

INSPECTION REPORT

JACKFIELD INFANT SCHOOL

Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 123982

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Barber

Reporting inspector: Mrs Mary McNaughton
1926

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 October 2002

Inspection number: 248520

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 |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 – 7 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Jackfield Street Burslem Stoke-on-Trent |
| Postcode: | ST6 1ET |
| Telephone number: | 01782 234450 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr P Lindop |
| Date of previous inspection: | 22 June 2000 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 1245 | Mrs M McNaughton | Registered inspector | The Foundation Stage Science Music | How high are standards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further? |
| 9146 | Mr M Brennand | Lay inspector | | How high are standards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? |
| 16971 | Mr R Hardaker | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs | |
| 27720 | Mr P Way | Team inspector | Geography History | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 4275 | Mrs J Taylor | Team inspector | English Art and design Design and technology Educational inclusion, including racial equality English as an additional language | How well is the school led and managed? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized school with 258 pupils on roll aged between three and seven. All attend full-time, including the 52 children in the nursery. Not all children who begin the reception class have had nursery education, and about 12 per cent transfer from a neighbouring nursery. There are two nursery classes and three classes in each of the other year groups. The average class size in nursery is 26 and in other classes 22 pupils. The school's roll is increasing.

The school serves the area of Burslem which is socially, and economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at 26.5 per cent is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (19.5 per cent) is broadly average, but there is an above average proportion of pupils with statements of special needs. The type of special educational needs is wide ranging including, emotional and behavioural, physical disabilities, autistic, and learning difficulties. Most pupils are of White UK heritage; fifteen pupils are of Asian heritage and speak English as an additional language. In school they receive additional support in Urdu, Panjabi and Bengali; two pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. On entry to nursery the children's attainment is very low

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that continues to improve under the very effective leadership of the headteacher. Standards have improved in mathematics, science, art and design, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology. Even though standards in reading, writing and speaking are below average children achieve well. The quality of teaching is good. Financial management and school priorities for improvement are well focused to take the school forward. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- The teaching of numeracy and ICT is good.
- Standards in art and design, design and technology and swimming are good.
- Outdoor play resources and dynamic classroom environments stimulate children's learning in nursery and reception classes.
- Children with special educational needs are catered for exceptionally well.
- Relationships are very good. Pupils respect each other and behave very well.
- Children have a very good understanding of a healthy lifestyle.
- The curriculum is interesting and exciting making pupils want to learn.

What could be improved

- The standards in reading, writing and speaking.
- The checks on pupils' progress.

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 June 2000. There has been significant improvement and the school now provides a good standard of education. Standards in mathematics are now average for the first time in the last five years. Standards in science have improved and in art and design, design and technology and swimming in physical education (PE) they are above average. The overall quality of teaching has improved. The relatively new leadership and management structures have been securely embedded and the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good. Most senior staff have had an impact on improving their subjects or areas of responsibility through visiting classes regularly to look at

teaching and learning. There has been very good improvement to the management of provision for pupils with special education needs. There has been satisfactory improvement in the school's procedures for assessing the progress and achievements of the pupils but the marking of pupils' work has not been addressed fully. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are better. Accommodation has been much improved and is used effectively.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 | |
| Reading | D | E | C | A | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| Writing | D | D | C | B | |
| Mathematics | D | D | B | A | |

Results have been consistently below average in writing and mathematics and dipped to well below average in reading in 2001. Compared to all schools nationally there has been an improvement since the last inspection and the gap between the school's results and the national average is closing. In the 2002 national tests standards were in line with the national average in reading and writing and above in mathematics. The school set demanding targets for 2002 and significantly exceeded them in reading, writing and mathematics, achieving highly compared with similar schools.

The inspection found the work of the current Year 2 pupils in reading and writing to be below average. Many pupils do not use a wide vocabulary or speak in proper sentences. Pupils' below average standards in speaking are hindering progress in reading and writing. In mathematics and science standards are average. In all other subjects, standards are at least in line with expectations and in aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) pupils achieve well.

Three year olds enter nursery with very low standards in all areas of learning¹. A very high proportion have poor language skills. Although children make rapid progress, their standards are still well below average at the start of the reception year. Many do not reach the expectations set for children at the start of Year 1 particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is partly because speaking and writing skills are not always taught effectively and sometimes not enough is expected of them.

Higher attaining pupils achieve well. Boys achieve lower standards than girls in both reading and writing mainly because they lack interest. Almost all children with English as an additional language achieve well. The pupils with special educational needs benefit from a good level of support and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--------|---------|
|--------|---------|

¹ Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils like their school. They are very keen to work and enjoy the activities they do. |
|-------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The majority of pupils are well behaved in classrooms, the playground and when moving round the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils work well together, show respect, and are keen to take on responsibility. |
| Attendance | Unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence is reducing, but a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent. |

The high quality relationships, and pupils' good attitudes create a secure base for teaching and learning. Occasionally some pupils' inappropriately call out to seek attention and disturb others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and in a sixth of lessons teaching is very good or excellent. There are particular strengths in the nursery, enabling the children to make rapid progress. In reception and nursery the teaching of personal and social skills and early numeracy skills is good. However writing and speaking skills are not developed sufficiently well to enable children to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, particularly in art and design, design and technology, ICT, religious education (RE) and swimming.

The teachers make good use of the guidance in the national literacy and numeracy strategies to support their planning. Teaching is strong in mathematics. Literacy is taught satisfactorily and sometime well but more could be done to help pupils' gain the necessary skills to make faster progress.

Teachers ask probing questions and make good use of a range of methods and resources. Nursery nurses and learning support assistants give pupils good help particularly those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The marking of work and the information teachers have about what pupils know, understand and can do is not always used well enough to help them achieve more.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Nursery outdoor play facilities are good and swimming is a particular strength. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Their needs are identified early and they are well supported by the very good special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and learning support assistants. Pupils with statements and those with physical disabilities are catered for well. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional | Good. The bilingual assistants provide good support and help pupils to achieve well. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| language | |
|----------|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall and very good for moral development. Pupils respond well to the positive climate created in the school; the whole community is valued and respected. Sometimes opportunities are missed to promote pupils' appreciation of the cultural diversity in Britain. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Satisfactory overall. This is a caring school that understands the needs of young learners and supports their personal development well. |

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Teachers' assessment of pupils progress could be used more effectively when planning work and better inform the targets teachers set with pupils and parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good leadership and good management. The school is moving forward well and the children make good progress. The headteacher has a very clear picture of how she wants the school to be and has made extremely successful changes to reach these aims. She is supported very well by the deputy and other staff. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. The governors check how well the school is doing and provide good support. They are very involved in the work of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. The school measures its success; identifies and improves weak areas effectively although further work is now needed in reading and writing. All teachers are learning to evaluate their own areas of responsibility and most do this very well. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The budget is used carefully and effectively to ensure best value and improve opportunities for the children. Staff expertise is used very well especially in the nursery. |

There is a very good level of well-qualified staff. Accommodation is very good and is used very effectively. Resources for the nursery and reception classes are good. The school has adequate resources for most subjects except music.

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 like school and make good progress. Teaching is good, children are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature. They feel comfortable in approaching the school and are well informed about how their children are getting on. | <p>A minority of parents feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their child does not get the right amount of work to do at home. the range of activities provided outside lessons is limited. |

The inspection team is happy to support parents' positive view of the school, their high degree of confidence is justified. The slight concerns about work at home and the range of activities are not supported. Children have appropriate work to do at home and the range of clubs, visits and visitors

provided at different times in the year is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' performance overall in the 2002 national tests is close to the national average and well above average compared with similar schools because of the change in the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Overall there has been an improvement since the last inspection with a generally upward trend over the last five years.

2. In 2002 standards in English, in both reading and writing are in line with the national average. Compared with similar schools pupils' achievement is well above average in reading and above average in writing. The school's strategies of additional support for average and lower attaining pupils significantly improved these test results. Although there was an increase of more than ten per cent, of pupils overall reaching average standards, a significant proportion are still working at the lower levels. Higher attaining pupils consistently do well, achieving close to the national average in reading and above average in writing.

3. Standards in mathematics in the 2002 tests, were above average nationally and well above average compared to similar schools. Mathematics results have improved since the last inspection on a year on year basis. Compared to all schools nationally, and in similar contexts, standards were below average in 2000 and 2001. However, this represents an improvement since 1998 when standards were very low in comparison to all schools.

4. The inspection findings show standards to be below average in English, in the current Year 2, in reading, writing, and speaking; standards are average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science in 2002 showed that pupils achieved above average standards compared nationally and higher attaining pupils achieved very well. This is an improvement on 2001 results that were well below average, although the higher attaining pupils achieved well. However, the inspection found standards average overall with fewer pupils' reaching the higher level due to inconsistencies in teacher assessment.

5. Three-year-olds enter the nursery with very low standards in all areas of learning. A very high proportion of children have poor language skills. The good teaching, full-time attendance and the quality of provision helps them to make very good progress. Overall, pupils make sound progress in reception but less than half achieve the goals set for children at the start of Year 1 in literacy and numeracy.

6. By the age of seven the pupils have made good progress. Across the school the rate of progress is never less than satisfactory and at times it is good or very good. The pupils have a sound base for literacy skills but do not use these well enough yet across the curriculum. The children's early difficulties with speaking clearly improve, but not sufficiently for them to achieve as well as might be expected. Consequently for the majority of pupils their reading lacks fluency. Average and higher attaining pupils are confident and read accurately and their progress is faster.

7. Almost all of the children with English as an additional language achieve well apart from the two with least comprehension of English, who achieve satisfactorily. A lot is expected of the higher attaining children, and consequently they reach above average standards. Boys reach lower standards than girls in reading and writing. From the nursery onwards the boys are less interested in writing activities than the girls. The school has already introduced good strategies, such as a wider range of reading material and specific, good quality support for the lower attaining boys. However, this continues as a concern.

8. The success of the numeracy strategy and the very good teaching is moving pupils' learning on rapidly in mathematics. Most pupils are competent in working with numbers to 100 and have good mental recall of number facts. They use their skills in ICT well across the curriculum.

9. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, benefit from a good level of support and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils like school. In a happy and stable environment pupils build good relationships and develop responsible attitudes. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning has a positive impact on their progress.

11. Behaviour is good in assemblies, during lunchtimes in the dining hall and in the playground. For instance, in the dining hall pupils sit quietly and wait sensibly for their turn to be served; they play well together. In most lessons behaviour is good or better. For example in a Year 2 games lesson the pupils sensibly passed large balls to each other and treated the equipment carefully. Year 1 pupils in a literacy lesson worked well together in a group writing activity. Occasionally, however, pupils are allowed to shout out answers which disrupts discussion sessions. No incidents of bullying or racism were observed and conversations with pupils and parents confirmed that such occurrences are very rare.

12. Relationships are very good. Around the school pupils are friendly and courteous to one another. For example, boys and girls in reception construct models together with the large bricks, amicably taking turns. In a lesson in religious education (RE), Year 2 pupils listened carefully to each other's point of view when talking about the miracles performed by Jesus. Pupils with special educational needs including those with physical disabilities have confidence to take part in all activities because of the support they receive. The pupils who have English as an additional language have positive attitudes towards school getting on well with staff and other pupils. For instance, when working as part of a group in science one pupil was helped by his partner to read the instructions and then confidently assembled the electric circuit to light a bulb. Pupils' involvement in setting their own targets for improvement, the responsibilities they take on as monitors in class and for setting up equipment for assembly, support pupils' personal development well.

13. Attendance remains below average. There are now very few unauthorised absences, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The majority of pupils arrive on time and registration provides a calm and orderly start to the day. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall. In a sixth of lessons teaching is very good and excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In ninety-eight per cent of lessons teaching is at least satisfactory and over half is good or better. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen in music was not significant in the context of the school's work. In line with the LEA policy, the nursery is staffed by a nursery manager, senior nursery nurse and three nursery nurses. There are particular strengths in the teaching in the nursery, enabling the children to make rapid progress. Teaching in the reception classes ranges from satisfactory to excellent. In one class, work is not well matched to pupils' needs in literacy, which limits their progress in using letter sounds when reading and writing.

15. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. The teaching of literacy is sound overall and in some lessons it is very good. In mathematics across the school teaching is good because of teachers' confidence and subject knowledge, and the very good leadership of the subject. Teaching is a strength in art and design, design and technology, ICT, RE, aspects of physical education (PE) and most areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, except communication language and literacy. Subject knowledge is good in these curriculum areas.

16. In the nursery and reception classes, all staff pay a high degree of attention to promoting children's personal and social skills. Teaching in this aspect has some very good features. Routines are well established. Nursery nurses and teachers are very clear about expectations of behaviour and there is a strong emphasis on praise, for example, when children readily share equipment or respond quickly to instructions. Early numeracy skills are well taught, but teachers' understanding of how to develop early writing skills is insecure and they do not give enough emphasis to improving pupils' speaking skills or helping them to acquire a good range of vocabulary. This inhibits children's progress in reading and writing.

17. In Years 1 and 2 effective teaching enables most pupils to make good progress. In all subjects work is well planned and generally matched to the pupils' needs. Test results and assessments on entry are not used well enough to plan what groups of pupils, particularly lower and average attainers need to do next to make progress. Teachers talk to pupils during lessons to check that they understand their work. In some lessons, teachers or learning support assistants make notes of what the pupils can do. For instance, in a PE lesson in reception, the nursery nurse recorded the children's responses to the music and the level of their co-ordination skills. In ICT lessons, pupils' confidence and control when using the computer is regularly assessed. The marking of pupils work is more consistent than at the last inspection, but teachers' comments do not tell pupils what they have done well, if their target has been achieved and what they have to do next to improve.

18. In the most effective lessons the teachers make good use of resources to demonstrate and explain key teaching points. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, a game designed to help pupils recognise three-dimensional shapes stimulated a high level of interest and enabled the teacher to reinforce pupils' understanding of the properties of the shapes to extend their vocabulary. In Year 1 in science, photographs showing how people change as they get older focused pupils' attention on small details, thus improving observation skills. The use of a video and bibles in a RE lesson made it easier for pupils to understand the miracles performed by Jesus. The deployment of the nursery nurses and learning support assistants support pupils' learning effectively.

19. Group-work is effectively used in literacy and numeracy lessons and pupils sustain good levels of concentration when working in this way. Teachers support specific groups of pupils, which speeds up the progress that they make. For example, in Year 2 the pupils' were helped to develop their ideas and predict the story ending. Similarly, when designing and making cars, they were shown how to turn a box inside out to avoid displaying the advertising slogan. They then made decisions together as they realised the need to adjust the size of the box to fit the chassis. Collaboration between boys and girls is good, for instance, when composing instrumental pieces in music. Pupils learn to respect the performances of others when they are expected to listen carefully to one another.

20. Teachers use of probing questions and good demonstrations are features of effective learning in many lessons. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, carefully structured questioning helped pupils to understand the differences between two and three-dimensional shapes. Their thinking was challenged as they talked about the 'faces' 'vertex' and the 'edges'. Similarly in literacy, good questioning of higher attainers about the meaning of the

text, resulted in them interpreting the characters personalities by using different types of voices. Coaching in swimming with the adults also in the water significantly contributes to raising pupils' confidence. Sometimes not enough demonstration is given to reception children so that they know how to begin the process of writing a sentence or to achieve good standards of handwriting by forming letters with a correct pencil grip.

21. All pupils with English as an additional language receive good teaching from bilingual support assistants. In class the two least fluent pupils receive satisfactory support and are making sound progress. However, they are not always clear about what they should do because not enough explanation is given and work is not sufficiently well matched to their needs.

22. In class lessons, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because work is well matched to their needs. These pupils receive good help from teachers and learning support assistants. Teaching in small groups in the special needs room is consistently good for pupils with reading difficulties.

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

23. The overall curriculum provided by the school is good. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating with a good range of learning opportunities. It meets statutory requirements in all aspects of the National Curriculum. Religious education is planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The Foundation Stage curriculum is broad, balanced and appropriately based on the recommended areas of learning. It provides a good range of activities and opportunities for learning. The outdoor play area provides a good space for physical development and other activities. The breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been successfully achieved through careful attention to planning which is reviewed each year. Planning identifies relevant links with other subjects. Where subjects are being integrated the work produced by children is often more detailed and of a higher quality. For example, in Year 2, a study of the history of the pottery industry with visits to Wedgwood and the Gladstone Museum also incorporated relevant artwork on clay tiles; an understanding of features of the pottery towns; report writing and using the Internet for research. Planning the curriculum in this way uses local resources and provides opportunities for pupils' to apply their skills and knowledge through a common topic.

24. The school is successfully using national guidance as the basis for its curriculum planning. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented. There are some strengths in PE and geography but limited three-dimensional work in art and design. Swimming is taught to all pupils. Although this is not a requirement for pupils this age it is felt by the school to be necessary because of the local waterways.

25. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding in personal, social and health topics (PSHE) taught through other subjects such as science, English, RE and PE. The school places a strong focus on good health and has successfully achieved a healthy school award. Pupils are encouraged to eat fruit and milk; sweets and crisps are banned. The permanent placement and replenishment of a basket of fruit in the corridor supports this aim.

26. The school has a number of links with its local community. These provide an extra

dimension to pupils' experiences of the immediate environment, making this aspect very good. The school is a member of the Staffordshire Partnership through which it visits nearby factories and museums. Local visitors bring to life parts of the curriculum, for example through providing eyewitness accounts in history. Visits by other adults, for example an international gymnast and a poet, generate enthusiasm and help to improve pupils' skills. Extra-curricular opportunities are being developed. At various times in the year there are clubs open to all pupils in mathematics, gymnastics, football and literacy.

27. Great benefit has been gained from involvement with the Beacon Partnership, a local school that has special status for excellence, especially in terms of raising standards. There are strong links to the local high school that has just opened a 'City Learning Centre' where adults and children can access courses. The Classroom Assistants Course and Introduction to Computers are two courses that have taken place in school with college trainers. These courses are planned to continue for the benefit of parents, some of whom provide valuable help in classrooms.

28. Guidance from learning support assistants and bilingual assistants ensures active participation in all areas of the curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language. For example, a four-year-old pupil recently returned from visiting her family in India was very unsettled. Reassurances in her own language helped her to confidently join in the literacy lesson. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need and physical disabilities, are catered for well. These pupils have full access to all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

29. The school places a high priority on developing its pupils as rounded individuals and in this it is successful, making provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development good. A positive climate for learning has been created in which all members of the school community are valued and respected.

30. Pupils' spiritual development is good, being provided through assemblies, religious education, music and art. Visits to local churches are effectively supplemented by assemblies taken by the local clergy. These provide valuable opportunities for quiet reflection and insights into religious beliefs. Children in a Year 2 music lesson were observed listening to their own compositions with a sense of awe. The entrance hall with its combination of quiet areas; the science display, of fibre-optic lights, sensory materials and music, provides an area for reflection and invokes a sense of wonder.

31. The school encourages pupils to develop a strong moral code making this aspect very good. Pupils were highly involved in drawing up the behaviour code. They also make group decisions on whether as a class they have behaved well and are deserving of an award. These opportunities give pupils an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The pupils are encouraged to show respect for each other and the community. Circle time² allows pupils to discuss how they feel about one another's behaviour and other events in school.

32. Good provision is made for pupils' social development, enabling them to take on monitoring jobs in classrooms and around the school. In the nursery social occasions are provided which enable children to develop social skills, particularly the need to take turns and share. Through the Investor in People Award, a national scheme for developing all people who work at the school, the school fosters a good team spirit, which pupils see and copy.

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

The behaviour policy with its emphasis on rewarding positive attitudes and the weekly reward assemblies, are an integral part of raising pupils' self-esteem.

33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils' knowledge of their own culture, particularly within the Potteries, is particularly good. There is a good range of local visits to support this. Knowledge about the rich diversity of cultures within the wider community of Britain is less well developed. The Christmas concert provides pupils with an opportunity to participate in music and the display of paintings by Kandinsky, Cezanne and Van Gogh gives them an opportunity to appreciate renowned works of art.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. This is a caring school in which most aspects of the school as a community reflect the good quality of care, guidance and support that is provided for pupils' personal development. Staff have a fundamental understanding of the needs of young learners, know the children well and spend much time supporting pupils' emotional development by acting as good listeners.

35. The school's provision for children with English as an additional language is good. This is good support and the children relax and achieve well in these sessions. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early with clear and consistent procedures. Good assessment procedures are in place to further this process and liaison with outside agencies is good. Parents are consulted during all stages of the process. This aspect is now a strength in the work of the school.

36. There has been satisfactory improvement in the school's procedures for assessing the progress and achievements of pupils. Since the last inspection a great deal of work has taken place in developing good procedures for analysing the test results. However, matching these achievements against the National Curriculum levels is not sufficiently well developed. Consequently the target setting process which the school carries out with the pupils is not as effective in moving pupils forward as it could be.

37. Pupils do not know enough about what they should do to improve. The marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the school and has not fully addressed this issue from the last inspection. Teachers do not always follow up written comments with pupils and they do not then act on the teacher's comment in subsequent work. All co-ordinators are beginning to introduce assessment procedures for their subjects and link these to portfolios of examples. A consistent approach using the National Curriculum criteria is needed to plan more specifically for the needs of all pupils.

38. Arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is the recognised child protection officer and she has been trained on the recent procedural changes. The school maintains detailed records and does all it can for the care and well-being of the child. Arrangements for health and safety are also good. All the statutory requirements are in place, including five fully qualified first aiders. Overall the premises offer a safe and secure environment. However, a boiler was put in the nursery toy store. There is no ventilation and nor is there a partition to separate the toys from the boiler. These requirements should be implemented as a matter of urgency so that the room can be used as it was originally intended.

39. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory which is better than at the last inspection. Registers are monitored daily by the secretarial staff; and persistent absentees receive, a first day absence telephone call. This procedure is not extended to encompass all pupils. There are good links with a pro-active education welfare

officer who visits the school regularly and visits the homes of parents of pupils who are poor attenders. She sends cards of congratulation to pupils whose attendance has improved. The school reinforces good attendance through termly certificates for 100 per cent attendance.

40. A behaviour management policy to which pupils and parents contributed is very good. This aspect of the schools work is a strength, improving on effective work seen at the last inspection. The gold certificates are hard earned and thus far just over twenty pupils have achieved this accolade. Rewards are balanced with a range of sanctions. The numbers being entered in the 'Blue book', which means a loss of privileges, have declined substantially over time. Procedures for preventing bullying and racism are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school's partnership with its parents is very good. They have a high regard for the school and feel it is developing their children as rounded individuals. The parents questionnaire raised no significant areas of concern and interviews with parents during the week of the inspection confirmed this positive picture.

42. Very good links with parents are established before children start at the school when they attend a new intake evening. This provides the headteacher with an opportunity to explain the principles on which the school operates and attendance at these evenings is good. The recently established parents' room is proving successful in helping parents to learn for themselves, for instance using a computer, and to understand about the work of the school. Parents recognise the headteacher 'does what she says' and the open door policy between parents and teachers is successful. Class assemblies are well supported by parents and another opportunity for them to understand what their child can do.

43. Parents' contribution to the work of the school is good. On average ten parents help out daily, primarily as book buddies paired with children who are not heard to read regularly at home. Without the support of parents the school could not provide swimming lessons and there are many trips on which their support is invaluable. Although there is no Friends Association an information sheet sent out at the beginning of the year asking parents for support, is responded to positively.

44. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is good. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed about their child's achievements, progress and areas for further development, in discussion with the class teacher and the SENCO. Consultation evenings, meetings to explain the process of national tests and open afternoons for science, mathematics and English are valued and well attended.

45. The school prospectus, home school agreement and regular newsletters are informative and provide a good insight into the work of the school. The quality of the annual reports on pupils' progress is satisfactory. Information on subjects tends to be descriptive, however, there is no indication of whether the level at which each child is working is appropriate to their age. Targets are set to address weaknesses, but there is no opportunity for parents to comment. There is a homework policy and interviews with parents confirm that homework is set regularly.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

46. This school is led very well. In particular, the headteacher and deputy are extremely perceptive about what the school should be like in the future and have very clear ideas about how to move forward quickly. All areas identified for development by the inspection team had

already been identified by the senior staff and planned, in order of priority, for improvement. The management of the school is good.

47. Over the past two years many very effective systems have been introduced that have raised standards. Although developments, such as firmer assessments and aspects of teaching and learning in English, are needed, the most important features of a good school have been put into place. For example, the headteacher, deputy and other key staff visit classes regularly to look at the teaching and learning. They identify how well the work is going and what is needed next. They know which subject leaders need further support and have established plans for their development. They review the success of past initiatives, such as developing the provision for special educational needs or the improvements in mathematics and recognise good strategies that will work in different circumstances. The last inspection identified necessary improvements to the assessment of the children's work. There are some successful developments in place and further work is ongoing.

48. The improvement in standards is due to the good teaching and strong leadership in these subjects. All teachers with responsibilities for developing subjects or aspects of provision work very hard and most have successfully changed and improved the areas they are responsible for. These initiatives have had clear guidance from senior staff to steer improvements and as a result the curriculum is good. The management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. Good communications systems keep all staff properly informed so that they can offer well-targeted support and monitoring for each pupil. All records are effective and up to date. An effective policy is in place which ensures that pupils are fully integrated into the classroom context for all aspects of the curriculum. The policy has been recently revised to bring it in line with the requirements of the new Code of Practice. In the Foundation Stage further work is needed by the co-ordinator to ensure the children's progress is consistent through the reception classes.

49. The governors' involvement in supporting the school is good. They keep up-to-date with developments and provide strong support to the headteacher and staff. There is, for example, a link governor for the key subjects and aspects such as literacy, numeracy and special needs. These governors support the teachers concerned and seek to further their own knowledge as a means of helping the school move forward. The chair of governors is very involved and is knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors search for reasons for the below average standards and question the headteacher and staff about developments. They run a weekly session where parents can raise concerns and very diligently respond to any queries.

50. Management and control of the school's budget are good. The headteacher and the governors' finance committee monitor spending effectively. Special grants are used appropriately and the school seeks many additional grants to improve such areas as the parents' room or the nursery play area. Funds made available through working with a nearby Beacon school have been used very well to broaden the children's experience in writing. There are adequate resources to teach almost all subjects except music and there is a satisfactory range of books to support teaching and learning in literacy. The school applies the principles of best value well in ensuring money is spent carefully and usefully. The opinions of parents are sought and parents feel very comfortable about visiting the school to raise any matters. The school compares its performance with others and constantly seeks ways of improving.

51. The school now has a stable, well-qualified staff. There have been considerable changes since the last inspection and new appointments are made carefully. The staff form a strong and committed group who work hard for the school. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Newly qualified teachers receive clear guidance and

support to help them understand the procedures of the school. The accommodation is very good since the building of the new Foundation Stage wing. The premises are very clean and tidy throughout and are well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Given all these strengths, the school is well placed to continue to move forward. It gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
- improving teacher's knowledge of the steps pupils move through when learning to read and write;
 - use this information to record their progress and identify the next steps in learning;
 - providing more opportunity for the pupils' to talk at length and encourage a more varied vocabulary and more appropriately structured sentences.
- (Paragraphs: 14, 16, 20, 54, 56, 57, 69, 70, 74)*
- (2) Improve the monitoring of pupils' academic progress in order to make better provision for their learning by:
- extending procedures for assessment in all subjects to give a clear picture of the progress pupils' make;
 - matching pupils' standard of work to National Curriculum levels;
 - marking the pupils' work so that it shows them how well they have done and how they can improve;
 - monitoring and evaluating how quickly pupils move forward.
- (Paragraphs: 17, 36, 37, 47, 72, 83, 90, 96, 100)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 48 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 36 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 6 | 20 | 20 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 13 | 42 | 42 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 52 | 206 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 13 | 55 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 1 | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 2 | 33 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 15 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 22 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.2 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |
| 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)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2002 | 35 | 29 | 64 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 33 | 28 | 30 |
| | Girls | 28 | 29 | 29 |
| | Total | 61 | 57 | 59 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (77) | 92 (81) | 95 (86) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 28 | 30 | 31 |
| | Girls | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| | Total | 59 | 59 | 60 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 92 (80) | 95 (89) | 97 (83) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 131 | | |
| White – Irish | | | |
| White – any other White background | | | |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | | | |
| Mixed – White and Black African | | | |
| Mixed – White and Asian | | | |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 3 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 3 | | |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 3 | | |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | | | |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | | | |
| Black or Black British – African | | | |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | | | |
| Chinese | | | |
| Any other ethnic group | | | |
| No ethnic group recorded | | | |

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) | 10 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.1 |
| Average class size | 22.1 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 139.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|-------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 0 |
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 162.5 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 10.4 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 487,490 |
| Total expenditure | 478,212 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,944 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 0 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 9,278 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 42%

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 258 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 108 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 71 | 26 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 64 | 23 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 62 | 27 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 45 | 28 | 7 | 2 | 18 |
| The teaching is good. | 69 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 53 | 31 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 72 | 19 | 4 | 0 | 5 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 74 | 21 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 50 | 36 | 8 | 0 | 6 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 69 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 69 | 25 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 41 | 30 | 8 | 0 | 21 |

A significant proportion of the new nursery parents returned questionnaires with 'don't know' about all aspects of the school's work.

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

52. The children make a very good start to school in the nursery. Their attainment on entry to the nursery at the age of three is very low. More than half of the children do not achieve the lowest level expected in the curriculum for children of this age. A high proportion of children have speech and language difficulties and very limited personal and social skills. The nursery nurses who lead and manage the nursery have a good understanding of the needs of the children. The effective team work, well planned activities and the high quality accommodation and resources help children make very good progress in all areas of learning.

53. As they move into the reception class at the age of four although they have made rapid progress, their attainment is still well below the national expectation, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Assessment of children's attainment at the start of their reception year, except for a very small minority of higher attaining children, is much lower than the national expectation in reading, the knowledge of letter sounds, writing and mathematical development. The children achieve slightly better in mathematics. At the end of the reception year the higher attaining children and some average attainers achieve in line with the learning goals set. However, more than half of the children do not achieve the learning goals set for pupils at the start of Year 1. In other areas of learning attainment is closer to that expected for their age.

54. There are some weaknesses in the way the Foundation Stage is led. Progress across the reception classes is uneven, because specific areas of weakness have not been identified early enough to inform planning and teaching to meet the needs of all children. The Foundation Stage criteria for achieving each step of the areas of learning are not used effectively to track children's rate of progress. Teachers' expectations of the children vary and work is not matched to their needs. Consequently, not all children do as well as might be expected.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features. The teachers and nursery nurses know the children well and priority is given to raising the children's self-esteem and confidence. They settle quickly to school routines and make good progress. Conflicts between very young children, because they cannot express themselves in words, are quickly resolved through effective adult intervention. The more articulate children understand that their actions are wrong as one boy said, "Cos we not sharing". By the time they are in reception the children usually play amicably, working co-operatively together. For example, when building with large wooden blocks. Social skills are very well promoted. The nursery staff teach the children to use cutlery at lunchtime, though few achieve this successfully, and to be independent when spreading butter on their toast for morning snack. Politeness and good manners, passing plates, waiting to have the jug to pour their own drink, establishes the high expectation for good behaviour. In both the nursery and reception classes relationships are very good and staff, including the mealtime assistants, provide very good role models. Children are given opportunities to learn about other cultures and values as photographs of their Chinese celebrations showed. The Early Years assembly provides opportunities for them to appreciate emotions and feelings through stories. The excitement and pride in being chosen as 'special person of the day' in reception gives children a purposeful sense of responsibility taking the register to the office and leading the class into the hall.

Communication, language and literacy

56. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are some weaknesses in the development of children's speaking skills and early writing. In recognition of the poor language skills of the majority of the children in the nursery and reception classes, staff ensure learning activities include many opportunities for speaking and listening. The children are good at listening. Nursery children enjoy stories shared in the book corner, craning their necks to look at the pictures, and they listen hard to the adult talking about events. They are keen to engage with staff and visitors initially, but find it difficult to develop a conversation, words are mispronounced and hard to understand. When playing outside on wheeled toys many use voice sounds but not words. A low attaining boy at the writing table held his pen up and said "do that" and did not know how to say, "will you write my name?" Reception children will offer one word answers to questions, particularly when the questions require yes/no answers. For example, when looking at a non-fiction book about 'Me as a baby' they clearly understood the information but were not corrected or shown how to say a complete grammatically correct sentence. The children with English as an additional language are well supported by the bilingual assistant but are not always extended in their speaking in all lessons. The teachers' expectations of how children speak are not high enough and this also impedes progress in reading and writing.

57. Most children in reception will attempt to write their name, either copying from a name card or unaided from memory. The majority are increasingly gaining a good understanding of the alphabet and letter sounds. Because some teachers' knowledge of the development of early writing, from mark making to becoming confident writers, is insecure, this aspect of development is not sufficiently well taught. There is not enough teacher demonstration in whole-class sessions to show children how to form letters correctly, how to hold a pencil properly, or what the process of writing a sentence looks like.

58. Children take books home to read every day and an effective link with parents is made through the home/school diary. Computers are used to practise early reading skills and children are interested as they match pictures confidently to the sounds with which they start. Higher attaining children know the words 'front cover' and 'title' and will recall the main parts of the story. Most, like books, but many do not recognise common words and find it hard to 'tell' a story from the pictures.

Mathematical development

59. The quality of teaching is good and some is excellent. Staff take every opportunity to use everyday routines to reinforce the children's understanding of number. In the nursery, staff had added numbers to children's photographs for registering their arrival. The children noticed the difference and with the nursery nurse counted to 22. They also noticed that not all children were present. Most reception children confidently count with some help the numbers from zero to 20 and beyond. They understand numbers that are less than or more than when the teacher asks, "is 19 more than or less than 23?" Lower attainers are not yet secure in their recognition and knowledge of numbers 1 to 5. Higher attaining children begin to estimate correctly how many objects are in a group and match this with the correct numeral. Resources around the classroom support the recognition of basic shapes and numbers to 100. Number lines introduce pictures of coins for 2p, 5p and 10p, helping early recognition of money.

60. Plenty of exciting practical play activities using role-play, puppets and ICT reinforce children's understanding. When learning about repeating patterns and shapes the children quickly grasp the idea through rhythmic chanting of the pattern on teddy's washing line. The children were then able to make their own repeating patterns using the large lego bricks; two

average attainers could adapt their pattern to mirror that on teddy's line. Mathematical vocabulary is well taught and children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language know the correct names for circle, square, triangle and begin counting from zero.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. The quality of teaching is good overall. In both the nursery and reception classes staff plan a wide variety of rich, first-hand experiences to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. In reception for example, a new baby was brought to the class. Children learnt all about its needs as part of the science topic on 'Ourselves'. The visit to the chemist shop to buy ointment, a sponge and nappies to use in the baby clinic role-play area extended children's awareness of personal care and growth. They listed the items they would need to bath the baby, tested the temperature of the water with their elbow, and dressed the dolls carefully putting ointment on them before fastening the nappy. A group of boys including two with English as an additional language were engrossed in the care and welfare play activities because of the support from the nursery nurse. Geographical and historical skills are developed through planned walks, including good use of the local park. Children have a developing knowledge of the route they took to the chemist. Higher attaining children could describe the way exactly, naming roads and giving directions to turn right and go straight over as well as knowing it took about half an hour to walk there and back.

62. Nursery children planted bulbs and knew that plants need soil and water to grow. The road markings on the outdoor play area help them to recognise signs and follow routes and directions as they go through the school's pretend fast-food drive-in.

63. Children use a range of programs confidently when working independently or in pairs on the computer. They all control the mouse to click on objects and move them around the screen. One or two can change from one program to another. Nursery children independently use the headphones on listening centres to hear story tapes.

Physical development

64. The quality of teaching is good overall. A very good range of activities is planned in the nursery to promote physical development. Outside play provision is excellent and well used because of the all weather surfaces. Here children confidently climb the rope assault ladder, pedal wheeled toys and pour and fill containers in the large sandpit. They have good control over their large body movements. Indoor activities with jigsaws, painting, small construction toys and clay help their fingers to become dexterous. Their control of tools such as pencils, crayons and paintbrushes is less well developed. These tools are frequently gripped as if stabbing with a dagger. Consequently the development of correct letter formation or finer movement with brushes is inhibited. Not all reception children improve their control of small tools and this does not help progress in other areas of learning. Physical education in the hall gives access to large equipment. Gymnastic skills are well developed through the school's link with a Russian gymnast.

65. Photographs of children at work show good balance and control on mats and obvious enjoyment of the experience. In a dance lesson children moved well responding to the different speeds and moods of the music. The adults joined in giving the children clear ideas for improving what they did. The positive reinforcement for stretching or pointing hands and feet raised the level of accuracy, fluency and effort in the dance. All children used space well as they twisted, turned, moving high and low. Children dress and undress reasonably well. Where rewards of a sticker for the first five to be ready are given, the children improve the

time they take to change. This then allows for maximum time in the lesson to develop skills in depth.

Creative development

66. The quality of teaching is good. A variety of appropriate activities are well planned to match the age and maturity of the children. Nursery children experiment with mixing blue and yellow when finger painting. The tactile experience is enjoyed and as they merge the two colours they notice excitedly that it turns green. Individual pictures range from slashes of colour covering the paper to painting basic forms of people. There is good provision for large-scale group pictures, using chalks, crayons and paint, where children enjoy working happily alongside each other. Children in the reception classes have produced self-portraits observing themselves through mirrors. They use a variety of materials for example, to make collage for number work. Children build imaginative three-dimensional structures with a variety of constructional materials and this activity engages the children for long periods.

67. All children enjoy singing simple songs and rhymes. The experimental and investigative music shop is well used by the reception children. The keyboard, tins, saucepans, plastic containers and large cardboard tubes invites the children to explore different sounds. They make their own instruments filling containers with pasta and lentils then accompany themselves shaking or banging in time while singing 'Humpty Dumpty'. The good questioning by the nursery nurse using appropriate language of high, low, loud, soft, fast and slow, helps children to identify the kind of sound being made. The dynamic visually stimulating environment enriches the children's senses. Role-play areas, such as, the holiday home, was constructed by the children after they had been inside a motor home. They had to decide what equipment would fit and where it should go. The accommodation is effectively used and provides a quality learning environment.

ENGLISH

68. Standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 are below average in all aspects of English. This is the same as the last inspection. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds improved dramatically in 1999, levelled in the following years and significantly improved in 2002. Although an appropriate proportion of pupils achieved above average levels, not enough of them overall, reach the average level, particularly in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment. This is because good work plans guide their learning and the high quality support they receive, both in class and in small groups from teachers and support staff. Children with English as an additional language usually make good progress, although for those at the earliest stages of learning English progress is satisfactory.

69. Reading and writing skills are taught satisfactorily and sometimes well. Teachers have implemented and adapted the national literacy strategy effectively to match the needs of the children. The teachers plan literacy lessons well, with a clear outline of what pupils will learn. Pupils approach their reading and writing confidently but some of the necessary skills to use and extend the children's knowledge of letter sounds to deal with more advanced work are not developed well enough.

70. The pupils' speaking skills are below average. Slightly more than half of the pupils in Year 1 have difficulty explaining their work. Their sentence structure is weaker than it should be and their use of descriptive words is limited to simple and familiar choices. For example, a Year 1 child said, 'I haven't had it for ages', meaning it was a new book that had not yet been read to him. In some classes, in Year 1 and 2, when pupils show reluctance in answering

questions, they are passed by to avoid embarrassment. This does not help their spoken language to improve. Their teachers do not demonstrate a range of appropriate responses that they could use and, as a result, pupils are not practising the correct way of putting a sentence together that uses more advanced vocabulary. The average and higher attaining children are supported well. More is expected of them and they successfully tackle harder work. Teachers ask searching questions and encourage the children to give longer, more detailed answers. There are few opportunities for the children to practise and rehearse spoken responses and little work systematically targets their language for improvement.

71. In Year 2, just over half of the pupils have below average standards in reading. Overall the children are confident about sounding out new words and use the pictures in their books to help them make sense of what they are reading. The below average readers are not yet fluent and have difficulty talking about what the words really mean. They cannot 'read between the lines'. In reading lessons teachers help children re-read passages to help them understand and ask careful questions to find out what the children know. This is good teaching and helps to speed the children's progress. However, teachers do not identify the small stages children move through when learning how to read. They are unclear about the children's standards when compared with the National Curriculum and are unsure exactly what to teach in order for the children to reach the next step quickly. For example, some children can sound out single letters but are not looking for small words within larger words to help them tackle something new. They might, for example, read 'all' and 'most' but not 'almost'. The average and above average readers are making faster progress. They are confident and read accurately. However, as they get older, they also begin to hesitate when meeting new or complex words because they still have a limited range of reading strategies. Teachers are good storytellers and show the children they enjoy books themselves.

72. The children make good progress in writing and the basic skills are introduced well. In almost all lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and lessons move along quickly. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are not given a strong enough emphasis. The children generally use their word building skills successfully to try and spell new words. For example, by writing 'whowt' instead of won't. They do not, however, have a wide enough memory of difficult words that are frequently used. This results in Year 2 children spelling such words as 'toow' for to, or 'gos' rather than goes. Many Year 2 children are unable to put in capital letters and full stops. This lowers their standards. Although teachers comment on this in their marking the situation has not improved this term.

73. In the best lessons, pupils make very good progress. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the pupils read and understood a good range of words and all formed their letters correctly. Almost all wrote a simple sentence correctly without teacher support. This very good teaching could be used to help other teachers improve their practice. A further strength of provision in English is the wide range of opportunities pupils are given, by all teachers, to write for a variety of different purpose and audiences. For example, when writing letters, poems or reports pupils are given many opportunities to apply their writing skills in other curriculum subjects but their lower than average standards in speaking prevents many of them from expressing themselves clearly.

74. The teachers are not very experienced at recognising the small steps within the National Curriculum levels. They identify what tasks the children find difficult or easy and plan lessons to support weaker areas without noting which level or part level the children are working towards. This makes progress uneven as important improvements are neglected, for example, punctuation in Year 1.

75. The leadership and management of English is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has offered her support to staff. Monitoring of lessons with the headteacher

has improved the teaching. More work is now needed to push the standards to the next level. The subject is appropriately resourced, with high quality 'big books' and guided readers. Class libraries in Year 2 are unsatisfactory. They are small and uninviting. The library, situated in the hall, is used well within the limiting circumstances.

MATHEMATICS

76. By the end of Year 2, standards in all aspects of the subject are average. Standards have improved since the last inspection; the year on year rate of improvement exceeds improvement nationally. Higher, average and lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school and many pupils are achieving well. This good achievement is directly linked to the quality of good and often very good teaching pupils receive and to the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress over time as a result of the good support they receive.

77. Standards on beginning Year 1 are below and sometimes well below those expected for pupils this age. However, a clear focus on developing numeracy skills helps pupils to extend counting skills so that by the end of Year 2 they are much more confident and proficient in working with numbers up to 100. The higher and average attaining pupils in Year 2 understand simple fractions, such as half and quarter, and are confident when adding or subtracting numbers to 100, having good mental recall of addition and subtraction facts using numbers to 20. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of hundreds, tens and units. They accurately order numbers, including hundreds. They explain strategies they use when doing this. Average attaining pupils have a good understanding of tens and units when handling two digit numbers. Both higher attaining and average attaining pupils are clear about the characteristics of odd and even numbers. Lower attaining pupils count accurately when using practical aids.

78. Pupils use an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary when discussing their work. Higher attainers understand that subtraction is the inverse of addition and use this knowledge to check if their answers are correct. A good focus on work with shape, results in average and higher attainers being able to name and describe the properties of a range of three-dimensional shapes. Similarly, a focus on the development of mathematical vocabulary is improving pupils' ability to use this when discussing shapes. They recognise and name such shapes as a cylinder, cuboid, cone and square-based pyramid and use words such as edge, rectangle, face, edge and vertex when describing them. Lower attaining pupils can recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes such as a square, rectangle and triangle and some three-dimensional shapes such as a cube and a sphere. Higher and average attaining pupils enjoy investigating in mathematics. They look for simple patterns and relationships when solving problems adding three numbers together within a given framework. Higher attaining pupils also investigate number permutations.

79. All pupils apply themselves well to mathematical tasks. They quickly settle to class and group activities after the initial whole-class sessions. They co-operate well and the pace of working is usually good.

80. The overall good teaching significantly contributes to the good progress pupils make in their learning. Teaching reflects good subject knowledge. Teachers give clear explanations to pupils and carefully plan work to meet the wide range of learning needs of pupils in classes. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on numeracy but also addresses the requirements of other aspects of mathematics. A strong feature of mathematics within the school is the focus teachers give to using and applying mathematics. Mathematical vocabulary is effectively developed and pupils use it when discussing their work. When

responding to a question they are often invited to explain why or how they have arrived at the answer. The good opportunities offered by ICT to support mathematics are being effectively used by teachers. For example, Year 1 pupils confidently use the computer to sort objects into different groups according to a range of criteria. They also use it to reinforce their ability to recognise shapes, develop counting-on skills, and to create number sequences.

81. The subject is excellently managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. There is an effective action plan to support the drive for further improvement. Assessment data is being used effectively to track pupils' progress and to aid the setting of targets for improved standards. Resources are good and used well to support teaching and learning. A well attended after-school mathematics club provides further good opportunity for pupils to develop an interest in mathematics in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

SCIENCE

82. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 are average and similar to those found at the last inspection. In most aspects of the subject, across the school, all pupils' make satisfactory progress. Training to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding has improved children's experimental and investigation skills.

83. Inspection findings, however, based on the work seen from 2002, shows that there are fewer pupils reaching the higher levels than results show. A reason for this discrepancy is that work is not accurately assessed. Also, teachers do not compare their judgements about attainment across the classes in the same year group. The school is already beginning work to tackle these issues. Further work is required on evaluating attainment so that the skills of lower, average and higher attaining pupils are clearly identified and next steps in learning matched to their need.

84. By the end of Year 2 pupils know about light and colour; materials and how they change. They classify mini-beasts and draw and accurately label the body parts. The pupils collect data when testing toy cars on different surfaces, measuring and recording their findings in simple table forms. Generally, there is not enough emphasis on pupils expressing their own ideas for solutions or explaining why things happen. In a lesson making electric circuits with a light and buzzers the higher attaining pupils quickly achieved the task and used a good range of science vocabulary such as positive and negative current and high volt battery. The average and lower attainers were willing to say what they had done but described their actions by saying, "this bit there".

85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers make lessons interesting with effective use of resources that involve the pupils well in practical activities. For instance, Year1 pupils join the parts of a skeleton as part of a design and technology lesson and then label the body parts correctly. When using photographs of themselves, careful and effective questioning allows misunderstandings to be discussed, such as, "because one child is taller than another, does that mean they are older?" Sometimes questioning could be extended to develop pupils' answers and to encourage them to ask their own questions. This would help them to act like a scientist, investigate and research their findings. ICT is used more regularly and pupils use the Internet to find information on topics, such as 'Ourselves'. Teachers are confident, enthusiastic and their subject knowledge is secure. Consequently, all pupils enjoy science and participate well because of the support they receive.

86. The co-ordinator is new to the post and is very able to take the subject forward. She is aware of the priorities and is implementing them effectively. The planned programme of work has been revised and is providing better progression from Year 1 to Year 2. The level of

knowledge shown by the nursery children now needs to be taken into account and links made with the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure skills are developed systematically.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Standards are good overall and the pupils make good progress. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The children cover an appropriate curriculum that includes good opportunities to develop above average skills with paint, pastels and pencils. They have opportunities to experience some work with textiles and clay but their standards in these areas, while satisfactory, are lower.

88. The pupils combine drawing media well and achieve thoughtful and attractive pieces of work. In Year 1, recent work based on self portraits is detailed and imaginative and shows a confident use of media. The children used pencil, chalk, charcoal and pastel with great sensitivity and individuality. Those who used colour reached a particularly high standard in making skin and hair tones and using unusual colours for backgrounds and contrasts. This is well above average work. The teachers draw attention to the facial features and encourage the children to experiment. In Year 2 the children also reach above average standards in their drawing and painting. Their work based on paintings by Lowry shows good teaching and learning of perspective. The children's models of small jointed figures have been used well to help them draw realistic people in the style of the artist. Their finished work is interesting and unusual. Other work, linked to drawings for design and technology work and history show good attention to detail and use of colour.

89. The children's work is displayed well. There is an interesting selection of posters displayed around the school showing work of artists such as Monet and Picasso. The use of art from different cultures is underdeveloped. A visiting artist has created work that is permanently displayed in the school and the children are able to combine some of their own work with this to make attractive displays.

90. The co-ordinator is newly appointed. She already provides good support by ensuring the planned programme of work is covered and has already collected teachers' planning to evaluate and discuss. The co-ordinator has noted that there is no strategy to assess the children's progress and help them reach higher standards. She plans to develop assessments as soon as possible.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards are above average and the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. These standards have been improved since the last inspection. Only one lesson was seen, but from the work on display and discussions with pupils and teachers, the quality of teaching is good.

92. Pupils enjoy the practical tasks of designing and making. They are competent in cutting, attaching and decorating paper, plastic and card and fastening materials together. Year 2 pupils have been designing and making wheeled vehicles that will carry a particular load. Their drawings are detailed and during the task they learned to make decisions about which materials work the best. The teachers encourage them to analyse the effectiveness of their product by judging its quality. For example, how easily the wheels turn and whether the car body matches the size of the base. Year 1 pupils have made fruit salads. They have selected and prepared the fruit before sampling and judging the quality of the completed salad. Their work is detailed and clear. Lessons are organised well and the pupils cover a good range of work at a fairly fast pace.

93. The subject is led well. The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for the subject but already has a clear view of the work of the school. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme for the subject and has adapted these to meet the needs of the school.

GEOGRAPHY

94. Only two lessons were seen, but from the work on display, the scrutiny of books and talking to pupils, standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. This is similar to findings at the last inspection. There are some good features, especially in the use of the local environment; studying places close to home and far-away places, including comparison with a very different environment in Oakamoor village. Pupils in Year 1 when learning about maps based on their classrooms and journeys around the school, could talk about directions and plot routes from the classroom to the hall. They look critically at their own locality and comment on the things that they like and those that they would like to change, using appropriate vocabulary. In Year 2 pupils' know about different types of transport in India and the United Kingdom and can compare differences between the town of Burslem and the village of Oakamoor.

95. The teaching of geography is satisfactory. The work is well planned. Pupils are encouraged to think about the physical and human features of the world in which they live. Much of the written work seen was very brief and does not give pupils the opportunity to express their ideas in writing. In reviewing the work of pupils from the previous Year 2, there was no evidence of attainment at the higher level and this is mainly because the higher attaining pupils are not given the opportunity to carry out geographical study in sufficient depth. The best written work was seen in relation to the project on the Potteries which includes aspects of history and art. Pupils were given more scope for written responses to the very interesting work. Overall, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop the writing of reports, notes on visits and longer pieces of writing to compare features of different places in the world.

96. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of geography and is well able to bring about improvements in the subject. There is a well organised approach to auditing current resources and drawing up an action plan for future resourcing needs. Plans are in hand to collect examples of work in each year group to help teachers assess pupils' attainment.

HISTORY

97. The standard of work seen in history is satisfactory for pupils at the end of Year 2. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. There are some good aspects in history, particularly in topics that allow the children to record their responses in models, pictures, written work and discussions. The work seen in the books from last academic year shows that the pupils have learned about many different events and personalities in English history. Very little of this work has required them to apply an understanding of why things happened in the way that they did, or why some famous people acted as they did. Consequently pupils do not achieve enough to reach higher standards

98. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall. Display in classrooms on the topic around the Fire of London and Samuel Pepys indicates that there is a good opportunity for pupils to learn about key events. Longer pieces of imaginative and factual writing are limited because there is an over-emphasis on the recall of small pieces of factual knowledge rather than the interpretation of events and reasons using historical evidence. For example, the children knew a few key facts

about Samuel Pepys but could not say why his diary is an important source of evidence, or how their own diaries might be used in the future.

99. Work is planned with a sensible balance between starting from the present and going backwards in time, such as the toy study going back to Victorian times. Other key events and important people, such as Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys are appropriately taught as individual topics. The curriculum is enriched with visits and adds a great deal to the pupils' understanding of their own very rich history.

100. The subject is effectively led by an experienced co-ordinator who knows what is needed next. Appropriate plans are in place to improve pupils' skills in interpreting historical evidence. A collection of pupils' work to set expectations of attainment across the age range is being developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

101. Standards in ICT are average by the end of Year 2. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop and use their skills and knowledge in several subjects. The result is that they develop confidence in their own abilities, and many make good progress. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' skills were reported to be underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers with the result that they also make good progress.

102. Year 1 pupils become familiar with the computer, learning the names of the different parts and about their functions. They can point out the keyboard, monitor and disk drive and describe what each of these pieces does. They quickly gain confidence and skill using the keyboard and mouse to operate a range of programs, for example, in art lessons drawing pictures on the screen. Year 2 extend their skills in English lessons, using the computer to write words and learn spellings. They work confidently, being able to use a range of buttons, function keys and the mouse, writing words and controlling the cursor on the screen.

103. Year 1 pupils know that information exists in different forms. For example, they know that books are used to find things out. With the support of the teacher they use the Internet to find information. As they watch the teacher using a 'search engine' they understand that the computer is responding to instructions given it by the teacher. This extends their understanding of being able to use technology to control objects and things, building on earlier experiences programming robotic toys to move in predetermined directions. Pupils in Year 2 use the Internet to seek out information about topics they study in the classroom. For example, in history they find out information about the 'Great Fire of London' and in geography about Japan.

104. ICT is effectively taught through its use across different subjects. Some specific ICT lessons teach particular skills, as for example, when pupils are taught how to use the Internet to search for information. Pupils effectively use a range of programs to develop learning in a number of subjects including English, mathematics, art and design, geography and history. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they give pupils clear instructions and explanations.

105. Management of the subject is good and as a result improvement since the last inspection is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and determined to continue the good improvement. The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure adequate child protection facilities are installed for when pupils are using the Internet.

MUSIC

106. Standards in music are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection.

107. The children sing very well together, particularly in assembly. Children know the songs from memory and their enjoyment and enthusiasm is enhanced by the tuneful and expressive performance. Most Year 2 pupils know the names of percussion instruments and some more unusual instruments, such as 'cabasa' and 'agogo', from different cultures. The pupils listen attentively to different types of music in assembly but they do not know the names of the composers or the piece of music they have heard.

108. Pupils' competence is systematically developed through effectively planned work. Consequently pupils in Year 1 use their voices expressively to tell the story of 'Peace at Last', whilst others create animal sound effects playing instruments with varying degrees of control. Pupils with special educational needs join in very well. By the beginning of Year 2 the pupils select their own instruments to make simple compositions such as 'a windy day'. With the help of the teacher they record their work on audio-tape, listen to it carefully, and use the recording as the starting point for the next lesson. A few pupils are beginning to say what they like about their own work and that of others. Higher attainers, with confident language skills, are just beginning to say how the instruments could be played differently to improve their composition, for example, softly, or slow getting faster and louder like a strong wind.

109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some strengths. The knowledgeable subject co-ordinator is raising the standard of music and providing good support and training for other less confident teachers. Using the specialist skills of the co-ordinator to demonstrate how to teach the lesson is beneficial, helping the pupils to learn more quickly. Sometimes, in lessons where teachers' are not as skilled, pupils are not taught the correct way to hold a beater or an instrument. This means the pupils are not always happy with the sound produced, but do not know how to improve it. The effective use of group work usually has pupils concentrating and co-operating well. Noise levels are occasionally too high for careful listening and a few older boys act inappropriately banging instruments. Lessons timetabled at the end of the day are too short. Consequently, rushed activities do not develop the pupils' knowledge or skills in depth. Resources are unsatisfactory because the range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and music books is limited.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. By the end of Year 2 pupils attain good standards in swimming. In other areas of the curriculum pupils attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy the very good range of activities provided for them. During the inspection pupils were observed engaging in swimming, movement and games activities.

111. Most Year 1 pupils start the school year as non-swimmers. As a result of very good teaching most pupils, by the end of Year 2, are able to swim at least a short distance and are very confident in water. A significant number are competent swimmers for their age. This represents very good progress.

112. During indoor lessons in movement and games Year 2 pupils move with sound levels of control and co-ordination. They display average games skills, being able to pass a football and dribble it around a number of obstacles with expected levels of accuracy.

113. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Direct teaching of games skills is effective in improving ball skills. Teachers ensure that pupils 'warm up' and 'cool down' before and after sessions. During sessions pupils respond well to instructions and try hard to do their best;

this has a direct impact on their learning. Overall, pupils make sound progress in these lessons. During some lessons the structure of the activities pupils engage in means that they are inactive for quite lengthy periods, simply watching others perform. For example, when engaged in a ball dribbling team game as a member of a large team with team members taking it in turns to dribble the ball. This inactivity slows down the rate of progress.

114. The indoor accommodation is spacious for dancing, movement and gymnastics. There is good hard surfaced provision outside for games. Resources are appropriate in quality and quantity. Good curriculum provision is very effectively enhanced by outside visitors who come into the school and undertake coaching sessions. For example, representatives of Leek Town Football Club visit school and coach football skills in an after-school club. They also work with pupils in lessons. From time to time a prominent gymnast holds gymnastic workshops in school. The provision is further strengthened by regular visits of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils to the Burslem Gymnastic Centre where they receive expert coaching and instruction in movement and gymnastics. At certain times of the year a gymnastics club is held after school for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and is well attended.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress with their learning. As a result, as pupils get older they show an increasing ability to express ideas and feelings and they have greater knowledge and understanding of religious issues to aid their thinking and discussions.

116. The good progress pupils make in RE is largely due to good teaching. Teachers skilfully involve pupils directly in lessons. By the use of astute questions teachers challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. They encourage pupils to answer by drawing on their existing knowledge. Lessons are interesting and are made relevant to the lives of the pupils. Pupils respond by taking part enthusiastically, contributing well to discussion, displaying considerable interest in each other's questions and happily sharing knowledge with one another.

117. Year 1 pupils have good recall of stories about Jesus. Most are aware that stories about Jesus' life on earth are found in the New Testament. They are aware of his healing ministry and know that he healed people by performing 'miracles'. When talking about some of the healing miracles performed by Jesus, higher attaining pupils are able to reflect on the feelings of the main participants in the story. For example, when discussing the stories of Jesus healing Bartimaeus and raising Lazarus from the dead they relate to the care Jesus shows to others and explain why it is important that humans should care for and behave well towards one another.

118. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of the importance of world religions and understand their significant symbols and events. They learn about the similarities and differences in the ways people of different faiths worship by studying the symbols they use in worship and the buildings in which they meet to worship. Visitors to school and visits out of school make a significant contribution to pupils' effective learning. For example, pupils have visited local Christian churches of different denominations and they have also visited the local Gurdwara. Members of the local clergy from different denominations have visited classrooms and people representing the Sikh and Islamic faith have visited school and talked to pupils about aspects of their faith.

119. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, having a good understanding of the requirements of the agreed syllabus. She offers good support to

colleagues in planning lessons and in monitoring teaching. Her enthusiasm and sound knowledge and a well-devised action plan contribute to the good capacity to improve. Resources are satisfactory; effective use is made of a range of artefacts when pupils study the different ways in which people worship. Assemblies contribute well to the quality of learning by providing opportunities for prayer and reflection, extending knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and recognising the major festivals of other religions.