

INSPECTION REPORT

BRYN OFFA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pant, Oswestry

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123528

Acting Headteacher: Mrs M Walpole

Reporting inspector: Mr John D Eadie
20191

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th February 2003

Inspection number: 248471

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rockwell Lane Pant Oswestry Shropshire
Postcode:	SY10 9QR
Telephone number:	01691 830621
Fax number:	01691 839232
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs V Turrell
Date of previous inspection:	6 th - 10 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20191	J D Eadie	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19430	E T Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28686	E Walker	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Art and design Geography History Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll aged 4 to 11	137 (Smaller than average)
Of these, 12 are of Reception age in a mixed age Reception and Year 1 class.	
Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	6.1% (Below average)
Percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English	0%
Percentage of pupils identified as having special needs	18.2% (Broadly average)
Percentage of pupils with statements of their special needs	0.8% (Below average)

The school is situated in the village of Pant, close to the Welsh border and five miles from the market town of Oswestry. It serves three local villages as well as several smaller rural communities. The school is a member of the North West Shropshire Education Action Zone, which provides support for schools in this rural area. Virtually all the pupils are of white British heritage. Most pupils with special educational needs have difficulty with their reading, writing and mathematics. When they start at the school, most children have below average levels of attainment. The headteacher has been away ill since June 2002 and the deputy has taken over as acting headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bryn Offa Primary School is a very good school. The pupils achieve very well during their time in the school, largely due to the good teaching. A further factor contributing to the high standards being achieved is the schools very good provision for the personal development of the pupils, which results in excellent behaviour and attitudes. The leadership and management of the school are good overall and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and very good for the older pupils in the school.
- The acting headteacher provides very good leadership for the school and is supported very well by the staff.
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development and this results in excellent behaviour, relationships and attitudes to their work and school.
- Parents have extremely positive views of the school and support the work of the school very well, making a significant contribution to their children's learning.
- The school has very good and productive links with the community and provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and trips out of school and visitors into school. All these enhance the curriculum significantly.

What could be improved

These areas for improvement should be read in the context of this being a very good school; they do not represent weaknesses, rather they are pointers to refine further the very good practice that already exists.

- Some teaching sessions are too long and the curriculum is not always planned into the school day as effectively as it might be.
- The pupils in Years 1 to 3 are not given sufficient opportunities to decide how to approach their work, or choose the methods or resources needed. There are also insufficient opportunities for extended writing.
- The curriculum for the youngest children is not appropriately planned.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997 and has made good progress since then. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved significantly. All the key issues from that report have been addressed, though some of these only recently so progress in some areas has not been as good as expected. There is a good commitment to continued improvement and the school is well placed to move forward.

STANDARDS

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

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

The similar schools referred to are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The pupils achieved very well in the tests in 2002. The A* for science shows results in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The results in the tests for pupils in Year 2 were not as good, being average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the age of eleven by Year 6 have been variable, as is common in smaller schools, but have generally been rising faster than the national rate. Targets for eleven-year-olds pupils in Year 6 were exceeded in both English and mathematics last year and more challenging targets have been set for this year. Standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. They are above average in art and design and history. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. The pupils generally achieve very well during their time in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved in all the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is excellent. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are developing outstandingly into mature and responsible young citizens. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Rates of attendance are above average. Pupils generally arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, though it is significantly better for the older pupils. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the pupils learn the skills of literacy and numeracy very well. A particular strength of teaching is the classroom management and organisational skills of the teachers. The structure provided gives the pupils a very secure learning atmosphere. The teachers have very high expectations of the pupils, both of their performance and their personal development and behaviour. The pupils rise well to these expectations and try their hardest to succeed. The needs of most pupils are generally met very well in lessons, although there are occasions when pupils are not given work appropriate to their needs. The teachers use homework particularly well to extend the pupils' learning. The pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class by their teachers and teaching assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school gives a satisfactory range of curriculum opportunities to the pupils. The very good range of extra-curricular activities and the range of trips out of school and visitors into school give the pupils very valuable extra opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for the pupils with special educational needs. Very good individual plans are made to help them progress, although there is not always appropriate support for them in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development. Within this, the provision for their social development is excellent. The school has a good policy on anti-racism.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very safe, clean, caring and welcoming place for the pupils. Although procedures for checking on the pupils' academic progress are in place in most subjects, these are not yet sufficiently developed to give the teachers good information to keep an accurate check on their pupils' progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The parents have extremely positive views of the school. The links with parents are very effective and parents make a splendid contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has accomplished a considerable amount during her time in charge and leads the school very well. She is supported very well by subject co-ordinators, most of whom have a clear view of the way forward in their subjects. The school is managed well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable and involved and contribute significantly to the success of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance satisfactorily. This aspect is in its early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	There are sufficient staff and resources. The accommodation is good. Resources, particularly the funds available to the school, are used well. The school seeks all ways of obtaining the best possible value for money in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard. • Their children like school. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. • Their children are making good progress. • Staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had no significant concerns, although a few are concerned about the uncertainty over leadership of the school.

As can be seen from earlier sections of this report, the inspection team agrees with all positive parental comments. Although this is a time of uncertainty for the school, the judgement of the inspection is that the school has made significant progress during this time.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of work seen in the inspection are well above average overall by the time that the pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average in Year 6. The pupils have below average attainment on entry and make very good progress during their time in the school and achieve very well. This progress is significantly faster in Years 4 to 6. Standards have risen faster than national trends since the last inspection.

Strengths in standards achieved are:

- results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2002 were well above average;
- standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6;
- standards are above average in English and mathematics in Year 2;
- the pupils make very good progress through the school;
- standards of presentation and handwriting throughout the school are very good;
- standards in art and design and history in Year 2 and in Year 6 are above average.

There are no areas for development.

2. Standards in the subjects of the curriculum seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of the pupils' work are displayed in the following table.

Standards	At the end of Year 2	At the end of Year 6
English	Above average	Well above average
Mathematics	Above average	Well above average
Science	Average	Well above average
Art and design	Above average	Above average
Design and technology	Average	Average
Geography	Average	Average
History	Above average	Above average
ICT	Average	Average
Music	Average	Average
Physical education	Average	Average
Religious education	Average	Average

3. The children enter the Reception class with rather below average attainment. They make good progress and by the time they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1, most have reached the expected levels. Progress is good in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, where the teacher and teaching assistant use a good range of activities to teach the basic skills. It is also good in personal development, which is regarded as a high priority in the school. In other areas of learning the range of activities is not sufficiently wide or related to the nationally recommended curriculum for children of this age for progress to be any better than satisfactory.

4. The results of the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 2 give attainment as being average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools. Compared to those schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results were below average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. These results were not as good as those in the previous year as there is a higher proportion of pupils in this group with special educational needs. Standards found in the inspection in Year 2 are higher in English and mathematics than they were in the tests last year as there are fewer with special educational needs in this particular group. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in the tests last year is lower than expected. This is largely due to the fact that in much of the work that they do, all pupils are expected to do the same tasks, and there is often insufficient challenge for the more able.

5. In the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002, the results were well above average in English and mathematics and in the top five per cent in science both when compared with all schools and with those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. As is common in small schools, standards have been variable, but the trend is upwards compared to the national trend. Compared to schools whose pupils scored similarly in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1998, results were average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. This, and other evidence collected by the school, shows that the pupils generally made good progress during their time in Years 3 to 6. Standards found during the inspection are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is due to a number of factors, the major one being the very good teaching that the pupils are getting in Years 4 to 6. In English a further factor is the imaginative way in which the National Literacy Strategy is used. In mathematics, the progress of the pupils is helped considerably by the very clear arrangements for keeping a check on their progress. The presentation of almost all aspects of the science curriculum through an investigative and experimental approach is ensuring very good understanding.

6. As can be seen in the above table, standards are above average in art and design and history in Year 2 and in Year 6. In art and design, this is due to the good use of visual resources and the way in which the pupils appraise their own and the work of others in the class to improve their efforts. The pupils have good knowledge in history and interpret how the past affects the present well.

7. The pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their classes. This is because of the very clear individual education plans that are written for them and the way that their teachers use these plans to provide them with work appropriate to their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

The following strengths are very effectively supported by parents and viewed as a direct result of good teaching and interesting lessons:

- the pupils enjoy school;
- the pupils show great interest in lessons. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities the school provides, including extra curricular activities;
- there are exceptionally high standards of behaviour in and out of school;
- the pupils willingly accept responsibility. They are extremely thoughtful about others;
- relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, is exemplary.

There are no areas for development.

9. Attitudes are excellent. The pupils come to school eagerly. They are industrious throughout the entire day, whether working individually or collaboratively. They share resources good-naturedly, particularly in the upper years. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 art and design lesson, one pupil overhearing another looking for a size three brush offered his, as he had just finished with it. Learning is a visibly shared process sponsored by the teachers' skills, enthusiasm and friendly encouragement, always ensuring the pupils are clear about what they have to do. Consequently, the pupils have a mature approach to the discussions in lessons. They leave contentedly at the end of school having very largely achieved their lesson objectives with improving standards.

10. Behaviour is excellent. This is regularly commented on by visitors and outsiders to the school. The pupils enjoy their environment at work or at play. They wholeheartedly support the Golden Rules, their class rules and the systems of rewards and sanctions. Instances of aggression are not expected. All know how very seriously this would be viewed. Lunch is a happy event. There is a broad mix of small and large groups cheerfully engaged in the wide range of activities provided. They quickly return to their studies after breaks. Consequently there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere the whole day. Exclusions have not been needed in this school.

11. The pupils' personal development is excellent overall. The pupils have a clear sense of values which underlies their personal development. They know what is expected of them and what is right and wrong. The pupils are developing self-belief and a growing awareness of the world around them. For example, they valued talking through an interpreter to visitors from Kurdistan. They welcomed a representative of the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) who acknowledged the pupils' active contribution in building the school wild life garden. The pupils are extremely aware of the needs of others in school. They respond extremely well to those leading assemblies. They listen intently, sing joyfully and enter into the moments of reflection thoughtfully. The pupils contribute sensitively to the discussions in religious education and the personal and social education programmes. They have a good appreciation of art and design and music. Instrumentalists greatly enjoy playing at assemblies.

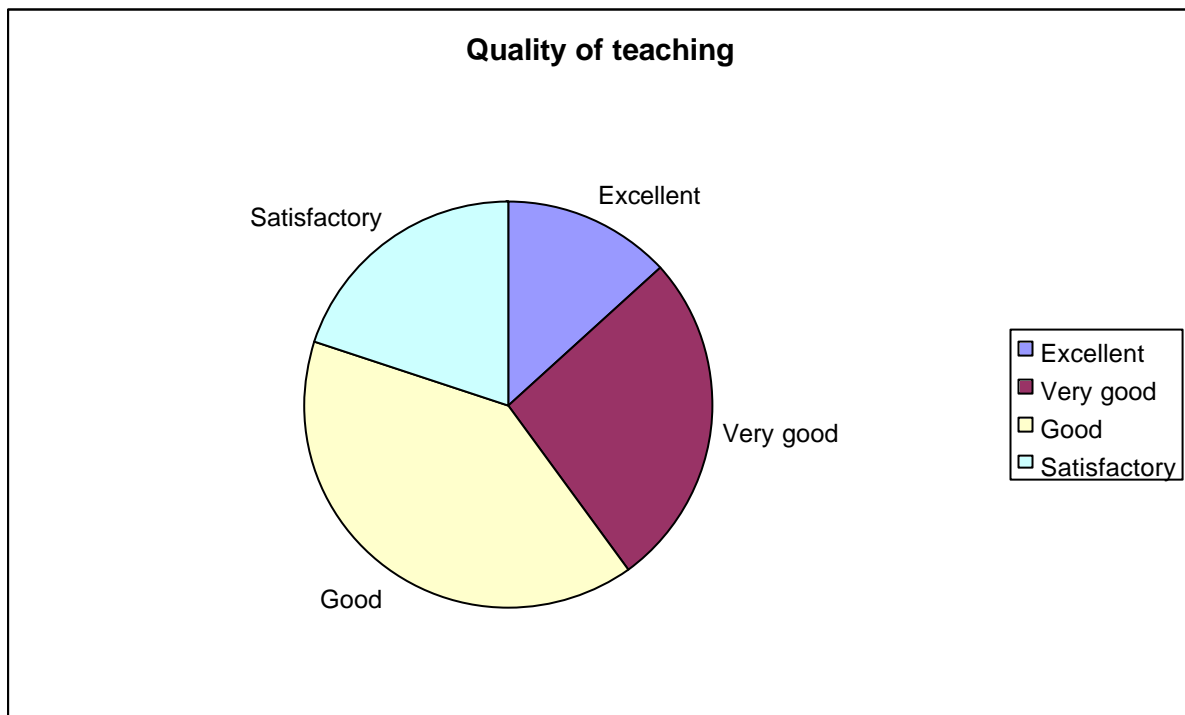
12. The pupils readily take initiative and welcome responsibility. All enjoy sharing in the daily routines, preparing for lessons or taking part in assemblies. The pupils are orderly. They notice what has to be done, automatically tidying up during lessons. They are proud of their environment. For example, the playgrounds, wooded play areas and the wild life garden are clean because the pupils choose to keep them that way. The School Council is new but already demonstrating responsible care for pupils' concerns. The points systems and awards for achievement and good behaviour are sought after, valued and celebrated by everyone. The pupils own their personal targets and exhibit self-confidence. They enjoy all that is available to them including sport and the after school clubs. Relationships are excellent. The pupils smile readily. They are eager to talk about what they have been doing or freely share any small concerns. They are courteous to adults and to one another, for example, by opening doors, sharing hymn books, and making way for one another in their classrooms. Older pupils automatically look after younger ones. Consequently, there is a whole school atmosphere which reflects the ethos of the school.

13. The pupils with special educational needs display a keen enthusiasm for school and lessons. They are interested in activities and invariably find lessons stimulating. These pupils often make a significant contribution to discussions in class and respond well to the teachers' direction and guidance. They like working on a task with a partner, as well as working as individuals.

14. Attendance is consistently above the national average. This is a credit to the parents and their children who attend punctually and regularly. Parents are very helpful in informing the school of absence immediately. Registration is prompt and effective, highlighting features of what is interesting about 'today'.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection.



Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the generally good quality of teaching and learning;
- the very good teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6;
- the teachers' classroom management and organisation;
- the teachers high expectations, both of performance and of behaviour;
- the variety of methods that the teachers use to interest and inspire the pupils;
- the way that the teachers ensure that all pupils are included in all aspects of lessons;
- the use of homework to extend learning.

Areas for development are:

- to give pupils in Years 1 to 3 further opportunities to learn more independently;
- to reduce the amount of copying from the board and other sources;
- to provide a wider range of experiences for the children of Reception age.

16. The quality of teaching in all classes is at least good. For the pupils in Years 4 to 6 it is very good overall; it is rarely less than very good and on a significant minority of occasions it is excellent for these pupils. The pupils consequently learn well in the school as a whole and the quality of teaching is a significant factor contributing to the very good progress that the pupils make. A particular strength of the teaching throughout the school is the teachers' classroom organisation and management. They create a very calm and orderly working environment in which the pupils find it very easy to learn. The pupils also respond very well to the high expectations that the teachers have of their behaviour. For example in most classes,

the pupils are expected to organise themselves, get out equipment and put it away without being asked. They are also expected to work together, in pairs or small groups, quietly and effectively. A very good example of this was seen in a science lesson with Years 5 and 6, where the focus of the lesson was to discuss the findings of a previous experiment. The discussions in small groups were extremely productive in extending the pupils' learning as they were approached sensibly and purposefully.

17. In Years 4 to 6, the teachers are very good at expecting the pupils to make their own decisions and find things out for themselves. For example, in an excellent English lesson with Years 4 and 5, after a stimulating discussion about narrative poems, using 'Albert and the Lion', the various groups were given ample opportunities to discuss and create their own performances. The results were inventive, amusing and showed high qualities of understanding of the audience to whom they were to be performed. In Reception and Years 1 to 3, the pupils are not given the same levels of independence and much of their teaching is too guided by the teacher. For example, in an art and design lesson with Years 1 and 2, the teacher gave too much direction to the pupils in exactly what they should do, rather than letting them use any imagination in their drawing. A further area for development of teaching is that there are too many occasions when the pupils are expected to copy from the board or other sources. This is not good use of teaching and learning time.

18. The teachers use a good variety of methods to inspire and interest their pupils. During the inspection an unusually large range of methods was used. For example, as well as class discussions and 'brain-storming' sessions, quick-fire question and answer sessions, the pupils were expected to work in pairs and small groups, handle artefacts and research using books and the Internet. All these opportunities encourage inquiring minds and enhance learning. This variety is more noted in Years 4 to 6 than in lower year groups. The youngest children of Reception age do not have an adequate range of experiences. They rarely have opportunities to make choices about their learning and learn through their experiences as advised in the nationally recommended guidelines for children of this age.

19. The teachers are very good at ensuring that all pupils are included in all aspects of lessons, whatever their abilities. The teachers consider the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and make good provision for their needs in English and mathematics. They focus questions and challenges very clearly toward the pupils so they are able to play a full and active part in the lessons. The pupils make good progress in these lessons. In other areas of the curriculum, in many of the tasks pupils are expected to undertake, they are expected to do the same tasks as other pupils. The pupils with special educational needs are not able to complete the task or consolidate their learning. They copy from other information or are only required to fill in missing words. The pupils work well in a group and are encouraged to contribute toward solving the problem within the group and make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills when completing an investigation.

20. The teachers make very good use of homework to re-enforce the pupils learning. As well as regular weekly tasks in English, mathematics and science, there are frequent informal activities for research or extension in other subjects. As well as these there are occasional projects to complete at home. A very good example of this is the display of bridges, entirely completed at home as part of a research project into structures by Years 4 and 5.

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

21. The broadly based curriculum meets all statutory requirements, as it did at the time of the previous inspection. There has been satisfactory improvement in producing new policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Some of these are very new and not yet fully embedded into the curriculum. They are not yet ensuring that pupils develop skills and knowledge progressively. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. An equal opportunities policy is consistently implemented, with no significant difference in provision because of gender, disability, race or culture. Procedures for promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.

Strengths in the curriculum are:

- the independence given to teachers to deliver the curriculum in their own way;
- the very good range of extra-curricular opportunities;
- visitors into school and the local area are used well to support and enrich the curriculum;
- the involvement of the community;
- the provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good;
- the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good;
- the provision for social development is excellent and evident in all aspects of the school.

Areas for development are:

- sessions in the morning are too long for the planned work;
- cross-curricular work that links different subjects is not planned consistently;
- the planned curriculum for the children of Reception age is not in line with the principles and practice of national guidance;
- ICT is not used as a learning tool in lessons in all subjects.

22. The children of Reception age benefit from a satisfactory curriculum that develops their skills, knowledge and understanding in all the recommended areas of learning. However, the curriculum planned for these children does not give them a sufficiently wide range of practical experiences and is not planned in line with the principles and practice of the nationally recommended curriculum for children of this age.

23. Although the amount of teaching time matches the nationally recommended teaching time, the sessions in the morning are too long for the planned English and mathematics sessions. This means that some other subjects do not always receive their full allocation. The teachers are creative in the ways that they compensate for this. For example, in one class the teacher sets aside a complete day or two for some art and design or design and technology projects. This means that time is not wasted getting out and putting away resources and a project can be completed from start to finish giving it added purpose. There are further compensations in the way that some teachers use themes linking different subjects. However, these are not planned in any consistent way and opportunities are therefore missed.

24. The school correctly places a strong emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. Although medium term plans provide teachers with opportunities to plan to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, there is no structured approach to doing so and there are inconsistencies between classes.

25. The school makes very good use of the local environment and many trips are arranged for the pupils to enhance their learning. The wildlife area within the school grounds is a very good example of the use of the environment. It was created in partnership with the

Shropshire Wildlife Trust, although the pupils did much of the planning and construction work, thereby having ownership of the area. There is a good range of visitors into school. During the inspection a local clergyman took an assembly and the representative of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust came into school to present an award to the school for their work. There are good links with the secondary school to which almost all the pupils go. Good links with other local primary schools exist for sporting activities and these links are developing in other ways due to the work of the rural Education Action Zone. A very good range of very well supported extra-curricular activities covers a wide range of sporting clubs as well as musical and other activities.

26. The quality of help provided for children of Reception age with learning difficulties is appropriate, and there is a satisfactory level of support provided by teaching assistants in language activity lessons. In Years 1 and 2, the targets identified on individual education plans are incorporated into English, mathematics and science lessons. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support but this is limited to literacy and reading skills. The pupils' needs, identified in their individual education plans, are fully met. The school works hard to ensure the curriculum is appropriate for pupils with special educational needs and gives them opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. These pupils use the opportunities well to undertake responsibilities where they help and support other pupils.

27. The teachers very successfully provide a wide range of opportunities for the spiritual development of the pupils. The pupils are conscientiously guided through assemblies and the personal, social and health education programmes. This is enhanced by planned and natural occasions in the subjects of the curriculum, particularly in science, art and design, music and design and technology. There is a strong moral code reflecting the ethos of the school supported by the very good examples of all adults in school. Cultural development is very well organised. The pupils are taught to build on their own mix of cultures in the border towns and villages of England and Wales feeding this school. A wider vision of other cultures is encouraged through geography and history lessons, visiting speakers, and trips to cultural centres. The provision for social development is excellent. This is thoroughly evident by the whole family of the school of governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and pupils demonstrating a happy, interactive and inclusive atmosphere.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good overall.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the school is secure, clean, warm and welcoming;
- the staff are very caring and provide a purposeful atmosphere;
- the procedures for promoting regular attendance and punctuality are very good;
- the procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are exemplary and eminently successful;
- the procedures for checking on the progress of pupils are good in English, mathematics and science;
- individual support for the pupil's personal development is very good.

There are no areas for development in this aspect.

29. The pupils are secure in a clean, warm and welcoming environment. The teachers are very caring. They encourage a happy, purposeful working atmosphere in which the pupils can grow into rounded individuals. All staff are aware of the strict criteria to be observed in child protection. The school has very good access to educational, medical and social agencies when required. The school is very well supported by the school secretary. Staff and the lunchtime supervisors are kind and stimulate play with the younger pupils very well.

Consequently there are very few incidents during breaks. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are thorough and effective and result in the good levels of attendance.

30. The procedures for monitoring and promoting self-discipline are excellent. Strategies are consistently applied and effective. This is largely due to the exemplary role models set by all adults and by the teachers sharing their high expectations of behaviour in lessons and assemblies. Occasional lapses in concentration are dealt with promptly and effectively. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are equally excellent. Parents are involved at an early stage in any cases of unworthy behaviour. Bullying is unexpected and rare instances are not tolerated.

31. The school's procedures for monitoring its pupils' academic performance are good. The procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry to school are good and this information is used well to measure their progress. They are not yet fully linked to the standards that pupils are expected to achieve by the time they enter Year 1 but record progress in the areas of learning which contribute to the subject areas. The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and are usually applied consistently for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are well established for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The teachers make effective use of assessment information to guide their lesson planning in English and mathematics but this is less secure in other subjects. Good use is made of these records to support the pupils' learning and to help plan work that is matched to their abilities. The pupils are very aware of the targets they are working towards achieving in English, mathematics and science. These are regularly reviewed by both teachers and pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6 where the pupils respond well to the teacher's very good and clear marking. This gives guidance about how pupils can improve their work in a positive and constructive manner.

32. Good procedures are in place for providing for the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The teachers are very willing to listen to the concerns of parents of pupils with special educational needs and work very effectively to enable the pupils to make progress. They are aware of the targets pupils are working towards in order to improve and make progress. The parents know and understand what is being taught at school. Reading and homework diaries are very well used and monitored and as a result make a positive contribution to these pupils' progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in the reviews of their children's individual education plans.

33. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. The staff know the pupils well and have a natural rapport with them. They promote a calm purposeful atmosphere where raised voices are uncommon. The staff have very high expectations of the pupils and treat them with individual respect. Consequently the pupils reflect these high standards and enjoy fruitful tuition. The parents realise this and are very pleased to acknowledge how well the school helps their children to mature. They are very confident that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. Staff are available to parents at the end of the day. Parents appreciate this. They feel they are listened to. Suggestions or concerns are dealt with very effectively. Daily opportunities are created for pupils to take initiative and responsibility. Good work and effort are fairly appraised at the end of lessons and in assemblies, especially when significant personal achievements in learning are made. Assemblies are used very well to promote responsible attitudes to work, behaviour, relationships and decision making.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Parents view the school exceptionally highly. They have great confidence in the acting headteacher and the staff in all areas of what the school provides and achieves for their children. This is similar to the situation at the last inspection.

Strengths are:

- links with parents are very good;
- the information in the school prospectus is of an exceptionally high standard;
- information to parents about their children's progress is very good;
- the parental contribution to their children's learning is very good.

An area for development is:

- the governors' annual report does not conform to requirements.

35. Information to parents about their children's progress is very good overall. The school's open door policy ensures ample opportunities are made for parents to speak to staff. Consultation evenings are very well attended. Progress and target setting is very well identified and checked throughout the year. Written reports are individual to the pupils and are detailed, with a clear indication of levels reached. There are regular letters covering all activities of the school year. The comprehensive school prospectus includes exemplary indicators for each subject of the curriculum as to how parents may assist in their children's learning. The governors' annual report, however, does not conform to requirements. Several matters have been separately reported and accepted by the acting headteacher for the attention of governors. Further, there is no insight into areas the governors have discussed, decisions made and how they impact on the school.

36. The parents are very pleased to be involved in their children's learning and feel the school works very closely with them. The home/school agreement has an excellent response. Consequently there are good, active working relationships between the governors, staff, parents and their children. This is a continuing strength of the school. The parents willingly support their children's work at home, particularly the younger pupils. The parents are pleased with the organisation and levels of homework, and make good use of homework diaries. Curricular related parents' meetings, for example on literacy and numeracy, are moderately attended. The parents welcome sessions on 'Starting School'. A small number of parents come into school to help in lessons. Parents welcome the range of opportunities to attend events in school. There is always very good attendance for the Christmas and Harvest presentations, class assemblies, special assemblies and events. The Bryn Offa Parents' Association (BOPA) offers very good support for the school in running a wide range of events with significant fund raising. All these contributions are valued by the school and result in extra equipment, such as an inter-active whiteboard.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The school is well led and managed, an improvement since the last inspection.

Strengths in leadership and management are:

- the acting headteacher gives very clear educational direction;
- the governing body are knowledgeable and involved in the school;
- most co-ordinators manage their subjects well;
- the school makes particularly good use of finances available to it.

There are no areas for development.

38. The acting headteacher has worked hard over the last six months and gives very clear educational direction for the school. For example, she created a new and detailed school development plan in very quick time when the headteacher was unable to do it due to illness. There is a very good teamwork ethic amongst the staff, who support each other and the acting headteacher very well. Most subject co-ordinators have very clear views of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects and have produced good plans to raise standards.

39. Special educational needs is managed well and meets the requirements of the new code of practice. The governing body places the support of pupils with special educational needs as a very high priority, and this role has been supported by specific training for the new code of practice in order to meet the new national requirements for pupils with special educational needs. The arrangements for the special educational needs co-ordinator to meet with the appropriate governor are effective, and the special educational needs governor reports back to the governing body regularly.

40. The governing body is led well and is playing an active part in the management of the school. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive and many are very involved in the school. A particular strength is the 'governor of the month', who is expected to visit the school and is given specific tasks to perform during their month of duty, depending on priorities and the governor's particular expertise. Governors are given subject responsibilities, and this is helping to focus their help to teachers and the school. The chair of the finance committee keeps a careful watch over budgetary spending and is involved at every stage in setting the budget.

41. The school development plan gives a clear view of developments in the school. Although there are clearly defined criteria for judging the success of items in the plan, the systems for checking on this success are not clearly defined or fully in place. Not all items in the plan are costed. The present format is new to the school and there is not yet any rigorous system for checking on whether developments are cost-effective. Although there is a good whole-school policy for checking on and improving the quality of teaching and learning, there have been other appropriate priorities recently.

42. The governors and the acting headteacher make very good use of all the funds and specific grants available to them. Day-to-day management of finances is efficient both within school and by the finance committee of the governing body. Finances are clearly linked to educational priorities both in the school development plan and in the day-to-day management of the budget. The school office is run very efficiently, releasing much of the day-to-day administration from the shoulders of the acting headteacher and other teachers.

43. The number of teachers is appropriate for the size of the school. They are suitably qualified to provide a good standard of education for their pupils. Staff new to the school are given good levels of support to help them in their early days in post. There is an adequate number of teaching assistants who complement the work in classrooms, particularly in supporting pupils with special educational needs. However, these are not always appropriately deployed. For example, there is insufficient support for the children of Reception age. The accommodation is good. The classrooms are generally well appointed and provide good bases for learning and a good sized hall is used well for a variety of purposes. Although the library is small, it is used well and work is to begin soon on building a new library and computer suite. The outside environment is very good with two hard surfaced play areas as well as a grass area and a playing field. There is also a lovely wildlife area which has been created by the pupils. Resources are satisfactory in quantity and quality and are used well to support teaching and learning across the whole curriculum and across the age range of pupils in the school.

44. The school has established very good financial procedures that are based firmly upon the principle of best value. Taking into account all relevant factors, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to continue to raise standards, the governors, acting headteacher and staff should:

- (1) consider the allocation of time to the subjects of the curriculum so that all subjects receive their full recommended allocation.
(Paragraphs: 23, 97)
- (2) increase the opportunities for independent learning so that:
 - the pupils in Years 1 to 3 have more opportunities to use their own ideas and initiative in their learning;
(Paragraphs: 17, 83, 85, 91, 96)
 - all pupils have more opportunities to use extended writing in a variety of contexts;
(Paragraph: 69)
 - the instances of pupils copying from the board or other sources are reduced significantly.
(Paragraphs: 17, 83)
- (3) improve the curriculum for the children of Reception age so that it is line with the principles and practice of the nationally recommended curriculum for the children of this age.
(Paragraphs: 18, 22, 43, 46-63)

In addition to the areas for development above, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan.

- Increase the planned opportunities for cross-curricular work.
(Paragraphs: 23, 24)
- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents meets all statutory requirements.
(Paragraph: 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	8	12	6	0	0	0
Percentage	13.3	26.7	40	20	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	132
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

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	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	8	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	24	24	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	96 (100)	88 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	24	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	8	13	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	21	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (60)	95 (57)	100 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	21	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (63)	95 (51)	100 (74)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.

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	126	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	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	2	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50.5

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	313 299
Total expenditure	302 758
Expenditure per pupil	2 294
Balance brought forward from previous year	11 855
Balance carried forward to next year	22396

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	132
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	37	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	44	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	65	31	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	12	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	41	2	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	32	8	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	39	8	2	0

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents are concerned about the uncertainty regarding leadership of the school, although significantly more parents are very happy about the changes that have been made since the acting headteacher took over.

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

46. At the time of the last inspection standards were reported as broadly in line with national expectations. It is a similar picture now. Children make sound progress in all areas of learning but creative development and outdoor play provision is unsatisfactory.

Strengths for the children of Reception age are:

- the teaching of the basic skills of communication, language and literacy and mathematics;
- the children's ability to present their work in a formal cursive style;
- the progress children make in their communication, language and reading skills.

Areas for development:

- to extend the opportunities for children to explore a wider range of creative and physical activities;
- to use a wider range of different tasks so that children can select and initiate their own learning opportunities;
- to create a range of 'short burst' activities so that children can explore a variety of different opportunities.

47. Provision for the youngest children is made in a class with the Reception age children and some pupils of Year 1 age. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision in the area but their experiences are very varied. The school works closely with the local playgroup, but not all children have attended this group. The children enter the school at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Presently the majority of children spend at least two terms in the class but some children who are now five will have spent four terms in the class by the end of the academic year. Their teacher is committed to ensuring all children make good progress but is relatively new to teaching this age. The management is the responsibility of the acting headteacher. The teacher has some support for part of the day but this is insufficient and children do not always receive the attention and support which is necessary for them to make progress in the creative and physical aspects of their learning.

48. The school's assessment of the children's attainment on entry to the class is refined from the local authority's system. These assessments indicate that the majority of children are achieving below average attainment on entry to school. They very quickly make good progress, especially in communication, literacy and language skills and mathematics so that they achieve expected levels by the time they become Year 1 pupils.

49. Teaching is good in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Planning for the other areas of learning is not as well developed and children do not make such good progress because they are not given sufficient opportunities or activities to explore and achieve in these areas.

50. Provision for children of Reception age is satisfactory with some good features in the mathematical and literacy areas. Higher attaining children make good progress but less able children are not yet ready to enter the tasks which are expected of other children. The opportunities to enhance progression toward the expected levels is limited by the lack of sufficient and varied activities which children can select regularly to develop their independent learning skills and widen their horizons in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. Provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory. The routines are well established and children are very aware of what they are expected to do and how to achieve it. The routines are effective and children are secure and confident. They know where to sit and how to answer the register. Parents make sure their children are in school but the children are confident to take their place in the classroom on their own without any other support except from each other. The teacher's quiet and gentle manner helps the children to respond in a similar way.

52. Children quickly settle to the routine and, after sharing their news, listen carefully and make their comments, taking care not to speak whenever others are speaking. They are intrigued by the disappearance of 'Barney Bear' and then recognise the postcard they have received from him from Africa. The teacher uses these opportunities well and effectively to extend the children's curiosity and thinking skills.

53. Children have insufficient opportunities to choose their own activities or to play with each other. There are very few opportunities for Reception children to use a variety of activities which support their development in this area. They work well alongside the Year 1 pupils and do the tasks which they are assigned. They are enthusiastic when listening to stories and are keen to contribute their ideas. They are ready to help each other and are very good at observing the classroom routines and put away the equipment and resources very carefully in their assigned places. The teacher has organised the classroom well so that equipment is clearly accessible and children can develop their independence when using the equipment and games. Children are made to feel valued and to learn right from wrong in a positive way. This in turn enhances their self-esteem. The teacher uses praise effectively and in return the children respond very well to her directions and requests. All children receive support and care which provides them with a positive beginning to their education and develops good attitudes to learning.

Communication, language and literacy

54. The children enjoy listening to stories and are enthusiastic about books and reading. They are very receptive to listening for the sounds in a range of words and respond very quickly and accurately to sounds, naming letters and recognising the blends and end sounds of three syllable words. Higher attaining children readily discuss the pictures and are anxious to explain the meaning of the words in a story. They understand that print conveys meaning and quickly associate both words and pictures.

55. The teacher used a range of questions and discussion points so that children felt comfortable sharing their holiday experiences with each other and recognising when it was their turn to speak. Teaching is good, children are encouraged to respond clearly and helped to develop their thoughts and ideas well. There is a lack of different opportunities for children to involve themselves in listening to each other during structured play opportunities and the lack of stimulating activities to self-initiate communication activities precludes active learning taking place. However, because the children are receptive to the direct approach and apply themselves to the tasks Year 1 are undertaking, they make very good progress in their handwriting skills. They use a range of support strategies well so that at the end of Reception the children are achieving the required standard to meet the early learning goal in this area.

Mathematical development

56. This area is well taught through the use of a range of practical activities and by the end of the Reception year the majority of the children will have reached the early learning goal for mathematics. The children can all count to ten and many count well beyond this. The older children are able to count to one hundred in tens and are developing the skill of counting in pairs both forwards and backwards. They have clear knowledge and understanding of numerals and younger children can match the number of objects to the numerals.

57. The teacher provides an interesting variety of tasks and activities so that the children are fully engaged in a range of practical activities. For example, the good use of each child wearing a number and finding their pair to make ten or listening to the teacher as she says a number and they respond quickly if they are the number to make ten. The children are recognising how to count in sequences and are challenged to finish the number patterns and say whether their pattern is odd or even numbers. They use floor puzzles well to extend and consolidate their knowledge and the good use of the teaching assistant enables the youngest children to achieve and make progress in the lesson.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The children enter the school with an appropriate understanding of their world. They are receptive to new experiences and exhibit a curiosity about the new ideas and skills they are learning. They are very interested and quickly become aware of the range of birds and their different habits as they watch them feeding in the wildlife area. They have made good progress since entering school and can discuss where they live and plan their route to school in very general terms. They recognise the local landmarks on the classroom map and are confident in describing their village and the people who help them get to school.

59. The teacher makes good use of the resources and introduces the children to the latest travels of 'Barney Bear'. They are eager to find out more and watch a video about Senegal and are able to make comparisons between features of their village and the town they see in Senegal. Higher attaining children are intrigued by the places and are very responsive to the questions and discussions. They are able to locate Africa on a map and describe how the bear may have travelled to Africa.

60. Children describe how they use the computer at home and there is evidence that they are aware of how to use different programs in the classroom. There are insufficient opportunities to use the computer in school and children are not yet fully aware of how to use it to develop further skills and knowledge. The lack of structured self-initiated activities does not enable the children to develop a wider range of experiences so that they can develop their thinking and ideas about the world around them. Children use the new outdoor play equipment to try out ideas but the lack of regular classroom support does not enable the facility to be used frequently. Children are not provided with sufficient role-play areas so that they can use both their experience and their imagination to develop their thoughts, knowledge and ideas. However, by the time they leave Reception, the children make satisfactory progress and are achieving the expected levels in this area.

Physical development

61. The children's physical skills are well developed when they enter school and the majority are achieving the early learning goal in this area after a short time in school. In physical education lessons, children run, jump and balance with confidence and the appropriate control. Their movements are well co-ordinated and they work well moving in time to rhythms and use movement effectively to demonstrate different sounds they hear in

the music. They are very self-sufficient when getting dressed and undressed, listen carefully to the teachers directions and work very co-operatively to produce simple sequences which they share well. The newly acquired range of outdoor equipment is good but its use is limited because it is not freely available in a secure area. Children, when given the opportunity, use it well. At present it is underused, along with the playground games and other large equipment so that the children are not able to develop their skills and imagination and add to their language and mathematical experiences.

62. The children have very good pencil control skills. Their letter and number formations are good. They use paintbrushes and paint sensitively and their drawings are good. They use scissors confidently and can glue and stick to join materials. The results of designing and making their vehicles indicate that children use their pencils, crayons and scissors well and follow directions carefully. There is little indication of any individual designs and the vehicles are functional and well made.

Creative development

63. Children make sound gains in their learning in this area and attain the early learning goal by the time they leave the Reception year. They enter school with a range of skills but the good teaching and clear direction enable them to make good progress in this area. They use paint confidently but do not have constant access to this activity; however, when asked to paint a tree in the wildlife area the majority achieved very good results and demonstrated control when using the paintbrush. They were restricted by the limited range of colours and some children were perplexed that they could not match the colours to what they could see. It was not possible during the inspection to observe the full range of creative activities but children take part in recorder lessons and other musical activities. They sing lustily when they know the songs in collective worship and are always ready to illustrate their work with a drawing and give a detailed explanation on what they have achieved. There are too few opportunities to explore a range of percussion instruments so the children can develop their own musical ideas across a range of learning experiences. The scope for imaginative play is restricted in the Reception area and children do not develop their drama and role-play skills sufficiently.

ENGLISH

64. Standards the pupils achieve in Year 2 are above average. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they are well above average. They achieve very well and their work is of a very good standard. This is largely due to the very good teaching. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the very good teaching pupils receive;
- the good use of teaching assistants to assist less able pupils;
- the good use of the National Literacy Strategy to promote a wide range of different texts and responses from pupils;
- the high quality of pupils handwriting and spelling in their written work.

Areas for development are:

- to increase the range of free writing opportunities in Years 1 and 2;
- to extend the speaking and listening opportunities for younger pupils so that they can interact with each other;
- to develop the pupils' research skills using the Internet and the library to support learning in all subject areas.

65. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are confident and their speaking and listening skills are good. The pupils are eager to learn and listen well to the teacher and each other. They are enthusiastic and are prepared to respond quickly to the questions they are asked or to contribute to discussions very well. The teachers use a range of strategies to ensure the pupils remain focused and listen carefully to what they are being asked to do. During a lesson in Year 2, the pupils were very careful to respond thoughtfully before indicating the number of phonemes in a given word. They recognised how phonemes form spelling patterns, which they have learnt well and used in their writing with a good degree of accuracy. They are well prepared, the teacher using a range of strategies to remind pupils how words can rhyme with each other. The good pace of the lesson enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make a contribution to the discussion on the poem 'How strange'. They appreciated the humour and offered perceptive comments both about the text and the humour within the poem. They were eager to offer their own ideas and analyse each others responses with comments, for example "It's not a boulder – it's a rock", to be countered with "How can you explain the difference?" They quickly recognised the definition is similar but the poem needs to rhyme.

66. It is a similar picture in Years 4, 5 and 6 where the pupils are encouraged by the use of good and varied resources to articulate and extend their knowledge and understanding through performance and discussion. The pupils responded very well to a range of monologues and humorous poems including "Albert and the Lion". The discussion about the humour, dialect and the construction of the poem led to perceptive points being raised by the pupils. The teacher extended the discussion to good effect giving all pupils, including those with special educational needs, the opportunity to extend their own skills and discuss how they could perform the poem so that others could appreciate the humour. The good use of paired and group discussions between pupils produced a very good range of performances for an audience of other pupils. The teacher used points raised by pupils to extend the discussion effectively so they recognised both humour and the techniques they needed to perform it. The pupils achieve very well and the standards that the pupils' demonstrate in speaking and listening are very high.

67. The range of reading materials has been extended and updated since the last inspection. There is a wide range of texts for pupils to read as part of their literacy lessons and in the choice of readers that younger pupils can choose from the class library. The pupils spend a considerable amount of time engaged in reading activities; the time is used effectively so that pupils can extend their individual reading skills. They receive good and focused teaching which ensures that all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils, are challenged well. They read a very good range of books which they discuss and review in detail. The teachers model reading very effectively and share good reading techniques. The pupils are given sufficient opportunities to extend their reading skills because they are engaged in the process and develop their own response to the text. The pupils are taught phonic skills well and use them effectively to develop both their reading and spelling skills.

68. The pupils are aware from Year 2 of the importance of using information from books across a range of subjects. The skills are well taught and pupils are able to use the contents and index of a non-fiction book to find relevant information. The school library is limited by space and the range of books is restricted, although the library is to be resited into a larger area in the future. Pupils are able to locate books in various sections of the library but they do not make sufficient use of the library to develop independent learning techniques regularly.

69. The range of writing opportunities in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils are supported by the use of writing frames which enable pupils to make some progress. The range of tasks these pupils are asked to do is not sufficiently different to challenge the higher attaining pupils. The pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their imagination to

write an extended story or to write their own account or reports. However pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the good use of teaching assistants enables them to develop confidence both in reading and writing.

70. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy very effectively in order to develop a range of skills which pupils, by the time they are in Year 6, use to good effect. They are well supported by the detailed marking and comments teachers use to help pupils improve the quality of their written work. Pupils make very good progress and by the time they reach the end of Year 6 they are able to write a variety of imaginative stories, poems and factual reports in other subjects. They use the skills they have learnt in literacy to improve the quality of their writing in history, geography and religious education. The pupils recognise and appreciate different types of poetry and compose their own poems which are funny, descriptive and of a good quality. Pupils enjoy the range of writing experiences and produce interesting results which are drafted and refined to a high standard. A pupil writing in an idiomatic style indicates her own worries can be likened to a range of other situations:

“Worry ophobia
Like your hair is terrified of the scissors
Like paper is horrified of the pen
Like a flower is afraid of frost
Like a cat is anxious of a dog
Like a popstar is nervous to sing
I worry”

71. In Year 6, the pupils make good use of a variety of styles and use a wide vocabulary to develop their points. Pupils are using a range of verbs and adjectives they have learnt in their literacy lessons to describe their feelings, evoking moods well so that the reader is engaged; “he found a piece of blood stained paper with spidery writing.....he saw a shadow, the draught made him feel cold and dark inside”. The pupils, as an exercise, analyse or mark each others work and add their comments about how they feel and make suggestions about how their friend could improve the style. They appreciate each other’s efforts and use perceptive comments to improve the quality of their work. The pupils work is very well presented; their handwriting and spelling skills are very good.

72. The pupils are eager to contribute to discussions. The effective use of questions and challenges by teachers enable pupils to think and consider the reasons for their answer. In a Year 6 lesson, the theme centred around dissuasive text based on bringing a large supermarket into the village. There were very good links with other subjects and the pupils’ geographical skills are extended by the discussions and research. The teacher ensured that by directing well-judged questions and indicating that a response is expected, the pupils gained confidence and used language structures effectively to develop their arguments. The good use of paired and group activities made sure that pupils were involved; developing their personal points of view and building on skills they learnt earlier. The lesson moved at a good pace and the pupils interest was maintained well. In Year 6, the pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the detailed analysis of the pupils’ performance by the teacher. The lesson and tasks are matched to individual needs so that all pupils make good progress.

73. The pupils behave very well, listen carefully and respond positively. The curriculum is good and sufficiently diverse so that all pupils can make good progress at their level. They are set clear targets which are regularly reviewed and they understand very clearly what they are expected to achieve within a clear time frame. Their work is assessed at frequent

intervals and detailed records show clearly the progress pupils have made in reading and writing.

74. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well and teachers have a clear understanding of how the subject is to be taught. Additional time is given to guided reading throughout the school. Phonics, spelling and handwriting skills are taught well so that by the time pupils are eleven they use a dictionary and a thesaurus with confidence and as a matter of course. Their handwriting is developing into a personal joined-up style which enables their writing to flow so they produce interesting pieces of work. In some areas the use of worksheets inhibits their style but the good use of writing frames for younger pupils assists their ideas and improves the quality of their work. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that appropriate resources are in place and supports both staff and pupils in monitoring the progress pupils make and extending the opportunities so that standards can continue to improve.

MATHEMATICS

75. Standards achieved in Year 2 are above average and in Year 6 they are well above average. This is largely due to the very good teaching which ensures that all pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- the standards being achieved;
- the quality of teaching;
- the progress that the pupils make;
- the setting of targets for the pupils future learning;
- the pupils' attitudes to the subject.

An area for development is:

- to ensure that pupils always receive work appropriate to their needs.

76. The pupils are achieving very good standards by the time they leave. The pupils in Year 6 have very good recall of their multiplication facts and use these very well when tackling problems. Throughout the school, problem solving has a high priority and the pupils are familiar with using their mathematical knowledge in a variety of ways. The oldest pupils demonstrated this when they were using the formula for the area of a rectangle to work out the areas of complex shapes. The very good teaching was demonstrated in this lesson. The mental/oral section of the lesson was taken at a cracking pace, with almost instantaneous answers being expected. The pupils rose to these high challenges and worked with a will, very keen to do well. The teacher then led a class discussion about the formulae for the area of a rectangle and then provided a variety of tasks, ensuring that the pupils of all abilities were suitably challenged. Once again, the pupils worked hard and enthusiastically and those of all ability levels were successful.

77. The quality of teaching is very good and this results in very good learning and the pupils making very good progress during their time in the school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and mathematics is also used well in some other subjects. For example, the pupils have collected weather data and recorded it in graphs in geography. In science, the pupils made accurate measurements of temperature when investigating habitats for mice. A particular strength of the teaching for the older pupils is the independence that they are given to make their own choices. For example in a very good lesson in Year 5, the pupils were using co-ordinates to create their own pictures. Some quickly realised that the picture they were trying to create was too complex to be successfully

completed. They therefore modified their designs and really good learning took place as they were thoroughly involved in the task. Occasionally for the younger pupils the work is not always appropriate for all their needs, the more able pupils sometimes having work that is too easy for them to start with, although there are almost always more difficult tasks for them to go on to.

78. The pupils' progress is helped significantly by the system of setting targets for their future learning. The older pupils all know what they are expected to learn next and their enthusiasm to reach their targets and have further targets set aids their learning considerably. The relationships between teachers and their pupils and between pupils creates a really purposeful working atmosphere in classes. There is often humour in lessons and teachers are very good at encouraging the pupils, using such phrases as, "There's no rule which says you have to understand it the first time." The pupils respond very well to this and have a real desire to succeed.

79. The subject is well led and there have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Much of this has come about through the monitoring of teaching and learning that has taken place and the analysis that has been carried out of test results. Subsequent action has been successful and is the major contributory cause of the rising standards.

SCIENCE

80. Standards in science are average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The pupils make good progress during their time in the school, though this progress is very good in the top two classes. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- the standards being achieved by the time the pupils leave;
- the progress that the pupils make;
- the quality of teaching and learning;
- the pupils' attitudes to the subject;
- the importance attached to investigative and experimental science.

Areas for development are:

- to decrease the amount of copying from the board and other sources;
- to ensure that the pupils, particularly the younger ones, always receive work appropriate to their needs.

81. The curriculum has been designed to be taught through an investigative and experimental approach. This is having a significant impact as the pupils are gaining understanding through their research and experiments. A particular strength is when the pupils are encouraged to develop their own experiments. This was seen in a lesson with Years 4 and 5 pupils, who were developing their own investigations to learn about solids and liquids. Some creative ways of recording the results of their experiments showed very good understanding of the properties involved. Much of this experimental approach is based around the quantity and quality of discussion that is very much an integral part of the introduction to topics. For example, in two classes, when the pupils were being introduced to the concept of solids and liquids, really worthwhile time was spent discussing what a suitable definition for each might be. This brought out all the major properties of solids and liquids and gave the pupils very good understanding of them. The high priority given to investigative science ensures that the oldest pupils readily understand how to set up a fair test, with for example, one variable, dependent and control factors and making predictions and drawing conclusions.

82. The teachers use the correct scientific terminology, for example using the phrase “thermal insulator” in a lesson with the oldest pupils. The pupils are used to this and readily understood what was being described. Much of the experimental work is planned to be carried out in pairs or small groups and the pupils work really well together. They are very good at ensuring that all have their turn and listen to and value the contributions of all members of the group. For example, when the pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class were discussing the results of their investigation into the best insulator for a mouse’s nest, all groups were involved in discussions which enhanced the learning of all members of the groups. All pupils were involved and putting in their ideas.

83. The scrutiny of the pupils’ work revealed two areas for development. In the younger classes, all pupils are frequently expected to carry out the same tasks and are not given the same opportunities to use their own ideas and initiative in their learning. This is the major reason for the progress being slower overall than it is for the oldest pupils. There are also a number of occasions, in all classes, when work is copied from the board or other sources. The quantity of the copying is too much for it to be useable for worthwhile learning and is often a waste of time. The co-ordinator is aware of these areas for development and has worked hard to ensure that the teachers are confident in using an investigative and experimental approach.

ART AND DESIGN

84. The pupils make good progress in their techniques and skills because of the good and often excellent teaching they receive in lessons. The range of work exhibited around the school and in pupils’ folders confirms that the techniques and skills of art and design are being taught and learnt very well. The pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 achieve above average results. There has been a significant improvement in standards in the subject since the time of the last inspection.

Strengths of the subject are:

- the very good use of observational drawing;
- the use of ICT to support the subject;
- the good use of a range of techniques.

Areas for development are:

- to extend the opportunities for the younger pupils to explore a wider range of materials and media.

85. The pupils are confident about the range of materials they can use and how to use different media to best effect, though the range of media used by younger pupils is more limited. The pupils in Year 2 produce detailed and interesting pictures in the style of Van Gogh with pastels and charcoal to create the effect and colours in their work. They are confident in describing their techniques and how they achieved the result. The teacher used models well so that pupils experimented and used their observational skills well when developing their drawing techniques. She encouraged pupils to have a go and share their ideas with each other so that all pupils learn that individual techniques are different.

86. Older pupils enjoy their art and design lessons and recognise the variety and different techniques they have learnt as they have progressed through the school. The teachers provide well planned lessons to ensure that pupils’ appreciation of other artists work is developed through discussion and observation. Year 6 pupils use digital photographs to annotate the detail and how they could interpret the features in their own landscape pictures. They are very confident about the purpose of using the digital camera and how they use the results to compose their own picture. Year 5 pupils are adept in identifying the surrealism in

Jean Marritte's paintings. They further their own surrealistic ideas when they look at a variety of book illustrations and discuss their reactions and emotions to the pictures. They listen very well and suggest their own ideas about how they can create pictures which will evoke a humorous response from their friends. They understand well why art and design is important both from their own response and the need to consider how they respond to the work of others. They are enthralled and constantly amend their ideas in response to the comments and challenging questions within the lesson. Teaching and learning are good and often excellent because pupils learn and use their art and design skills in a variety of other subjects to develop a point and enhance their work very well.

87. The range of opportunities are extended through the use of visits and the 'Quinta experience' which encouraged pupils to absorb the theme of creation to produce a series of interesting banners which are shared with the school as decoration in the school hall.

88. The subject is overviewed by the acting headteacher. The policy expresses clear intentions which are matched by the very good planning to deliver the subject throughout the school. The procedures for formal assessment are not yet in place but pupils and teachers measure progress in the results of each lesson and at the end of each theme.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Standards achieved are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the pupils make sound progress. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils' making skills;
- the planned curriculum for the subject;
- the way that design and technology projects are linked with other subjects;
- the pupils' attitudes.

Areas for development are:

- the pupils' evaluation of their projects;
- creativity for the younger pupils.

90. Although no lessons took place during the inspection, there was ample evidence around the school in the form of completed projects, planning sheets and photographic evidence to make secure judgements. The quality of many finished projects is good, as the pupils have good skills with materials and joining them. For example, the bridges that the pupils in Years 4 and 5 had completed as part of a homework project on structures showed a good variety of materials effectively put together. The Greek temples completed by the pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed good skills of making and also demonstrated the good links that are made between design and technology projects and other subjects as they were made as part of the pupils' history work on the Greeks.

91. The pupils' planning sheets showed that their making skills are not matched by their design and evaluation. In many classes, particularly the younger ones, the pupils had not created their own designs. They had either all worked from the same design, or had chosen from a selection of provided designs. For the younger children, there was also evidence of too much direction in what they should do, even to the extent of all the children painting their models the same colour.

92. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Discussions with pupils showed that they are keen and enthusiastic to complete worthwhile projects. The subject is well led, the relatively new co-ordinator having created a new scheme of work to try to overcome the problem of mixed-age classes. This scheme is good, with correct emphasis being placed on the necessary skills for the various ages.

GEOGRAPHY

93. In Years 2 and 6, the standard of pupils' work is average. The pupils make sound progress in developing their knowledge of people and places. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the very good use of the local area;
- the pupils involvement and exploration of a range of different opportunities;
- the good use of the skills pupils have acquired in their literacy and numeracy lessons.

Areas for development are:

- the pupils' use of geographical terms;
- to broaden the resource base to include a wider use of visual material from a variety of sources.

94. The pupils in Year 1 make good use of the area immediately in the vicinity of the school. They are able to trace a route to the school from the village and draw a map to represent the route. They are aware of the park and local landmarks and recognise the different types of houses and that the main road is a major road leading to Welshpool and Oswestry. This good use of visual information and discussion promotes their understanding so that by the time they are in Year 2 they are able to compare their houses and village with a village in Mexico. Pupils use a limited range of geographical terms and maps but are not confident about how we could travel to Mexico crossing the ocean by ship or air.

95. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they are very aware of the wider world and are confident in their use of some geographical terms. They explore a range of geographical topics through other subject areas. The very good use by the teacher of a theme 'What's in the news' enables pupils to collect and explore a range of issues so that they identify the area in the world, the effect on the local environment and the impact in geographical terms on their lives. They use a range of maps and atlases with confidence and have developed a variety of skills in order to use the appropriate map. This very good use by the teacher in challenging pupils about the range of items in the news extends their knowledge very well. Developing lines of argument and the good use of developing debating skills in the literacy lessons during the week enabled pupils to recognise the impact that a new supermarket would make upon the village. This is used well to develop pupils' geographical skills. Pupils with special educational needs make significant progress in the use of various geographical terms and give good reasons why the supermarket would impact on the village. The pupils use detailed mapping skills and environmental factors in developing their argument both for and against the fictitious supermarket in their village.

96. The pupils visit a range of different places and are given the opportunity of residential experiences to develop their understanding. Lessons are planned well but the lack of different tasks in some lessons does not extend or support the learning of all pupils in the group. The good use, particularly in the older classes, of other subject areas and the use of relevant and local topics enables all pupils including those with special educational needs to make good progress in these classes. In some lessons for the younger pupils, opportunities to extend the pupils' vocabulary are not taken because they are not encouraged to explore their ideas

or given the opportunity to discuss with each other their thoughts and ideas.

97. The management of the subject is good. Recent additions to the resources and the development of the subject using national guidelines have refocused the subject since the time of the last inspection. The limitations of time suggest that coverage is not yet fully developed but the co-ordinator is reviewing how the subject can continue to be extended through using other areas of the curriculum. Assessment procedures are not yet fully in place but progress is recorded and further development in this area is being reviewed. The understanding between teachers enables the subject to be taught effectively

HISTORY

98. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the course of the inspection, but evidence from pupils' books, their work on display around school, and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The pupils make good progress and the quality of teaching is good overall. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Strengths of the subject are:

- the quality of the pupils' work;
- the good use of visits and the local area to develop pupils awareness of the past and how it influences the present;
- the pupils' attitudes to the subject.

Areas for development are:

- to consider further the use of a four year programme so that the subject is covered to sufficient depth;
- to increase the opportunities for pupils to record their work independently and use their research skills from a range of sources;
- to provide a range of tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

99. Pupils enjoy the subject but their recall of some topics is limited. However, they are confident in their knowledge about how to find out about the past and what they can learn from it. Lesson plans and displays around the school indicate a variety of historical topics are explored in some depth. The pupils' work is well presented but the lack of different tasks and the use of worksheets hinders the progress of groups of pupils of differing abilities. However, pupils work well together so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Year 6 pupils recognise very clearly the range of resources which are available for them to find out about any period or culture in the past. In their recent topic on the Ancient Greeks they demonstrated how they had used the information and had written both factual and newspaper reports to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about the Greek way of life. They recognise that understanding develops by asking questions and suggesting what the information may be saying to the present.

100. There are good links with other subjects and pupils used their geography and English skills well when they used their study of India to explore a historical settlement in Mohenjo – Daro. The resources are used well so that pupils in Year 5 learnt how the village may have been, interpreting the information from a range of sources very well. The interesting variety of tasks ensured that all pupils including those with special educational needs made good progress. The teacher used a range of interesting comments to raise the pupils' awareness and gave clear guidance on how to improve the quality of their work. Younger pupils are challenged to find out why Henry had six wives and how the people lived in Tudor times. For the younger pupils, the use of resources from the Internet and books is limited and pupils are directed in how to use their information. The lack of different tasks does not challenge the

more able pupils sufficiently.

101. The good use of a visit to Erddig so that pupils in Years 1 and 2 can make detailed comparisons between life in Victorian times and their own lives enables pupils to record their thoughts in a personal way rather than using a worksheet. The pupils offer opinions and give reasons about why it was hard to live at Erddig. The use of common worksheets restricts the progress and the opportunity to extend the knowledge and historical knowledge of some pupils.

102. The co-ordinator has developed the subject well and uses a range of national guidelines on which to base the teaching of the subject. The pupils' progress is monitored through a series of assessments through which the co-ordinator, together with the teacher, identifies any areas which need to be developed. The age profile of pupils is challenging the co-ordinator to develop a four-year programme in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils will not repeat any themes but will continue to explore the skills which are required. Consideration is being given to using other subject areas so that pupils can extend their knowledge and skills across the subject area

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in the school and good progress has been made since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory. No teaching was seen during the inspection.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- curriculum planning and development planning;
- the leadership of the subject;
- the use of a wide range of resources;
- the pupils' attitudes.

Areas for development are:

- insufficient use is made of the computers;
- ICT is not used sufficiently in other subjects of the curriculum.

104. Good progress has been made since the last inspection as there is now a clear scheme of work that addresses all aspects of the subject. The teachers have had training and are generally confident in their teaching. There are a limited number of computers in the school at present, but plans to create an ICT suite are almost at the building stage. The computers are supplemented by the loan for two weeks each term of twelve laptops from the Education Action Zone. This enables the necessary skills to be taught. However, the skills are not then practised sufficiently by regular use of the computers in classrooms. For example, during the inspection the computers were unused for most of the time.

105. The school makes particularly good use of other technology. For example, the digital cameras are used very well, both to support work in other subjects and to record pupils' work. During the inspection, the camera was used in an art and design lesson as a stimulus, and the resulting pictures were incorporated into the pupils' art and design work. The digital microscopes are also well used to support work in science. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, one was being used for the pupils to investigate the various materials they had used as thermal insulators. The resulting discussions gave the pupils much better understanding of the suitability of these materials for their purpose. These resources are used sensibly and

with enthusiasm by the pupils, who enjoy their time using ICT, but say that they do not have enough opportunities to use the computers.

106. Although there are some good uses of ICT in other subjects, such as those noted above, there is insufficient planned use of ICT. For example, there are few instances of the pupils using a word processing program to draft and redraft work in literacy. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and is well aware of the areas for development, and has worked hard to take the subject forward. He already has plans in place to make best use of the new ICT suite.

MUSIC

107. Standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The pupils make sound progress and the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the quality of the pupils' singing;
- the musical expertise of a number of staff;
- the pupils' attitudes;
- the extra-curricular opportunities.

There are no areas for development noted.

108. The pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with due regard to dynamics and expression. This was particularly evident in assemblies, where even the youngest pupils, who could not read the words of the verses, joined in enthusiastically for the choruses, swelling the volume considerably. In a lesson observed in Years 4 and 5, the pupils were singing a well-known song and the teacher was encouraging them to think of ways they could improve. The resulting learning was good. Coverage of other aspects of the music curriculum is adequate. The school is fortunate in having a number of staff who have musical expertise. This meant that they were able to accompany the pupils in lessons, in two cases on guitars, which helped significantly when the pupils were trying to learn new songs.

109. The pupils enjoy their music lessons and are keen to try to improve their performances. They work very well in groups, listening well to each other and valuing the contributions of all. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities in music. As well as two recorder groups and a choir, run as out of school activities, there is a range of lessons in other instruments, taken by visiting teachers. The choir is very well supported with about a quarter of the school from all age groups taking part. They are currently preparing for a local music festival in which they perform regularly. These opportunities for performance are very worthwhile. Instrumentalists accompanied the song in assembly on one morning of the inspection. As well as a good number of recorders, there were some violinists and cellists. The song was accompanied well.

110. There are a good range of instruments and recorded music to support teaching of the subject. The co-ordinator leads the subject enthusiastically and works hard to raise standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress due to the sound teaching. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the range of opportunities offered in the curriculum;
- the range of extra-curricular opportunities;
- the pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

There are no areas for development noted.

112. The curriculum is organised to ensure a good range of opportunities. For example, all pupils from Year 2 to 6 have opportunities to go swimming each year and good standards are achieved in swimming because of this. The full range of aspects of the National Curriculum is planned into the curriculum, with some of these having extra opportunities. For example, there are occasions when the pupils use the skills they have learned in their dance lessons to perform for an audience. During lessons, a feature which aids the progress that the pupils make is the way they are evaluating their own and other's performance. In a dance lesson observed, the teacher asked, "What advice could we give to groups to improve their performance?" The suggestions were sensitive and useful. This is indicative of the very good relationships that exist and of the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Even within the greater freedom that physical education lessons afford, there were no instances of inappropriate behaviour.

113. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and the school is successful in local sporting competitions, for example football and cross country. A good number of pupils take part in these extra-curricular activities. A further positive feature of the school's provision is the annual residential visit for the oldest pupils. This gives opportunities for the pupils to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. The school is fortunate in the space it has available for physical education. As well as a good sized hall, there is a large playground and a field which is used for football and summer games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in Year 6 which are in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Shropshire. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good use of individual pupils' experiences;
- the pupils' involvement and exploration of the subject.

Areas for development are:

- to further develop pupils knowledge and understanding of other faiths;
- to extend the opportunities to promote pupils own thoughts and knowledge.

115. The syllabus is under review but the school continues to develop the themes which were in place at the time of the last inspection. The national guidance on raising pupils awareness of their personal and social education has been incorporated into the religious education lessons but is not included as part of the syllabus.

116. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. It is a similar picture in Years 3 to 6 with some evidence from pupils' work in Year 6 that it is good. There is a developing maturity towards their work as pupils move through the school so that by the time they are in Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and are developing their understanding about belief and the stories from the Old and New Testaments.

117. Whilst there is some recognition of other faiths and beliefs within the syllabus these are not fully developed. The pupils are confused about the different traditions and practices of other faiths. There are no opportunities to visit places of worship other than the local church and a nearby Abbey. They are not able to make comparisons and have limited understanding about how other people worship. They allude to the Five Pillars of Islam but do not appreciate the significance of the place in prayer in any other belief.

118. The teachers plan their work carefully and use a variety of sources to extend the pupils' knowledge of Judaism through using posters and artefacts. The pupils recognise that rituals and traditions were and are very important to a Jew. They respond well to the interactive questions on a display using the information to reflect on the significance of the Torah and the Ten Commandments. The good use of discussion impacts on pupils' knowledge and they are confident in the responses they make to the good use of questions about the stories Jesus told his followers. They recognise that Jesus was a leader and how He enabled others to follow him.

119. The good teaching in Year 6 ensures that pupils make links between the Christian message and the way people conduct their own lives. They give careful consideration to the issues which affect their own lives. The interesting assignments and the diverse range of experiences the teacher has provided enable pupils to explore the issues surrounding favourite charities. This gives them the opportunity to make their own response and to pursue in a mature manner the issues they have raised. Pupils are absorbed when considering how to build bridges across the barriers which have been created in a conflict situation. The teacher creates an open situation so that pupils can make both a collective and individual response to the situation recognising the codes of behaviour which are within the Christian faith.

120. The teachers' subject knowledge is good. There are opportunities to use the Internet to provide a further range of sources; these are not yet fully explored but are in the process of being developed so that pupils can experience and access a wider range information. The recently appointed co-ordinator is aware of the need to broaden the syllabus. The very good use of the wider range of Christian resources and the use of story sacks which have been provided so that younger pupils can share in greater depth the bible stories enable them to make good progress in their knowledge of the Bible. They listen carefully and are anxious to respond to the questions and thoughts which help them to understand the meaning of the Easter story. Assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding is not yet in place although day to day assessment enables the teachers to plan the next steps within the scheme.