

INSPECTION REPORT

STOTTESDON CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kidderminster

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123504

Headteacher: Mrs D P Snape

Reporting inspector: Mrs R J Schaffer
23698

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 June 2003

Inspection number: 248467

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Stottesdon Cleobury Mortimer Kidderminster |
| Postcode: | DY14 8UE |
| Telephone number: | 01746 718 617 |
| Fax number: | Not applicable |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | The Revd W Bromley |
| Date of previous inspection: | November 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 23698 | R J Schaffer | Registered inspector | Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage | What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9146 | M Brennand | Lay inspector | | How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 12060 | P Peaker | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Educational inclusion Special educational needs | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Situated in a very rural setting, the school is smaller than most other primary schools, except for those in the immediate vicinity, with 25 boys and 23 girls on roll. Admissions to the school are increasing although pupil mobility is not a significant factor in the school's provision. Children start in Reception the term before their fifth birthday and they share a class with Year 1 and 2 pupils. Years 3 and 4 are taught together for part of the time and join the Year 5 and 6 pupils to make one class for the remainder. Twenty one per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including one pupil with a Formal Statement of Need. This is an increase on previous years but is slightly below average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties and a much higher proportion than usual have problems related to language, such as dyslexia. There are no pupils reported to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils are from a mainly white United Kingdom heritage. When children start in reception, their attainment is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Stottesdon is an effective school that is successful in achieving many of its aims. The pupils achieve well, and reach standards above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave for secondary education. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the committed support of other staff and the governors ensure that the school is constantly improving. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn at a good rate in most lessons. The school is welcoming to all who wish to join and makes proper arrangements for any pupils with disabilities so all are included in its provision. The education it offers is good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching results in pupils attaining standards above average in English, mathematics, science, geography and history in Years 3 to 6 and in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music in Years 1 and 2.
- The school develops pupils' moral and social awareness well; pupils build good relationships with each other and, by the time they are in Year 6, they have acquired a mature respect for the needs of others in the school community and in the wider world.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support that they receive.
- The purposeful leadership of the headteacher has brought about many improvements to the school, and especially to the pupils' learning environment.

What could be improved

- Standards in art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6, and in design and technology by the end of Year 6.
- Children's learning in the Reception Year when they choose activities for themselves, and opportunities for them to gain confidence in writing independently.
- The school does not formally evaluate its work enough, or involve all subject managers sufficiently in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's improvement has been good since the inspection in 1997. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology have improved, although standards in art and design, and design and technology by Year 6 are still below expectations. Curriculum planning has been improved significantly as has the provision for staff development. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is now good but more remains to be done in some

subjects. All statutory requirements are met and the governors' roles have greatly improved. Whole-school development planning has improved although there is still room for further development.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils who sit the tests at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 is much smaller than in most schools. In the past three years the number of pupils in Year 6 has been as low as three and as high as nine. With such small numbers it is unreliable to draw conclusions from the results of one particular year. Taken over the three year period from 2000 to 2002, the pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 has been above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. The school's results have kept pace with the national trend of rising standards. In Year 2, pupils consistently attain above average in mathematics in national tests. Over the three year period, results in reading are above average, but results in writing have been below in some years so that overall they are average.

The school took steps to improve standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 because an analysis of test results indicated that girls were not doing well enough. The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 points to the success of these measures, with standards being above average in mathematics as well as English and science. Pupils' achievements are good. The school should exceed the challenging targets it set itself for English and mathematics for 2003. In Year 2, standards in mathematics, reading and science are above average but in writing they are average. Pupils' achievements are good except in writing where they are satisfactory. At the end of Year 6, pupils also attain above average standards in history, geography and physical education and at the end of Year 2 in music and information and communication technology. Standards are below average in art and design in both Year 6 and Year 2 and in design and technology in Year 6. In all other subjects an average standard is reached. Standards in literacy and numeracy are good.

Children in the Reception Year make good progress in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal, social and emotional development and they are on track to exceed the levels expected for their age in these areas. They learn to read quickly, but they do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills in writing so that although they make satisfactory progress it could be better. Overall in communication, language and literacy and creative and physical development their achievements are satisfactory and they should meet the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

Pupils with special education needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for their learning. Work is well adapted or altered to suit the needs of pupils of higher or lower attainment and their progress is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to work hard at their lessons and many have the same good attitude to the work they are expected to do at home. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. All the children in the Reception Year listen to their teachers well, but a few are reluctant to help with clearing away their own equipment. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are polite, helpful and courteous to each other and to adults. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils have been taught from an early age to include each other in their games and to respect each others' differences and they respond to this well. Pupils take responsibility and show initiative when required to do so. Occasionally, older pupils expect too much of those younger than themselves when supervising them at play. |
| Attendance | Good. Pupils are keen to come to school, and most pupils arrive punctually so that lessons start promptly without interruptions. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The good quality of the teaching leads to effective learning. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating work that captures pupils' interest and so they are keen to start their lessons. Included in this is the imaginative use of information and communication technology which often boosts pupils' interest and level of productivity. Because teachers carefully assess pupils' level of understanding, they provide work that is well matched to pupils' capabilities. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils which contribute to a good atmosphere for learning in all classes. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Teachers and learning assistants work well together to develop the skills and knowledge of pupils with special educational needs.

In most subjects, teachers are very knowledgeable and so know the best methods to use to provide effective learning. However, in art and design, design and technology and in providing for children in the Reception Year to learn as they play, teachers' expertise is not high enough. As a result, in these lessons, the best methods are not always used. Strategies to motivate pupils by giving them a clear understanding of what they should aim for in a lesson and targeting questions at different groups of pupils during whole class questioning times are two other areas for development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good overall. Planning in most subjects is very relevant to pupils' interests. All subjects, except art and design and design technology provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Planning in the Reception Year is satisfactory overall but needs development so that play areas interest children more and challenge them to learn. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils' individual needs are carefully targeted. Learning assistants and teachers work well together to help pupils achieve. Outside agencies are used as fully as possible, within the constraints of the school's finances to provide extra expertise. However, parents are not included in reviews of their child's progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. The school has a friendly family atmosphere. Teachers set clear moral standards and raise pupils' awareness of spirituality through reflection. Opportunities for social development are organised well, especially in lessons. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good. Staff know pupils very well and respond effectively to their needs. There is a proper attention to health and safety. Systems to check pupils' academic performance are good in some instances but need more development in others. The school takes proper steps to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to understand the principles of racial harmony. |

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and the smallness of the school allows regular daily communication between the teachers and parents and carers.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher directs her efforts very effectively at providing the best education for the pupils at the school. She is supported well by the only other permanent member of staff who takes on far more responsibilities than teachers in similar positions. All staff work very well together as a team. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. Governors are effective in their support of the school. Many take an active part in the school's work and consequently know its strengths and weaknesses well. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. The school takes a realistic approach to identifying its own areas for improvement and in checking its own performance. However, the process is not linked closely enough to pupils' achievements, and those with subject expertise are not sufficiently involved. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. The school has to plan its finances very carefully because of the difficulties caused by fluctuations in numbers. The best use and best value is made of all resources and of the strengths of the small staff. |

Teaching staff are well qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum and learning support assistants have good guidance and training to support pupils with special educational needs. The much improved accommodation is kept in excellent condition, and it provides well for pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum, except for physical education. The school does not have a hall that is of sufficient size for physical education to be taught indoors for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Good use is made of the facilities at the nearby activity centre but overall this is not a satisfactory situation. Resources are generally satisfactory. Although there have been good recent additions to the resources in the Reception Year, some of which came from money raised by parents, there is not enough good quality outdoor or indoor play equipment and no outdoor storage. This increases the difficulty for the teacher to plan activities that match the nationally recommended guidance for this age range. The newly acquired garden area is a benefit to pupils' learning and appreciation of the natural environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching is good and their child makes good progress. Their child enjoys coming to school and behaviour is good. The school helps their child to become more mature and expects hard work. The school is well led and managed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information provided on how well their child is getting on. The way in which the school works with parents. The amount of homework set. The range of activities out of school. |

The inspection team agreed with all the parents' positive comments. The school has a parents' evening to discuss pupils' progress in the spring term. Teachers are available to discuss any problems with parents after school but this is not always an option for parents at work. Inspectors agree with parents that an evening meeting in the autumn term would provide them with better information to support their child. Inspectors found that the school tries hard to forge an effective link with parents but that some parents do not take up the opportunities offered. However, governors do not have a means of finding out parents' views. The inspection team found that teachers set good homework activities and that, for those pupils who return it to school, it supports their learning well. The range of activities provided out

of school is limited. With such a small staff, this is inevitable but an increase in musical activities is planned.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 When considering the school's results in National Curriculum tests, the small number of pupils in each year group needs to be taken into account. In the past three years, the number of pupils in Year 6 taking the test has been as low as three and as high as nine. This makes comparisons against national figures and those for schools with similar percentage of pupils who take free school meals unreliable. It also means that it is difficult to judge whether the school is improving its standards year-on-year. The analysis of results that are drawn together over a three year period or longer is more reliable. Over a three year period pupils' performance in English and science has been above average while in mathematics their performance has been average. These same indicators showed that, in mathematics, girls were not doing as well as boys and were falling below average.
- 2 The school used these indicators in its own analysis of the pupils' performance. It identified the need to raise standards in mathematics, especially for girls and took the following steps to improve pupils' achievements:
 - Splitting the class that had been formerly made up of Years 3 to 6 into two classes for half the week with Year 5 and 6 in one class group and Years 3 and 4 in the other;
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems in which they have to decide for themselves what calculations to make;
 - Booster classes after school for all pupils;
 - The use of information and communication technology to motivate pupils.
- 3 These developments appear to have made a difference as pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 6 is above average and assessments carried out by teachers for the end of the year indicate that all pupils are on track to attain the expected level while 50 per cent should attain the higher level. These results indicate that the school is on track to achieve its target in mathematics and the same is true in English.
- 4 In National Curriculum tests for mathematics at the end of Year 2, pupils have consistently attained standards above average. Teacher assessment in science for 2002 put pupils' attainment as above average. Standards in these two subjects are very secure and currently are above average. In English, there has been a different picture with the school focusing attention on writing. This was because, over the three year period pupils' results were well above average in reading but in writing results were only slightly above, and were below average for the last two years. Currently, there is still a discrepancy in standards of writing and reading. Pupils of all levels of attainment read their books with enjoyment often showing a good understanding of using punctuation to provide added meaning and standards are above average. Standards in writing are average. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' skills in writing in Years 1 and 2 and new methods recommended nationally are being taught well. Although it is early to judge whether these have been successful, because there are so few pupils in the year group, average and lower attaining pupils are hesitant writers. They do not write very much

and often seem discouraged so that work is not finished. They make satisfactory progress in spelling, using punctuation and handwriting but their progress is limited in expressing themselves freely so that they can begin to develop the structure of their work.

- 5 In 2002, teachers assessed pupils' skills in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 as above average and this is similar for the current year group. Pupils speak clearly and listen well. Teachers ask good open questions in class sessions and when working with pupils in small groups. Adults value pupils' opinions and so they are happy to put forward their ideas or express an opinion. They make good progress in developing the range of words and sentence structures that they use with confidence.
- 6 When children start in the Reception Year, their knowledge and understanding is similar to expectations for their age. Their achievements are good in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development so that by the end of the Foundation Stage¹ they should exceed the levels set for this age. Children benefit from good teaching in mathematics and they count accurately and understand simple addition and subtraction problems to a level beyond expectations. They share in the topics that are taught to pupils in Years 1 and 2, for instance learning about seaside holidays in the past and how to grow plants and so their knowledge of the world around them develops quickly. When the children work in a small group with the learning assistant, their skills in reading and writing develop well but they do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing in their play, or to gain confidence in using the letter sounds they know to express their own ideas. Overall they are on track to attain the levels set for them in communication language and literacy and in creative and physical development but their achievements in these areas could be higher, particularly with reference to their writing.
- 7 In Year 6, standards are above average in English. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. They are confident at expressing their ideas and use a good range of vocabulary to explain their point of view. They listen to others thoughtfully. As keen readers, they understand how to use a range of reading skills, for instance scanning the computer screen quickly for information or settling down for a good read with a book of their own choice. Their knowledge of authors, both classical and modern is good. Pupils use different styles to match the purpose of their writing and the teachers' good attention to developing their knowledge and understanding of grammar results in well structure work that is punctuated properly. Pupils collect spellings they have difficulty with and learn spelling patterns at a good rate so that work is often spelt correctly. In mathematics and science, standards are above average. Pupils use a good range of methods to work out their mathematical calculations. They have achieved a good speed with mental calculations that are repeated frequently such as multiplication tables. They work on problems confidently and have a good understanding of the equivalence of decimals and fractions. In science, the work of pupils in Year 6, shows that they tackled a good range of investigations and recorded results to the level expected for their age. For instance, producing careful line graphs on squared paper to accurately indicate the

¹ Foundation Stage – identifies the children from three to the end of the Reception Year. It has its own nationally recommended curriculum that is explained in a guidance document. There are six areas of learning and the expectations of what children should know by the end of the stage are identified as Early learning goals.

variations in the effectiveness of materials as thermal insulators. The current good focus on developing pupils' understanding of science enquiry has been effective, and pupils have a good understanding that tests need to be carried out at least three times for findings to be reliable.

- 8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and some attain, or come close to, national standards by the time they take the national assessment tests in Year 6. Pupils make particularly good progress in literacy where the support in class and extra work when withdrawn in small groups enables them to learn important basic skills. They make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Although the school has not formally identified pupils who are gifted and talented, in English, mathematics and science those who learn quickly are given work that provides them with a good level of challenge and their achievements are good. In other subjects, such as physical education and art and design, the lack of thorough assessments means that these pupils are not identified although teachers are aware of their proficiency.
- 9 Standards are below average in art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6 and in design and technology by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide enough lessons that allow pupils to explore a wide range of media. Teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory and does not help pupils to develop their skills and knowledge systematically. Standards in physical education exceed expectations by the time pupils are in Year 6. Standards in swimming are good because from the Reception Year upwards pupils have the opportunity to swim in the summer term. The good improvements in teaching and provision for information and communication technology have resulted in pupils in Year 2 attaining a standard above expectations while throughout the school pupils' achievements are good. Similarly recent good teaching in music has resulted in good achievement for all pupils and the standard of pupils' knowledge and understanding in Year 2 being greater than expected. In Year 3 to 6, pupils produce a really good amount of work in history and geography. These subjects are taught well so that pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are confident in using their skills in literacy and numeracy in all their work and standards are above expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They have good attitudes to their work and respond well to their teachers' expectations of good behaviour. There is a good atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning, as was found at the time of the previous inspection.
- 11 In lessons, pupils work hard and listen well to their teachers and to each other. The children who have just started in the reception class have settled quickly into school routines, including those who find separating from their parent or carer difficult. Pupils generally contribute confidently in class discussions and practical activities, although just occasionally a few seek attention by the odd silly comment. There is a good emphasis on pupils working together in pairs or small groups and during these times pupils offer each other mutual support and behave in a mature manner when they are in a position to help. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 reading session an advanced reader took turns to read a book with a younger pupil whose skills were not so advanced. Pupils of all ages pay good attention in assembly and on entering or leaving the hall show thoughtfulness to others.

- 12 At play times and lunch times, behaviour is good. Pupils, parents and mid-day supervisors state that there are few instances of bullying or unkindness. When incidents do occur, they are dealt with promptly and generally to the satisfaction of all concerned. Parents respond well to the school's systems for behaviour management and most sign and support the home school agreement. There have been no exclusions.
- 13 The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' personal development, although some experiences that are offered in many schools, such as the organisation of a school council or special guidance on how to help younger pupils, are not available. Older pupils respond very well to being identified as "guardian angels". They have the responsibility of ensuring that playtimes are happy occasions for all. At play and lunch times, there is a very good mix of age groups and genders when pupils play and eat together. Older pupils take it upon themselves to look out for younger pupils. For instance, one play time a Year 5 boy, on his own initiative, helped Year 1 and 2 pupils to set up a game of football and then made the good decision to let them get on by themselves. On one occasion, however, some older pupils reprimanded a younger child a little too enthusiastically. Although the younger pupil did not take the matter to heart, it was clear that the older pupils had not understood that their well meant intervention was a little heavy handed. Pupils respond well when they are given opportunities to undertake their own research and teachers ask them to determine the nature of their work when this is appropriate.
- 14 Attendance figures are higher than average and punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school and parents report that even when they are unwell they are keen to come to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 The overall quality of teaching is good and this leads to effective learning. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection when a few lessons were unsatisfactory and there were not so many lessons judged to be good. Because only 17 lessons were seen, teaching was also judged by the quality of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Eleven lessons were good, two were very good and four were satisfactory. There were no lessons that were unsatisfactory. It must be taken into consideration that, at the school, there are only two permanent full-time members of staff. One part-time teacher was absent through ill health during the inspection, and the temporary teacher replacing this member of staff had only taught at the school for approximately one month. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. In the Foundation Stage it is satisfactory. There is good teaching in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, history and music. Some improvements are needed to the teaching of design and technology in Years 3 to 6 and art and design in all year groups.
- 16 The strengths in teaching and learning are:
- the thorough teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills in Years 1 to 6;
 - stimulating resources, methods and content of lessons with imaginative links between subjects;
 - the use of information and communication technology to broaden pupils' interest and to provide support for one group while the teacher concentrates on others;
 - the use of support staff to provide extra help for pupils with special education needs;

- teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and productivity which means that pupils of all levels of attainment pay good attention in lessons and work hard;
- the marking of pupils' work that clearly explains how they can improve.

Areas for development are:

- teachers do not always explain to pupils, at the start of a session, what it is they are expected to learn, so at the end pupils are not sure how well they have achieved;
- in the Foundation Stage, some activities and methods are not planned well enough to help children to develop the skills and knowledge they have gained previously, particularly in writing and creative development;
- in art and design and design technology, the process of critical assessment is not taught well;
- in whole-class teaching sessions, strategies to target questions to groups of pupils are not used often enough.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage

- 17 Teaching is good when adults lead an activity, either explaining a new concept or developing knowledge and understanding. However, because the activities children explore for themselves do not help to move children's learning on quickly enough, it is satisfactory overall. A strength of the teaching is the warm friendly relationships and the respect that adults show for children's ideas and efforts. This helps children learn to respect others and to share their learning and classroom resources well. Teachers' expectations of children are high, but care is taken that they are not overshadowed by the older children. For example, in a music lesson with Years 1 and 2, the reception children managed to participate very fruitfully in an hour long session because the teacher was conscious of their needs and frequently changed the mood and nature of the musical experience. In mathematics, work is well matched to their capabilities. Children benefit from hearing older pupils count and carry out additions and subtractions with numbers much higher than is usual for their age, but the teacher takes care to ensure that they gain early concepts thoroughly. Teachers are skilful at developing knowledge of books and helping children learn the early skills of reading. The nationally recommended methods are used for teaching letter sounds to read and write but there is sometimes too long an interval between sessions and teachers do not always adhere to the recommended sequence so that some children forget the sounds they have learnt previously. The learning environment in the class allows the children to initiate their own activities, for instance, playing in the sand, or water, writing at a small table and building with construction equipment. However, children did not use these areas well on their own because they were not provided with the necessary motivation. When playing in the sand, for instance, they became bored because they had not been provided with a particular challenge. Activities are not clearly linked to the topic so that the knowledge and understanding learnt earlier in the day can be revisited as they play. Notices do not ask questions or build on children's reading and writing skills because an answer is needed before play areas can be accessed.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6

- 18 Teachers make good use of the methods recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. There is a good understanding of integrating the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Enjoyment of language is encouraged when pupils are

taught to listen to rhymes and the sound of words. As a result, pupils are confident to make suggestions such as the one made by a pupil in Year 2 who named the area where plants are grown as the "Stotty Sprouting Centre". Teachers use good methods to encourage interest and enthusiasm for reading, for example, by pupils being paired with reading partners and by using a wide range of reading material. Good strategies for teaching pupils to work out unknown words as they read are taught as are good strategies for learning to spell. In Years 1 and 2, teachers assess pupils' achievements well when they read in groups, although this has not yet been developed as effectively in Years 3 to 6 but is planned as an area for development. Methods recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy are used effectively in all year groups. Teachers provided a good balance of work between problem solving and the consolidation of knowledge through computation practice. Pupils' confidence is high in using their own strategies and explaining how they have arrived at answers. Because teaching aids and resources are displayed and are accessible in all classrooms, pupils use them effectively when they need extra help.

- 19 Practical activities in science and mathematics, the good use of books, pictures and artefacts in history and geography and imaginative links between subjects are some of the ways teachers provide stimulating lessons that interest pupils so that they enjoy coming to school. A particularly good example of this came from the eye-catching pen and ink portraits pupils in Years 3 and 4 had produced. These pictures consolidated their knowledge of work done in science on convex and concave mirrors, as they were pictures of themselves and their friends reflected from one or other of these mirrors. The quality of the artwork was particularly good, having a surreal aspect to them and pupils were fascinated by them. The carefully planned use of visitors and visits enhances pupils' learning as they benefit from the extra knowledge and expertise these bring to their learning. A member of the Jewish religion explained the customs and festivals of Judaism helping pupils to have a greater insight than otherwise. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to extend and consolidate pupils' learning. It is often used to provide support for one year group while the teacher concentrates on the learning of pupils in another year group or level of attainment. Teachers also make good use of programs that have a particular benefit to one kind of learning. For instance, in a mathematics lesson using a computer program designed to help pupils' understanding of symmetry, pupils could move shapes around the screen more speedily and more frequently than if they were working on paper.
- 20 Teachers plan lessons so that work builds well on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and this contributes well to the progress pupils make. However, plans are not very detailed and, on occasions, do not make it clear what pupils are to learn in lessons or how much they are expected to achieve according to their capabilities. An example of this occurred in a mental arithmetic session in Years 3 and 4, when the teacher gave the pupils a short timed session that involved adding four two digit numbers together. Although the teacher had different expectations of pupils according to their attainment, she did not share this with pupils. One pupil managed to complete ten calculations while lower attaining pupils only managed two or three. A statement at the start that made it clear what the expectations were would have helped to motivate pupils no matter what their capabilities. Although teachers know pupils well and pitch the level of their work well, during whole class questions times, teachers rarely framed their questions so as to suit different groups or those of a different age. In most lessons, teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn by the end of the lesson but this is not always done and it is not often referred to as the lesson proceeds or checked on in the final part of the lesson.

- 21 In all classes, there are good relationships and teachers manage pupils very well. There are plenty of opportunities for humour and friendly repartee but teachers expect good behaviour and pupils respond by respecting them and with politeness. This very good management should result in very good behaviour but clearly in Years 5 and 6 the expectations of the temporary teacher were not quite the same as that of permanent staff and so it is possible that the behaviour seen on inspection was slightly less good than usual. Nevertheless, it was consistently good.
- 22 The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good and much improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is well focused on pupils' needs and the targets on individual education plans are clear and realistic. Grouping by attainment for literacy works well for these pupils. They are supported well in their work by knowledgeable teaching assistants. The school benefits from the support and advice of the Learning Support Service particularly in relation to assessment and strategies for the individual education plans.
- 23 The marking of pupils' work is very good in Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2 where the teachers make verbal comments rather than written ones. In Years 3 to 6 teachers marking often consists of good questions that develop pupils thinking further. Comments provide them with a clear understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have targets in English to help motivate them to work hard and achieve. However, there was no evidence of these targets being referred to in marking either to inform pupils if they needed to try harder or whether they had been achieved.
- 24 The school provides a good range of activities for pupils to do at home. Projects are often completed at home and research in books or on the Internet is carried out to supplement that done in school. In Years 1 and 2, reading books go home regularly and parents are given good guidance on how to help their child improve their reading and this makes a good contribution to children's achievements.

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

- 25 Overall, the school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements and develops pupils' interests and learning effectively for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Curriculum planning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection.
- 26 The school has now reviewed and effectively updated all its policy documents to include relevant issues such as how the school provides for those with disabilities. The exception is that of religious education which is to be done shortly. The school's planning has benefited from meetings with headteachers from other small schools in similar circumstances. These meetings have helped the school ascertain how to plan work for classes that span three year groups and ensure that work is set at the right level for pupils' interest and capabilities.
- 27 Teacher's planning for children in the Foundation Stage takes account of the requirements of the new national planning guidance for this age. Both the teacher and the classroom assistant have received advice and guidance to help them provide a curriculum that meets the needs of these children, within a class of pupils

that includes Years 1 and 2. Some of the advice has been helpful, but other advice, while reflecting good practice in other schools, has not proved useful because of the restrictions caused by a limited number of staff in the afternoons. As a result, some suggested activities have not been suitable for the situation in this school. Appropriately, staff are still flexible in their plans and checking to see what works well and what needs further adaptations.

- 28 The skills and strategies that pupils must learn in literacy and numeracy are well taught. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are in place and are being used effectively to raise standards. Teachers make many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, reading and mathematical skills when learning in other subjects. Its effectiveness is apparent in, for example, history and geography where pupils are able to write descriptively and at some length on a variety of topics. The school has now adopted nationally agreed guidelines for all national curriculum subjects. This has improved the consistency in the way that pupils' knowledge and skills are built on as they move through the school. There has been a good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology. It is used to develop pupils' learning in most subjects as for instance, when pupils use their word processing skills to enhance the presentation of their work, or use the Internet to carry out their own research. Planning for art and design and design and technology is satisfactory, but the standard of pupils' work is not high enough, because the plans have only recently been introduced and some teachers need guidance or training to use them effectively.
- 29 Provision for pupils' with special educational needs is good. The recommendations of the new Code of Practice are met successfully. Support for these pupils is usually in the classroom but some pupils are withdrawn for small group specialist teaching for the development of literacy and numeracy according to need. Pupils' individual education plans refer to specific targets for each pupil and these are reviewed each term. However, parents are not invited to visit the school and contribute to these reviews. In the past, when pupils have had a formal Statement of Need, proper review procedures have been in place. The good provision of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is effective in enabling them to make good progress towards achieving their targets. All pupils have the same opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life.
- 30 Good provision is made for personal, social and health development and reflects the importance that the school places on pupils' personal development. Suitable policies are in place for sex and drugs education. Outside visitors are used well to help pupils, acquire knowledge and understanding in these areas so that they are beginning to develop a mature attitude to the issues they will need to face as they grow up. During the inspection, for example, the school nurse led sessions for Year 6 pupils on sex education and pupils said that they found the discussions helpful.
- 31 The school has useful links with the local community which make a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are regular visits from members of the local community such as the church, police and fire service. The Activity Centre in the village is made available to the school in the winter months. This provides particularly well for pupils in Year 5 and 6 who have the opportunity to experience orienteering and abseiling through this facility. Pupils in Year 6 visit the local secondary school which helps to ensure a smooth transition to this phase of their education. Although there

are a satisfactory number of activities to enable pupils to participate in areas of sport outside of school time, five a side football and netball, for example, there are few other after school clubs.

- 32 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. This is an area of high priority in the school and is largely responsible for the school's supportive ethos and climate for learning.
- 33 Provision for pupils' spiritual education is good. It is developed through personal and social education and through acts of collective worship. In most lessons relationships are strong and pupils are encouraged to show their appreciation for the work of others. This was seen very clearly in a lesson in Year 5 and 6 where pupils critically appraised the work of others in a sensitive and constructive way. Pupils have opportunities to learn how people of other faiths celebrate significant festivals.
- 34 Provision for pupils' moral education is also good and linked to their spiritual development. Care and discipline are based on the values of tolerance and respect for each other. Teachers provide good role models and pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are helped to understand the consequences of their actions. Good behaviour is effectively promoted through the weekly reward system and a regular reinforcement of the home-school agreement.
- 35 Pupils' social development is good. The school is effective in developing pupils' self esteem and building up their confidence as learners. This has especial benefit for those pupils with special educational needs. Collaborative work in the classroom is encouraged. The school's system of 'Guardian Angels' is an effective way of enabling interactions between older and younger children and fosters good relations.
- 36 Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily promoted through visits to the theatre in the neighbouring towns of Telford and Ludlow. They have had opportunities to participate, through visiting dance and drama groups from Africa, in the music of these cultures. Pupils are introduced to other faiths and cultures through their lessons in religious education and geography. Visits to a local museum reinforce their own cultural heritage. Music is beginning to play a good part in pupils' experiences of culture but it could be developed further. In addition, the school has not provided as fully as it could for pupils' understanding of the contribution of artists and craftsmen to the world's many cultures, including that of their own country.
- 37 The curriculum of the school provides the climate, opportunity and learning environment for pupils to achieve confidence and success in all aspects of their school life. Pupils are given a good understanding of how to live together harmoniously in a society of different cultures and different races.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 38 The school cares well for pupils' health, safety and welfare. At the time of the previous inspection the school made adequate provision for pupils' welfare but there were some aspect in need of improvement and these have been addressed effectively. From the start of their education children are made to feel welcome and this caring approach continues throughout every child's education. A parent whose child had recently started in the school was particularly complimentary about how welcoming the staff and pupils had been. This had helped her child to settle in well and become part of the school's community. The school takes good care to check on pupils' progress year on year in English, mathematics and science.

- 39 Procedures for child protection are sound. The headteacher is the recognised child protection officer and she has recently received training on the updated procedures. Knowledge of her role amongst staff is good. Arrangements for health and safety are also good again overseen by the headteacher and supported by the governor responsible for health and safety. The school has recently undertaken an audit of its premises, in conjunction with a risk assessment officer from the local authority. This raised a number of minor issues, which are in the process of being rectified. Procedures for medical records and the provision for first aid are good. Accidents are recorded and where necessary parents informed. The school is well served by a dedicated caretaker who keeps the premises in good condition and lunchtime meals are of a good quality.
- 40 Procedures for checking and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are monitored daily by the secretary who will carry out a follow-up telephone call where a pupil has been absent for more than a day without a reason. However, much of the credit for the high level of attendance is due to pro-active parents who ensure that their children attend regularly. They are also quick to inform the school when their children are absent. Few incentives in the form of awards to encourage better attendance and punctuality are employed. Time keeping is generally good with very little disruption to the start of lessons.
- 41 The procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good, evidenced by the good standard of behaviour that was observed during the inspection. Behaviour is managed within the pastoral care programme, with emphasis placed on promoting good behaviour and respect. Pupils have input into drawing up their own class rules and they consider them to be fair. The star system leading to the award of merits together with the weekly celebration assemblies are much valued. Lessons on personal and social development, including citizenship, provide pupils with a forum to raise issues of concern that may have occurred during the week. The school has suitable procedures in place to eliminate bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. Interviews with pupils indicated that such incidents are rare.
- 42 The care and support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils they work with well. The school's values are well reflected in the way that pupils with special educational needs are given opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are valued highly and their achievements recognised. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress as they move through the school. There is good liaison with outside agencies which provide valuable support.
- 43 The school has a good range of procedures for checking on how well pupils are achieving in English, mathematics and science. At the end of the year and at the end of each term, the school uses appropriate tests including the optional national tests to check on how well each pupil is attaining the different levels of the National Curriculum. This is supplemented very well by teachers' assessments as work proceeds. For instance, when work is marked or projects finished teachers often check the level against National Curriculum requirements. Good evaluative comments identify what pupils have understood and how much help they needed. Teachers have a good understanding of the need for tests to be useful, rather than carried out as a matter of course. This has resulted, for instance, in fewer spelling tests being given but a careful check kept on how well pupils spell in their written work. This is much better practice than a weekly spelling test. The school has recently purchased sets of reading books that help teachers identify specific aspects

of pupils' reading that need improvement. They have not yet been used for any length of time but indicate that the school is sensitive to the needs of good quality assessment. The use of targets in English is being tried out in Years 1 and 2. The targets are appropriate but have yet to contribute to pupils' understanding of how well they are progressing. The progress of children in the Foundation Stage is checked appropriately against the levels set for their age range.

- 44 In other subjects, the school checks pupils' attainment by judging whether they have achieved the work planned using the national guidance for planning. Any pupils that do better than expected or those that fall below expectations are recorded. The system is satisfactory but does not help to identify missing skills, for instance, if work is not planned to include this particular skill. So that in subjects such as art and design and design and technology where pupils' work is not planned well, this does not give an accurate picture. In information and communication technology, the school has not yet devised a system to track pupils' achievements or to check if knowledge and understanding are secure.
- 45 The headteacher keeps a useful record that tracks pupils' progress in English and mathematics from their admission to Year 6. When a pupil does not make the progress expected year-on-year, reasons are sought to explain this. Many of the current Year 6 pupils did not make the progress they should in Year 3. The headteacher identified the reasons for this as the difficulties of providing for their needs in the very cramped accommodation alongside the other three year groups. When the class was split at the end of Year 4, many of these pupils caught up by making much greater progress than expected in Year 5. The school analyses the performance of girls and boys as well as possible from national test data, given the small number in each year group.
- 46 The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good occurring informally during whole class discussion times and in lessons that are specially planned to develop pupils' knowledge of issues relating to personal, social, health and citizenship education. The small size of the school means that staff know all pupils well. It also allows for close relationships with parents and conversations between them and staff at the beginning and end of each day provide an opportunity to pass on information about what is happening outside school. A more formal judgment on personal development is made in the annual report to parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 47 The school's partnership with its parents is satisfactory. Overall parents are positive in their support of the school. All parents felt that their child was happy to come to school. They considered that the teaching is good, that their children are making good progress and that the school expects their children to work hard. There is satisfaction with the way the school is led and managed and nearly all parents felt staff were approachable. The questionnaire and parents meeting however raised a number of concerns relating to; how well they are informed about their children's progress, how closely the school works with them and the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection findings agreed with their views on the information they received on their children's progress and that there is not a great deal of provision for extra-curricular activities but not with how closely the school worked with them.
- 48 The school has effective links with parents. The headteacher operates an open door policy and along with her staff she makes herself available in the playground at the beginning and end of the day. This helps to build trust and provides parents with an

opportunity to raise concerns. Newsletters are sent out at the beginning of every term followed up by regular correspondence informing parents of upcoming events. There are good opportunities for parents and children to get to know the school and the teachers before children start in the Reception Year. The quality of the comments in the home school reading diaries provides further evidence of the good links that exist.

- 49 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is adequate. During the week there is little if any support from parents for work in class. The majority of parents are at work and unable to find the time to provide help. However, support from parents for outside visits is good and two parents help to run the football and netball teams. Parents have also volunteered to improve the school's outdoor environment. There is an active Parent and Teachers Association, which organises a variety of fundraising and social events. The money raised has been used to purchase computer equipment and digital cameras.
- 50 The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is inadequate. Parents raised concerns, both at the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires about the quality of information they received on their children's progress. They were particularly concerned about the limited number of parents' evenings, there being only two, in the spring and summer terms with the summer term meeting only providing an opportunity to review the work of the past year. Parents felt that they needed an additional meeting in the autumn term, which would allow them time to rectify any concerns that might have arisen. The inspectors agreed with this view. The annual reports on pupils' progress, although satisfactory, are reliant on computer generated comment banks and do not give a clear indication of the level at which each child is working and whether this is appropriate to their age. The reports do give targets for further improvement but with the long interval between the summer reports and the spring term, there is little opportunity for parents to check how well their child is doing in relation to their target. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed as soon as the school has concerns. They are kept aware of the targets for their child but are not invited to attend the reviews.
- 51 The contribution of parents to children's learning at home is satisfactory. Curriculum evenings have been held but the turnout to these events has been low. By contrast the comments in the reading diaries indicate that parents regularly hear their children read. Support at home for other work is more mixed. Where it is good it is excellent with some parents going the extra mile to support their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 52 The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the governors support her leadership well. Because of the determination and drive of the headteacher, much needed improvement to the school's very limited accommodation was recently accomplished. In this very small school, there are no staff with management appointments, although the permanent member of staff leads well in her areas of responsibility without this recognition. Overall, the management of the school is good, but co-ordinators are not involved enough in checking on the quality of teaching and learning and the evaluation of the success of school improvement does not take enough account of pupils' achievements. At the time of the previous inspection, a temporary headteacher was in post and several important aspects of school management were not effective. These aspects have been addressed and, overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

- 53 At the time of the previous inspection, job descriptions were not in place. Staff now have good clear job descriptions, and roles and responsibilities are well defined. Everyone in this small school plays a part in ensuring that the day-to-day running of the school is carried out smoothly and in overseeing the pupils' well being, care and guidance. School staff are very well briefed so that school policies are reflected in their practice. For example, expectations of pupils' behaviour is shared throughout the school community. The headteacher has created a small but successful team.
- 54 Staff's strengths are valued and newcomers quickly feel at home. Visiting teachers or support workers who are only in school infrequently clearly feel part of the team. Temporary teachers are important to the school, providing cover when staff attend training, or have other reasons for absence. Even when they are in the school for a short time, the skills of temporary staff are appreciated and are put to good use to the advantage of the pupils. For example, a teacher with expertise in information and communication technology, who was standing in for a part-time member of staff absent through sickness, provided valuable guidance to both staff and pupils on the use of computers in their work.
- 55 The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and appropriate areas for development are identified in the planning document for whole school development. The pupils' performance in national tests, and in the school's own assessments, are considered as part of the whole process of evaluating provision. For instance, in Years 1 and 2 writing was identified as an area for development as the pupils attained better levels in reading than writing. Good plans are drawn up to take action to address any weaknesses. The headteacher keeps the governing body well informed as to the progress of action plans and improvements to provision. However, the process is not rounded off by linking the success of developments to the rate of pupils' learning or to specific targets for their achievements. For example, information and communication technology has been an important area for development over two years but the school has no means of judging how well these initiatives have helped pupils attain the different levels described in the National Curriculum. Similarly, the strategies to improve writing are not being judged against any given targets in relation to pupils' achievements in writing.
- 56 The school has implemented the procedures for performance management and these are linked closely to the school's plans for improvement. The headteacher has followed guidance on carrying out classroom observations with regard to discussing the focus of the observations and subsequent findings. Areas for improvement have been identified and followed up with outside assessors checking where necessary. As co-ordinator for mathematics and science, the headteacher has also evaluated the quality of provision through checks on teaching and pupils' learning. However, the English co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to do this. This weakens her view of the subject as a whole and how to improve from the stand point of the whole school.
- 57 The governors are well organised to support the work of the school through active committees and individuals who take on responsibility for different areas. Many governors provide practical help, working with children in school, for instance, supporting small groups or escorting on visits out. They take up training and attend link meetings with other schools such as the termly meeting for governors with responsibility for special educational needs that provides a good overview for governors of practice in other schools.

- 58 The school places great importance on training, especially as, with so few teachers, each one needs expertise in several areas. Classroom assistants are given good guidance and training as far as is possible within the constraints of the budget. The headteacher works closely with a group of other small schools and this brings the benefit of joint training on many occasions. The introduction of the new curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage placed particular strain on the school, as staff working with that age range needed training over and above the areas that were already their responsibility. There has been support from the local authority and staff have responded to the changes well, even though there are aspects in need of improvement.
- 59 The organisation and management of the school's finances is very good. The governors and headteacher work well together to keep a close watch on whether actual spending is in line with their earlier forecasts. The school's finances are restricted and so difficult decisions have to be made. This has resulted in great care being taken to look for the best value from purchases and services. Grants and money for particular areas of school life are used wisely. There is good long-term strategic planning to make the best use of the school's finances and to ensure that school developments can be adequately supported. This has resulted in good improvements in several subjects, for instance, in science and mathematics. The school had to decide whether or not to employ an extra teacher part-time when the numbers in Years 3 to 6 became greater than is usually possible to teach four year groups in one class. The school's own tracking system appears to indicate that the pupils made better progress in mathematics and English when taught in classes of two year groups. However, although the governors are aware of this it is not formally evaluated and included in the school improvement process so that a watching eye can be kept for the future. Through the headteacher's meetings with the group of other small schools and from considering National Curriculum test results, the governors compare how well they are doing to other schools. Consultation with parents is mostly informal but the governors do not do as much as they could to take into account parents' views.
- 60 The recent very good improvements to the school's accommodation have come about through a sustained period of effort on behalf of all those connected with the school, but most of all the headteacher. Her determination galvanized the governors and led to a very proficient bid for the necessary funds. Parents appreciate the improvements which have had a very positive impact on the learning of the pupils. The school still lacks a hall that is suitable for physical education for pupils from Years 3 to 6. The use of the nearby activity centre and outdoor facilities compensate, but this is not a satisfactory situation. There is a good enclosed area for outdoor activities for the Reception Year, but there is no outdoor storage and as yet the school has few wheeled vehicles and insufficient large play equipment. The school's playground has an attractive climbing and balancing area but the playing field is not fenced so as to prevent fouling by irresponsible dog owners.
- 61 Classrooms have enough computers and these are supplemented by three lap-tops that have the advantage of being movable between classes. The newly acquired garden area is a good resource for developing pupils' appreciation of the natural world.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62 *In order to improve the quality of education further the governors, headteacher and all staff should:*

- (1) Raise standards in art and design and design and technology by:
 - sharing the good practice in art and design in Years 3 and 4 with all staff;
 - improving the opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 to explore a wider range of media and techniques in art and design;
 - teaching pupils more about the way both subjects contribute to their own culture and that of others;
 - improving pupils skills in Years 3 to 6 when making products in design and technology;
 - improving the way pupils are taught to evaluate their own work in both subjects;
 - using assessment to check on pupils' achievements and plan future work. *(Paragraph references 9, 16, 36, 44, 84, 113, 114, 115, 119, 120)*

- (2) Improve the challenge and opportunities for learning when children in the Reception Year choose activities for themselves, and use better methods to motivate and encourage them to write independently by:
 - integrating activities into the topics and subjects that already interest children;
 - providing a challenge or suggestion that moves children's learning on as they play or provides an opportunity to negotiate with others;
 - providing motivating reasons to write and attractive resources and materials;
 - encouraging early efforts to spell words using letter sounds that can later be taught as correct spelling and increasing the frequency of short sessions to teach letter sounds;
 - improving both indoor and outdoor resources. *(Paragraph references 17, 27, 66, 72, 73)*

- (3) Improve the way the school evaluates its own work by:
 - using information about pupils' achievements more fully in the process of judging the success of its own performance;
 - involving all subject managers in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. *(Paragraph references 55, 56, 59)*

In addition to these key issues, the governors should include in their action plan the following less significant issue:

Parents do not feel that they have enough information on how well their child is progressing. This is mainly because there is no meeting in the autumn term to help them understand how they can help their child make progress during that academic year, and parents of pupils with special educational needs are not invited to the meeting that reviews their targets. *(Paragraph references 50)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 17 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 20 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 12 | 65 | 24 | 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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | - | 48 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | - | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | - | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | - | 10 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 3 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 1 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.7 |
| 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.

Data on the school's results in national tests is not shown because the number of pupils who sat the tests, at the end of 2002, were less than ten in Year 2 and Year 6. This is done so as to prevent individual pupils from being identified.

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 | 48 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 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 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 2.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25 |
| Average class size | 25 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 27 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | - |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | - |

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2001/02 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 160,101 |
| Total expenditure | 155,014 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,768 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 10,417 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 5,090 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of education support staff | - |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | - |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | - |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 0 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 0 |
| | |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0.6 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 48 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 18 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 56 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 61 | 33 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 33 | 56 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 44 | 39 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 50 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 44 | 39 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 50 | 39 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 61 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 39 | 39 | 17 | 6 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 39 | 39 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 50 | 33 | 6 | 0 | 11 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 22 | 33 | 17 | 22 | 6 |

Note care should be taken when interpreting this table as each parent is represented by more than five percentage points.

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

- 63 The Reception Year children are taught in the class with Year 1 and 2 pupils. They start in the term before their fifth birthday and this means that parents have not got the choice of children starting sooner than that. Prior to this, many attend the local playgroup though some start school without any experience of earlier education. There are currently six children in the Reception Year and, of this number, only two started in September. In the mornings, children are taught by both the classroom teacher and the learning assistant. In the afternoons, there is only the teacher in the class. This presents difficulties for the teacher to plan the curriculum so that it fully reflects the national guidance for this age.
- 64 When children start, some have a wide range of words that they use well to express themselves when they talk. However, some lack confidence and are not used to relating to others outside their family group. These children use only one or two words to communicate. They settle quickly because adults and the other children are very understanding of their needs. Some have little knowledge of books or writing implements, and overall the attainment of children when they start school is as expected for their age.
- 65 Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, in mathematics, their knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. Currently, they are on track to exceed the levels set for them in these areas by the end of the Reception Year. They make satisfactory progress in communication language and literacy and in creative development and in these areas they should meet the expected levels.
- 66 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is often good when the children are taught in a separate group which is possible when the learning assistant is present. However, the quality of provision is affected negatively when there is only one adult in the class as happens in the afternoon. The teacher has made good efforts to change the classroom so as to reflect the learning environment recommended for this age and to plan activities accordingly. Staff have received training and there has been advice from the local education authority consultants. However, occasionally, advice has seemed conflicting. The school has had to wait until moving into the new accommodation during the current year before fully implementing the new guidance which came out two years ago and, as a result, are still at a trial and error stage with some aspects of provision, particularly the role play and play resources such as the sand pit and water tray. Staff are reflective and flexible in their approach so that new methods are tried and judged according to their benefits to children. Children's achievements are assessed satisfactorily through daily observations and checked against the levels for their age. There was no judgement on this stage at the time of the last inspection so it is not possible to comment on improvement since that time.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 67 The quality of teaching in this area is good and children are on track to exceed the levels set for them by the end of the year. Although no specific teaching times for this area were seen, there was ample opportunity to observe provision as it arose in other lessons. The routines of the class are well established and the children of

reception age join in readily with the older children in such things as arriving in the morning and putting belongings away, registration and going to assembly in an orderly manner. Because they are taught well to share and to care for others, they help each other when working together in pairs, for instance to make a model out of a cardboard box when they needed to take notice of their partners suggestions and to share resources such as glue and paint.

- 68 The very good relationships established by adults provide the children with good models for their own behaviour. Adults value and respect their ideas and this helps children to do the same, even when their own wishes are very pressing. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and take every opportunity to reinforce polite interactions. A good example of this occurred when the learning support assistant allocated the job of giving out whiteboards during a writing session. As the child handed out the boards, a sensitive reminder from the learning support assistant helped the recipient to say 'thank you' so that this was repeated by the rest of the children. The one occasion when the children did not improve in this aspect was in the afternoon when they had spent too long playing in the sand without an adult checking the effectiveness of their play. Although playing well together to start with, they began to niggle each other over who should have the most miniature play people. This was partly because the activity did not present enough of a challenge to motivate the children to work together and partly because there was no spare adult to promote better quality play. There are no children identified with special educational needs in this small group but staff are alert to children's early needs, for example, providing good behaviour management plan for those who find it difficult to separate from their parent or carer.
- 69 Children are taught to care about others and to respect the feelings and beliefs of others. For example, when they learnt about the festivals of Judaism when a Jewish parent came to share with the children their family customs relevant to their faith. They join in with the older children in learning stories from the bible and in discussion times when the teacher provides good opportunities for children to think about issues such as friendship.

Communication, language and literacy

- 70 Children make satisfactory progress overall because although teaching is often good, it suffers when there is only one adult in the room making it satisfactory overall. The staff are in the process of trying out new methods and developing their knowledge of the best way to provide in this area. When there is only one adult in the room, children do not get the support they need to develop their skills as they play and choose activities for themselves. This will always present difficulties with the current level of staffing, but the methods and planning used in some instances are not helping either.
- 71 Children make good progress in learning about stories and rhymes. They often join with the whole class to listen to the story that will form the basis of their work for the week. They learn effectively when the classroom assistant teaches them as a separate group the rhymes and repetitive phrases from the stories they have enjoyed. They learn what to expect from a story and know that it has a beginning, middle and end. This has helped their reading. They are confident to have a go at reading independently, and they recognise a good number of words in the simple books that they take home to read with their parents. Their reading is further on than expected for their age.

72 Although most children express themselves well, a few start school without the confidence to say more than one or two words and remain hesitant at putting forward their ideas for some time. Adults are skilful at helping them develop the confidence they need, allowing them to go at their own pace but building on their interest and desire to join in with activities. For example, when painting a large cardboard box with a friend to make a model hotel, a child who rarely spoke became insistent about how they should proceed. The classroom assistant noted what was happening and waited for the right moment before developing their discussion by making a further suggestion. However, during one afternoon session when only the teacher was present for the three year groups, the children were given several options; either playing in the sand, water, construction, or role play. This was a good number of choices but none had been planned to provide motivation for them to play together or to tempt them to extend their skills and initiative. Although, the children started off playing happily, they gradually became less interested, and the talkative ones started conversations about home events while those, who needed to develop their talk, fell silent, engaged in solitary play. Children's interest in their current topic on seaside holidays had not been harnessed, nor were they given a challenge, perhaps to see how many sandcastles with flags atop they could fit into the sand tray or whether they could build the fun park with the construction set. Pencil and paper was not provided out of doors for them to include notices and notes. During this time, the teacher was engaged in helping Years 1 and 2, who were working on a science activity. She gave occasional good support to the children's play and this helped to develop their ideas for a short while but the impetus was temporary and suffered from the lack of prior impetus.

73 Children have made satisfactory progress in learning to shape letters and to write words they know, or can guess at using letter sounds. Children's achievements are satisfactory and most are set to achieve the level expected for their age although those of lower attainment are unlikely to do so. Staff use good methods to help children learn to recognise, say and write the letters of the alphabet as was shown in a good session when the children worked on white boards to write simple sentences with the classroom assistant. In this session children wrote words such as 'in' and 'is' independently when helped by the classroom assistant providing the letter sound. However, the short sessions on learning letter sounds are too far apart and do not always follow the recommended sequence in the national guidance. This results in children often forgetting how to write letter sounds they have previously learnt especially when trying to write their own sentence. The method of encouraging pupils to write independently using letter sounds they know is not promoted enough and so pupils are not thinking of themselves as writers. Adults are not clearly establishing the idea of having a guess at spellings as a starting point for children's writing with the correct spelling taught later when the child is ready. The classroom writing area has few really tempting resources or materials to catch the eye. During their play children are not choosing to write because they are not motivated enough to do so by adults exciting their interest in a really good reason to write and praising even unreadable efforts. As a result, children are not practising their writing skills as often as they could.

Mathematical development

74 Children's progress is good and they are on track to exceed the levels expected of their age by the end of the Reception Year. Because the teacher has good subject knowledge, she plans activities that help children develop a secure understanding of early mathematical concepts before moving on to recording them, or to a more

complex activity. She is well supported by the classroom assistant who leads their learning when they start on group or individual tasks. Their counting is good. Even those of lower attainment count a jumble of items, as many as ten, carefully making sure that no item is counted twice or left out. Higher attaining pupils count into the twenties and beyond with accuracy. Children are full of pride at their own expertise with numbers. One, child whose capabilities were generally average said with great confidence 'I can count up to a hundred' which possibly was not true but was a good indication of his confidence and enjoyment of mathematics. Children worked well on placing different two-dimensional shapes into sets, according to the number of their sides. They were observant and pointed out differences such as this shape is long and pointed, describing a diamond shape and could name rectangles, triangles and squares.

- 75 During play, children use mathematical terms freely, for instance, one child saying "you have two more people than me" when she wanted to increase her collection of small people in her sand play. They are familiar with measures and understand the general terms that are needed to describe height, length and the capacity of containers.
- 76 There is a good area of mathematical resources that children can access freely. However, an area for development would be to increase the level of mathematical planning in play activities. The children had enjoyed having a shop in the role play area earlier in the year and teachers' planning showed that this had given them a lot of opportunities to play with money and to understand the value of different coins. However, there are few notices to encourage a mathematical response from children as they play or activities that consolidate their learning from earlier in the day by incorporating it into a fun challenge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 77 Children make good progress in this area. They benefit from the topics and subjects that are taught to Years 1 and 2 which are adapted well so that they can participate and overall teaching is good. The topic for the whole class on seaside holiday, past and present generated a great deal of interest. Children talked about the seaside and staying away from home, when they worked in pairs making a model of a hotel out of large cardboard boxes. They showed a good understanding of the need for the hotel to be larger than an ordinary house because "a lot more people sleep in the hotel". One pair made their hotel out of a box with no lid for the roof. For a while they were happy with this and then they decided it would not do because people would get wet when it rained. They knew that the seaside was a good distance from their home and that to get there you would need to travel by car or bus. Most children explain the relevant features of the different seasons in good detail, and all knew that it was currently summer, although not all knew that autumn would follow. They had a good understanding of words such as 'yesterday' and 'last year' and could explain that older people remembered things in the past before they were born.
- 78 Because of the way the timetable was planned, there was no opportunity to see children using computers (It was timetabled for Years 1 and 2 on the occasions of observations) but teachers' planning indicates that children have good opportunities to use the computer and develop their skills in using the mouse and simple functions of the keyboard.

- 79 There are good areas for display and children had been involved well, at a level appropriate to their needs, in the class work on growing plants and observing what plants need to grow. However, as with other areas of learning, the topics that increase their knowledge of the world are not integrated well enough into their own play so that children can go on to develop their new found vocabulary and understanding in their own initiated activities.

Physical development

- 80 Although no teaching was seen in this area, provision is satisfactory and children have some good opportunities to develop their physical skills, but planning and resources are limited in some respects. Despite this, most children are likely to achieve the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.
- 81 There is an attractive outdoor area for children to access during the school day, when there is an adult free to supervise. The fact that this can only usually occur in the mornings when the class is staffed by two adults is a limiting factor. Most children make good use of space and control their bodies well as they move freely around with pleasure and confidence. However, one or two lack confidence and tend to be stationary when playing in large groups and these children would benefit from a greater diversity of equipment. There are small apparatus for children to use such as bats, balls and hoops in the area designated for their play, but there are few wheeled vehicles and no climbing apparatus. During lunchtimes, children climb with reasonable agility on the equipment in the main playground. They are helped on occasions by older pupils, or learn to copy what older pupils are doing and so develop quickly themselves.
- 82 No large construction was used during the inspection and the school does not have a good range of this type of equipment but when painting outdoors, children showed that they could work together to carry larger objects at tidy away time. They have good opportunities to manipulate paintbrushes, pencils and scissors. Few had any difficulty, for example, cutting through the thick cardboard of their boxes to create windows and doors which is something children at least a year older than themselves sometimes find difficult. There is no outdoor storage but the area benefits from a good-sized canopy that means the outdoor area can be used when there is a small amount of rain.

Creative development

- 83 Provision in this area of learning is unsatisfactory in some aspects and good in others and this means that overall it is satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen, for instance in music and when children's appreciation and interest in stories was developed well, and their imaginations fired by characters they learnt about in nursery rhymes and songs. Most children are likely to meet the levels set for them at the end of the Reception Year but there are some important areas for development to increase the contribution of this aspect to children's learning and personal, social and emotional development.
- 84 Because there is no permanent area for painting and creating pictures or models freely, and the provision for Years 1 and 2 is not well developed, children are not getting enough opportunities in art and design to explore colours either through paint or collage materials or to develop an understanding of the consistency of paint and their own ideas of how to represent their world on paper. When painting their

models, children became excited when they discovered by accident the mix that occurred when they dipped their brush in and out of different paint pots. They inevitably ended up with brown and the classroom assistant encouraged discussion well as to why this had happened. However, it was clear from the hesitancy some children had to apply paint that they had not had as many opportunities to do this.

ENGLISH

- 85 By the end of Year 6, standards in English are above those attained nationally. This is an improvement on the results seen at the previous inspection. Currently, the overall standards of pupils in Year 2 match the national average. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, in reading their attainment is higher than that expected nationally. The main reason for the improvement in standards is the hard work and commitment of all staff in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the encouragement they give to pupils to help them use their literacy skills in all subjects. As a result of these strengths, pupils' achievement over time is good in all aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by learning support assistants who ensure that they understand what they have to do to improve.
- 86 In the national tests in 2002, the performance of Year 6 pupils was above the national average, continuing an upward trend over a three year period. In the national tests for seven-year-olds the performance of Year 2 pupils was above the national average in reading but below in writing. The school attributes the dip in writing to the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in that year group in this small school.
- 87 Standards in speaking and listening benefit from the early emphasis the school places on the development of these skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations. Teachers give pupils the opportunities to speak about their work, not only in English but in other subjects, to other pupils and these pupils can listen attentively and courteously. Pupils have a good vocabulary and they speak confidently and generally clearly. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to alter the way they speak according to the listener and they express their ideas clearly and confidently. They are very willing to answer questions and, in a poetry lesson, showed that they could make deductions from what they had read and express their views concisely.
- 88 By the end of Year 2, pupils have good reading skills. Higher and average attaining pupils read with intonation and expression paying attention to punctuation. They have good word recognition and have a range of strategies for reading unknown words. These include using their knowledge of letter sounds, breaking the words into syllables, re-reading the sentence for meaning and using the pictures to give them some help. Lower attaining pupils also have these strategies but need reminding to make use of them. They describe the stories they have read and talk about the characters in their books. They can make sensible suggestions about what might happen next. Pupils do not recollect easily how to use information books. Reading skills are built on well as pupils move through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are reading fluently, understanding and paying attention to more sophisticated punctuation. They show, by the change of tone, an understanding of certain words being sign posts in their reading and it is evident that they are using this skill to maintain understanding of the text. This was particularly evident in a pupil's reading of 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix' where sentence construction is relatively complex. They understand that there is a variety of reading skills and know when

each is of relevance. They demonstrate good attitudes to their reading by declaring personal preferences for writers and types of text which they enjoy. They have a clear understanding of how to locate information not only by using books but by using sensibly information from the Internet.

- 89 The school identified the need to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2. Methods recommended in new guidance for this age range have been incorporated so that there is now a good emphasis on pupils watching the teacher write and following this model. Standards of writing are in line with national expectations by Year 2, but because there are so few pupils in the year group it is not possible to judge if initiatives have been successful. Higher and average attaining pupils spell high frequency words correctly and generally use punctuation properly. Higher attaining pupils develop their ideas well and make some good vocabulary choices. However, some pupils of average attainment and those of lower attainment often only write short pieces and do not structure their writing so that there is a clear beginning and end. As with Reception Year pupils, they do not have enough opportunities to write on their own using spellings they can make a guess at to encourage them to express their ideas and think of themselves as writers. Pupils have regular handwriting practice and by Year 2 only the lower attaining pupils are still using a print script.
- 90 By Year 6, higher and average attaining pupils achieve standards in writing above those expected nationally whilst lower attaining pupils meet national expectations. Pupils have many opportunities to write in varied ways not only in English but in subjects such as geography and history. Their handwriting is neat and they present their work carefully, sometimes enhancing its presentation by the use of word processing. They use persuasive writing well and produced some good arguments for and against fox hunting. In a subject very close to their interest, the use of their school grounds by the public, they wrote collectively to the local press which publicised their concerns. Their work shows their ability to use words evocatively and after a visit to an African dance company a pupil wrote, "We walked out of Africa back into Ludlow". They show an enjoyment in writing poems. The work of an average attaining pupil showed very good use of figurative language. "Balers open their mouths, seed drills' bellies rumble and the ground screams as the plough digs it up".
- 91 The school's planned programme of work is the National Literacy Strategy. The various aspects of work are comprehensively covered. Literacy skills are developed not only in English but in other subjects where pupils have the opportunity to write at length or to make notes from information texts. The acquisition of reading and writing has a high priority in the school and enables pupils to achieve well.
- 92 Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teaching is successful because literacy skills are well taught and pupils are encouraged to use these in other subjects. Teachers structure lessons well and make the work relevant and interesting to the pupils. Teachers' daily marking of the work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is of a high quality. It informs pupils clearly about what they have done well and what could be improved and is a simple but effective strategy. The evidence of the pupils' response is seen in the improving quality of their work and the obvious care and pride they have in their work. The marking of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 does not provide the same level of constructive comments. In Year 2, pupils have individual targets aimed at improving the quality of their writing but marking rarely

makes reference to these. However, throughout the school, clear objectives and learning targets are not systematically shared and discussed with pupils. There is a good match of work to pupils' levels of attainment ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can succeed thus enhancing their self-esteem. Teaching assistants keep a close eye on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs, both when working in the class and on the occasions when pupils are withdrawn. Those pupils who have special difficulties with using letter sounds to spell and read have good programmes of work to help them improve.

- 93 The subject leader provides good leadership in English. There have been many initiatives to implement since the previous inspection and these have been put in place and developed effectively to support pupils' learning. The school has good resources to support the National Literacy Strategy. There is no school library as such but the pupils use the travelling library which visits the school.

MATHEMATICS

- 94 The standard of pupils' work is above average in Years 2 and 6. Because of the good teaching in all classes pupils' achievements overall are good. This is good improvement since the inspection in 1998 when standards were similar to the national average and pupils' progress was sound.

- 95 In 2002, the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were average, and below average when compared to similar schools. It is not always profitable to compare one year with another when there are few pupils in a year group, as is the case in this school. However, the current year does look to be an improvement over previous years. In 2002 some pupils did not get the expected level in the tests whereas this year all pupils, including those who find mathematics difficult, are working at or above that level.

- 96 The school looked carefully at the answers that pupils got wrong in 2002 and made sure that these areas of the mathematics curriculum were covered more systematically. The pupils who learn more slowly than others and those with special education needs have good support because the teaching group is smaller. All pupils are given the chance to boost their attainment through extra lessons that are directed at their particular needs.

- 97 The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 were above average in 2002, as had been the case in previous years. In 2002, no pupils fell below the expected level and half of the pupils gained the higher level. This was a particularly good result, as there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group than usual. The very good teaching in this class engenders an enthusiasm for mathematics and pupils tackle challenging work eagerly.

- 98 Teachers apply the principles recommended by the national strategy for the subject well and as a result pupils' skills in mental calculation develop well year-on-year so that by the time they are in Year 6 they can use these skills to help solve problems. For instance, when asked to work out the area of an L-shaped piece of land, the sides of which were measured in hundreds of yards, all pupils, including those of lower and average attainment could multiply at the level expected for their age. They thought out how to divide the shape into two and arrived at the answer after using multiplication sums and an addition sum. Higher attaining pupils showed further competency in using several operations when they worked out how to find the

area of a compound shape consisting of a rectangle and an equilateral right-angled triangle. Over the year they have built up their knowledge of working with decimals, fractions and percentages and they have a good understanding of their equivalence. Not all pupils are sure about the need to reduce fractions to their lowest number and sometimes leave a fraction such as 64 over 500 as an answer. While teachers give good explanations to pupils as they work, to help them understand how to improve, marking often only indicates right and wrong answers and does not challenge pupils to go back and have another look at answers such as this. Because teachers' expectations of pupils is high and work is interesting, pupils are confident with mathematics and enjoy the challenge of problem solving. They use mathematical terms correctly, for instance, when working in science investigating the properties of light using mirrors, one pupil described the angle he had marked on the paper as 'acute' and thought for himself to measure it with the correct instrument.

- 99 The abilities of pupils in Years 1 and 2 to add and subtract are good. Average attaining pupils in Year 2, use doubling and halving of numbers up to 20 very competently. Those of higher attainment double and halve numbers such as 14 and 16 without difficulty. When given simple problems, they explain confidently how they have arrived at their answer. During the week pupils were working with shapes. Their understanding of shape is very good. For instance, a higher attaining pupil pointed out the importance of looking at whether shapes leave a space when placed side by side. Another pupil, fitting hexagons together confidently explained: 'It is a tessellating shape'. When building a hexagon given the choice of two different smaller shapes, the pupils were very interested to find that it was easier with one shape rather than another. Their explanations and discussions around this fact showed a very enthusiastic approach to problem solving and a good understanding of the properties of the shapes.
- 100 During the inspection only two lessons of mathematics were seen, one of which was satisfactory and the other being good. However, discussions with pupils, examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work, indicate that the quality of teaching is generally good and often very good. Teachers plan work very well to build on pupils' previous knowledge and so tasks are well matched to their next stage of learning. In Years 1 and 2 activities are often practical so that pupils can see a reason for adding or subtracting and so their skills improve at a good rate. Very good links between different aspects of mathematics also maintains this consolidation of skills. During the week of the inspection, for instance, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used their understanding of multiplication when working out how many shapes, such as the rhombus or trapezium would fit into a larger hexagonal shape. The practical nature of the task meant that those struggling with multiplication and the younger pupils could check using the actual shapes while the very youngest pupils developed their skills in counting through the task.
- 101 The methods recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy are well embedded in the school's practice. The good relationships in classes ensures that all pupils are confident to explain their work to others and to join in with all oral work. There is now good use of computers to develop pupils' skills as was seen in a good lesson when Year 3 pupils built on their knowledge of symmetry by moving triangles that could not be rotated around the screen to build a shape that reflected the one provided on the other side of the line of symmetry on the screen. The program increased in difficulty allowing pupils to work at their own pace. Teachers assess pupils' work well but on occasions do not identify at the start what it is they expect pupils to achieve by the end of a short session. For example, in an oral mental session the teacher did not

identify different expectations for the different year groups and levels of attainment within the class. As a result, those who only achieved part of the work were not pleased with themselves, even though they had done well within their own capabilities.

- 102 Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs or those who find mathematics difficult, and they make the same good progress in lessons as others. Support is sometimes provided through extra explanation by an adult and sometimes through resources that match their needs. Where pupils with special needs in another area of learning find mathematics easy, teachers use the subject well to boost their self-esteem. All teachers take care to ensure that all pupils participate in all activities. Homework is set that helps pupils consolidate their learning or to encourage interest, for example, when pupils obtain information from family surveys in order to produce data to convert to graphs.
- 103 The subject is well led and managed. There is a very good long term planning that helps to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes are given work that matches their level of attainment and maturity. The co-ordinator has used the information from the school's own tests and from National Curriculum tests to adjust planning when necessary and to check whether there are weaknesses in teaching. There is good monitoring of pupils' progress as they move up the school. Links with other subjects and with pupils' interest ensure that mathematics is made relevant for the pupils and that pupils have good opportunities to practice their skills in numeracy in other subjects such as history, geography and science.

SCIENCE

- 104 The standard of pupils' work is above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievements are good because they learn through practical investigations that they enjoy. There has been good improvement since the inspection in 1998 when standards were similar to the national average and pupils' progress was sound.
- 105 In 2002, the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were similar to the national average and when compared to similar schools were well below average. Yearly comparisons of results is not reliable when there are small numbers in each year group, and in the previous year the school's results were above average. In 2002, all pupils attained the expected level or above, but the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was well below the national average. Currently, Year 6 pupils are all working at the expected level and at least half are attaining standards above. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 for 2002 were well above average in all aspects of science with every pupil attaining the expected level.
- 106 The school has had science as an area for development over the current year. This has resulted in teachers improving the way in which pupils carry out investigations so that they gain a better understanding of the scientific process. Work in pupils' books indicates that, pupils' understanding of predicting and carrying out investigations to test their predictions has improved at a good rate over the year as more work of this nature gave pupils the opportunity to develop their understanding of the process. The science co-ordinator also adjusted the areas covered in depth during the year after analysing what questions pupils scored badly on in 2002.
- 107 Pupils in Year 6 talk confidently about the different areas of science they have studied and as they do so they use correct terminology. This is because the teacher puts a proper emphasis on them explaining in their own words the difference

between terms such as translucent and transparent. In their work, they have used a good range of measuring instruments to check findings, for instance thermometers when testing materials for their usefulness as insulators. During their lesson on investigating the properties of light in which they worked with angled mirrors, they were quick to get out their protractors to record the angle at which they had placed the mirrors to get the optimum number of reflected objects. They enjoy surmising about outcomes, for instance, whether it would make a difference to their findings if they moved the reflected object close in to the point of the angle or as far away as they could. They have begun to make good generalizations and to pose questions to test out whether those generalisations are correct. For example, earlier in the year, when investigating their own pulse rates as part of their work on the human body, they suggested different categories of people to test and interestingly found that taller people had a higher pulse rate than shorter people.

- 108 In their science lesson, Year 2 pupils were working on investigating the best growing medium for seeds. This was a development on the work they had done in earlier weeks in which they had studied the growth of a plant from seed and learnt to name the different parts of the plant. From this work they had gained a good understanding of what a plant needs to grow and be healthy. In their lesson they worked in small groups to decide how to test the different types of soil that the teacher had made available to them. At the start of the lesson, there was general agreement that the best way to find this out was to grow a plant from seed in a pot. All pupils, including those of lower attainment understood that they would need to give the seeds water and to keep them in a place where they could get plenty of sunshine. Average and higher attaining pupils were quite sure that they would need to make sure that the way they treated the seeds would need to be the same for the test to be 'fair'. As with earlier work in their books, for instance on testing which materials would 'stick' to a magnet, the pupils were beginning to make predictions as to what would their tests would show. For example, most thought that the compost would be the most favourable growing medium while the sand was not rated highly.
- 109 The quality of teaching is good. Pupils enjoy science and their interest is well maintained through practical activities, and a good range of resources. Work is well planned to use pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and often relies on pupils' using their skills in numeracy and literacy. Teachers have high expectations of pupils working sensibly together and in the main most co-operate well. On occasions, however, teachers missed opportunities to focus learning tightly on the main objective for the lesson, mainly because what pupils are expected to learn is not always securely identified in respect of the possible outcomes. In the lesson for Year 3 and 4, the activity led pupils to observe the opposite outcome to the expected one because of the nature of the investigation. The classroom support assistant, supported by the teacher made a good further explanation to put pupils back on the right track but if the objectives for the session had been shared more clearly with pupils, this could have been avoided. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy science lessons and often shine in group activities because of the practical nature of the tasks and their progress is good.
- 110 Because of the rural situation of the school, pupils have a particular interest in animals and their habitats and the school makes good use of this interest to develop their learning. Interesting finds from home are welcomed for school display and discussion. For instance, when working on the skeleton, one pupil wrote in his science book that he had found the skull of a small animal beside the sheep dip. He brought it into school and with the help of his teachers, identified it as an adder.

Homework often involves surveys of family members, research into areas being studied at school or collection of materials as happened with Year 5 and 6 who found materials at home that provided good examples of the properties such as 'translucent' that they had been studying in school. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. Groups are organised so that pupils are happy working together and pupils who learn more slowly than others benefit from the practical nature of the tasks and of being given support in recording their findings.

- 111 The subject is well led by the headteacher. The current focus on improving the subject has been successful and pupils are now working well when tackling investigations or practical activities. The one aspect of this that is still in need of some development is ensuring that when lessons are planned, clear objectives are set that are manageable in one lesson and are shared with pupils at the start so that they can be checked at the end to see if they have been achieved. A strength is that marking and the analysis of formal assessments are used well to plan future work.

ART AND DESIGN

- 112 By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' skills and knowledge in art and design are not developed well enough. The standard of their work is below that expected for their age. This is a similar picture to that of the previous inspection and improvement has been unsatisfactory.
- 113 In Year 6, pupils have recently begun to use sketch books. They explain that sketch books are used to try out ideas and techniques but do not understand any other purposes. Their work on shading using different thickness of pencils resulted in some satisfactory work, although limited to one lesson. They understood how to use the technique of enlarging an object such as a shell to increase the quality of their observations. However, they have not had the opportunity to do this to any great extent and they are at an early stage of developing these skills. They have had no opportunity to sketch out of doors, or explore shades of colours through mixing paint or other media. When painting pictures in the style of Tudor portraits, they show a good understanding of how a portrait reveals character, but their pictures show that they apply paint without much knowledge of blending colours, or using paintbrushes sensitively. They have a limited understanding of how other artists and craftspeople can influence their work and they have not built up their skills in critically evaluating their own or others efforts.
- 114 In Year 2, pupils draw and use crayons well in a design and technology lesson on producing an illustration for a well known nursery rhyme. This is because they are given lots of opportunities to draw in other lessons such as science and history. The drawings that they produce are at the level expected for their age. Earlier in the term pupils painted and made collage pictures of a flowering plant to help consolidate their knowledge of a plants' root, stem, leaf and flower. However, because these pictures did not provide them with opportunities to explore for themselves the texture of collage materials, or to investigate the application of paint, they do not provide evidence of their knowledge and understanding of art and design.
- 115 No art and design lessons were seen during the inspection. The pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching is generally unsatisfactory. Teachers are not focusing enough on separate skills and developing these consistently. The exception is in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' work in these classes indicates that the quality of teaching is good. Pupils learnt, for instance, to appreciate a patchwork picture

entitled 'The Family'. They learnt from the effects the artist created by the juxtaposition of different patterns, before starting on their own pictures of applied materials all of which related to their own family life. The teacher provided good opportunities for their skills to develop week-on-week so that their understanding of collage developed well as did their understanding of how to apply paint sensitively. However, even in this class, pupils are not given enough opportunities to build up their skills of evaluating their own work.

- 116 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has improved the resources and her work offers a good model to other teachers. However, there has been insufficient sharing of good practice either informally or through training. The nationally recommended scheme is used but there is not enough guidance to help teachers plan the consistent development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Assessment is satisfactory but does not make a contribution to identifying what pupils need to do to improve further. Insufficient attention is given to the art of other cultures and so pupils do not have a good level of curiosity about art from around the world. Similarly there are few visits to art galleries or to see art and craft displayed locally or on the Internet.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 117 There has not been enough improvement in this subject since the previous inspection. At the time of that inspection, standards were in line with expectations by the end of Year 2, but pupils had not made enough progress from Year 3 onwards so that by the time they were in Years 6 standards were below. This is still the case.
- 118 No teaching was seen during the inspection so judgements were made by discussions with pupils, examination of their work and teachers' planning. In Year 2, pupils' current work in design and technology provided them with a range of enjoyable creative opportunities and linked with their work in literacy. They were investigating how to make a picture book or card more interesting by the addition of a slit in the page along which an object or character could be moved by the process of a slide at the back. Pupils enjoyed choosing a favourite nursery rhyme and worked well in pairs to plan out how they would incorporate the moving part into their picture. The quality of their work was satisfactory and some pupils interpreted the task very imaginatively. However, the task did not provide a great deal of challenge, for instance, many pupils could have coped with investigating folded card or paper to achieve a pop-up. Several pupils cut slits that were too long so that the slide was not secure. The teacher did not provide enough advice to check this weakness. Earlier in the year, pupils had made felt puppets, again these showed good imagination, but barely satisfactory skills in making. Glue or staples were used as a means of joining, for example, neither being a suitable method for felt. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to identify what resources they need to make an artifact, before starting on their practical work, and that they should have a plan. The teacher helps them to evaluate their work when finished but they are not given enough opportunities to evaluate as work proceeds.
- 119 In Year 6, pupils made musical instruments some weeks before the inspection and these were the main evidence of their work. The teacher had allowed free choice in the type of instrument to be made. Some chose to make simple shakers and although the addition of some decorations at a satisfactory standard helped to distinguish these as the work of an older pupil, the challenge of producing sound in this way is usually attained by pupils of a much younger age and so the making skills

involved were at too low a level for pupils' age. Different notes were produced by a number of bottles filled with water which led pupils to some discoveries with regard to the nature of sound vibrations but did not provide a challenge in design, making or evaluation. Teachers have not developed a systematic approach to help pupils evaluate as they work the suitability of materials, the tools that they use or the effectiveness of their own plans and efforts. This was illustrated by an instrument that provided different notes by plucking elastic bands stretched across a packaging box that had been cut open. The cardboard became squashed in places and was clearly not strong enough to keep the 'strings' of the instrument in place. The pupil noted this at the end of the project, but an evaluation part way through the making process would have quickly highlighted this possibility and allowed for a stronger box to be substituted, thus helping the pupil evaluate the suitability of materials for certain purposes. Where pupils had had help from home in making their instruments, they were well finished, but other instruments were not finished well, for example, jagged pieces of wood that had not been smoothed down. Pupils do not have enough understanding of how design and technology is integrated into daily life or understand the process of how industry, or the independent craftsperson, takes an initial idea through to final finished product.

- 120 Currently the leadership of the subject is not satisfactory. It is shared between the two teachers and this mainly relates to ensuring that pupils cover the identified projects and that there are sufficient resources available. The school has adopted the nationally recommended guidance for the subject and has recently acquired a scheme that provides good examples of tasks at the appropriate level for each year group. However, teachers do not have enough knowledge of how to encourage pupils to produce work in all three elements of design, make and evaluate to the standard expected for their age. There is insufficient assessment and so pupils do not improve year-on-year.

GEOGRAPHY

- 121 By the end of Year 6, attainment is above national expectations for the age. Pupils at the end of Year 2 attain standards which are in line with the national expectations. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained for the younger pupils but have improved significantly for the older ones. This can be accounted for by the clear leadership of the subject co-ordinator and the use of the new national guidance which is providing teachers with a firm structure on which to base their lessons.
- 122 By Year 2, pupils make good progress in the development of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to enable them to make good progress in relation to their levels of attainment. Pupils can locate on a map the countries of the British Isles. They can plan a simple route. Linked to their work in history on the seaside in the past, they make a comparative study of the physical features of Tenby and compare the location with their own village of Stottesden. They use the Internet to research the areas and to download maps, pictures and information. Pupils extend their knowledge of the wider world through the medium of Barnaby Bear, a toy character who travels abroad with pupils, teachers or friends of the school.
- 123 In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to gauge the temperature inside and outside the school by setting up a series of experimental settings in various locations. They make good use of information and communication technology to record their findings noting temperature, time and

place. They extend this knowledge and look at the weather patterns in the migratory routes of the swallow. They use the Internet to locate information such as the rainfall, wind pressure and temperature to support this work. In Year 5 and 6, the teacher capitalises well on news items to extend pupils' understanding and knowledge. Pupils know how, why and where avalanches and earthquakes are most likely to occur. They make good use of the Internet and of their computer skills to research and record their information. Literacy skills are developed because they have opportunities to write at length and to make notes from their information sources.

- 124 Although no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, the quality of the pupils' work suggests that the teaching is at least satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in Years 3 and 4 and the work seen in the other classes indicates that this is the case with pupils making good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The care pupils take with the presentation of their work and the quality of their homework shows that they have very positive attitudes and an enjoyment in what they are learning.
- 125 The head teacher co-ordinates the subject well. Since the last inspection, she has introduced the national guidelines which provide a programme of work helping teachers to plan effectively. Resources are now good and pupils have the opportunity to use Ordnance Survey maps, atlases and those on the Internet or in encyclopaedias on CD ROM.

HISTORY

- 126 Standards are above those expected for pupils at the age of eleven and they achieve well. Standards for pupils at age seven are at the expected levels when compared with schools nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their level of attainment. For pupils at age eleven, this is an improvement on the standards seen at the last inspection and the findings are similar for those pupils age seven.
- 127 By the age of seven, pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of events in the past. They can make simple distinctions between their own lives and past times. They look at the features of old and new toys. They acquire appropriate historical terminology such as 'old', 'new' and 'in the past'. They can communicate what they know about old and new toys through talk and writing. Pupils use the Internet to access information about holidays in the past. The study enhances their vocabulary not only with every day words associated with the seaside but with period specific words such as steamer, Punch and Judy and hokey pokey. They develop their time related vocabulary by hearing and using phrases such as when your parents or grandparents were young. They have the opportunity to listen to a visitor talk about seaside holidays forty years ago. They are recognising that there are several ways in which they can find out about the past.
- 128 By Year 6, pupils have gained much more information about a range of historical periods. There is a comprehensive coverage of the curriculum which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils show an understanding of time lines in relation to the period being studied. They understand that there are many sources of evidence such as the work of archaeologists, historians and information that can be acquired from looking at artefacts. They have opportunities for extended writing such as their work on 'Who were the Vikings?'

They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of why people leave their homeland to invade and settle in another country. They communicate well in their writing of the story of Henry the Eighth. Pupils in Year 6 collect information on aspects of the Victorians from a variety of sources including the Internet.

- 129 Overall, teaching is generally good. Teachers manage classes well. There is effective use of information technology so that each of the two subjects is having a positive effect on the achievement in the other. For example, pupils in Year 2 developed their keyboard and research skills simultaneously and those in Year 6 combined their research findings from the Internet and books to make a PowerPoint presentation of their work on the Victorians. All pupils can work together co-operatively and concentrate on their work. By Year 6, pupils can evaluate critically each others' work in a constructive way. They show pride in their achievements in the way that they present their work whether it is written or on the computer.
- 130 There is good management of the subject. The head teacher has responsibility for history and has introduced the national guidelines which provide a programme of work to help teachers to plan effectively. Pupils' progress is assessed at the end of each period studied. She has introduced opportunities for pupils to write for specific purposes which supports their work in literacy. Information and communication technology is used well in the subject and enhances pupils' learning. The school is still reliant on the county loan scheme to supplement its own resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 131 At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average for pupils by Year 6 and a key issue in the report was to raise standards. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are now above national expectations and the standards of pupils in Year 6 are overall in line with national expectations. The school has worked hard to do this by providing training for all staff and by introducing a whole scheme of work to widen the range of pupils' skills. These substantial improvements have not been in place long enough to impact fully on the standards of the older pupils in the school but Year 6 pupils, as well as those in other years, are now achieving well. Links with work in other subjects are well-developed especially in history, geography and science.
- 132 Pupils in Year 2 make good progress in the development of their skills in information and communication technology. They can access the Internet to find information and copy and paste into their work what is relevant. Pupils in history searched through a range of pictures relating to the seaside in the past and chose one about which they wished to write. They can select from the range of fonts, sizes and formats with confidence before they compose their text. As the work was to be shared with younger pupils in the class, they discussed in their pairs the attributes of various fonts for ease of reading. At the end, they can save their work in their folders and select the correct printer. Discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that these pupils also have opportunities to use a range of programmes for graph making.
- 133 By Year 6, many pupils are confident and competent independent users of computers. They appreciate the usefulness of information and communication technology in their work and in the outside world. Linked to their study of the Victorians, the pupils have created multi-media presentations using PowerPoint, with the help of their teacher. They can explain and show how they have used a search

engine to access web sites on the Internet, locating and collating information which they download to use to write their own versions. They work together collaboratively discussing the text, graphics, animation and sound which is most appropriate to their work. They request information about the climate in other parts of the world by their email contacts. Their understanding of how to use computers to monitor events and to sort data is satisfactory, but not as far on as their understanding in other aspects. When working with a programmable toy, most can enter instructions as well as expected for their age, although those of lower attainment need some adult help to succeed at the level expected for their age. They enjoyed using the digital camera to record its progress which gave them good insight into the usefulness in the outside world of such cameras. They load the images into the computer and print them to display their work.

- 134 The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning for other subjects identifies its use. These subject lessons are often used as the means to develop computer skills. Literacy skills are improved by the pupils' growing proficiency in word processing. The school does not yet have many programs which aim to improve skills in reading, grammar and spelling.
- 135 Teaching is good overall and this is having a positive effect on raising standards. Good emphasis is placed on the development of relevant technical vocabulary. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are also important factors in pupils' achievement in lessons. They are keen to learn, they listen attentively and show understanding by their eagerness to demonstrate their skills. This contributes to their progress. Working in pairs, most show good co-operative skills and wait patiently for their turn to use the keyboard. Pupils in Year 6 show a good level of maturity in their ability to criticise courteously and constructively the work of others.
- 136 The leadership of information and communication technology is good. Since the last inspection, pupils have been able to experience a broader range of activities and the developments required to raise standards have been well managed. Pupils have their own folders which can be assessed by the subject leader, although as yet there is no system to record assessments and to check these against National Curriculum levels. The school recognises that this is an area for development. The school sensibly delayed training and improvements to resources until the alterations to the accommodation had been put in place as the previous cramped accommodation meant that there was very little space for computers.

MUSIC

- 137 The school employs a music specialist to teach music to all the year groups. This has brought about significant improvements to the pupils' knowledge and musical skills because the quality of teaching is very good. Although pupils in Year 6 are now making very good progress, they are making up for lost ground in previous years so standards are at the expected level for their age. In Year 2, pupils exceed expectations for their age which is an improvement on the previous inspection.
- 138 Teaching combines elements of fun and enjoyment with the acquisition of musical knowledge and skills through explanation and practice. Pupils, in all year groups, enjoy singing and are knowledgeable about how to pitch their voices, to listen to the rhythm so as to sing in unison with others and how to pay attention to the mood the leader is trying to create through such things as altering the volume of their voices.

In Year 2, when singing a well-known song, pupils became a little too enthusiastic and, as a result, began to sing too loudly and to lose the quality of their tone. A reminder from the teacher was listened to and understood so that they repeated the song harmoniously. They had little difficulty in holding the melody and rhythm when singing in a round with the teacher leading the younger pupils. Although the lesson lasted for an hour, all pupils paid good attention and learnt quickly. For instance, they tackled a new song which was taught to them by the teacher singing phrases. Their very good listening helped them to quickly pick up the melodic phrases and to repeat them accurately. They have a good knowledge of the importance of silence in pieces of music and have begun to read sounds from non-traditional methods of recording. Their performance skills are good and they can explain what it is they like about a piece of music.

- 139 Over the year, pupils in Year 6 have produced a very good amount of written work. They have recorded what they have learnt about rhythm, the time signature of pieces of music and are beginning to record simple patterns of sound using traditional notation. Pupils of higher attainment exceed the expected standard when writing their appreciation of orchestral pieces. In their lesson, they worked well together in pairs to interpret, through movement, short patterns of sounds they had composed the previous week to create a 'spooky' atmosphere. They showed an understanding, at the level expected for their age, of the choices and techniques they could use to create their effects. The very good teaching results in good progress but pupils are not yet exceeding expectations because their past inexperience with playing tuned instruments and developing confidence in their own pitch and knowledge of rhythm means that they are not yet attaining a higher level.
- 140 The teacher has very good subject knowledge and understanding of how to inspire in pupils an enthusiasm for music. In lessons, work has to be adapted to accommodate at least three year groups but the teacher successfully uses a wide range of strategies to cope with this. She has high expectations of pupils and lessons are full of variety and pace. The subject is now making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The visit by African drummers widened pupils' understanding of music from other cultures but this is an area that is not as well developed as it could be. The headteacher acts as caretaker for the subject and has an overview of teaching and learning through checking on how well pupils are progressing through their performances and written work. Assessment is by way of checking if all have achieved the planned programme of work. This gives a broad overview of pupils' achievements but there is no means of recording pupils' particular strengths and weaknesses and pupils with special talents are not identified.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 141 By the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining a standard above expectations for their age. This judgement was arrived at by checking the school's records for pupils' achievements in swimming and observing their skills in outdoor games. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. No judgement could be made for the attainment of pupils in Year 2 as no physical education lessons were timetabled during the two and a half days of the inspection.
- 142 Pupils are very enthusiastic about outdoor games and sports. The after-school club run by volunteers for a county organisation is well attended by pupils of all ages. During these sessions pupils develop and practice their skills in running and

dodging, and catching, throwing and aiming a ball. In a good games lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked very well together in their two teams to try to bring about a victory. They showed a mature understanding of the need to act as a team and were keenly competitive. In an adapted version of rounders all pupils kicked a soft ball as far as they could to run round four bases while the other team fielded. All pupils made contact with the ball after it was bowled. Pupils' catching and throwing skills were good. Occasionally a ball was dropped, but on most occasions, when the ball was kicked within a reasonable distance of a fielder, a catch was made. There was a great deal of excitement during the game and pupils were very aware of strategies they could employ to defeat their opponents. For instance, one pupil who was good at aiming his kick, sliced it to the side in order to outwit the fielders.

- 143 The quality of teaching is good. Pupils only have one term in which to learn to swim but records show that they make good progress week-by-week so that the majority of the class can swim over 50 metres and many can swim beyond 100 using a recognized style. The games lesson was preceded by an introductory warm-up session and pupils understand why they need to do this. The game was organised well with the teacher changing the rules to increase the level of difficulty. Because pupils were enjoying the session, they became excited and sometimes too noisy. This was not prevented by the teacher, and some pupils began to gain attention through noisy celebrations which detracted from the good work of others. Nevertheless, all pupils participated happily and were included in the activity whatever their sporting prowess.
- 144 The subject manager is effective in planning the curriculum so that the school can provide the full requirements of the National Curriculum. This is difficult because the school does not have a hall of sufficient size for gymnastics and inside games. However, the problem is overcome by arranging visits to the near by activity centre in the winter months, when it is not used by schools on residential visits. There is a large gymnastics hall at the centre. So gymnastics and dance are planned for the winter. There are also opportunities to try out outdoor pursuits such as abseiling and orienteering. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but there is no system to draw assessments together so as to obtain an overall view of how well each pupil is achieving in the subject. As a result, no pupils with particular talents are identified.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 145 Standards of attainment meet the requirements of the local authority's agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well and those pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their ability. Other strengths in standards are to be found in pupils' spiritual awareness and their understanding of the importance of their actions and how these can affect others. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection.
- 146 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire an increasing facility to reflect on significant themes. From an identification of what makes a good friend they learn the qualities Jesus sought in choosing his disciples. Visits to the church ensure that they appreciate that ceremony is present in religious faith. This understanding is extended when they learn about Judaism. They have the opportunity to learn from a parent about her celebration for Hanukkah and the preparations she makes for the Seder meal on the first night of the Passover to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt of the Jewish people. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 analyse the character of Jesus drawing on references

in the bible. This enhances their information finding skills and is linked closely to their work in literacy. Using stories from the Old Testament, pupils look at the issue of faith. In particular, they consider the story of Abraham and Isaac.

- 147 There were no lessons during the inspection but from looking at the pupils' work it is possible to judge teaching as being satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught altogether but it is clear to see that the teacher matches the work carefully to the age and level of attainment of the pupils. Pupils in Year 5 had made good use of the Internet and produced a multimedia PowerPoint presentation on world faiths.
- 148 The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The planning is based on the new national scheme and a new policy needs to reflect the changes which have been made recently. There has been no time to monitor the quality of pupils' work and understanding. The level of resources in school is satisfactory but these can be supplemented from the county loan scheme. There is no formal assessment of the subject. A strength in the subject is the way in which teachers reinforce pupils' literacy skills during religious education lessons.