

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODHOUSE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124031

Headteacher: Mr D Eaglestone

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone
21114

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September 2002

Inspection number: 248531

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Anchor Road Longton Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 5EW
Telephone number:	01782 233167
Fax number:	01782 233165
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Woodall
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21450	Daniel Kilborn	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education	
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Special educational needs	
22248	Glesni Thomas	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

SES Ltd
132 Whitaker Road
Derby
DE23 6AP

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodhouse Junior School is a larger than average junior school for 407 pupils, with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Almost all are of white United Kingdom heritage with just two per cent from other ethnic backgrounds. There are seven pupils who have English as an additional language but only one pupil, a refugee, is at an early stage of English language acquisition. There are a few looked after children. The area served by the school has features of social and economic disadvantage. A broadly average proportion of pupils, 26 per cent, is eligible for free school meals. Nineteen per cent of pupils, broadly average, have special educational needs. The range of needs include specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural needs. The large majority, however, has moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is about average. The school has identified about seven per cent of pupils as gifted or talented. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally above average. Over the past two years, six teachers have left and eight have been appointed. Three teachers were new to the school at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school in many aspects of its work. The headteacher leads the school well and is committed to developing a love of learning in partnership with the community. Standards have improved over the past few years and by the end of Year 6 they are now above average in mathematics, science, religious education, art and design, history and geography. The school is helping pupils become mature and responsible as a result of the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much of the teaching is good. It is consistently good in Year 6 and helps pupils achieve very well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are above average in most subjects.
- The quality of teaching is mostly good and all staff are committed to continuing professional development.
- The headteacher is an excellent role model for pupils and staff.
- The school provides a stimulating learning environment and very good curriculum; the provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- All pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life.
- There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development, attitudes and relationships very well.

What could be improved

- The monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment in order to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- The numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels in English.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been satisfactory overall improvement since the last inspection in November 1997. Standards are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection. Weaknesses identified in design and technology have been addressed successfully and progress in the subject is now more consistent across the school. Average standards have been maintained in all other subjects, except for ICT where despite some improvements, progress has not kept pace with the rapidly rising national expectations. Teaching and learning have improved and the school continues to be well led and managed. Handwriting, presentation, marking and assessment have improved but some inconsistencies across and within year groups remain. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are now good. Good improvements have been made in playground safety. The capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	E	D
Mathematics	E	D	D	C
Science	E	C	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, mathematics and science are now above average. This is reflected in the provisional results of the group of eleven-year-olds who took the national tests in 2002 and in the work Year 6 pupils were doing during the inspection. Improvement has resulted from better teaching as a result of the teachers' commitment to continuing professional development, a very good curriculum and the higher standards of pupils entering the school at seven. In relation to pupils from similar schools, standards are high enough to be above average. Standards in English, mathematics and science have kept pace with the national upward trend and the school is likely to achieve its targets for the next two years. In English, not enough pupils attain the higher levels. There has been improvement in pupils' writing, and the focus on stimulating the boys to write better has closed the gap that had opened between the performance of boys and girls in the 2001 tests. Both boys and girls now achieve standards that are similar to the national average. In mathematics, pupils achieve well across most aspects of their work, although their mental mathematics skills are not sharp enough. The emphasis on investigative work in mathematics and science has helped to raise pupils' achievements in these subjects.

Pupils' achievements are sound overall, although they are mostly very good in Year 6. In other year groups, there are some inconsistencies and learning for most pupils varies from satisfactory to good. In writing, the achievements, particularly of the above average pupils, could be better. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their personal targets. The needs of those pupils with statements of special needs are fully met and they achieve well. The very small number of looked after children and those who have English as an additional language are supported effectively and achieve well in all subjects. The school makes good extra provision for the small minority of gifted and talented pupils in activities outside normal lessons. These activities make a good contribution to the pupils' knowledge, understanding and achievements.

Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations but could be higher if computers were used more to support work in other subjects. Standards are above average in art and design, history, geography, physical education and religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils in Year 3 take time to settle into the routines of the school but improve rapidly as they move through the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There is little evidence of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and pupils talk very positively about the friendly atmosphere in the school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Together with the development of confidence and high self-esteem, pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils learn effectively about citizenship in organisations such as the school council. They develop a very good awareness of moral and social issues especially in relation to those who are worse off than they are. They support a wide range of charities and are sensitive to environmental issues.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

Teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection was good or better in almost seven out of ten lessons and in these lessons the teaching met the needs of all pupils well and they made good progress. Teaching was very rarely unsatisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the past year, however, reveals some inconsistencies in pupils' progress. In some classes, in Years 3, 4 and 5 for example, progress is satisfactory, whilst in others it is good. There was significantly more good and very good teaching in the Year 6 classes and as a consequence pupils make rapid progress in lessons. Despite some difficulties for the pupils in Year 3 settling in to their new classroom routines, learning develops very well as they move through the school and many of the older pupils have very good attitudes to learning and achieve very well in their academic and personal development. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well.

The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good and the grouping of pupils into ability sets is well established and effective. The good teaching is characterised by good planning, brisk pace, stimulating use of resources, very good relationships and questioning that makes pupils think. In the less effective lessons, there is a lack of challenge in the work set for groups and whole class sessions go on for too long. The scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates inconsistencies in achievement, presentation and marking. Computers are not used enough to support work across all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The breadth and richness of the curriculum are strong features of the school's provision. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effective support is provided. All staff know these pupils well and activities are well matched to individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The one pupil at the early stages of English language acquisition is well provided for and integrated effectively into the life and work of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual provision is good and moral, social and cultural provision is very good. Staff provide very good examples for the pupils to follow. There is a strong sense of community within the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There is an ethos of care and social inclusion, which permeates the work of the school. Assessment and its use to inform planning are satisfactory, although there are inconsistencies that weaken its effectiveness.

The school has made very good efforts to involve parents in their children's education and a good partnership has developed. The large majority has very positive views of the school and make a good contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. In his commitment, enthusiasm and teaching, the headteacher leads from the front. He is an excellent role model for staff and pupils. He is supported well by his deputy and senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and are developing their strategic role effectively. They have good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good general view of its work but the present system of monitoring teaching and learning is not sharp enough to pick up inconsistencies across the year groups.
The strategic use of resources	Strategic planning is very good and most resources are used well.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed is good. There is a very good understanding and application of best value principles

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 are making good progress. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • Behaviour is good and the school is helping children become mature. • There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on. • The working relationship between school and parents. • Consistency in the provision and marking of homework.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments. The information provided for parents and the partnership between school and parents are judged to be good. There is a very good homework policy and homework was set or referred to in most classes during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. In English and mathematics, there has been gradual improvement since 1999, in line with the national trend. Results in science have risen more rapidly. During this period, girls have tended to do better than boys, particularly in writing and mathematics. The school is aware of this and has worked on strategies to close the gap. Unverified results from the 2002 tests reveal good improvements. Indications are that overall standards have improved with a similar percentage of boys and girls reaching national levels. This has raised overall standards with almost 20 per cent more pupils reaching the national level in English and mathematics. The high standards in science have been maintained. Inspection evidence supports this improving picture and indicates that similar target percentages for 2003 are likely to sustain the improvement. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in English remains too low. In the 2001 tests, whilst the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was similar to the national average in mathematics and above average in science, it was below average in English. The unverified results for 2002, show only a similar percentage of pupils reaching the level 5 in English.

2 Overall improvement has been brought about by careful analysis of pupils' performance in national tests. In writing, for example new stimuli to motivate boys to write more readily is proving promising. In mathematics, there has been emphasis on teaching a variety of different methods of calculation to the different ability sets and then deciding on the best method for their particular needs. The teachers' commitment to continuing professional development has also led to improvements as their own knowledge has increased. The setting of personal targets for pupils has contributed well. Also, the attainment of pupils entering Year 3 has risen since the last inspection and over the past three years has been above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This points to the likelihood of a continuation of the rising trend in standards.

3 Most Year 3 pupils find difficulty in settling into their new classes and work routines. This creates some initial difficulties for the teachers in Year 3 who work hard to establish a more effective attitude to learning. Nonetheless, this aspect of their learning develops very well as they move through the school and many of the older pupils have very good attitudes to learning and achieve very well in their academic and personal development. This is particularly marked in the Year 6 classes. Teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection was mostly good and in these lessons pupils of all abilities made good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the past year, however, reveals some inconsistencies in pupils' progress. In some classes in Years 3, 4 and 5, for example, progress is satisfactory, whilst in others it is good. Progress is more consistent in Year 6 and pupils achieve very well in most aspects of their work. There is still room for improvement in pupils' achievements in writing, particularly for the above average pupils.

4 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers and learning support assistants work closely together. The pupils work hard in their lessons and want to please their teachers. They make the best progress where teachers plan specific activities and resources for each pupil. In some situations pupils are withdrawn from their classrooms to work with their teaching assistants. These sessions work well and are based on the targets in their termly individual education plans. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets of their individual education plans. In the lower sets for English and mathematics, there is a high proportion of the pupils who experience special educational needs. The setting arrangements are successful in helping the teachers to plan work suited to pupils' needs and help increase the rate of

progress in these subjects. The school strategy of supporting the lower sets with learning support assistants is effective.

5 The very small number of looked after children and those who have English as an additional language are supported effectively and achieve well. The school makes good extra provision for the small minority of gifted and talented pupils in activities outside normal lessons. These include visits to partner primary schools to ‘master classes’ in subjects such as art, dance, music, mathematics and science. A few pupils attended a national seminar on philosophy. These activities make a good contribution to the pupils’ knowledge, understanding and achievements.

6 In English, by the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening and writing are similar to the national average and pupils’ achievements are satisfactory. More could be expected of the above average pupils in their writing. Pupils achieve well in their reading and standards are above average. Pupils’ literacy skills give good support to work in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education and are a key factor in the above average standards achieved in these subjects.

7 In mathematics, pupils achieve well in number, shape, measures and data handling. However, pupils’ speedy recall of number facts is too slow and leads to some inaccuracies in paper calculations. The school is aware of this and has begun to target this aspect of learning. Pupils’ numeracy skills give satisfactory support to work in subjects such as geography, science and design and technology. In science, pupils develop a good knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. In both science and mathematics, good emphasis on teaching the skills of investigation is helping raise standards.

8 The school’s successful commitment to a broad and relevant curriculum with appropriate amounts of time spent on all subjects has helped to raise standards in almost all subjects since the last inspection. Standards are above average in art and design in which imaginative use is made of a wide range of techniques and materials to express and develop ideas. In history and geography, above average standards are substantially the consequence of a curriculum that embraces a highly practical approach. In above average work in religious education, pupils’ work shows thoughtful responses to their learning and a good knowledge of Christianity and other major religions. In the physical education lessons observed, standards were better than normally seen for pupils’ age. Standards in music are similar to the levels expected nationally. In design and technology standards are in line with national expectations and progress across year groups has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. In information and communication technology, standards were judged to be above average in the last inspection. Whilst there has been improvement since then, it has not been enough to keep pace with the rapidly rising national expectation. Standards are now judged to be similar to those expected for pupils’ ages. Computers are not yet used enough to support work in other subjects and this slows down pupils’ progress in applying and developing skills.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils’ very good attitudes to school, good behaviour and very good relationships with staff and each other are having a very positive impact on their achievements, especially on their personal development. This shows an improvement over the standards described in the previous report when attitudes and behaviour were described as generally positive. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by the very lively and keen interest they show in their work and the general life of the school. This was demonstrated well by a pupil in Year 6 to the agreement of many of her friends when she remarked that; “We are one big happy family.” Pupils also show a very keen interest in the many extra-curricular activities provided for them.

10 Attitudes to learning improve as pupils progress through the school. In Year 3, pupils take a while to settle into new routines and are often restless, especially at the end of the morning sessions. This, at times, limits the learning of pupils in spite of teachers’ efforts to maintain the pace of the

lessons. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are keen to get on with their lessons, try hard to do their best, and sustain interest well throughout the school day. This was demonstrated well in an art and design lesson in which pupils maintained concentration well throughout the lesson, showed a keen desire to improve their work and impress their teacher. The very good interest pupils show in reading has a very positive impact on the standards they achieve.

11 The behaviour of the great majority of pupils is good. There is little evidence of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and pupils talk very positively about the friendly atmosphere in the school and in the playground. They praise the team captain system and the use of pupil volunteers in helping maintain standards of behaviour in the playground. A small minority of pupils are boisterous but their behaviour is well controlled. There has been one temporary exclusion in the last year, a figure below the national average. Pupils have a very good awareness of why rules and conventions exist, and are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of their actions on others. By the time they reach Year 6, they are very mature, sensible and well behaved young people. They show very good respect for the feelings and beliefs of others and all show a genuine appreciation of the efforts of others.

12 Pupils with special educational needs behave well and have very positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to get on with their tasks and work very well together when placed in small groups with other pupils. They listen to the adults who help them with their work and grow in self-confidence as they achieve their targets. They are happy to learn and keen to share their work and learning. The relationships between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants is a key factor in the increasing confidence pupils with special educational needs show during lessons. All of the adults in the school are committed to showing pupils how everyone is special and themes such as 'Marvellous Me' have a very good impact on pupils' self-confidence.

13 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils and staff get on together well. This pleasant rapport has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially the interaction between teachers and pupils during lessons. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, the excellent interaction between the teacher and pupils produced a very informed debate on the impact of waste on the environment. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful and love chatting to visitors. They work together well in pairs and groups. Teamwork is good and boys and girls co-operate well as they show when very eagerly taking part in a Tug of War organised by the headteacher in the lunch break.

14 Pupils' personal development is very good and they develop a very good awareness of citizenship. A very good example is their keen and responsible approach to being Team Captains in Year 6. They talk about helping teachers and especially younger pupils in the playground if they have problems or get into squabbles. They like to show visitors around and are very proud of the outdoor facilities at the school. They talk very positively about how they were consulted and helped in their design and content. Pupils show pride in the school achievements. They express their feelings well in relation to issues or dilemmas. For instance, in an English lesson for Year 6 pupils, they talked of "desperation" and "isolation" when confronted by bullying, and in a personal and social education lesson for Year 3 pupils remarked on particular pupils being good at making us laugh or being good at getting on with people. They are developing a very good awareness of moral and social issues especially in relation to those who are worse off than they are. They support a wide range of charities and speak very proudly of their support for tree planting in Africa. They are developing a good awareness of environmental issues.

15 In the school council pupils show their maturity and social development very well. They currently have working parties to look at the development of a computer club at lunchtimes and at what goods are to be sold in the tuck shop, and they are writing their own newspaper. Pupils show very good appreciation of art, music, drama and literature. Pupils are developing a joy for learning, which is fostered very well by the school. Together with the development of confidence and high self-esteem, pupils leave the school very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Year 6 pupils say they will be sad to leave the school but are confident about the move to secondary school.

16 Overall attendance rates are good, being above the national average. Levels of unauthorised absences are low. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons at the start of the school day. These factors have a positive effect on their standards and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is more excellent, very good and good teaching now and very little teaching that is less than satisfactory. Teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection was good or better in almost seven out of ten lessons and in these lessons the teaching met the needs of all pupils well and they made good progress. There was significantly more very good teaching in the Year 5 and 6 classes and as a consequence pupils made rapid progress in these lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the past year, however, reveals some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. In some classes in Years 3, 4 and 5, for example, progress is satisfactory, whilst in others it is good. Despite some difficulties for the pupils in Year 3 settling in to their new classroom routines, learning develops very well as they move through the school and many of the older pupils have very good attitudes to learning and achieve very well in their academic and personal development.

18 The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good and the grouping of pupils into ability sets is well established and effective. Teachers have a good knowledge of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and lesson planning is based on the recommended three-part structure of introductory whole class work, group and individual activities and closing recap sessions. In English, more could be expected of the above average pupils and in mathematics the opening whole class mental mathematics sessions could be sharper and involve more of the pupils. Where lessons in English and mathematics were less effective, the main weakness centred on the group activities. Some work given to groups and individuals who were working independent of the teacher was not challenging or stimulating enough to keep them meaningfully occupied and their attention and rate of progress dropped at these times.

19 Science, art and design, history, geography, physical education and religious education are well taught. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects is good and activities develop key skills and capture the pupils' interest effectively. In design and technology, music and physical education, teaching is mostly satisfactory with some good and very good lessons seen. The teaching of ICT seen during the inspection was good but a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that it is satisfactory overall. Key skills are not built on successfully enough from year to year and there are no systematic assessments and records of pupils' progress. This leads to inconsistencies in pupils' learning. Whilst there are some good examples, overall teachers are not using computers enough to consolidate and extend skills through other subjects.

20 Across all subjects, key strengths in the teaching are:

- planning that is based securely on national and school guidance
- emphasis on investigative and practical work in all subjects. In an art and design lesson, for example, pupils produced very good work as a result of the exploration of surface patterns and textures in the school grounds. In geography, they took photographs of traffic 'blackspots' round the school to aid their investigations and solutions with reference to an environmental problem
- assessments of what has been learnt in lessons as a pointer to planning the next stage of work
- questioning that makes pupils think. For example, in a literacy lesson for below average pupils, the teacher asked; 'What do you think the story is going to be about?'
- relationships that foster self confidence and self esteem
- the willingness of all teachers to evaluate their performance and seek ways to improve
- use of resources including visits and visitors to support and enrich learning and

- the setting of regular homework that consolidates and extends learning.

21 Areas for improvement relate to:

- expectations of the amount and quality of the work pupils might achieve;
- marking that gives pupils little indication of how it might be improved;
- whole class sessions that go on too long to maintain the attention of all pupils.

22 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is supported effectively by the pupils' individual education plans that are carefully drawn up by class teachers and the co-ordinator. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator in monitoring the quality of teaching is good and ensures that learning support assistants receive training which helps them meet pupils' needs. Learning support assistants link with certain pupils to hear them read, recite their spellings, work at meeting their targets and keep their progress under review. In large part this works very well. Where learning support assistants read with pupils, they read the words for the pupils and sometimes miss opportunities to remind them of the sounds made by each letter or group of letters. Most pupils with special educational needs are taught in the lower sets of English and mathematics. These individual or small group sessions are very valuable in ensuring that pupils keep up with their work.

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

23 The rich and highly effective curriculum extends pupils' horizons and incorporates an excellent range of clubs and out of school activities. Since the last inspection, the quality and range of learning opportunities have improved considerably and are now very good. The broad curriculum provided reflects very well the values of the school and its commitment to inclusion. Improvements since the last inspection have resulted in a very well balanced programme highly relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

24 All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and there are good policies and schemes of work for all areas. All statutory requirements are met, as are the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The curriculum includes a good programme of personal social, health and sex education and the school council is a very good example of the opportunities provided for personal development. A topic based curricular approach has been successfully adopted for some subjects. For example, a historical study of the Tudors is linked to a unit of work on textiles in art and design without loss of rigour in either subject. The thoughtfully designed timetable includes three lessons during morning sessions and this helps to ensure that pupils experience a balanced curriculum. Curricular provision is underpinned by the school's high challenge/low stress approach and its successful endeavours to provide a good climate for learning.

25 The breadth and richness of the curriculum are strong features of the school's provision. The curriculum includes environmental studies, which is taught through other subjects, including science, geography and art. For instance, pupils in Year 6 learn about pollution in their geography lessons, look at patterns in the environment in art and visit an outdoor education centre. In many subjects, the starting point for learning is often in the school environment or the locality. For instance, work on local and global pollution begins with a playground litter trawl. Permanent and transitory features of the school environment, including the Ugandan Village, the pebble sculpture, the Potteries mural, silk paintings and outdoor weavings are a testament to the breadth of the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest and pupils have benefited from visits by artists in residence working in music, art and other curricular areas. In addition, from Year 4 onwards, pupils visit Outdoor Learning Centres and older pupils have the opportunity of residential and camping visits.

26 The school has sound strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. There are well-established arrangements to group pupils according to prior attainment for their English and mathematics lessons. Teachers' planning in these subjects is well linked to the national literacy and numeracy strategies. However, assessment information is not yet used effectively enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly the above average pupils, make the full progress of which they are capable

27 The commitment to equal opportunities is strong and this is evident in the way all pupils are fully included in learning. The encouragement given to pupils to be resourceful, responsible and resilient learners is one strategy designed to achieve school's aim of making learning accessible to all. The success of this approach is particularly evident in the way pupils apply themselves in practical tasks. Endeavours to successfully meet the needs of all pupils extend to extra-curricular activities. For example, an early morning reading club provides good support for pupils encountering problems with reading and a philosophy club is organised for above average and gifted pupils.

28 Pupils with special educational needs are given exactly the same learning experiences the school offers to other pupils. The school has developed sound strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy to special educational needs pupils including the use of sets. Timetabling is very carefully managed so as not to disrupt learning in other subjects and even spare minutes at play or lunchtime are used to remind pupils of their spellings and tables. The before school sessions, which have just begun, are an excellent example of the commitment of teachers and learning support assistants to encourage pupils with special educational needs to learn effectively outside of the normal school day.

29 The arrangements made by the school for extra-curricular activities are of the highest quality. Curricular opportunities are greatly enriched by the very wide range of clubs and activities held before and after school and at lunchtime. Staff support for the clubs is outstanding and every member of staff runs at least one club. The very wide range of clubs covers music activities including orchestra and choir, various sporting clubs, first-aid and table games. Some clubs, such as the early morning fitness and aerobic clubs are part of the school's strategy for promoting fitness and healthy living. The sign language club reflects the school's inclusive approach.

30 Links with the community are good, for instance pupils visit the nearby Gladstone Pottery Museum, the school choir performs locally and, at the local church, pupils perform sketches they have written. Members of the clergy regularly visit to take assemblies. There are good relationships with local schools. Infant pupils have painted a playground mural for the juniors and staff and pupils from the secondary school organised a very successful arts activity day in which the junior pupils painted silk banners.

31 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and the provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good. These aspects of the school's provision make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

32 Well-planned acts of worship that set the theme for the week and are extended in the class discussion times are effective in promoting pupils' self-esteem and give a focus for pupils to explore the meaning behind Christian values and beliefs. During the inspection the school focus was "Marvellous Me" and the aim was to promote self-esteem. Some of these discussions were good and one was excellent. However, some teachers do not give their pupils enough opportunities to reflect on issues, and the teachers' own ideas and opinions tend to dominate. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about their own and other faiths and are encouraged to discuss the way in which issues impact on themselves and others. Pupils are asked to reflect on the similarities and differences between faiths and to respect the beliefs and customs of others. Older pupils are expected to respond in more personal ways and to discuss attitudes to major rites and events such as the creation and initiation into faiths and deities. The rich curriculum enables the pupils, through history and geography for example, to understand how human values influence world events and the environment. The science curriculum promotes respect for human endeavour and the natural world.

33 The school rules are relevant and practical and are applied consistently throughout the school. Very good systems for supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties involve the adults in school, the pupils and the parents or carers. The school involves pupils in supporting the code of conduct and the care for others through the school council and a group of 16 of the oldest pupils who support lonely or new pupils and help to sort out disputes at playtimes. The weekly assembly theme is displayed in public areas and in the classrooms and there is an emphasis on positive aspects of behaviour. Adults set high standards and pupils know what is expected of them. This is extended beyond the school, as older pupils are encouraged to discuss world events as well as local issues. Pupils are actively encouraged to care for their environment and are justifiably proud of the 'wild area' and mock jungle that pupils helped to design.

34 These clear, consistent systems create a strong sense of community within the school. It is expected that pupils of all abilities and ethnicity should have equal rights and responsibilities within the school and the school works extremely hard to ensure that there is equality for all boys and girls. The personal values promoted within the school enable the pupils to select their peers for responsible positions such as the team captains and the year group school council representatives. Individuals are encouraged to take on responsibilities and to persevere with their duties. The excellent provision for extra-curricular activities encourages the commitment of the individuals themselves and to the others who depend on them. In this, the staff set an excellent example as everyone participates. The school encourages the pupils to support a range of charities such as tree planting in Africa and toiletries for the Elizabeth Trust, a local centre for homeless women, as well as national charities such as Comic Relief. This diversity extends pupils' understanding of the needs of others. The residential visits that are open to all pupils from eight years old upwards give pupils the opportunity to experience life away from home and to socialise with their teachers and peers in a new situation.

35 The school has built on the good cultural provision at the time of the last report and now provides the pupils with many opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. The extra-curricular activities, from the choir, orchestra and art clubs to the beginners and advanced language clubs, the gardening and library clubs, provide an exemplary selection for the pupils. Talented pupils play musical instruments and dance while highly literate pupils produce and edit the school magazine. Artists such as Narita Dabi work with the pupils, in this instance to create traditional Indian and African designs in silk. Musicians such as Winston Lewis, whose drums are still discussed by the pupils, give live performances and provide workshops. On World Book Day people from the community read to the pupils. The very good curriculum enables pupils to learn about their own and other cultures and to understand something of the needs and rights of all races as well as facts about their lives and cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The school provides very good care arrangements for its pupils and has maintained the standards outlined in the previous report. Safety outdoors has been improved significantly since the last inspection. The ethos of care and social inclusion, which permeates the work of the school, contributes very well towards pupils' positive attitude to school.

37 Health and safety procedures and monitoring are very efficient and potential risks are identified quickly. Child protection procedures and awareness are very good. First-aid arrangements are good with adequate staff receiving training. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well and staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well, especially looked after children. This contributes effectively to the very good personal support that enables all pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem.

38 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. The behaviour policy with an emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour has had a very positive

impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Sensitive handling of potential problems is key. For example, the school seeks never to call a pupil a naughty child but a child behaving in a naughty way. Pupils see the rewards system, especially the awarding of team points, as very fair and effective. The superb range of outdoor facilities and activities has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and relationships. Arrangements to discourage and deal with bullying, racist or sexist behaviour are also very good and any potential racial incidents are monitored and recorded rigorously. The school has a good written race equality policy that has been updating in line with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Parents and pupils feel that potential incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. The school makes very good efforts to include all pupils including those with behaviour difficulties. Exclusions are only ever used as a last resort.

39 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Registers are well maintained and the close monitoring of absences enables the school to quickly identify and pursue families who present problems.

40 There is good liaison between special needs staff and outside agencies. This ensures that the pupils' needs are fully met. The school has good procedures to identify and meet the needs of its pupils with special educational needs following the guidance of the Code of Practice, including working with partner infant schools. The school monitors the progress pupils make and in turn this information is passed to parents at the regular reviews of progress. The individual education plans are of good quality and concentrate on the skills and knowledge that pupils need to help them make progress towards their targets. Teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work hard on writing plans. Learning support assistants keep track of pupils' progress during lessons and report back to teachers about the success of each pupil. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good.

41 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. Information from Key Stage 1 tests is passed to the school and supplemented by school-based tests carried out soon after pupils enter Year 3. This data is used satisfactorily to identify the learning needs of new entrants. Optional tests in English, mathematics and science are carried out at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 and the outcomes contribute to the good individual targets that are set for all pupils. Assessments of what children know are carried out at the start and end of units of work in some subjects, including science, history and geography. End of unit tasks identify those pupils who have exceeded, reached or failed to achieve the unit learning objectives. Non-teaching staff often undertake observations of pupils and these contribute well to assessment information. There are good procedures for noting pupils' response and achievement in English and mathematics lessons. These, and other assessment procedures, have yet to be co-ordinated effectively and consistently applied.

42 The school's analysis of assessment information has led to action being taken to address underachievement. However, data analysis is not systematic enough. The school has recently adopted a new electronic system to organise assessment information but this is not yet fully operational. When up and running, it is expected that the system will improve the co-ordination and dissemination of relevant information, highlight trends in performance and facilitate prompt action. In the meantime, however, the school recognises that there are some shortcomings to the present arrangements and the best use is not being made of assessment data to ensure that pupils make the full progress of which they are capable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 The partnership with parents is good and the very good efforts made by the school to involve parents in their children's education have a positive impact on their attitudes to school and learning. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the last inspection with significant improvement in the quality of reporting on progress to parents.

44 Parents, through views expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, have mostly positive views about the school. They say that their children like school, are making good progress and behave well. They believe that teaching is good and the school expects the children to work hard while helping them to become mature and responsible. They are happy with the interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence supports these views. About a fifth of parents who responded to the questionnaire were of the view that the school does not work closely with parents and does not provide sufficient information on progress. Inspectors feel that the school works with parents very well and that they receive very good information from the school. Annual reports provide very good detail on attainment and progress in relation to all subjects; helpful targets for improvement are included in reports. Newsletters give parents good information about the life of the school and also about work to be undertaken each term. Home/school diaries are used consistently to enhance very effectively the two-way communication between teachers and parents. The school is very open to parents; staff are available for consultation at the beginning and end of the day. The school makes very good efforts to involve parents in the school community and their children's learning. For example, sessions on the school approach to accelerated learning are held and courses for parents are organised with a local college.

45 The contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is good. They are a valued part of the school community. The Parent, Teachers and Friends Association provides considerable financial support for projects. The large majority of parents ensure their children come to school regularly and promptly, they support homework especially reading and attend consultation sessions.

46 The school has very good relationships with parents of pupils who have special educational needs. It makes every effort to ensure that parents have the opportunity to take part in the identification and provision for the special educational needs of their children. Although some parents choose not to take up these opportunities, there are very good arrangements for seeking other ways to contact families. There are good systems to inform parents of their child's progress within the special educational needs provision of the school. The action plans drawn up by the school ensures that parents are kept informed about their children's work. Regular annual reports are of good quality and the termly review of progress is organised well by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that parents have a thorough understanding about how they can help their children to reinforce the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47 The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who, through his commitment, optimism, enthusiasm and teaching, leads by example. He has been very successful in fostering a love of learning in the pupils and respect for the beliefs and talents of others. He is an excellent role model for teachers and pupils. He is well supported by his deputy and senior staff. The school's appropriate aims are well reflected in its everyday life and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. There is a strong desire to improve standards further. The headteacher ensures that all pupils have opportunities to excel and is dedicated to inclusion. This is achieved through the provision of a rich and balanced curriculum that includes an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The sense of direction provided by the leadership of the school is evident in the jointly produced school development plan and subject action plans, which are effective management tools. They provide clear and costed programmes for action over the next two years.

48 Systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and take effective action to improve are satisfactory overall. There is some effective analysis of pupils' performance in national and school initiated tests that have brought improvements in standards. For example, methods to improve boys' writing in English and pupils' number skills in mathematics have been successful. Recent emphasis on the effectiveness of the mental starter sessions in the numeracy strategy is beginning to feed through.

However, the use of data analysis is not systematic enough. The recently adopted electronic system to organise assessment information and track the performance and value added data on the performance of individual pupils is not fully operational. Whilst the headteacher and team leaders monitor teaching at reasonably regular intervals, the process has not been rigorous enough to identify and remedy inconsistencies in teaching and learning across all subjects. Staff changes have interrupted the process but nonetheless inconsistencies in the quality of, for example, assessment, marking and presentation and the different rates of pupils' progress within and across year groups have not been overcome. Subject co-ordinators have clear job descriptions and good subject knowledge. They have developed subject policies and schemes of work to an agreed format and monitor planning and pupils' work. This is done in partnership with the curriculum and assessment manager and year team leaders. However, some key co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across all classes in the school and as a consequence are not clear about what works well and what does not in teaching and learning in their subjects.

49 The school is managed well. There is a very strong commitment to continuing professional development and all staff attend in-service training sessions on a regular basis. These are organised and co-ordinated very effectively by the deputy headteacher. The policy for performance management is clear and well established and is linked effectively in the first place to the needs of the school and secondly to the needs of the individual teacher. This commitment has brought about a strong team approach, improvements in teaching and a strong desire to improve. The school is a recognised training body for registered and associate teachers.

50 The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively and is developing its strategic role well. An appropriate committee arrangement is effective in helping governors to share out responsibilities. Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They are well informed about pupils' performance and ask critical questions to help clarify issues that arise. Some governors have been into classes to observe teaching and discussed their observations with the class teacher. These activities have been handled sensitively and have contributed to the mutual respect and understanding that exists.

51 The governing body has established effective procedures for monitoring the school's provision for special educational needs. They have a named governor who takes an interest in the delivery of that provision and in the progress of the pupils. Regular reports are written and presented to the governing body by the special educational needs co-ordinator. She provides good leadership and has developed good systems and ways of working. A number of notable features figure in this work, including the very good relationships with parents. The training and support that learning support assistants receive are of very good quality. The sessions organised ensure that their skills are maintained and the support they offer improves in quality as a result. Paperwork is efficiently managed and the plans that the school has to keep provision under review and make improvements are of good quality.

52 Financial planning and monitoring is very good. The long and short term financial planning takes careful account of known commitments, resource implications of school development planning and flexibility in relation to pupil numbers. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used to provide good support. Day-to-day administration is very good allowing teaching staff, especially the headteacher, to focus on the pupils and their education. The school has a good awareness of the principles of best value. For example, comparative data in relation to similar schools is used to help measure performance and pupils and parents are consulted regularly on a range of issues.

53 There is a good match between the numbers experience and qualifications of teachers and the needs of the curriculum. A number of recently qualified teachers benefit from the very good strategies for staff development. A well-written continuing professional development policy contains a good record of professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff that is well linked to school priorities. The well-deployed non-teaching staff provide very good support for teachers and

make a significant impact upon pupils' progress. The caretaker, cleaners and midday supervisors play a valuable role in the smooth running of the school.

54 The main buildings of the school provide a range of good accommodation of varying size and age. All areas of the school are maintained to a high standard and imaginative developments have improved the accommodation since the last inspection. The recent provision of excellent outdoor play facilities incorporating a climbing wall, an adventure playground and a themed jungle area with a large covered hut make a very good impact on pupils physical and creative development. The school library has been re-sited since the last inspection but its small size will still only accommodate small groups. The school has good access to adjacent playing fields and the two good sized playgrounds are used well for team games and a range of sports. There are attractive displays around the school that show pupils' work to good advantage.

55 Overall, learning resources are good. Since the last inspection good improvements have been made to resources in music, geography, literacy and ICT. The school makes good use of visits to places of interest. Visitors to the school make a valuable contribution to pupils' education in artistic and creative areas. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good resources housed in a good-sized reading room.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 In order to further improve standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- 1) *Improve the effectiveness of monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment by;
 - a) sharpening the focus for evaluating teaching and learning in lessons in order to iron out inconsistencies in the rates of progress made by different classes and year groups
 - b) developing the new data analysis system in order to better track the progress of individual pupils and to measure the value added the school provides
 - c) checking pupils' work more rigorously to ensure all marking and presentation are of a consistently high standard
 - d) ensuring that assessment procedures are more rigorously co-ordinated and consistently applied
 - e) including all key co-ordinators more in the observation and evaluation of teaching in their subjects.

(This issue is discussed in paragraphs 41, 42, 48, 64, 69, 74, 96 and 112)

- 2) *Increase the numbers of pupils attaining the higher levels of the National Curriculum in English by;
 - a) continuing to evaluate and develop the recently introduced techniques to stimulate writing
 - b) ensuring that work given to pupils who work independently of the teacher is more challenging
 - c) in the marking of pupils' work, including more comments on how it might be improved,
 - d) improving pupils' handwriting so that all pupils write in a consistent, legible and joined script.

(This issue is discussed in paragraphs 1, 6, 18, 26, 57 and 60)

In addition to the key issues above the school should also consider these less significant issues for inclusion in the action plan

*Increase the use of computers in classrooms to consolidate and extend skills in all subjects.
(Paragraphs 8, 19, 63, 69, 74, 83, 93, 101)

*Sharpen pupils' mental mathematics skills further in the opening sessions of numeracy lessons.
(Paragraphs 7 and 18)

***Indicates that the school has recognised these issues and has already included them in its development plan.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	40	29	1	0	0
Percentage	2.3	18.2	45.5	33.0	1.1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	408
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	94

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	56	59	115

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	29	51
	Girls	47	36	57
	Total	78	65	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (74)	57 (68)	94 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	33	51
	Girls	55	45	57
	Total	92	78	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (74)	68 (77)	94 (82)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	401	2	
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	1		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
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	1		
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	1		

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	27.2

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	866,721
Total expenditure	864,268
Expenditure per pupil	2,029
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,960
Balance carried forward to next year	55,413

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	408
Number of questionnaires returned	181

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	2	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	52	6	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	56	13	3	1
The teaching is good.	43	52	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	15	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	40	7	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	37	5	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	48	15	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	48	37	8	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	43	9	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	43	6	2	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

57 In the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests for Year 6 pupils, the school's results were well below the national average and below average for similar schools. Girls' results were markedly better than boys' results and this had been the trend over three years. There has been, however, a gradual improvement in overall standards since 1999 which has matched the national trend. Provisional results from the National Curriculum tests for 2002 indicate good improvement and the closing of the gap between the performance of boys and girls although the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5 is still too low. This is largely the result of weaknesses in pupils' writing. Inspection evidence from the scrutiny of work and the school's own testing of pupils indicates that standards across the school for the current pupils are generally in line with those found nationally, and in reading, standards are above average. The school is on course to meet its targets for the 2003 assessment tests. These would be likely to maintain current standards.

58 Standards in speaking and listening are in line with those found in most schools and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils have good opportunities for discussion in lessons. For example, when discussing dilemmas, pupils in Year 6 show empathy for a 'new boy' in a class and express opinions well. When discussing story texts in their literacy lessons all pupils are encouraged to contribute ideas, predict events and form likely resolutions. This was exemplified in a lesson in Year 4 on Viking raiders. Most pupils show good imagination and sound use of vocabulary when expressing ideas. Older pupils are good listeners – they pay close attention in lessons and show by their work that they have understood. Some younger pupils new to the school do not listen as well as older pupils and need correcting by teachers. They are encouraged to listen more carefully and to take turns when speaking. Pupils in all classes talk enthusiastically about books they have read. They give sound oral accounts about what they think and feel about the characters and events in stories. Pupils' speaking and listening skills give sound support to work in other subjects, for example, in a 'circle time' discussion lesson for Year 6 pupils they listened well to other pupils ideas and spoke sensitively about their thoughts and opinions.

59 By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are above the national levels and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They are enthusiastic readers and many are members of the local library. Reading record books indicate regular reading at home. Teachers regularly review reading books and progress. This close monitoring of reading is having a good impact on standards. Good opportunities are made for pupils to read interesting texts in the literacy hour and other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher makes effective use of a book about Roman life, not only to promote literacy and reading skills well but also to link in with the current history topic. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their phonic skills (the sounds made by letters) and are increasingly willing to attempt new words in front of the class. Most pupils read aloud confidently and with appropriate expression. Older pupils in the school express preferences for a particular author like J K Rowling or J R R Tolkein and say why they like a particular type and style of book. They chose from a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books available in classrooms. They quickly find books in the school library using the classification index system but insufficient use is made of the library to further extend reading and research skills. Pupils' reading skills give sound support to their work in other subjects.

60 Standards in writing have improved steadily since the last inspection and the gap in performance between boys and girls has greatly reduced. Standards in handwriting across the school

are variable with some younger pupils joining their letters together carefully in a cursive script whilst some above average pupils in Year 6 still print their letters. This was an issue in the last inspection and although the school has introduced a handwriting policy, it is not applied consistently across the school. Good use is made of dictionaries for spellings and older pupils use a thesaurus to improve their descriptions of characters in their stories. Regular spellings taken for homework also have a good impact on standards in spelling, which are satisfactory. The school is working on the development of pupils as independent writers and very good use is made of story frameworks and 'mind-mapping' structures (where pupils are encouraged to think out a story in their mind and plot it on a diagram). This is helping pupils to plan a more structured and interesting story. Teachers encourage pupils to use similes and metaphors and interesting descriptions in their writing. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6, for example, pupils develop a text on a boy called 'David' and present their own dilemmas for the character using good imagination and descriptions. In the lesson, they continually revised and improved their work and made good progress. Pupils' writing skills give sound support to work in subjects such as history and religious education.

61 Most pupils have good attitudes to their work. They listen to their teachers, answer questions with relevant and often enthusiastic answers and participate in discussions well. Their behaviour is good, they work hard and most settle quickly to the tasks set. They co-operate well in groups, sharing resources and supporting each other when necessary in independent work.

62 Teaching in the lessons observed was mostly good. Planning is consistently clear and work is usually matched to pupils needs. In a minority of lessons, where teaching is less effective, the work given to pupils working independently of the teacher is not sufficiently challenging and pupils drift off task. This slows down the rate of progress at these times. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of teaching English. Many lessons are characterised by brisk introductions where lesson objectives are made clear to the pupils. Interesting texts are used which stimulate discussion and help pupils develop well their reading and writing skills. Teachers use a range of strategies to interest and involve the pupils and open-ended questions promote lively debates. For example, a Year 3 teacher uses a number of amusing phrases related to elephants to enable pupils to make very good progress in their ability to read and sort the phrases into groups. She constantly stresses letter sounds and encourages pupils to think of words with the same sounds within them. In a Year 6 lesson, using a text from the 'Secret Garden,' the teacher completely engaged the pupils in the story and stimulated them to find similes such as 'eyes as big as a wolf' and 'sun on his face like a hand touching'. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and relationships with pupils are good. This has a good impact upon pupils' work rate and progress.

63 In the main, the setting of pupils for literacy impacts well on standards. Teachers assess pupils' work conscientiously during and after lessons using a range of informal and formal assessment procedures. Non-teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons, supporting pupils with special educational needs very well. They contribute valuable information to the recording of pupils' progress. Good examples of homework are seen across the school. The school has an agreed marking policy but this is not always applied consistently across the school. Whilst there are some very good examples of marking which clearly indicate to pupils how they can improve their work, sometimes only ticks or short non-developmental comments are made. This does not encourage pupils, particularly the older and more able, to reflect and evaluate their work. Not enough use is made of computers to help pupils to draft and edit their work.

64 Co-ordination of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has good oversight of pupils' progress from teachers' planning, from seeing pupils' work and from careful analysis of standardised tests. She has, however, had no opportunity in her first year in post to see other teachers work in their classrooms to help them develop further their teaching techniques and ensure a greater consistency of teaching across the school. This is built into the subject action plan for next year.

MATHEMATICS

65 By the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected in number, shapes, measure and data handling. The speed at which pupils recall multiplication tables and number facts is too slow and at times this leads to mistakes in calculations. The 2001 test results were below average but comparable with those in similar schools. The unverified results for 2002 and inspection evidence shows an improving picture with almost a fifth more pupils achieving the expected levels than the previous year. The same average proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels in 2001 and 2002, although when compared to similar schools, results were well above average. Last year there was very little difference between the results achieved by boys and girls. The improvements are due to the careful analysis of the 2001 test papers and subsequently teachers concentrating on teaching straightforward number strategies.

66 Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the value of digits in seven figure numbers; they use this understanding to carry out complex calculations successfully. Pupils who do not learn as quickly as others also have a good understanding and this helps them multiply 2 and 3 digit numbers by 10 and 100. They solve simple word problems using this method. Pupils in Year 6 understand that fractions, decimals and percentages are all ways of expressing the same value. Knowledge of shapes and measures is above average with pupils in Year 3 able to identify lines and planes of symmetry in three-dimensional shapes. Pupils make sensible estimates when calculating. In Year 4, pupils threw dice and rearranged the three digits to help them win a game of rounding up. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The setting arrangements help to maintain this good rate of achievement. The good quality support pupils receive from learning support assistant is also beneficial in ensuring these pupils make good progress towards meeting the targets set out in individual education plans. Overall, the setting out of work is not as neat as it should be. This leads to errors in calculations and is because not all of the teachers share the same high expectations of presentation.

67 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was generally good and learning was also good. An analysis of the last year's work from all year groups, however, shows inconsistencies in achievement between classes in the same year and between year groups. In lessons, teaching in Year 6 is never less than good and pupils achieve consistently well. In Years 3, 4 and 5, achievement is generally satisfactory, varying from good to satisfactory between classes. In some classes, pupils learn well because their teachers plan interesting work that involves pupils in solving problems. There were examples of this in Years 4 and 6 and pupils cheered when new work was announced. Not all work is marked to the same high standard. In the best examples, comments are offered to pupils about how to improve their work, they are given targets and positive relationships are formed. Where there are weaknesses, there are no targets for improvement and errors are not identified.

68 All teachers take their planning from the National Numeracy Strategy and lesson plans have a good structure, outlining clearly the three recommended parts of mathematics lessons. However, in too many lessons the mental starter is not rigorous and does not involve all pupils in the class. This means that pupils do not have a brisk start to the lesson in order to fire their enthusiasm and memory of mathematical facts. The main part of the lesson is managed well, teachers often setting imaginative tasks. In one set in Year 6 the teacher deliberately planned the same error in a calculation that her pupils had made in the previous lesson in order to emphasise the point. This showed good planning based on a thorough assessment of pupils' previous progress.

69 Pupils use their mathematics skills and knowledge in other subjects satisfactorily; for example, they produce continuous data graphs in science and use measuring skills well in design and technology. Computers, however, do not support work well enough in the subject. The analysis of assessments is at an early stage. The collection of test information shows how much progress pupils make over each year but this has not been linked rigorously enough to teaching or the progress pupils make over their time at school. The co-ordinator is a skilled and capable leader and manager. The latest analysis of the Year 6 tests showed that setting out calculations was a problem and the remedy set in place by the

co-ordinator is solving the difficulty pupils face. The school is aware of the need to improve mental skills and teachers have discussed some methods of involving all pupils in a rigorous start to each lesson. There is more work to be done on this part of each lesson. The co-ordinator has had too little opportunity to observe teaching across the school and this limits the impact of monitoring on improvements in teaching and learning in the subject.

70 The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. The inconsistencies in teaching and the rate of pupils' achievement continue to be areas for improvement.

SCIENCE

71 Pupils enter school at the age of seven with above average standards. These standards are maintained throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are high enough to be well above those of pupils from similar schools. These standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and have risen faster than the national trend since 1999. Standards dropped below the national average in the two years following that inspection. Improvement over the past two years has been brought about because the school provides its pupils with a broad and relevant science curriculum and pupils are encouraged to apply their knowledge and to learn through investigation and experiment. National Curriculum test results and inspection evidence reveals no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special needs make good progress throughout the school because they have good support in the classroom and have work adapted to meet their needs when appropriate. Above average and gifted pupils have appropriate challenge and regular homework ensures that all pupils are able to extend their work in line with their abilities. Pupils from ethnic minorities are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.

72 Pupils are encouraged to use a wide technical vocabulary from the time they join the school at the age of seven. The oldest pupils use scientific terms with accuracy. When discussing the interdependence and adaptation of plants and animals, for example, pupils use the terms predator, producer, consumer, habitat, dispersal and pollination. They use the school's 'wild area' well, applying their knowledge of habitat and food chains to find examples. Pupils' books from the last academic year show a good understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum and much of their learning is through investigation, observation and experiments. This approach to learning reflects the school's commitment to a practical "hands on" education and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Pupils are confident and willing to "have a go", knowing that their efforts are valued. In some classes, however, pupils do not pay enough attention to the way they present their work.

73 The quality of teaching is good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. In the four Year 6 classes all the teaching observed during the inspection was good and it was very good in half the lessons. Throughout the rest of the school it was at least satisfactory with some good lessons. In the best lessons, the teachers give clear guidance and make full use of the pupils' previous learning to explore new concepts. These teachers analyse the outcomes of previous lessons and adapt their planning to accommodate the pupils' learning needs. For example, a teacher realised that the pupils did not have a secure understanding of the relative sizes of the sun, earth and moon and spent some time exploring this before moving on to the next stage of the topic, the earth's orbit around the sun. All the teachers have good relationships with their pupils and generate a good climate for learning so that pupils generally make good progress in their lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic and work well together. All teachers have good scientific knowledge and teach the subject confidently. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and above average pupils are supported well. In the lessons where there was a learning support assistant, she supported the pupils with special educational needs very effectively, working in partnership with the teachers. All teachers use homework very well, consolidating and extending the work in lessons and encouraging their pupils to do their own research.

74 Teachers make very good of the good range of resources apart from ICT. Apart from a few examples, for instance when a digital camera was used in an investigation, the use of ICT either for research or to measure and record results with probes, sensors and data programs is an area for development in the subject. A weakness in the teaching overall is a lack of consistency in the marking of the pupils' work and the teachers' expectations of the quality of the pupils' written work. While some teachers provide their pupils with written comments that give guidance to their pupils and help them improve or extend their learning, others rarely do more than tick the work. Some teachers insist on good presentation while others allow untidy work and poor handwriting. There has been some analysis of the pupils' results in national and school-initiated tests in order to identify weaknesses in knowledge and the curriculum is regularly updated as a result. Monitoring has not been sharp enough, however, to identify and remedy some inconsistencies in teaching and learning within and across year groups.

ART AND DESIGN

75 Standards are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school attain standards higher than those normally seen for eight to eleven year olds and some of their work is of a very high standard. The improvement on the average standards seen at the last inspection has occurred because the school places a high value on art and has:

- provided a well designed scheme of work
- given pupils opportunities to work with a wide range of materials and techniques
- created a visually stimulating environment
- enriched the curriculum
- raised pupils' confidence in themselves as artists
- improved teaching in art

76 Pupils use line well. Their drawings from direct observation are often well used as a starting point for further work. In Year 6 notes on textures, such as "scratched, rusty" and "soft, smooth and delicate" are added to sketches to inform later work. Imaginative use is made of a wide range of techniques and materials to express and develop ideas. The most exciting and creative work is evident when materials and techniques are combined, for example in Year 4's exploration of surface patterns and textures in the school grounds.

77 Good making skills and attention to detail are seen consistently in pupils' finished work, in textiles patterned with stitches and fabric paint, in tile prints and delicately decorated clay thumb pots. In Year 6, pupils make striking and original sculptures inspired by Aztec masks. Interpreting the work initially in two dimensions and subsequently in three, they incorporate joining, plaiting, twisting, weaving and moulding techniques. The outcomes are inventive and of very high quality.

78 Attitudes to art are very good. A strong feature is pupils' very confident approach to their work. They start work without hesitation, work in a sure handed manner and persist until the task is completed. In the lessons seen, there were good examples of pupils helping one another with their work and sharing resources sensibly. They handle tools and equipment responsibly and thoughtfully. On the whole, they listen well to instructions and help to tidy up after lessons. Pupils enjoy art. The extra-curricular art club is over-subscribed and has a waiting list. A very large mural painted by club members incorporates aspects of local history and is a source of great pride.

79 Teaching and learning are good and some very good lessons were seen. Lessons are well focused and explanations are clear so pupils understand what it is they are learning. Good lesson organisation and clear expectations of behaviour help to ensure that a productive working environment is established. Because teachers have good subject knowledge, they give good guidance on what pupils need to do to improve and therefore learning is usually effective and sometimes very effective.

Teachers are confident about art teaching and a very good scheme of work guides them in their lesson planning. Thoughtful use is made of the work of Gaudi, Georgia O'Keefe and other artists to inspire pupils' learning and develop their spiritual awareness. The art curriculum is enriched by local visits, including to the Gladstone Pottery Museum where pupils in Year 4 decorate biscuit ware and learn about the work of Clarice Cliffe. The distinctive school grounds are well used as a stimulating starting point for learning and also features work by pupils, including a permanent pebble sculpture. The rich curricular provision is further enhanced by regular art action days, by visits from artists in residence and by visits made by pupils to an environmental art centre.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80 Standards in design and technology were similar to those expected for pupils' age at the time of the last inspection and the school has maintained this level of attainment. Standards of attainment and progress are now, however, more consistent across the school as a result of a good scheme of work and better subject knowledge by teachers. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and it is often good.

81 Pupils' design and technology skills and understanding develop satisfactorily as they move through the school and by Year 6 they use design specification sheets well when making objects such as slippers. Good, well presented, designs allied to testing of suitable materials for strength, warmth and wear enable most pupils to produce carefully made slippers of a high quality. After studying and designing different shelters, many have the opportunity to build and test their ideas on a field week to Standon Bowers. High quality powered vehicles indicate a good awareness of gears, electrical circuits and variations in wheels and axles which supports well pupils work in science. Pupils in Year 5 use their imagination well when designing a game based on a space theme and a range of working musical instruments are successfully produced. Carefully made pop up cards in a Year 4 lesson connect well to literacy story frameworks and Year 3 pupils have a good awareness of the process of producing packaging designs to suit various products.

82 Pupils throughout the school select and use a suitable range of tools and materials independently and have a good awareness of health and safety. Planning sheets are used well by pupils to organise their ideas and help them consider the whole design process and evaluate their finished work. For example, when pupils in Year 3 design and make sandwiches, they consider various fillings and evaluate whether they are healthy or unhealthy. They place them in various food groups and successfully identify ways to improve the construction and visual appearance to meet a customer's requirement.

83 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do are now more consistent and planning is good. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding and set high standards for the pupils' work and levels of concentration. Well-prepared resources are used well in lessons, as with sandwich fillings in Year 3 and biscuit products in Year 5. This careful preparation ensures a high level of interest by pupils and good pace to the lesson. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their ideas and are actively encouraged to consider improving designs to meet the objective of the final product. Teachers do not make enough use of computers to develop work in the subject.

84 The scheme of work provides very good guidance and support to teachers and a good range of resources is available throughout the school. The scheme develops skills progressively from year to year and provides good and appropriate challenge for all year groups. Co-ordination of the subject is sound.

GEOGRAPHY

85 Standards in Year 6 are better than those normally seen. Standards are now higher than they were when the school was last inspected. The school has developed a very good geography curriculum and teaching standards have been raised. In the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory. It is now good overall and there is a large proportion of very good teaching. Pupils make good progress in their learning and their achievements are good.

86 Pupils in Year 6 achieve well in their understanding of how people can improve or damage the environment. This is because good teaching helps pupils make links between the local and global environments and encourages them to take responsibility for finding solutions. A mature and responsible approach is encouraged and pupils respond very well, often making thoughtful and reflective contributions to class discussions. Fieldwork is a strong feature of the curriculum and this helps promote the development of good enquiry skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 photographed traffic “blackspots” in the streets near the school. In a very well led discussion that followed pupils expressed their concerns and ideas for improvement. In pairs, they listed and prioritised the issues and noted action that might be taken. Their comments revealed a high degree of awareness of the impact of traffic on the local environment and their ideas for action included contacting the local council and devising a questionnaire for local residents. Pupils use their literacy skills well to communicate their ideas. They present data effectively, selecting relevant formats and justifying their choice, for instance of a table over a flow diagram. This is because teachers, having taught recording skills, encourage pupils to make decisions for themselves.

87 Teaching is good and often very good. Teachers often use challenging questions well to provoke and help pupils make fresh connections in their thinking. Resources are innovative and relevant; newspaper cuttings, school information booklets, council newsletters provided a starting point for a Year 6 task, for example. Some of the printed material had been highlighted, making it easier for the below average pupils to access the information they needed. Some good cross-curricular links are established, particularly with mathematics. Pupils weigh the amount of litter collected by two classes in a day. They then calculate the amount of litter produced by the whole school in a year. Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils. A sense of mutual respect is well established and pupils know that their contributions to class discussions are valued. The very good, and sometimes excellent, attitudes pupils have to the subject are key factors in their willingness to contribute as listeners and speakers to the very good class discussions that were seen.

88 The very good curriculum has a highly practical approach. As well as investigations into the local area, pupils learn about village life in Britain and India and are taught about rivers and the effect they have on the landscape. Throughout the school, pupils follow a good continuous unit related to news events. During the week of the inspection teachers dealt sensitively with the recent lead story about the anniversary of the Twin Towers tragedy. There are sound assessment opportunities and pre and post topic questionnaires help pupils to understand the gains in knowledge they have made. Large maps and aerial photographs provide stimulating displays and resources for the subject are good. The subject is well managed and there is a good degree of confidence in teaching the subject.

HISTORY

89 By Year 6 standards are above those normally seen. They are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection when attainment was average. Since then, history teaching has improved and is now good and pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. These improvements in provision account for the current higher standards.

90 During the week of the inspection, history was not being taught in Year 6. Nevertheless a scrutiny of pupils’ work indicates that they achieve well, particularly in developing skills of historical enquiry and in interpreting evidence from the past. These skills are well nurtured throughout the school. In Year 3, for example, pupils use original sources to make deductions about Roman military life. In Year 4, they learn that by piecing together fragments from pictures of Ancient Greek pottery,

information about the past is revealed. By Year 6, pupils gather data from a range of written and other sources. They analyse and interpret Victorian census information successfully. Most demonstrate an understanding that events can be open to differing interpretations.

91 Pupils have a sound knowledge of how people lived in the past and above average pupils make good use of specialist vocabulary, for instance in their writing about Greek myths or about life in Roman Britain. Most draw well on their growing sense of chronology when recording what they know of the past and their own personal histories. They organise and communicate information well in tables, diagrams and various written formats, but except in Year 4, the presentation of written work is untidy.

92 Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding of the past. For instance, in one lesson about a Roman soldier the teacher asked; "His head hurt - what does that tell us about his uniform?" Resources are good and are well used to arouse curiosity, to challenge and to clarify thinking. Lessons are well organised and the work prepared for pupils is interesting and well matched to their differing skills in reading and writing. The quality of learning opportunities is high and good cross-curricular links are often established, for instance with art and design. The curriculum is enriched with museum visits and the judicious use of artefacts. There are sound assessment opportunities including a pre and post assessment of each history unit. This gives pupils an awareness of the gains in knowledge they are making. The subject is well led.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

93 By the end of Year 6, attainment in ICT is at the nationally expected levels. The recently refurbished computer suite is a very good resource and is timetabled effectively. While pupils learn the knowledge, skills and ideas to meet the standards expected of eleven-year-olds, they are not given enough opportunities to use these skills in other lessons. There are some good examples of the use of ICT in other subjects but the computers in classrooms are not used sufficiently to reinforce and extend learning. There is a lack of challenge in the work given to the above average pupils and consequently not enough pupils are working at the higher levels.

94 Pupils enter the school in Year 3 achieving below average standards in this subject. Their knowledge of the keyboard and other basic skills is underdeveloped. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The teaching in the week of the inspection was generally good but the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils showed that pupils in all of the year groups have average levels of knowledge and skills. The development of key skills from year to year has not been systematic enough to raise attainment sufficiently. In their weekly session in the computer suite pupils are taught the skills defined by the National Curriculum in the subject. Pupils in Year 6 draft their work directly onto the screen and understand how to control how their work looks. For example, they change the type and size of the font as they consider the nature of their work. They plan parties using spreadsheets to calculate the cost of food and drink as the number of guests varies. They use the Internet for research purposes to find out about the Aztecs and to look carefully at environmental issues such as pollution. In the current Year 6, pupils are producing an animated presentation. They worked well in pairs and quickly understood the procedures for assigning farmyard sounds to buttons. The straightforward directions by their teacher helped pupils understand and they were soon recording their noises and deleting those they thought were unsatisfactory. They linked illustrations and letter styles to each of the sound buttons. Pupils in Year 5 word process newspaper reports, use databases to record scientific information and construct pie charts and block graphs to help them in their mathematics work. Pupils in Year 4 write accounts of visits, poetry and sets of instructions and design additions to their playgrounds. Pupils in Year 3 design surveys and greetings cards as well as compose simple tunes.

95 In the lessons observed, teaching was generally good. Teachers know enough about the subject to teach skills effectively. They plan work that is interesting; for example, in Year 5, pupils rehearsed how to draw shapes using a graphic program before making plans of their classroom. In Year 4, pupils practised giving instructions to other pupils before planning sequences of movements for a point on the screen. Teachers pay good attention to the different learning needs of some pupils, including those with special educational needs. This group of pupils makes good progress. Learning support assistants provide good advice in lessons, never interfering with learning and giving just enough advice to support for pupils to do well. Lessons are well organised and teachers make effective use of the projector to show pupils step-by-step procedures. Pupils are managed well and they are keen to learn in the computer suite.

96 The joint co-ordinators are skilled managers and the school's commitment to the subject is demonstrated by the development of the new equipment in the computer suite. The co-ordinators have a good understanding of the need to develop the subject and governors are committed to further improvements. The co-ordinators have not had the chance to monitor teaching across the school and as a result there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and hence the pace of learning. There are no systematic assessments and records of pupils' progress and this too leads to inconsistencies in pupils' progress.

97 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, maintaining the quality of teaching and improving the resources in the subject.

MUSIC

98 Standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils attain the expected standards for their age throughout the school. There has been an improvement in the music curriculum, with more attention given to teaching pupils about music and musicians from their own and other cultures. This was judged to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection. The extra-curricular choir and orchestra, recorders and dance activities, as well as the good range of peripatetic instrumental tuition gives pupils ample opportunities to play music. As a result, pupils perform confidently and well. Live music makes a good contribution to assemblies and to the life of the school.

99 The school uses a combination of commercial schemes of work alongside government guidance for the subject. As a result pupils' musical knowledge and skills are built on successfully as they move through the school. For example, Year 3 pupils identify and maintain a strong pulse when listening to recorded music and know the symbols for whole and half beats, while the oldest pupils write down their own symbols when composing musical sequences to show the length of the sound and rests.

100 The quality of the teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall and very good in the subject leader's class where her expertise results in above average achievements. She provides challenging tasks and uses resources very effectively, insisting on the best possible performance from her pupils. There is some shared teaching in other areas of the school when teachers interested in the subject take the music lessons for their year group. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers respond to the outcomes of these lessons and if necessary amend their planning to meet the pupils' needs more closely. All teachers have sound subject knowledge. In the less effective lessons there is some lack of challenge. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the lessons and, when appropriate, are supported effectively by teaching assistants. In all lessons there are good relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils are encouraged to work together. Pupils' attitudes are generally good, although in one lesson in a class of pupils new to the school some pupils did not behave well and did not co-operate effectively with each other. Their behaviour improved when they performed alone. This teacher has good strategies for managing pupils' behaviour that are beginning to take effect.

101 The subject is co-ordinated satisfactorily. The subject leader is committed to extending pupils' musical experiences through extra-curricular activities, visiting musicians and performances in school and in musical festivals in the community, for example the City Annual Recorder Festival. Those who play orchestral instruments are given the opportunity to attend Music Centre practices to extend their experience of playing alongside others. There is a good range of resources including instruments and recorded music although there is little use of computers to generate music or compose electronically. Tape recorders and videos are used effectively as part of the curriculum. The subject leader monitors the teachers' plans for their lessons but she does not observe teaching and there is little opportunity for her to influence the quality of music lessons throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102 Standards have improved since the last inspection. In the activities seen during the inspection standards were better than those normally seen for pupils' age. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make mostly good progress in the lessons seen across the school.

103 Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of movement through exploration using different levels, speeds and direction. The majority demonstrate good balance and control successfully linking movements together in simple sequences. Pupils in Year 5 show good hand-eye co-ordination when bouncing balls on tennis racquets and when playing small games. Most dribble and pass a football accurately and know elements of games play including working as a team. By Year 6, most pupils have good games skills, demonstrating accuracy and confidence when throwing and catching a rugby ball. Most pupils reach the 25 metre national level for swimming by the time they leave the school, and many achieve well beyond this level.

104 Progress across the school is good in gymnastics and games skills. In the lessons seen pupils continually refine and improve their own performance through good practice opportunities and well-focussed teaching. They respond well to challenge and evaluate their own and others' performances sensitively. When working on the climbing wall and playground apparatus pupils in Year 5 develop their confidence and upper body strength well. They constantly encourage others to achieve better performances and improve their awareness of working safely above the ground.

105 Pupils enjoy their lessons and their attitudes are good. They respond well to clear instructions, understand the rules of competitive games and demonstrate a strong sense of fair play. Pupils are well behaved and wait patiently and quietly for turns. Most concentrate hard and stay on task well, working energetically and co-operatively in pairs or small groups.

106 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and have appropriate aims that are shared with the pupils. Teachers set the right tone for lessons by changing into appropriate clothing and by their preparedness to demonstrate. These personal demonstrations along with very good use of individual pupils own performance strengthen teaching and provide good models for others in the class. In all the lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, promote awareness of health and safety very well and by their enthusiastic approach move the lessons on briskly. Relationships with pupils are very good and encouragement is constantly given which supports pupils' confidence and will to succeed.

107 The range and quality of the curriculum is very good. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities makes a significant contribution to pupils' games skills. Through a range of sporting competitions against neighbouring schools the more able sports players have good opportunities to further extend their skills. The school has enjoyed good success in these local competitions and pupils are proud of their achievements. The school has regular visitors from the outside world of sport, for example, soccer coaches from Stoke City Football Club. Many of the school staff take part and run clubs outside of school hours and these are greatly appreciated by parents. The enthusiastic and

knowledgeable co-ordinator is now involved in a national programme of sports development and pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential visits featuring outdoor adventure activities. These activities develop pupils' social skills and make a good contribution to their overall moral and social development.

108 The school has use of a grassed playing field and two playground areas for team games. The hall has sufficient floor area but its design prevents pupils from seeing all of its space during lessons. Resources for games and gymnastics are good and the excellent playground climbing facilities contribute well to pupils' fitness and confidence.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109 Pupils make good progress throughout the school and by Year 6 pupils' achievements exceed the requirements of the Stoke on Trent Agreed Syllabus. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when achievements were in line with the requirements. Pupils' work shows thoughtful responses to their learning and a good knowledge of Christianity and other major religions. From Year 3 pupils begin to explore generic issues such as celebrations, festivals, rites, laws and holy books as well as fundamental beliefs like the creation and deities. As they get older, pupils begin to respond effectively to world issues. They write thoughtful accounts and letters after the events of September 11th, for example, and express horror as well as analysis as they learn about the Holocaust. Pupils have great respect for the religions beliefs of the faiths they study. Pupils in Year 4, for example, know that they should wash their hands before handling the Qur'an. They listened avidly as a Muslim pupil explained some of her rites and customs. They were extremely impressed when she read a little Arabic from the Qur'an! Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, contribute to all aspects of the curriculum and the school's inclusion of pupils from ethnic minorities is very good. Diversity is celebrated.

110 In about half the lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was satisfactory and it was at least good in the rest. In one lesson the teaching was excellent. This excellent lesson had a personal, social and health education focus as pupils explored the theme of self-worth in line with the collective worship theme for the week. The teacher encouraged pupils to use a sophisticated vocabulary as they found adjectives to describe personal attributes...gregarious, conscientious, numerate and independent were amongst the adjectives used. The teachers and the pupils created a warm and friendly atmosphere where all pupils felt confident to contribute in a sensitive and uninhibited manner. In this lesson the pupils' attitudes were excellent as they shared thoughts and laughed together. This lesson made an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual and social development. Similar discussions in other lessons also encouraged pupils' self-esteem although in some lessons the teachers did not give their pupils enough time to reflect and the majority of the discussion came from the teacher.

111 The lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that the work includes discussion as well as facts. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and there is some specialist teaching within year groups as teachers share expertise. The curriculum is well balanced and often moves beyond the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There is no formal assessment system but teachers identify pupils who excel or do not achieve well. There are different expectations of the pupils from class to class and from year to year. While the content of the lessons and the opportunities for discussion are common to all lessons, the written work is variable. Some classes produce well-presented independent writing containing both fact and opinions and making a good contribution to the pupils' literacy skills. In other classes much of the work consists of worksheets that demonstrate knowledge but involve little effort on the part of the pupil. There was very little written work in one year group over the last academic year. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has planned to address it in her action plan. Although it is often inappropriate for the pupils to record their discussion, there needs to be consistency

in the quality of the work that is written down in order to maintain pupils' standards in literacy, especially handwriting.

112 Co-ordination of the subject is sound. The subject leader monitors the curriculum and resources well and the resources are plentiful and of good quality. Pupils visit local places of worship and church leaders regularly take the school's acts of worship introducing themes that are extended in the religious education lessons. There is good liaison between the co-ordinator for religious education and the co-ordinator for personal, social and health education. This has led to the development of common themes and good cross-curricular links. Monitoring by the co-ordinator does not focus rigorously enough on the quality of teaching and learning across the school in order to help identify and remedy inconsistencies.