

INSPECTION REPORT

ST STEPHEN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fradley, Lichfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124084

Head teacher: Mrs V Shand

Reporting inspector: Mrs R J Andrew
21460

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th February 2003

Inspection number: 248545

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
Fradley
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Staffordshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M White

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21460	Rachael Andrew	Registered inspector	English Geography Music Religious education Equal opportunities English as an Additional Language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19426	Christopher Farris	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?
19120	Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology Design and technology Physical education Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20706	Benita Toth	Team inspector	Science Art and Design History Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average community primary school situated in the village of Fradley and serving two geographically distinct areas, Fradley and Fradley South. The school has grown substantially since the last inspection because of new housing developments in the immediate area. There are now 164 pupils on roll, 94 of them boys, who outnumber girls in most classes. The pupils are taught in single year-group classes. Children are admitted to the school in the September prior to their fifth birthday. There are currently 19 children at the Foundation Stage in the reception class. There is no longer any provision for nursery-aged children. Most pupils are from white, English speaking backgrounds but a few are of Asian and Chinese backgrounds whose mother tongue is not English. None of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, including long-established families and those new to the area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is ten per cent, below the national average but varies considerably from year to year. The proportion of pupils entering the school, other than in the reception class, is high and growing. The school has identified 15 per cent of the pupils as having special educational needs. This is about average but the percentage of these pupils who have written statements setting out their needs is higher than the national average. The range of special educational needs include autism, behavioural and learning difficulties. Since the last inspection there has been an almost complete change of staff, including the head teacher. The attainment of children when they start in the reception class is broadly average overall. There are, however, considerable variations from year to year and there are several year groups in the school with a very wide spread of ability.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The head teacher leads the school well. She and other key staff have managed efficiently the rapid growth of the school and a major building programme. They have adapted well to the many challenges that a growing school brings and made significant improvements since the last inspection. Most subject leaders have been influential in developing their subjects and, with the head teacher, have improved the quality of teaching. The quality of education, especially teaching, provided by the school, is good. It enables most pupils to do as well as can be expected and to reach at least satisfactory standards. The financial resources available to the school are spent wisely, with the emphasis on raising attainment. Given the improvements brought about in a period of rapid change, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher and key staff lead the school well, identify what needs improving and take appropriate action.
- There is a shared commitment to succeed and the capacity to bring about further improvements.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables most pupils to do the best they can.
- Teachers' expectations, their relationships with the pupils and the consistent application of the behaviour policy lead to positive attitudes to school and good behaviour.

What could be improved

- Standards in art and design are below average at the end of both key stages.
- Although pupils make at least satisfactory progress, a few do not always do the best they could because the work teachers set for them is not pitched at the right level of difficulty.
- Handwriting, spelling and punctuation could be improved.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough in most subjects to support pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the time of the last inspection in January 1998, the school has made good progress against the areas identified for improvement. There has been particularly good work done in deciding what is taught in each subject and how, and when, it will be taught. This ensures that work now builds on earlier learning and most aspects are covered thoroughly. The reorganisation of the school into single year-group classes has helped this process. There have also been important changes to the way the school checks on the quality of what it provides in many areas so that it now has a clear picture of what works well and what does not. Standards have risen and the school has received achievement awards for improving results at the end of Year 6. The quality of

teaching and learning has improved and pupils make better progress. The good standards of behaviour and pupils' positive attitudes to work have been maintained.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards have risen faster than the national average over the last few years. As a result the school has received two national achievement awards. The table above shows that in 2002 eleven year old pupils reached standards that were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above those in similar schools. Standards in science took an unpredicted fall. The absence of one pupil and the fact that another pupil took only one of the two test papers contributed towards it. The school has been unable find any other reason why this happened even after a thorough analysis of the test answers. The inspection team is also unable to account for the fall. In the past, the school's results have shown a good level of consistency from year to year. When pupils leave the school at the end of the Year 6, the composition of the class is often very different from the same class when pupils started school in reception, or its composition at the beginning of Key Stage 2. There have also been significant changes within the current Year 6. As a result the school is unlikely to reach the ambitious targets it has set for the end of the year. Inspection findings show that this year standards for eleven year olds are average in English, mathematics and science. The achievements of average and higher-attaining pupils are good but lower-attaining pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Lower-attaining pupils do not make such good gains in learning because the work is sometimes too hard for them. Errors in spelling, punctuation and the lack of fluent joined handwriting hamper standards in their writing. The results of national test for seven year olds in 2002 show that pupils reached average standards in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards in mathematics at age seven have been better than in English for several years. The standards of seven year olds currently in Year 2 are above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. Although most seven year olds do well, higher attaining pupils could do better, especially in reading and writing. Both seven and eleven year olds develop good numeracy skills and learn to think scientifically because of the emphasis on mental mathematics and investigations in science. Pupils' reading and research skills help them to find information quickly and make good use of it. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make similar progress to other pupils in the class. They are fluent English speakers and make good gains in learning new vocabulary. Standards in art and design are below those expected at both seven and eleven because pupils do not learn the skills they need to make the necessary progress. There are too few opportunities for them to experiment with different materials and techniques. Standards in ICT are average at the end of both key stages. There have been considerable improvements to the teaching of ICT since the last inspection but there are too few opportunities for pupils to put their skills into practice in other subjects. This is hindering progress. In all other subjects, standards are broadly average. Pupils meet the standards set out in Staffordshire's guidance for teaching religious education. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. It is often good when they work with teaching assistants. In Key Stage 2 the work is sometimes too hard for them and this slows their progress. In both key stages, the targets for pupils with special educational needs are not always clear enough to enable teachers to plan small steps towards them to ensure that pupils make the best possible gains. Children in the Foundation Stage (in the reception class) start school with broadly average skills although their reading and mathematical skills are slightly above average this year. Children are on course to attain all the early learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year and a few will exceed them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested in their work and try hard to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There is a good working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils respond quickly to teachers. They respect each other's property and take care of school equipment.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work together, co-operating well in pairs and groups in many lessons. They listen carefully to each other's views and show respect for ideas that are different from their own. They respect their teachers because they are treated fairly. Teachers show that everyone matters.
Attendance	Very good. It is well above the national average.

Pupils carry out classroom jobs responsibly without being reminded. They move sensibly about the school, in cloakrooms and between the mobile classrooms and the main building. Pupils are beginning to take on a bigger role in working for the benefit of the school community now that a school council has been established. They show their concern for others by helping to raise funds for those less fortunate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is at its best in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, teaching was very good in several lessons in different classes. Particularly effective learning is also evident in the quality of work in the pupils' books in Key Stage 2. They cover a lot of ground, take care with their work and use a wide range of ways of recording their learning, for example writing, drawing, graphs, tables and diagrams. Teaching in the reception class is good, especially in the area of learning that develops children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The teacher's plans include a rich variety of experiences and activities that interest the children and contribute well to good progress in this area. Children's spoken language skills are developed well and letter sounds are well taught but the teacher does not move higher attaining children on as fast as they could go in reading and writing. In Key Stage 1 there is a similar picture. Reading and writing skills are taught well but higher attaining pupils could do better. This is because not enough is expected of them. Teachers do not make the best use of the information they gain from day-to-day checks to plan the next steps in learning. The books that higher attaining pupils read are too easy and there are too few opportunities for them to write at length. Progress in mathematics is better, enabling pupils to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 but there are still times when higher attaining pupils could move on faster. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and often make good progress. In Key Stage 2, the work is more challenging, pupils often work at a more rapid pace, and higher attaining pupils respond well to the demands made of them. However, occasionally teachers do not use the information from day-to-day checks to modify tasks well enough for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs when they work alone. When this happens they find the work too difficult and so they struggle to succeed. Numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school and problem solving is given a good emphasis. Reading skills are taught well and, from an early age pupils learn how to access information in reference books so that they become proficient at finding things out for themselves. They learn to write confidently because letter sounds are taught systematically and teachers encourage pupils to try out their skills in many ways and use a growing range of vocabulary. The good emphasis on the development of vocabulary ensures that pupils whose mother tongue is not English make good progress in English as well as in other subjects. Handwriting is taught systematically but teachers do not insist that pupils use a joined style. This slows the development of fluency. There is insufficient emphasis on punctuation and the systematic teaching of spelling in Key Stage 2, that hinders lower attaining pupils in

particular. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of what is to be taught in art are not good enough to ensure that pupils reach the standards expected nationally. Teachers manage pupils well, and expect them to behave well and work hard. As a result of this and the good relationships that teachers build up with pupils, lessons take place in a calm and purposeful atmosphere.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Work is planned to cover all the subjects required. An appropriate emphasis is given to English and mathematics. There is a reasonable balance between other subjects. There is a good range of interesting activities for the children in the reception class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers provide good support, and teaching assistants are deployed to the classes where there is most need. They help individuals and groups of pupils to get the best from their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There are very few pupils whose mother tongue is not English and all are fluent English speakers. They make good progress in developing a wide vocabulary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes sure that pupils understand the need for rules and how their actions affect others. There are good opportunities for pupils to co-operate in many lessons. Pupils learn about major religions and other cultures as part of their studies but not much about the many cultures that make up modern British society. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have achieved and how to improve.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection, health, safety and welfare procedures are all efficient. The school has developed good systems for tracking pupils' progress. The information gained from checking what pupils know and can do is not always used well enough to pitch work at the right level.

There are satisfactory links with parents and a useful sharing of information. There is a satisfactory range of activities, including sport and music out of lesson time to interest older pupils. Investigative work in science is given a good emphasis but there is insufficient work out of doors in geography to enable pupils to put map-work skills into practice and learn about features of the landscape at first hand. Although computers are used well to teach pupils the necessary skills, there are too few opportunities to put these skills into practice in other subjects to help their learning. The targets set for pupils with special educational needs in their individual education plans are not always clear enough or in small enough steps to ensure they are achieved quickly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher has a clear view of what works well and where the school needs to improve. Key staff have substantial responsibilities for specific areas of the school's work, for example for improving work in each subject. They carry out their tasks efficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and provide valuable support for the head teacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has established effective procedures for checking how well it is doing and taking effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes sure that earmarked funds are spent on the areas intended and that funds are available to support those areas identified as

priorities for improvement.

The head teacher has established an effective process for checking the quality of teaching. The school gives sufficient consideration to whether its spending decisions are cost effective. The accommodation in the main building is good providing specialist teaching areas for using computers and a shared room for teaching design and technology and music. Staffing and learning resources are adequate for the needs of most subjects apart from art and design. There are shortages in specific areas of information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Children make good progress.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• Parents feel that the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents feel that the school could work more closely with them and keep them better informed about how their children are getting on.• Parents do not feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside school.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views but not their negative views. The school provides parents with the usual information about its work and everyday matters. There are informative annual reports and regular opportunities to meet teachers to talk about progress. Although there is a satisfactory range of interesting and well-led activities out of lesson time for older pupils, there is little opportunity for younger pupils to be involved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards throughout the school have improved since the last inspection. Test results have improved for eleven year olds faster than the national rate of improvement and the school has received two recent achievement awards.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage (in the reception class) start school with broadly average skills although their reading and mathematics skills are slightly above average this year. Children are on course to attain all the early learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year and a few will exceed them. Girls and boys achieve equally well. Children's speaking and listening skills and knowledge of letter sounds are above what is expected for children of this age. Children make satisfactory progress overall although more able children could do better in reading and writing. Teachers do not expect enough of them when they plan work to enable children to put their reading and writing skills into practice.
3. In Year 2, pupils are on course to reach standards at the end of the year that are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and science and above average in mathematics. For pupils in Year 2 this more or less reflects the results obtained in national tests in 2002 for seven year olds, although results in mathematics were then well above average. The results at the end of 2002 for eleven year olds were above average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. The fact that one pupil only took part of the test and another pupil was absent goes some way to explain the fall in standards. The school's own analysis does not provide any further reasons. Evidence from the inspection indicates that science teaching is good. Expectations are high and there is good emphasis on investigative work. There are no differences between subjects that could account for the difference seen in the test results in 2002. This year, inspection findings indicate that standards are likely to be broadly average in all three subjects. Most pupils make good progress but a few pupils could do better. It is not possible to judge the impact of the school's revision programme on standards overall because it has not yet begun but booster classes are helping lower attaining pupils to improve.
4. In Key Stage 1, most pupils answer questions confidently although not always clearly. Higher attaining pupils explain their thinking carefully and describe their experiences in some detail. A few pupils still find reading and writing difficult but the support they receive enables them to make steady progress in building up these skills. Most pupils read well enough to enjoy stories and make use of information in simple reference books. Their research skills are good and they use reference books efficiently, using the contents page and index to find what they need. Higher attaining pupils tackle unfamiliar books with confidence. Most pupils write well enough to record their learning and experiences in different subjects and to compose simple stories, poems, lists and descriptive passages using a growing range of vocabulary. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in English or other lessons so they are not so good at structuring longer pieces of writing and using the ideas they have worked on in formal exercises. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, could do better. They could also do better in reading if the books they were given were more demanding and they were required to think more deeply about what they read. Teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can do in reading and writing are not sufficiently high. They do not use the information gained from checking pupils' progress in lessons to move these pupils on to the next steps quickly enough.
5. In Key Stage 2, pupils' vocabulary, structure and organisation of their writing develop particularly well. They write effectively in a wide range of styles and for many different purposes. For example, they write play scripts, diaries, poems, accounts of events, newspaper reports and character descriptions. They work productively on computers to draft

and edit their work; for example, they have successfully structured complex arguments for and against compulsory physical education. This lesson provided good opportunities for pupils to consider how to improve the structure, balance and vocabulary in their writing. Pupils' handwriting is usually legible and reasonably neat but few have developed a flowing cursive style. A few still mix capital and lower-case letters and write in a style that slows their progress. Lower attaining pupils do not always follow basic spelling rules and their punctuation is not good enough to enable them or others to read their work fluently. They could do better in writing. Standards of reading are good. Pupils of all abilities read quite complex texts but their reading lacks expression. They extract information from reference books quickly.

6. In mathematics, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in learning number skills because teachers expect them to find different ways of calculating. They ask pupils to explain how they arrived at a particular answer and suggest an alternative method. Most lessons begin with a brisk mental starter and multiplication tables are learned systematically; these routines help to sharpen pupils' skills. Seven year olds estimate and measure objects, solve number problems, including those involving money, identify half and a quarter and interpret graphs and charts. They add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately. Higher attaining pupils do too much consolidating of work they already know rather than moving on to the next step. This indicates that they could be challenged further. By the age of eleven, pupils accurately use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division methods with large numbers to calculate and solve problems. They describe two and three-dimensional shapes by using a range of characteristics and find the area of irregular shapes. Data-handling is taught well so that pupils again a good understanding of how information is represented and interpreted.
7. In science there is a strong emphasis on investigative work, which helps pupils to develop good skills in scientific method and think and work scientifically. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand how exercise affects the body. They can identify the use of electricity in everyday life and know of its dangers. They have completed an extensive range of work on forces. In Key Stage 2, pupils cover a lot of ground and have a sound knowledge and understanding of the work studied such as living things, materials and physical properties. They record their work in a wide range of ways that show good understanding of their investigations. They recognise the relevance to everyday life of what they learn; for example the work on friction was associated with different types of shoe. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress.
8. Standards in art and design are below average at the ages of seven and eleven and pupils of all abilities could do much better. Teaching is unsatisfactory because teachers do not have sufficient expertise and their expectations are not high enough to enable them to get the best from the pupils. Pupils do not have the skills they need to work well in a range of materials or have sufficient opportunity to try out ideas and experiment with different techniques.
9. Standards in all other subjects are broadly average for seven and eleven year olds. In ICT, pupils in both key stages operate computer keyboards efficiently to present written work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 edit their work efficiently. They use a range of software to present information in text, pictures and graphs. Pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets to investigate what happens when data is changed and use the research facilities effectively. In design and technology, pupils have the skills they need to make a range of products to a satisfactory standard although their design drawings are fairly basic. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge of local history. Pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills because they study objects, maps, books and photographs and work in the locality and on visits to historic sites. In geography, pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of different locations and physical features such as rivers. They have satisfactory mapping skills but do not have enough opportunity to put them into practice outdoors. Although pupils study some aspects of the landscape in depth, for example rivers, they do not investigate a wide enough range of geographical features at first hand. Seven year olds sing quite well and use instruments to compose simple pieces of music. They discuss what they like about the music they hear and suggest how to improve their own performance. It was not possible to see eleven year olds at

work. Pupils in Year 1 reach above average standards in dance. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in games. In religious education, pupils gain a sound understanding of the religion they study and say what is similar and what is different. They know how religious belief affects people's action and life choices because both strands of the subject, learning *about* religion and learning *from* religion, are given appropriate weight. Standards by the age seven and eleven meet the requirements identified in syllabus taught locally.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Progress is good when they work with teaching assistants and the work is carefully matched to their needs. This is not always the case in Key Stage 2, where lessons are sometimes too demanding. This means that their progress, although satisfactory overall, is not always as good as others in the class. Teachers support them well when they can and track their progress carefully. Relationships are good throughout the school, and pupils' work is always valued, which encourages them to try harder.
11. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make similar progress to others in the class. Their vocabulary develops well because of the good emphasis put on this aspect of English work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Children under five have settled into school well and have built good relationships with adults and each other, and have learnt the daily routines. They sustain interest in their work and play and show a good degree of independence. They are able to work on their own while the teacher deals with another group and they willingly help tidy the classroom at the end of the lesson. Their behaviour is good.
13. Pupils throughout the rest of the school have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to be involved. They settle down to work quickly and continue working even when not directly supervised. They are interested and responsive and enjoy their learning, particularly when the lesson is challenging, as in a dance lesson in Year 1 when pupils tried hard to master the movements in a Scottish reel. They work well individually and many examples were seen of good collaborative working in pairs and groups, with more able pupils willingly supporting colleagues who found the work more difficult.
14. The behaviour of the pupils is good and they have a thorough knowledge of the school rules and a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They are cheerful, friendly and interested in what is going on. However, some forget the common courtesies, for example pushing through doorways ahead of adults. Pupils generally meet the teachers' high expectations for behaviour and lessons are uninterrupted and productive. Behaviour on the playground is also good. Pupils have due regard for the school and its environment and show an appropriate respect for property. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions during the last year.
15. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding. Most are well behaved, and respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements. However, a very small number do not always behave well in lessons or have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is often challenging and has the potential to be disruptive. Other pupils have learned to ignore this type of behaviour and it rarely interrupts lessons for more than a few minutes as teaching assistants respond quickly by removing pupils from the class or playground until their behaviour improves.
16. Relationships are good and the school is a harmonious community. Pupils support each other well, for example telling the teacher that a classmate has been hurt at playtime. They listen to the views of their colleagues and share in their successes with them. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions, with pupils talking to each other sensibly while eating in the dining room. Boys and girls from all ethnic groups work and play together well and appreciate the

value of friendship. Pupils of all ages readily accept the constant arrival of newcomers and do all they can to make them feel welcome. The school's thoughtful induction policy contributes strongly to this.

17. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for their personal development, including opportunities to assume responsibility. Across the school, pupils conscientiously carry out classroom duties. Older pupils have a wide range of duties that assist the smooth running of the school, for example helping younger pupils with coats, acting as team captains and assisting with music in assemblies. Class representatives sit on the newly formed school council and take a pride in presenting other pupils' views. Pupils act as 'buddies' to others new to the school. They show initiative in organising events in support of charities, such as for 'Blue Peter' appeals. Pupils take part in the good range of lunchtime and after-school activities that develop their physical and social skills and enable them to work as a team. As they get older, pupils develop increasing independence in their learning; for example, pupils in Year 4 used their own research on local temperatures as basic information for a lesson on data recording.
18. Attendance during the last school year was very good and well above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with national averages. Most pupils arrive punctually in the morning, and lessons get off to a prompt start.
19. Pupils enjoy their school life. Their good attitudes, behaviour and relationships all help to create an environment supportive of learning. All the strengths found in this area at the last inspection have been maintained.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good and is sometimes very good, particularly in Key Stage 2. This results in effective learning and by the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils produce good quality work in their books. Nevertheless there are some differences in the pace of pupils' learning. Higher attaining pupils sometimes do work that fails to move them on fast enough and lower attaining pupils sometimes find the work too difficult. Where this occurs, it is usually the higher attaining pupils in classes in Key Stage 1 and the lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 whose progress is not as good as others in the same class. This is because teachers do not use the information from day-to-day checks on pupils' learning well enough to plan the next steps.
21. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers plan lessons for a rich diversity of activities. The teacher has a good understanding of national teaching guidelines for children of this age, particularly how to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Her management of children is sound and she makes good use of support staff. The teacher's expectations are not always high enough for more able children when they undertake reading and writing activities so their progress is hindered.
22. Teachers have a good understanding of most of the subjects they teach. This enables them to explain new learning well, to teach skills thoroughly and to extend pupils' thinking by probing their understanding. Numeracy skills are well taught, for example. Pupils are taught to use different strategies when they calculate and solve problems. They are expected to explain their thinking so that teachers can check their level of understanding. Literacy skills are taught to a satisfactory standard. Early reading skills are taught well. Pupils learn and use letter sounds to help them to read and spell unfamiliar words. Pupils are taught handwriting skills systematically in Key Stage 1, including how to join letters together to improve the fluency of their writing. Pupils learn how to organise their writing for different purposes and how to use punctuation. However, lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 do not build on spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills well enough although the structure, organisation and range of vocabulary in their writing develop well. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make

similar progress to other pupils in the class. Their understanding and use of general vocabulary and also more specialist terms develops well in English and in other subjects. Teachers do not always expect enough of the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in terms of their ability to read more complex books. Reference skills are taught well from an early age so the pupils can find information efficiently. This contributes to their progress in other subjects. Science is taught well in both key stages. A good emphasis is placed on pupils investigating for themselves so that they learn to think scientifically, to predict what might happen, observe carefully and explain why things happened as they did.

23. In geography, history, physical education and religious education the combination of teachers' knowledge of their subjects and well-planned programmes of work enables these subjects to be taught well. There are particular strengths in the depth of pupils' learning about different places and some features of the landscape in geography, local studies in history and, in religious education, pupils' understanding of how religious beliefs affect peoples' lives.
24. The quality of teaching in design and technology, ICT and music is satisfactory. Making skills are taught well in design and technology but the design process is not given enough emphasis. The computer suite is used well to teach pupils the ICT skills they need but teachers plan too few opportunities for them to put skills into practice to support their learning in other subjects. In music, effective guidelines and resources for teaching and the advice of the subject leader enable other teachers, none of whom are musicians, to teach the subject adequately. The lack of specialist skills means that they do not always intervene effectively to practise areas that need improving.
25. The teaching of art and design is unsatisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and skills are not good enough to enable them to get the best from their pupils. Teachers are not teaching skills in a logical sequence or enabling pupils to experiment with different materials or techniques. Their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. There is insufficient attention to the work of artists to help pupils learn an art vocabulary and to discuss styles and techniques. As a result pupils' learning is patchy, progress is slow and standards are low throughout the school. Art has received insufficient attention over the last few years to maintain standards.
26. Teachers manage pupils well. They show pupils through their actions and relationships that each of them is important. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and thoughts in a climate that respects different points of view, aptitudes and interests. As a result pupils gain confidence in evaluating their own and other pupils' work and learn from this experience. Pupils work well in groups and pairs. They discuss work sensibly, take turns to use equipment such as computers and share ideas that help others to make progress. Teachers use a range of different methods, such as teaching the whole class, small groups and individuals to make sure that they teach different aspects of the work in the best way. In the best lessons there is real enthusiasm for teaching and learning. The end of these lessons is often used to advantage to draw learning together, to highlight what has been learnt well, what pupils have enjoyed most, where improvements need to be made and what the next steps should be. Not all teachers manage to create this sense of achievement and moving on. In a minority of lessons in both key stages, although teaching is competent and learning thorough, the pace is ponderous and pupils' enthusiasm and rate of progress drop.
27. Different groups of pupils do not always make equally good progress. This occurs when teachers' pitch the work too high for lower attaining pupils or not high enough to challenge higher attaining pupils. Teachers do not use the information from day-to-day checks on pupils' learning well enough to adapt work to suit different groups. This becomes even more important when pupils work alone, especially in Key Stage 2, where there is often no additional adult support in classes. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support groups in Key Stage 1, usually lower attaining pupils. They use their expertise effectively to modify tasks and help pupils to overcome difficulties. There is sometimes insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. This happens more often in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Pupils

occasionally spend too long going over work they already know rather than working at a higher level from the outset and sometimes teachers underestimate what these pupils can do.

28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teaching is good where learning support assistants work with pupils and where work is matched carefully to their needs. However, it is not as good where pupils are expected to complete the same work as other pupils, and progress slows. The quality of individual education plans is unacceptably varied. This is because not all targets set by teachers are precise enough. Nor are the steps towards meeting them sufficiently small to help both teachers and pupils assess progress towards the targets. Teachers do not check frequently enough how well pupils are doing in reaching their targets but they do keep careful records that track progress over the longer term.

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

29. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils in which all subjects required by the National Curriculum are represented. Planning shows that there is sound coverage of statutory requirements and the school has adapted national guidelines that provide teachers in each year with effective guidance for work, which builds well on earlier learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when there was no coherent curriculum plan. The curriculum places satisfactory emphasis on the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills within English, and good emphasis on the development of number skills within mathematics. There are developing links between subjects, which help to make the curriculum more relevant for pupils. The successful implementation of national strategies for literacy and numeracy are helping to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning in English and mathematics. The amount of time allocated to teaching in Key Stage 2 is below the nationally recommended minimum time of 23.5 hours
30. There are weaknesses in the curriculum, however, which prevent pupils from making the best possible progress. The art and design curriculum is narrow and there is little work of quality. This does not provide pupils with the range of experiences they need to make good progress. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy, number and ICT skills through other subjects. Worksheets are sometimes overused, especially in Years 1 and 2, which reduces pupils' interest and involvement. There is not enough use of the locality and of first-hand experiences to help bring the curriculum to life for pupils in geography. Some areas of the ICT curriculum, such as control technology, are given too little emphasis because of shortages of resources.
31. The range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class is good and gives appropriate consideration to national guidelines for children of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children take part in a wide range of planned and structured activities and experiences, which give them a satisfactory start to their education and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
32. The curriculum is soundly organised to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make at least satisfactory gains in learning over time. They gradually develop their literacy and numeracy skills, especially when directly supported by the good work of teaching assistants. There are some very good examples of work being tailored to their needs, for example in a history lesson in Year 4, but work is not always matched to their needs and this prevents them from making the best possible gains in learning.
33. A satisfactory number and range of well-led clubs and activities appeal to the interests of pupils. Clubs, such as football, netball, drama, chess, recorders and art, are well supported and greatly appreciated by pupils. A small range of visits, including a residential visit to Standon Bowers for older pupils, extends their learning. Visitors, such as theatre groups, also enrich pupils learning experiences.

34. Teachers make every effort in all lessons and activities that support the curriculum to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are valued and celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school. All pupils are learning to respect one another and support each other's learning, although a very small number find this difficult. The school successfully provides learning opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, ability, background or ethnicity, to help them make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
35. Teachers give sound emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education. They learn to respect each other's points of view through occasional discussions about issues which concern them, such as considering what makes a good friend. Pupils develop an awareness of the need for rules based on safety, protection and fairness. Teachers regularly give praise to enhance pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to do their best. Older pupils have special duties, which helps to increase levels of initiative and responsibility, although there is limited opportunity for them to change their duties once they have been allocated. Sex education is included in the school's health education programme, in line with agreed policy. Older pupils learn about the use and misuse of drugs. The health education programme makes pupils aware of a healthy diet, hygiene and exercise for maintaining a healthy life style.
36. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. For example, representatives of the fire service and the police visit school to help raise pupils' awareness of the world of work. However, there are no links with local businesses or industry to help benefit pupils. There are well-established links with the school to which most pupils transfer at eleven. These help to ensure a smooth transition for pupils in Year 6 to their new school. Links with local primary schools are good.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good relationships between staff and pupils and a developing programme of personal, social and health education provide a firm foundation for the teaching and learning of moral values and social skills. Teachers ensure that pupils know right from wrong, and give clear, understandable reasons for the rules that have to be obeyed. Pupils are starting to be more involved in some of the school's decision-making processes through their class representatives on the recently formed school council. The curriculum also encourages pupils to become more aware of their responsibilities, not only to their friends and other pupils in the school, but also in the wider world through, for example, projects on the environment. The extra-curricular activities, including team sports, enable pupils to learn the skills and discipline essential for successful teamwork. An annual residential trip gives pupils the confidence to manage away from their home environment. Pupils are given a range of duties and responsibilities around the school. This helps to raise their self-esteem and awareness of the needs of others. However, they undertake the same duty throughout the year. This limits their experiences. As pupils get older, they start to take responsibility for their own learning, for example undertaking independent research activities at home or in the school library and computer room.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies and religious education lessons make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught about a range of beliefs, and reflect on the relevance of religious teachings to their own lives. Assemblies follow planned themes and include music for pupils to listen to, and time for quiet reflection. Opportunities for pupils to marvel at the wonders of the natural world occur in lessons, for example in a science lesson about water absorption in Year 3 when pupils were amazed as water crept up a sheet of paper held vertically.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also satisfactory. Pupils receive a sound grounding in aspects of their own cultural heritage, for example looking at local canal history and doing a comparative study of a nearby village. Pupils undertake Scottish country dancing in a physical education lesson. Pupils are introduced to a good range of classical and modern

literature from different traditions. There is not much of the pupils' art work or pictures by famous artists displayed around the school to attract interest or serve as an inspiration. Religious education lessons give a wider dimension to pupils' cultural development through the study of the major world faiths and pupils learn about life in other countries in geography lessons and through the school's annual 'Culture Week'. However, the school lacks a planned programme of activities to promote the appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of life in modern Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school cares for pupils well and has good procedures in place to ensure their safety and well-being. Relationships at all levels are friendly and the level of pastoral support is good. As a result, pupils are happy and secure and enjoy coming to school. The good relationships make it easy for pupils to talk to staff about any worries they may have. Satisfactory procedures are in place to help reception children make the move to the school and there are appropriate transition arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary school. Pupils' personal development is well supported but the monitoring of this is only informal unless there is a specific concern. However, teachers know each pupil well and any concerns are shared between staff and acted upon.
41. Child protection procedures are good. The designated teacher with responsibility has had relevant training. Staff are briefed as necessary on individual cases. The school has a good working relationship with social services and other outside agencies. Class teachers are very aware of pupils' needs and give good support to them all.
42. The school promotes and checks attendance well and this helps to maintain the very good attendance record. As a result of clear expectations from the school most parents let the school know if their child is absent for any reason. Unexplained absence is checked and is followed up promptly if there is felt to be any concern. Registers are well maintained.
43. The school's management of behaviour is good. There is a good policy based on rewards and positive reinforcement of good behaviour. All staff set a good example and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This helps to create an environment that is conducive to effective learning. Midday supervisory staff provide good support at playtime and this has a positive effect on playground behaviour and safety. There are toys and structured play activities available for both playgrounds and when these are used the maintenance of good order requires less staff intervention.
44. There is a good policy for health and safety and the management of this on a day-to-day basis is also good. A governor with professional expertise is helping to provide a sharper focus and a more formal structure to the school's procedures. Safety inspections and risk assessment take place. Fire drills take place each term but the fire alarm is not tested weekly, as per the policy. Testing of portable electrical appliances is up to date. First aid procedures are satisfactory and several staff have first aid qualifications. Accidents are properly logged and parents are notified in writing in the event of a bump to the head or more serious accident. The school provides a safe environment for the pupils and is kept well cleaned by the premises staff. The school's measures to protect pupils using the Internet facilities are effective.
45. The school's arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is carefully tracked as they move through the school. This enables teachers to know how well pupils are doing. Assessment arrangements in most other subjects are satisfactory. Teachers use agreed approaches to record the progress of different groups of pupils to help them to assess their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. However, because these arrangements are fairly new, they have yet to make an impact on pupils' progress.

46. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. There are a variety of arrangements to help teachers assess what pupils know and understand, including tests and end-of-unit assessments. Procedures for checking how well children are doing in the reception class focus on a target group each week for specific observation so that accurate assessments can be made and the information used in the next steps in learning.
47. There is much analysis of test data to help identify and overcome weaknesses, set group targets, and inform planning. However, data analysis is not yet used enough to boost pupil performance, for example to help make regular predictions about possible pupils' achievements in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests, to help improve 'borderline' pupils and to look at how different groups of pupils are doing. Test analysis is helping teachers to provide group targets for pupils in English and mathematics, but the information about weaknesses identified in particular aspects of each subject are not used well enough throughout the school to improve learning. Day-to-day assessment information is not used well enough to ensure work is planned to build on previous learning.
48. Pupils with special educational needs are soon identified through initial assessment. Teachers use this information to help them set targets on individual education plans of what is needed to help pupils to improve. These targets are not always precise enough to enable small steps in learning to be planned. The lack of precision makes it more difficult for teachers to check the progress pupils are making towards meeting their targets. External agencies are involved as required to help meet their specific needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school has a satisfactory relationship with the parents and seeks to involve them in the education of their children. Where this is achieved, it has a beneficial impact on their education. This is a similar situation to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. Most parents who made their views known are supportive of the school. Although relatively few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, about half of the parents responded to the questionnaire and their views confirm these opinions. Parents see the school as promoting a positive work ethic with good teaching helping their children to make good progress. They see their children liking school and being well supported as they grow and develop. However, a few parents responding to the questionnaire feel that the school does not work closely enough with them and that they are not kept well informed on their child's progress. A few feel that the provision for clubs and out-of-school activities is unsatisfactory. The inspection findings support the positive but not the negative views.
50. The school provides parents with a satisfactory level of information about their children's progress and about general matters. There are frequent newsletters and in addition the head teacher sends details of special events and other information. The prospectus and governors' annual report both provide comprehensive information for parents and meet statutory requirements. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory and include suggestions about how parents can help their child to progress. There are parents' consultation evenings each term and, in addition, parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to be involved in the review of their children's progress. Staff are on hand each day at the school gate for any parents who wish to talk about any concerns.
51. Parents make a generally satisfactory contribution to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. A few help in the classroom and on outside visits and provide valuable support. Many parents provide help to pupils at home with their reading and other homework. The school's homework policy provides a structure for homework that is satisfactory. The school has organised curriculum evenings for parents on, for example, literacy and numeracy but such meetings are poorly attended. An active parents association raises significant funds that are used to purchase learning resources such as computers, which benefit the education of the children.

52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed and involved at an early stage of identification. Their opinions are sought when individual education plans are written. Communication with them is usually good. Links between home and school are regular and mostly constructive, helping to ensure that pupils receive good support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of leadership and management of the school is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The head teacher provides good leadership and has an effective programme in place for reviewing and judging the quality of the teaching and learning that takes place in the school. She has managed very well the recent challenges of an extensive building programme, new staff and constant arrival of new pupils.
54. The head teacher's good leadership is shown in her development of teachers' roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders now take a much more active role in the school; they have devised action plans to raise standards and used money allocated to them wisely to help them achieve their intentions. The subject leaders in mathematics, English and science have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their own subjects through observing teaching and learning. Opportunities are given to other subject leaders through a rolling programme of classroom monitoring.
55. Other teachers also exercise their responsibilities efficiently. The reception teacher manages the Foundation Stage well. She is enthusiastic and keen to improve her knowledge and skills. Issues relating to special educational needs are managed effectively. The special educational needs co-ordinator oversees this important area, conscientiously maintaining and updating the special needs register. She consults with class teachers regularly although there are still some problems ensuring that individual education plans, written by teachers, are of consistently good quality. Support staff have clear roles and responsibilities, work well and are valued. They provide good support for pupils with special educational needs.
56. A major strength of the school is the strong team spirit, and the will and desire to improve the school further. Teachers work hard, take on additional responsibilities and training enthusiastically and share their expertise effectively with each other. The head teacher nurtures this enthusiasm well providing encouragement and support while making her expectations clear. The school's potential for further improvement is good.
57. This aspiration is also reflected in the work of the governing body. Governors see their role as supporting the head teacher while at the same time investigating and questioning plans for the school's development. Many lead very busy lives, which reduces their involvement and effectiveness, but they bring a range of expertise to the leadership of committees. Some governors spend time in school, observing lessons and discussing issues with specific staff or giving support within a particular subject. Governors attend relevant training courses and the chair of governors maintains an overview through monthly meetings with the head teacher and the vice chair of governors. The governing body carries out its role well, has helped to guide the school through the challenges of building programmes and has put into place provision to meet the demands of the constant admission of new children.
58. The school's plan for improvement, criticised in the last inspection report, is now good. It shows clearly how the areas for action are to be achieved and judged, the resources required to implement those actions as well as how long each action is expected to take and cost. This is now an effective plan for improving the school further. It is reviewed and monitored well although it does not yet show as clearly as it might its impact on pupils' performance because it lacks reference to specific learning targets that can be easily measured. The school's aims and ethos are clearly stated and inform the work of the school although they are not incorporated closely enough into the school's plan for improvement to ensure that the school knows how successful it is in meeting them.

59. Financial planning is sound. The resources available to the school are spent on those areas identified as priorities for improvement in the school development plan. Specific grants, such as those received for additional support for pupils with special educational needs, are being used well for their intended purpose. The head teacher and governors look well ahead to estimate likely costs and the governing body's finance committee has a good overview of the school's budgeting process and checks spending regularly. They are supported well by the administrative assistant who oversees day-to-day financial matters. Adequate checks are carried out to ensure that the school is getting value for money when negotiating and placing orders for goods and services. Strategic planning has ensured that the growing numbers in the school have been accommodated well and that the curriculum and re-organisation of the school into single age classes has taken place smoothly. It has been a priority of the governors to keep class sizes manageable and they have achieved this in spite of the strain this has placed on the school's finances in the short term.
60. The school has a satisfactory number of teaching staff whose qualifications and expertise match well the demands and range of the curriculum. Staff are ably supported by teaching assistants who are held in high esteem. They make a valuable contribution to the school. The induction of new staff is good as are the head teacher's arrangements for the professional development of staff. Performance management (checking how successful teachers are in carrying out their roles and responsibilities) is now well established. The targets set reflect both the needs of the school, and the personal and professional needs of the staff.
61. The accommodation is good with some very good features and this enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Since then a major building programme has been carried out to cope with increasing pupil numbers. Most classes are in the main building but pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are housed in a separate unit. Classrooms are of sufficient size for the pupil numbers. They are light and airy and most are carpeted, which helps to minimise noise. There is a good area, including a library, for small group work. The school has a very good computer suite that can accommodate a full class, working in pairs, and also a well-equipped room for music or design and technology lessons. The hall is of a good size and is multifunctional. The facilities for children in the Foundation Stage are much improved and enable children to achieve the expected levels by the end of their year in reception. Internally the standard of decoration is good. Externally, the older parts of the building are badly in need of painting. The outdoor play areas are satisfactory. The two playgrounds give sufficient space for the pupil numbers. Junior pupils wishing to play football are able to do so on the good-sized adjacent grassed area, which appears to drain well.
62. There are sufficient learning resources to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively in most subjects. There are shortages in art and design and ICT that are hampering pupils' learning. Resources have improved significantly in geography and history since the time of the previous inspection. Resources are readily accessible and generally well used. The library contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction books but the labelling system does not provide categories that younger pupils recognise easily. Older pupils manage to find what they need although the process is slow but younger pupils need adult help. This is hindering the development of independent research skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to improve standards further the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards achieved in art and design by :
 - improving teachers' expertise and confidence;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - teaching a full range of skills carefully in a logical sequence;
 - improving resources;
 - providing pupils with opportunities to experiment and develop different techniques and try out different materials before embarking on a piece of work;
 - widening the range of work and putting more emphasis on three-dimensional art and the study the work of major artists from different traditions.(see paragraphs 8,24,107-113)

- (2) enable all pupils to make the best possible progress by:
 - ensuring that the work set for higher attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, provides sufficient challenge;
 - ensuring that the work set for lower attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, is not too difficult;
 - making sure that all teachers make good use of the information gained from the full range of checks the school undertakes, including the analysis of tests and day-to-day observations of what pupils know and can do, to plan the next steps;
 - ensure that the targets for pupils with special educational needs are precise, in sufficiently small steps and checked more frequently so that they see the results of their efforts quickly.(see paragraphs 2,4-6,10,20-22,27,28,32,47,75,88,91,94,99,101)

- (3) improve the standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation by:
 - ensuring that the joined handwriting skills taught in Year 2 are used whenever pupils write and continue to be practised throughout the school;
 - introducing a systematic approach to teaching spelling and a more consistent approach to identifying errors in pupils' work throughout the school;
 - encouraging pupils to recognise the value of punctuation in reading for meaning, reading with expression and in giving structure to their writing.(see paragraphs 5,22,91)

- (4) improve pupils' progress in all aspects of ICT by:
 - identifying in subject plans where the use of ICT would benefit specific areas of learning;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers to assist their learning in all the subjects of the curriculum where it is appropriate;
 - extending the range of resources to enable each aspect of the work to be taught thoroughly.(see paragraphs 9,30,135)

The following minor weakness should be considered when governors formulate their action plans.

Provide better opportunities in subjects other than English for pupils to improve their writing skills.
(see paragraph 30)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	21	16	1	0	0
Percentage	0	17	46	35	2	0	100

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	164
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	7	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	21	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (83)	92 (94)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	24	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (83)	100 (89)	100 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (74)	79 (79)	79 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (68)	79 (84)	89 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

* Because there are fewer than ten girls in the year group, the results are not shown separately, as per the Governor's reporting arrangements to parents.

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

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	328,720
Total expenditure	321,126
Expenditure per pupil	2,099
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,480
Balance carried forward to next year	6,170

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	164
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	38	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	64	13	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	62	14	5	4
The teaching is good.	31	56	2	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	58	19	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	49	6	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	46	4	2	6
The school works closely with parents.	18	49	27	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	36	36	15	4	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	52	4	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	46	20	2	4

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents are concerned about the rapid and continuing growth of the school and fear that it will lose its village school atmosphere. They are also concerned about the increasing number of pupils with challenging behaviour.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. There are wide variations in children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage. Attainment also differs significantly from year to year. This year's assessments show that the current reception children entered the Foundation Stage with above average skills in reading and slightly above average skills in early mathematics. By the end of the Foundation Stage these children are expected to attain the early learning goals (national targets for children to reach by the end of the reception year), with a few children exceeding them. They are making satisfactory progress.
65. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher has considerable nursery experience, is very enthusiastic and has a good understanding of both the developing needs of young children and the early learning goals. There are very good relationships with support staff. A particular strength of the teaching is the very good range of activities planned to make links between the six areas of learning identified for the Foundation Stage.
66. In the last inspection report a number of aspects of the school's provision for its Foundation Stage were found to be unsatisfactory. Planning was considered to be underdeveloped and the scope of stimulating activities provided was too restricted. Planning is now good. It takes into account the range of first-hand experiences needed by young children to develop those skills and concepts that provide a secure basis for future learning. One of the strengths of the Foundation Stage is the curriculum, which is now provides a wide range of rich learning experiences.
67. Poor accommodation facilities and resources were also criticised in the last report. These areas have been addressed. The accommodation is now good and the resources are improving. The outside play area is still insufficiently stimulating but this is a focus for development and work has begun.
68. Parents are involved effectively in the transition from home to school. A half-day session for the children and an invitation to enjoy a story session in the summer term helps them to settle quickly into full-time schooling. Parents have the opportunity to attend meetings and receive an information pack together with an information booklet to assist their child in becoming an effective reader. Parent/teacher meetings are held during the year to keep parents fully informed of their child's progress although specific targets for the child are not included in this process.
69. Staff assess the development of the children's skills and concepts well. By the end of the reception year the teacher and support staff have used a series of simple tests, observations and collections of work, to assess the children's knowledge and skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are expected to meet the early learning goals in this area and a few are likely to exceed them. Teaching and learning are good. Children have already learned class routines and can maintain attention and concentration well. They are very good at playing co-operatively in the water area, using the play equipment provided, and can interact well in the imaginative play space. They understand the importance of working as part of a group within the class and taking turns; for instance, in counting to 20 the children understand that they only answer when the ball is rolled to them.

71. Children form constructive relationships with the adults in the class and with each other. They behaved well and were interested in the many activities that were prepared for them during the inspection. They showed enthusiasm for practical activities, for example when they worked with a programmable toy. A few children found it difficult to concentrate when listening activities went on for more than 15 minutes.
72. Activities, such as the 'Wedding' held in the church at the time of the inspection, gave children an understanding, not only of a traditional event, but of moral concepts such as 'promises' and social values such as 'love' and 'friendship'. The candle-lit church setting generated a sense of wonder in the children. In comparing Christian celebrations with those of other faiths, children are building up an understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Most of the children have well-developed language skills. Their attainments are above average for children of this age. They interact well with each other and with adults, and the majority can use language appropriately to discuss events or relate a well-known story in sequence. Most children answer questions confidently and many can give further details when the teacher asks "How do you know?"
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's understanding of letter sounds is developed very well. The majority of the children recognise the sounds of the letters of the alphabet and can hear sounds at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words. They use this knowledge to write their own words and a few attempt to write more complex words using these word building skills.
75. The more able and average children can read a familiar range of common words and simple sentences independently. The reading material is appropriate for the average reader but the more-able children are not given books that provide sufficient challenge and impetus. This is also reflected in the children's writing. The children do not have enough opportunities on a daily basis to transfer their good phonic skills to their writing in a variety of carefully structured activities and opportunities for informal writing in the play areas. All of the children are likely to meet the goals expected for their age in reading by the end of reception. A few more able children could do better. Children are not as near the early learning goals in writing and a few children are unlikely to reach them by the end of the year. Many are not yet forming letters accurately. Their achievements could be better.

Mathematical development

76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A good range of activities such as sorting, matching and saying number rhymes is provided for the children. Most of the children already have a good understanding of counting to 20, can recognise and order numbers up to 10, and can relate numbers to objects. A few are able to count confidently to 100 and recognise numbers to 30. Children know the names of two-dimensional shapes and find examples of these around the room. More able children talk about the number of sides of different shapes. They have a good understanding of size and the language associated with it. They explain that some objects are 'longer than', 'shorter than', 'bigger than' or 'smaller than' others. The idea of addition being the combining of two groups is understood and children were just beginning to learn how to take away or subtract.
77. Indications are that the majority of the children will reach the goals expected for their age in mathematics, with a small proportion exceeding them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. This area is taught very well. It is a strength in the teaching of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Through topics meaningful to the children, activities are planned that help them to understand the world around them. The children use the school grounds to look at living things and learn basic geography skills through identifying from photographs where, outside or inside the school, 'teddy' is located. They investigate living things by using their senses as appropriate, tasting fruit and handling newborn chicks. Their skills are developed further when children taste different flavours of porridge after reading the story of *The Three Bears*. Fairy stories provide further stimulus for effective learning. For example, children made a giant's castle in the sand tray and made trucks for Snow White's dwarfs from construction kits.
79. Children identify similarities and differences by sorting their own toys according to specific criteria such as 'cuddly' or 'construction'. Through the 'toys' topic, children's ideas of past and present develop well. A display in the classroom leads them to talk about toys of their own and those belonging to their parents and their grandparents.
80. The children show a very good understanding of the uses of everyday technology. Many are already demonstrating good computer skills and use programmable toys. Most of the children are likely to reach the goals expected for their age and many will exceed them.

Physical development

81. Teaching and learning are good. Children's physical development is progressing well and all should meet the requirements of the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are able to change their clothes with a good degree of independence and once in the hall are very good at finding a space for their dance lesson. Children showed good bodily control as they moved appropriately to show the movements of a soldier, clown, and a wind-up toy. Most children control their movements, speed up or slow down as necessary and have the skills to carry out a sequence of repeated actions.
82. Children have sound hand control for their age: they can build using construction kits or building bricks, and are able to control a crayon or paintbrush. Writing skills are less well developed but many have very good 'mouse' control when using the computer. Children are developing the skills of scissor control and can cut paper to decorate their jack-in-the-box models. Good use is made of the limited outside play area to transfer skills learned in class to outside. Children are able to practise skills to improve their bodily control, such as climbing and balancing on a frame, riding bicycles, scooters and space hoppers or negotiating obstacles on an obstacle course.

Creative development

83. By the end of the Foundation Stage children's creative development will be in line with the requirements of the early learning goals. Children paint and are able to blend colours. Paintings of themselves and their friends contributed well to their display 'Our Circle of Friends' while blending is used to mix the colours of their favourite toys. They are able to use modelling materials to make models of their toys. The teaching is good. Children enjoy many opportunities in the classroom for imaginative and dramatic play such as role-play for the wedding, in particular, and celebrations in general. These opportunities support their speaking and listening skills well.
84. The children enjoy singing simple songs for a variety of purposes, for example counting songs such as 'Five Current Buns', and clapping rhythms to music such as the Polka Song. They use music and dance to express and communicate ideas. In their dance lesson children used their facial expressions well to convey such feelings as the blank face of the soldiers, the surprised expression of the Jack in the Box and the amusing face of the clown. They subsequently paint pictures to show how the music makes them feel.

85. Children are able to make their own toy collages by cutting out toys from catalogues and magazines. This helps them to practise scissor control. They cut out various materials to find out the best material to make the fur for their bears.

ENGLISH

86. Standards in English are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There has been significant year-on-year improvements at the end of Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school and the majority make good progress. The wide differences in pupils' attainment when they enter the school, both at the reception stage and in those pupils joining later, mean that overall standards vary significantly from year to year. This accounts for the fact that standards in 2002 were higher.

87. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress because teachers:
- introduce pupils to letter sounds systematically and help them to use them to build words when they read and write;
 - choose books and texts carefully for whole-class teaching so that they interest boys and girls;
 - encourage pupils to read regularly at home. Most parents support their children well, keeping up a useful dialogue with teachers about what pupils do well and where they have difficulties;
 - teach pupils to use the index and contents page so that they can extract information efficiently from reference books;
 - provide writing tasks in a variety of forms and for different purposes and cover a lot of ground;
 - introduce pupils to a growing range of vocabulary and challenge them to use more adventurous words in their writing;
 - help lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to overcome their difficulties by providing good support in lessons and guiding teaching assistants so that their supporting role is helpful.

88. However, pupils do not always make the best possible gains because:-
- there are too few opportunities for higher attaining pupils in particular to write at length;
 - although pupils are taught joined handwriting systematically from the second term in Year 2, they are not expected to use it for all their work. As a result pupils who choose not to use it have little opportunity to practise new skills;
 - the books provided for higher attaining pupils to read in school and at home offer insufficient challenge to their understanding of more complex stories and ideas.

89. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 most pupils listen carefully and express their ideas so that others can understand them. Higher attaining pupils explain their thinking and describe, in some detail, what they have done. Most pupils read with reasonable fluency and understand what they have read well enough to answer questions about it. They are confident to have a go at books they have not seen before. Lower-attaining pupils read with little expression; for example, they do not use a change of voice when someone is speaking because they are not able to make use of speech marks and question marks as prompts. They use letter sounds well when they meet a word they do not know but they do not readily pick up clues from pictures when they get stuck. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression. They read and have a good understanding of quite complex vocabulary in books that are new to them. They are ready for the challenge of thinking about ideas that lie behind the text of more complicated stories. Most pupils write well enough to record their ideas and to compose simple stories. Pupils' spelling of regular words and those they use frequently is good. They use their knowledge of letter sounds well when they write and are not held back because they are afraid to have a go. Many pupils could make better use of punctuation to separate sentences. A few higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use

speech marks and write more complex sentences, linking ideas together with words such as 'because' and 'but' and thinking of different ways to begin sentences. However, they have too few opportunities to write at length and put into practice what they have learnt about describing settings and the feelings of characters and to build a story that comes to a satisfactory conclusion.

90. At Key Stage 2, most pupils make good progress because teachers:
- provide an increasingly wide range of writing tasks so that pupils become adept at writing imaginative stories, play scripts, factual accounts, persuasive arguments and balanced discussions;
 - choose extracts of good quality and from a wide range of literature including myths and legends, children's classics, modern fiction, plays and poetry;
 - discuss different forms of writing knowledgeably so that pupils learn to structure their own writing effectively and use a growing vocabulary to enliven it;
 - set time targets in lessons so that pupils work at a good pace and complete a lot of work;
 - pitch work that challenges most pupils to do their best;
 - provide effective teaching that helps a group of pupils in each lesson to make particularly good progress;
 - set group targets and use marking well to remind pupils of particular aspects of their work that need improvement.
91. However pupils do not always do as well as they could in some aspects of their work because:
- the approach to teaching spelling and identifying spelling errors is not systematic enough or readily understood by pupils and lower attaining pupils in particular are hindered because they are unable to use basic spelling rules;
 - pupils are not expected to use joined handwriting so many fail to develop a fluent joined style;
 - insufficient attention is given to punctuation so that pupils do not use it as a guide to expressive reading, and lower attaining pupils in particular still have difficulty in demarcating sentences accurately;
 - teachers do not always provide tasks that are easy enough for lower attaining pupils to complete successfully when they are working independently, so on these occasions pupils become dispirited and fail to make much headway.
92. Standards of speaking and listening are broadly average. By the end of Year 6 pupils express their ideas on a range of issues. They listen to other points of view and say why they agree or disagree. They put their ideas into writing well in a range of forms and for different purposes. They are able to build an argument, to develop tension in a story, describe characters and scenes and express their feelings. There are a few good links with other subjects, for example history, so that pupils combine their knowledge of ancient civilisations and heroic language to compose poetry including phrases such as "Courageous Lord of the Aztecs, heroic conqueror of warrior tribes..." On the whole, however, there are too few opportunities in other subjects for pupils to improve their writing skills. Pupils have studied and absorbed the characteristics and language of a wide range of good quality fiction and are confident in using it. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are sometimes held back because their grasp of punctuation is weak, they do not have a good enough grasp of spelling rules and their handwriting is slow and laborious. Many pupils do not routinely use a fluent joined handwriting style or confidently use a range of punctuation. Pupils are given the opportunity to draft and edit writing on computers but this does not happen often enough to help lower attaining pupils in particular to become skilful enough in identifying their own errors and making improvements to their writing. Discussions with pupils about their reading showed that pupils of all abilities read books that challenge them. Their reading diaries confirmed this but indicated that they chose quite a narrow range. Boys showed as much interest as girls and both read fiction and non-fiction but they showed little real enthusiasm for reading. Although they could answer questions about the content of the stories and about characters, they found

it difficult to think beyond the obvious and to arrive at a more subtle interpretation. Pupils' research skills are good. They find information in books quickly because they have been taught to scan the text. They use headings and subheadings and other flagging devices efficiently to locate what they want. They make efficient, although only occasional, use of research methods on computers.

93. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They plan and prepare lessons thoroughly so that pupils are interested in the work. In the best lessons, in Key Stage 2, teachers inspire pupils to make thoughtful contributions to discussions because they ask searching questions. Classes are well managed so that pupils get on with their work, uninterrupted by others. Key Stage 1 pupils work well independently and rarely interrupt the teachers when their attention is focused on other groups. When required to co-operate in pairs, pupils do so constructively, for example when working two to a computer to draft and edit discussion texts in Year 6. Pupils learn well from each other's ideas. Teachers effectively explore with pupils the use of different words in a range of contexts. They encourage pupils to be adventurous in their choice of words and to think about the power of words to convey interest and excitement. As a result pupils of all abilities and those whose mother tongue is not English develop a wide vocabulary.
94. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has a good overview of teaching and learning because time has been set aside for her to observe lessons. Specific weaknesses in pupils' learning have been identified, for example, that their understanding of the deeper meaning of complex texts needs improving. The analysis of Year 6 test answers and checking completed work has also identified areas for improvement. This has been translated into targets for groups of pupils in Key Stage 2. As yet there has been no formal analysis of what Year 2 pupils do well or not so well in tests although the school has identified that boys read less well than girls. The subject leader has responded well by checking resources and making sure that the range of books and texts now reflect boys' interests better. Pupils' progress through the school is checked carefully so that booster classes can be targeted at those pupils most in need. Better use could be made of the information to help individuals whose progress is not as good as expected. Since the last inspection a library has been built up and this now contains a range of fiction and non-fiction of good quality that appeals to both boys and girls of all ages and caters for diverse interests. Classes use the library on a weekly basis for a variety of purposes. Older pupils find the books they need but it is a time-consuming business because they do not find the labelling system easy to use. The system makes it very difficult for younger pupils to use the library without assistance.

MATHEMATICS

95. Standards in mathematics are above the national average by the end of Years 2 and in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. Progress for most pupils is at least satisfactory, as they move through the school, and is often good. This is an improved picture on the findings of the last inspection. The high standards often achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 do not always translate into high standards at the end of Year 6 because of the large number of pupils admitted to the school late in their primary years.
96. All pupils make at least sound progress in the development of understanding of number, shape, space and measures, and in their ability to handle data. By the end of Year 2, pupils use mathematical names for common two-dimensional shapes, begin to use mathematical diagrams and are starting to use standard units to measure the length of objects. They solve simple number problems using mental calculation and paper methods, and are starting to understand place value of digits. By the end of Year 6, pupils show recognition of proportions by using fractions to describe them, and recognise equivalent fractions. They understand place value to 1000, employ and interpret mathematical diagrams, add and subtract decimal numbers and identify negative numbers. They have begun to develop their own strategies for solving number problems. They represent, group and interpret collected data in different ways.

97. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and are often good. Where teaching is good, teachers' high expectations result in challenging work, and pupils put more effort into getting it right. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. A good choice and use of resources ensures that learning is effective. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships, secure subject knowledge and a brisk pace, help to keep pupils motivated and involved, and explain the good attitudes to learning.
98. The progress of pupils is at least satisfactory and often good because:
- teachers pitch work at a 'high average' level, which challenges most pupils;
 - the subject is well led and managed, by a good teacher of mathematics, and there is a clear action plan to sustain improvement;
 - planning is well focused, which enables teachers to build carefully on previous learning, and is increasingly adapted to take account of problems encountered by pupils;
 - all teachers place good emphasis on developing important number skills and problem solving;
 - information gained from tests is increasingly analysed to discover and overcome weaknesses, inform planning and set group targets for pupils, and has improved since the last inspection;
 - teaching assistants are used successfully to help pupils with special educational needs, mostly in Years 1 and 2;
 - teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously to celebrate their achievements and help them to move forward.
99. However, pupils do not always make the best possible gains in learning. Higher attaining pupils, mostly in Years 1 and 2, are sometimes given work that they already understand before proceeding to more challenging tasks. Lower attaining pupils, mostly in Years 3 to 6, are sometimes required to complete the same work as other more able pupils. This slows their progress because the work is sometimes too hard for them. Teachers are not making good enough use of day-to-day checks to pitch the work at the right level. In Years 1 and 2, particularly, teachers rely too much on worksheets and do not use 'real-life' mathematics enough, to interest pupils and help them to appreciate that numbers are all around us. Links with ICT, though evident, such as in work on spreadsheets in Year 6, are not given enough emphasis. There are satisfactory opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills in science. Pupils' work, mathematical challenges, problems and puzzles are rarely displayed to stimulate pupils' interest and develop a wider mathematical vocabulary.

SCIENCE

100. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected and pupils make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Standards in Year 6 have returned to the average level seen in 2000 and 2001 following a fall last year. If the results since the last inspection report are analysed there is year-on-year improvement at the end of Key Stage 2 with results only dipping in 2002. The reasons for last year's fall can be partly explained by a pupil who took only half the test and by the absence of another able pupil. In this small year group each pupil represented five per cent of the marks. Neither the school's analysis nor inspection findings shed any further light on this fall.
101. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Lessons are well planned, the work is pitched to challenge the pupils and more able pupils are given opportunities to support those who have special educational needs. This requires more able pupils to explain their thinking as well as to make suggestions about how to proceed, and so extends their scientific thinking. While teachers ensure that all pupils are able to take a full and active part in the lessons a more simplified means of recording work would help pupils with special educational needs.
102. Teachers have good subject knowledge. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on first-hand investigative work which enables pupils to experiment for themselves. Pupils are

encouraged to think scientifically, for example to ask questions, make predictions, consider their methods and test those predictions. They are often given a helpful framework to guide their thinking. There is good emphasis throughout the school on 'fair testing', with children of all ages considering what needs to be kept the same to make the investigation fair. Thus, when pupils in Year 2 use different surfaces to test the distances a toy car will travel on a slope, they know that the same car must be used, that the slope must be kept at the same angle and that the car must start at the same point.

103. The pupils' response to their science work is good and sometimes very good. They show a high level of interest in carrying out investigations and work well together collaboratively. This was particularly evident when pupils were testing the absorbency of different kinds of paper. These opportunities to exchange ideas help develop pupils' social skills and also promote good listening and speaking skills.
104. Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. Teachers' planning is guided by a scheme of work that allows pupils to build systematically on their existing knowledge. This is an improvement since the last inspection report where planning was seen as a weakness.
105. There are very good links with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 study friction and forces based on their own shoes in science, they design and make slippers in design and technology and make drawings from charcoal in art based on their own favourite footwear. Opportunities to record their work, and the teaching of correct scientific vocabulary, mean that the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' numeracy skills are also developed satisfactorily: the pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically. Although the use of modern technology to support science is weak at the moment, new sensory equipment and electric microscopes have been purchased and are soon to be integrated into the science curriculum.
106. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and has put right those weaknesses identified at the last inspection. He has checked the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by observing lessons, analysed test results at Key Stage 2 and ensured that schemes of work are appropriate for the changing needs of the school. Resources, including a small range of good quality books in the library, have been improved and special attention has been paid to ensuring that all aspects of the science curriculum are now taught effectively.

ART AND DESIGN

107. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in art and design are below those expected for children of a similar age. This is different to the findings in the last inspection report when they were found to be in line.
108. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and teaching here was satisfactory. Although pupils enjoy art, it is clear from their response and application in the lesson that they have not received the necessary earlier skills to help achieve the desired outcome.
109. Evidence gained from displayed work, from books and from discussions with pupils, show that teaching is unsatisfactory and that children are not learning the underlying techniques nor have sufficient knowledge and experience about processes in art and design. Teachers' subject knowledge is unsatisfactory.
110. There are isolated examples of good teaching. In one class pupils used pastels and, with the aid of mirrors, drew their own faces. In another class pupils have had the opportunity to make their own printing blocks and have used repeating patterns for a wallpaper design. There are good charcoal drawings from direct observation of footwear, which link well to work in design and technology and science. Sketchbooks do not include any evidence of pupils being taught painting and drawing techniques in a structured way.

111. The curriculum is too narrow. There is too much emphasis on painting. Criticisms that appeared in the previous report are still to be addressed. In particular there is insufficient range of learning experiences for the pupils in textiles, printing, sculpture and clay. The school has a powerful computer graphics program but only one example of its use was evident during the inspection.
112. The use of sketchbooks continues to be underdeveloped. They do not include examples from real life or magazines to stimulate ideas or show evidence of pupils experimenting with line, textures, shape, colour mixing or pattern making. Similarly there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment with different types or sizes of pencil and brushes.
113. It is clear that in the past the subject has been given insufficient attention. A new subject leader has recently taken over responsibility for the work in art and design and has drawn up an action plan that gives a clear outline of developments needed for improvement. She has started an art club, which has proved popular with the pupils. She has plans to improve resources, which at present are inadequate to support the curriculum. A new commercial scheme, based on national guidelines, has been purchased to give more guidance to teachers. Structures are in place, therefore, to raise standards in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Progress is satisfactory as pupils move through the school because there is an appropriate range of projects for them to develop their skills of design, making and evaluation. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection.
115. Improvements since the last inspection include the adoption of a structured scheme to help ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical order, and improved resources, which are now sufficient to implement the requirements of the curriculum.
116. Pupils work with a range of tools, equipment, materials and components to make products, which are of at least satisfactory quality, and are sometimes good. By the end of Year 2, pupils design and make vehicles to standards that are close to national levels. They begin to evaluate their finished vehicles against their original designs and start to discuss possible improvements. The work builds systematically through Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3 add more detail in pictures and words to their designs for photograph frames. They select suitable materials and give reasons for their choices. The completed end-products show greater originality and of good quality. Pupils in Year 4 investigate commercial products in more depth. For example, they investigate different types of moving pictures before designing and making a pop-up book of their own. As a result, they use slide mechanisms and loose pivots effectively. By the end of Year 6, pupils design and make products with increased accuracy and quality of finish, working from more sophisticated designs. They evaluate and modify their plans as they proceed and suggest changes to the end-product.
117. Teaching and learning are at least sound and sometimes good. Good features of teaching include a good emphasis on important skills and extra levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils, such as when they add a heel to their slippers in Year 6. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and make good use of support assistants to aid the learning of pupils with special educational needs in particular. These positive features help to ensure that most pupils enjoy the subject and have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers are more confident teaching the various elements of design and technology.
118. The subject is soundly led and managed, and there are clear plans for its continued development. It has a secure place within the school's planning. Recent developments have

included the systematic use of the multifunctional room for design and technology, the creation of a food technology area and the improvement of resources for teachers to help them to teach effectively. Teachers check what pupils know and can do as they move through the school and are beginning to use this information to plan the next steps. The range of pupils' work displayed helps them to take a pride in their learning, attracts other pupils' interest and gives them ideas.

GEOGRAPHY

119. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the picture observed at the time of the last inspection. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has contributed well to significant improvements in the planning of work, which is bringing improvements to teaching and learning. Progress in Key Stage 2 is now good because the programme of work builds more systematically on earlier learning. The pupils use maps, reference books and computers as sources of information because resources have been substantially improved. This means that teachers place less reliance on worksheets, which at the time of the last inspection were slowing progress.
120. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have only done half a term's work in geography this year because most of the work is planned to take place in the late spring and summer terms, when the better weather permits more work out of doors. Work in pupils' books from last year shows that pupils begin their studies in the local area by visiting the village and noting different types of building. They draw simple plans of the classroom and learn to follow a route. Good use is made of a programmable robotic toy to develop pupils' understanding of direction and distance. Pupils learn about St Lucia – the climate, jobs, homes, farming and family life – and how these differ from life in England. They write about their favourite seaside place and what activities can be carried out there. Pupils' achievements are sound.
121. Pupils in Key Stage 2 undertake a lot of work. Good standards are evident in the work on locations, for example Mexico, and in the study of rivers, coastal erosion and physical features. Although pupils' work shows that they undertake a considerable amount of map-work, this is mostly in the classroom. The lack of fieldwork means that they rarely put their skills into practice or learn directly from the landscape. A little work of this type is undertaken during annual residential visits for Years 5 and 6 but there are missed opportunities to use the immediate area around the school to study features of the landscape and buildings, to take measurements of changes in the weather and to survey human activity. This is hindering the development of geographical skills.
122. It was possible to observe only one geography lesson during the inspection. This confirmed the good teaching evident from the work in pupils' books. The lesson in Year 3 was well planned so that pupils worked with a sense of purpose. They were quite clear about what they were to learn and how they were to find out. The teacher had written useful prompts on the board so that pupils could plan the work in stages. This helped the less able pupils and those with special educational needs to measure the progress they were making and to persist with the task. The teacher gave them good support, asking searching questions to extend their understanding and making suggestions to help them to make progress. Higher attaining pupils put their literacy skills to good effect. They used reference books well to find out information about physical features in Mexico and what use villagers made of them. They know how subheadings, bullet points and other flagging devices help them to pick out what they need. They are familiar with geographical terms so that they put the information they find to good use. Pupils put a lot of effort in to the work and maintained a good pace in spite of the fact that they had just returned from swimming and were getting tired at the end of the day. The teacher kept them on their toes with her enthusiasm and pulled the whole lesson together well at the end. Substantial progress was made and pupils' achievements in the lesson were good.

HISTORY

123. Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards expected for their age group at the end of Years 2 and 6. It is clear from observing lessons during the inspection, looking at pupils' work in books and talking to pupils, that standards from the last inspection have been at least maintained.
124. The curriculum now covers a range of interesting learning activities. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. This is reflected in the quality and range of learning opportunities at each key stage.
125. Teachers encourage pupils' understanding of history at Key Stage 1 through studying the lives of themselves, their families and others. These younger pupils start from subjects familiar to them, such as their own toys, and are able to make comparisons with toys loaned by parents and grandparents. They study the lives of people in the more distant past by looking at transport and consider the differences between transport today and that in earlier centuries. Pupils in Year 2 carry out some good research work on the lives of famous people such as Louise Braille, Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys.
126. Pupils at Key Stage 2 show good understanding and knowledge of major events, prominent people and changes in Britain's past through their studies of Tudors and Victorians, and of world civilisations such as the Aztecs. Teachers do not yet give sufficient emphasis to helping pupils understand some of the differences in the way the past is represented and interpreted through greater reference to different methods of finding out about the past. As a result pupils are not able to compare the usefulness of different sources of information.
127. Local history is taught very well. Pupils visit the village of Alrewas and follow a trail that helps them to identify historical features in the village. Pupils in Year 5 visit Fradley Junction in connection with their work on waterways.
128. In Key Stage 2, visits also help enrich the curriculum and make history more meaningful for younger pupils who visit Shugborough Hall to study Victorian life and Tamworth Castle to learn about Tudor times. From these visits and the accompanying work, pupils begin to imagine what life was like. Such visits and supporting work make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
129. Pupils respond well to their history lessons. Their attitude is good. In lessons, the pupils were engaged and interested, particularly in follow-up work to their visit to Shugborough Hall where they had the opportunity to find out about the lives of a Victorian laundry maid or school child. Their responses showed good empathy with their historical counterparts and a good retention of knowledge gained.
130. Opportunities for pupils with special needs are generally sound. In one lesson, provision was very good. Here the teacher had provided a simplified task, which enabled pupils to think about and record their work. One particular pupil had individual work. These pupils with special educational needs made good progress and could contribute well in the feedback session at the end of the lesson.
131. Resources are much improved since the last report and are now good enough to teach the subject thoroughly. While there was evidence of some research using the Internet during the inspection, greater links could be made to ICT to broaden the pupils' learning. There are also insufficient opportunities for older pupils to extend and apply those skills used in literacy, such as personal writing, newspaper reports, letter writing and play scripts, in their recording of historical events.
132. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and a clear idea of the requirements of her role. She has already made an analysis of the teaching

and learning through looking at children's books and displays and talking to colleagues. She has drawn up an action plan. Together with the previous subject leader she has produced a policy and supported staff in implementing the programmes of study. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Standards are in line with national levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection.

134. Progress is satisfactory as pupils move through the school. This is because:

- ICT is given increasing emphasis, because teachers are more confident and competent than they were;
- the subject is soundly led and managed and there are rigorous plans for its continued development;
- pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have regular access to computers to enable them to improve their skills;
- the adoption of a structured scheme of work is enabling pupils to build carefully on previous learning, and is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection;
- teachers are now checking and recording the development of knowledge, skills and understanding for all pupils;
- pupils are using CD-ROMs and the Internet to obtain information;
- when pupils work together on computers, they co-operate well and this helps to reinforce their learning.

135. However, weaknesses still exist that are preventing pupils from making the best possible progress in all areas of the subject. ICT is rarely used to support work in other subjects. Pupils do not exchange information often enough with others using e-mail or draft and edit stories. There is not yet enough emphasis on describing and discussing the effectiveness of their work in ICT, and comparing it with other methods of communication. Although each class has a weekly session working on computers, the computer suite still stands idle for long periods on some days. There are shortages of resources, which prevent all areas of the curriculum from being taught well, for example in the area of control technology, and the school does not yet have a digital camera.

136. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the mouse and keyboard confidently to produce short pieces of writing. They use different styles, sizes and colours of font. They research information on their chosen topic using a CD-ROM and make decisions about how useful the information is compared to that found in books. They use simple graphics programs to draw pictures and represent information in graphs. Work builds systematically through Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 3 extend their understanding of graphics programs when they create patterns, in a link with art. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent in their use of computers in a range of situations. A few good links with science enable them to collect, represent and interpret information in graphs. They construct a useful spreadsheet to help them answer the question "Can tall people jump further than short people?" and they compare the usefulness of paper and electronic spreadsheets. They use the keyboard well to draft and edit their work. For example, they write an account of the residential visit to Standon Bowers. Their published work shows that they have a good grasp of word-processing skills.

137. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good features of teaching include secure subject knowledge, clear explanations, good questioning, much opportunity for pupils to have 'hands-on' experience and a useful summary of what has been learnt at the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils make good progress in the tasks set and show good attitudes to learning. Where pupils make slower progress, tasks are not pitched at the correct level or pupils have to wait for help, which is not readily available.

MUSIC

138. Substantial improvements have been made to the programme of study in music. At the time of the last inspection there was no planned programme that set out what pupils need to learn in each year. The work now builds systematically and pupils are developing listening and appraising, composition and performing skills. The subject leader has good expertise in music and as well as designing a programme that can be taught with confidence by non-specialists, she gives valuable support to colleagues at the lesson planning stage. This leads to satisfactory teaching, with significant strengths in the subject leader's class. Standards are broadly average by Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 as they were at the time of the last inspection. It is not possible to judge standards at the end of Year 6 because music was not part of their timetable during the inspection.
139. In the lessons, there was a good balance of composing, practising skills and performing either with the voice or with instruments or both. The pupils listened intently to each other, to tape recordings of their own performance and to a range of orchestral and popular music. This helped them to make suggestions about what they liked and why and how to improve their own performances. For example, a pupil in Year 3 identified the need for a conductor to help her group perform better together. Other pupils in the class appreciated the way one group used an accelerating beat to depict a cheetah gathering speed. The best compositions used an effective range of instruments and combined them imaginatively to depict slithering snails and the unchanging pace of their movements. Pupils in Year 1 listened to a commercially produced tape of a song, chosen carefully to enable them to detect subtle changes in the accompaniment. They spotted the introduction of percussion instruments and the use of quiet chanting voices as a chorus. After practising the song with the tape they were able to add these variations to their own performance. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, made satisfactory progress in the lessons.
140. Pupils in Year 4 had a more ambitious task – to compose a piece for tuned instruments and percussion that expressed the mood of the city. They had listened to contrasting pieces of popular and classical music and read a poem together to give them inspiration. They applied themselves to the task eagerly and, although much more work is planned before pupils are ready for performance, they were beginning to bring shape and coherence to their pieces. They were able to express the different moods well. The teacher's own knowledge and expertise enabled her to make valuable teaching points that helped pupils to concentrate on specific elements, to overcome difficulties and improve their compositions. For example, instead of taking it in turns to play part of each piece the teacher encouraged pupils to play different rhythms at the same time and to use a repeating melody line as another layer.
141. The teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use the ideas and suggestions of the scheme well and adapt them to suit their classes. They choose resources carefully. There is now a good range of instruments, enough to allow each pupil to play. There are times when a lack of confidence prevents teachers from singing themselves to demonstrate how to improve individual phrases of the music. As a result pupils' singing does not improve as quickly as it might but the good model provided by the tapes used and the opportunity to practise with them means progress is satisfactory. Quite young pupils sing in tune and learn new songs quickly. Older pupils are hampered when they evaluate each other's work because their use of technical terms is at an early stage. Teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy music lessons and so do the pupils. Pupils put a lot of effort into their work and are pleased with the results. Lessons are managed very well, so that even when each pupil has an instrument, pupils stop working quickly when asked to do so, handle instruments carefully and keep them still when listening to others. Pupils value others' efforts and offer useful suggestions for improvement.
142. A few pupils benefit from instrumental tuition provided by local education authority music teachers. A group of recorder players meets regularly at lunch time. Twice a year, the school puts on performances of music and drama that involve infants at Christmas and juniors at the

end of the summer term. All these activities enrich pupils' learning and provide opportunities for them to gain additional skills and perform to a large audience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Standards in dance are above expected levels by the end of Year 2, and are broadly in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. There was not enough evidence during the week of the inspection to make secure judgements about standards in other areas of the subject by the end of both key stages. However, progress was at least good in most lessons seen. This is a broadly similar picture to the judgements made during the last inspection.
144. Planning indicates that all areas of the curriculum are taught, and a scheme of work helps to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding develop sequentially. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive swimming instruction at a nearby pool to help them to learn to swim and to enable them to learn about water safety. Almost all the pupils in Year 6 can already swim at least 25metres – the standard expected for eleven year olds. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 undertake orientation activities, stream searching and scrambling on a residential visit to Standon Bowers, which enables them to benefit from organised adventurous activities. The subject is soundly led and managed, and there are good plans for its further development, such as through a focus on improving teaching and learning in gymnastics. A consistent approach to checking what pupils can do has been introduced to help teachers to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Some older pupils attend football and netball clubs, which help to improve their games skills further and give them opportunities to work with pupils of different ages. Resources are sufficient, of good quality, carefully stored and readily accessible.
145. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in developing and connecting skills, techniques and ideas to help them perform a variety of dance routines. Pupils in Year 1 employ basic movement patterns successfully as they learn a simple dance, linking movements to good effect. Pupils in Year 3 employ movement in an imaginative way, responding to music by altering the speed, level and direction of their movements. By the end of Year 6, pupils work collaboratively on sequencing routines to perform an Aztec circle dance. This is a good link with history that gives added relevance to their work.
146. As they move through the school, pupils develop increasingly complex games' skills. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 build on what they have learned earlier about small-sided ball games to learn the standard rules of netball and basketball. They learn basic attack and defence skills, develop evasion strategies and learn how to co-operate with others to work effectively as a team.
147. Teaching was good in the lessons seen during the inspection, and in a Year 1 dance lesson it was very good. Good and better features of teaching include a strong emphasis on the development of important skills, secure relationships and control, a brisk pace to keep pupils fully motivated, good use of resources, and high levels of challenge to promote rapid learning. These features help to ensure that pupils respond well to lessons in physical education. Opportunities are missed to improve pupils' learning further by enabling them to evaluate their own and others' performance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. At the time of the last inspection, standards were described as above what was expected by the syllabus taught in Staffordshire schools in Year 6 and in line in Year 2. Standards are now broadly in line in Year 2 and Year 6. The teaching remains good and enables good progress to be made in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. They behave well in lessons and work purposefully. The programme of study has been improved to make sure that all the required elements are taught and the acquisition of new resources means that

pupils have better opportunities to learn from religious objects, reference books and video material. There is a satisfactory supply of Bibles so that pupils can look up references for themselves. The apparent fall in standards is likely to be a result of the increasing demands of the revised Staffordshire guidelines for religious education and the more wide-ranging programme of work devised by the school.

149. Pupils in Key Stage 1 get a good grounding in their understanding of Christianity. They learn about the birth of Jesus, stories associated with the life of Jesus and his teaching. Teachers make important links between the study of religious life and pupils' own lives. By learning how important Jesus' disciples were to him, pupils gain a better understanding of the value of friendship and the importance of belonging to a family. Older pupils, in Year 2, learn about the Bible and the Qur'an. They learn about the importance of these books to Christians and to Muslims. When they are taught about some of the most important religious teachings, the pupils begin to see that there are similarities between them, for example that forgiveness is given prominence. In the lesson observed in Year 2, there were good opportunities for discussion and the teacher questioned pupils closely to check their understanding and to extend their thinking. Pupils enjoyed the work, gave thoughtful answers to the teacher's questions and made good gains in learning.
150. Pupils in Key Stage 2 cover a substantial amount of work. Their books show that teachers take an interesting approach to the subject, provide good levels of challenge and encourage pupils to record their work in a variety of ways. Pupils are encouraged to make links between what they learn and how it relates to their own lives. They work on the two main strands of the programme of study in parallel, that is learning *about* religion and learning *from* religion. When pupils in Year 6 study the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments, for example, pupils consider the importance of rules for different groups and why communities, such as schools, need rules. They gain a good understanding, which influences their response to school rules in a positive way. In a similar way pupils in Year 5 begin to grapple with the ideas of respect for individuals, and of conflict and peace. They study the lives of St Francis and William Booth, and how their faith directed the course of their lives and their service to others. Teachers encourage pupils to read about recent events portrayed in newspapers and consider whether we live in peaceful times and what we can learn from the lives of religious leaders.
151. As in Key Stage 1 important links continue to be made between different religions, their similarities and differences, and what can be learnt from them. For example, pupils study initiation ceremonies and discuss how participants are expected to take on new responsibilities. They compare the Jewish Bar Mitzvah ceremony and the Christian First Communion. Landmarks and important occasions in their own lives, both in the past and in the future, are discussed with the idea of responsibilities in mind. There is a good emphasis on celebrations and how these form an important part of both secular and religious lives. Pupils learn about religious symbols and how these help to encapsulate central beliefs and to gain a deeper understanding. They learn about the symbol of the candle, central to several religions, and its many layers of meaning.
152. The subject is well led and managed. The improvements brought about by the subject leader have been good. They have enabled a more coherent programme of teaching to be undertaken. Pupils' work is monitored so that a careful check is kept of its quality and how the work develops from year to year. A sensible system for assessing standards has been introduced so that teachers can now judge with more accuracy how to plan the next steps.