

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Talke Pits, Stoke on Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124097

Headteacher: Mrs J Ashley

Reporting inspector: Mr T Neat
20007

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 248548

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: Kingsley Road
Talke Pits
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Neil Jones

Date of previous inspection: 1/12/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20007	Mr T Neat	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11392	Dr T Heppenstall	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	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?
20815	Mrs P English	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
30691	Mrs K Yates	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Foundation Stage Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springhead Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. There were 194 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection, of whom 101 were boys and 93 girls. The school is located in the village of Talke Pits near the Staffordshire border with Cheshire. It takes pupils from four to 11 years of age from the village and surrounding areas. The attainment of children joining the reception class is below the level normally found.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (17.0) is broadly in line with the national average. All the pupils speak English as their home language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (21.7) is broadly average. The percentage with Statements of Special Educational Needs (1.6) is broadly in line the national average. The number of pupils moving into and out of the school part-way through the school year is significantly higher than in most other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Springhead Primary School is a good school with many strengths. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has led to the results attained by its pupils rising significantly since her appointment five years ago. The high quality assessment and target setting procedures, good quality teaching, and very good support and guidance to pupils also contribute directly to pupils' achievements. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She is supported very well by senior staff and the governors.
- The arrangements for assessing how well pupils make progress, setting targets and linking this to the management of teachers' performance are very good.
- The very caring nature of the school results in pupils behaving well, having good attitudes to learning and getting on with each other very well.
- The school is good at helping pupils to become well-rounded, mature and responsible young people.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards in art and design are above average at both seven and 11 years of age.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and science in relation to the national averages.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The monitoring of pupils' work.
- The assessment of some foundation subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1997. Since then it has made good progress. Thanks to improved leadership the standards of seven and 11 year olds have risen significantly faster in the national tests than most schools in the country. The extent to which the school monitors and evaluates its performance has increased greatly, supported by new, very effective procedures for assessment, target setting and managing the performance of staff. The curriculum is now much richer and promotes far more creativity. Despite staffing problems the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Standards in art and design, design and technology and ICT at age seven have been raised. Most of the areas for development identified in the last report have been addressed successfully, although better

provision is still needed to allow pupils in the junior part of the school to attain satisfactory standards in ICT.

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	E	C	D	D
mathematics	C	C	B	B
science	D	C	C	B

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

The results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2002 (the last year for which national data are available), indicate that standards in reading and writing were well below average and in mathematics they were average. Teacher assessments showed that science standards were well above average. A greater proportion of pupils with learning difficulties resulted in a fall in English and mathematics from the above average results of 2001. The table above shows that standards at age 11 in 2002 were below average in English and above average in mathematics. Science standards were average compared with all schools and above average when judged against schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. The overall performance of 11 year olds was comparable to the previous year despite the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties being higher and the extent of their difficulties being greater.

The overall trend in results is clearly upward. Over the years 1998 to 2002, the standards of pupils leaving the school have risen faster than the national rate of improvement. The school sets very challenging targets which it usually exceeds.

Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, the results of the national tests just taken are likely to be below those achieved last year since there are large proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and staffing problems have affected Year 6 earlier in their school life. Standards are, overall, below average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics at both seven and 11 years of age. Standards in art and design have risen since the last inspection and are now above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. In design and technology, standards have improved significantly and are now satisfactory. In religious education, pupils' standards are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects, standard are average. In ICT standards are now broadly average at age seven, but remain below average at age 11 because there are not enough up-to-date computers. The school is in the process of addressing this.

Given the levels of attainment when children join, the high proportion of pupils who do not have continuous experience at the school and recent staffing problems (now overcome), inspectors judge that most pupils achieve appropriately and many achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested in lessons. They are keen to answer questions and join in discussions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They look after property well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to the adults who work with them. They take responsibility readily and show initiative.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

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 good quality of teaching and learning contributes directly to pupils' achievements. Parents are impressed by the extent to which the teachers and their assistants know individual pupils. Of the lessons seen during the inspection approximately one in ten was very good, six in ten were good and three in ten were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. English and mathematics are taught well, as are the skills of literacy and numeracy. This helps pupils to learn well in other subjects. Good teaching was evident in science, art and design, history, music and physical education. Not enough lessons of design and technology and ICT were seen to make reliable judgements. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

The consistently good quality of teaching in the reception class helps children to learn well. Teachers throughout the school question pupils skilfully. Pupils are controlled and managed well, helping them to concentrate and work hard. The good methods used by teachers ensure that ideas and skills are taught effectively. More able pupils are sometimes not challenged enough, especially if they do the same work as the rest of the class. The teaching assistants contribute strongly to the success of lessons. Thanks to the school's target setting system, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Much thought and effort has gone into creating a rich range of learning experiences. The flexible use of time to arrange special 'activity' and 'theme' weeks adds much to the curriculum. The emphasis put on encouraging creativity is very strong feature of the provision, as is the involvement of local people and visits to places of interest. Planning does not always identify how more able pupils will be challenged.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Staff are patient and caring. They understand the needs of these pupils well. Support assistants play a vital role in helping pupils with learning difficulties improve their performance.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Social and moral development are supported very well. The staff provide very good role models for the pupils. The consistent message of treating others as you would like to be treated yourself, has a strong impact on pupils. The lack of an agreed schedule of topics makes it difficult to ensure a balanced programme of assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Springhead is a very caring school. The level of personal support for pupils is very good. Very good procedures are in place for child protection. Overall, the arrangements for checking the progress made by pupils and setting targets are very good. Improvement is needed in recording pupils' progress in a few subjects.

The school has very good links with parents. It provides them with good quality information. Parents hold a very good opinion of the school and support activities which directly involve their children very well. Parents are reluctant to volunteer to take positions of responsibility in the parent-teacher association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, who is supported ably by senior managers, has resulted in improved standards, good quality teaching and a rich range of learning opportunities. Team work and a shared commitment to succeed are major strengths of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Led by a very effective chairman, the governors are very supportive of the school and know its strengths and weaknesses very well. A few required items are not included in the information the governing body provides for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school's very clear view of its effectiveness owes much to the system for linking target setting and the assessment and recording of pupils' progress, pioneered by the headteacher. The school has a very strong commitment to self-review. A wider range of pupils' work needs to be examined for the monitoring of standards to be fully effective.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is good. Funds are used well to achieve the objectives set for school improvement. The principles of best value are applied well to the school's work.

There are enough, appropriately qualified teachers and a good number of teaching assistants. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory. Overall, learning resources are sufficient, but more are needed for science, geography, history and ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leadership and management of the school.• The good teaching.• Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best.• The progress pupils make.• The provision for extra-curricular activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework.

The inspection team endorses the positive views that the great majority of parents have of the school. Inspection findings indicate that the provision made for homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of children enter the school with standards of attainment below the levels normally found. They receive a good start to their education in the reception class. Inspection evidence shows that due to the good provision and the consistently good teaching most children are likely to reach the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they move to Year 1.
2. When they enter the school the starting point for the majority of children with learning difficulties is very low. Many have great difficulty forming the simplest of sentences. Social skills are poor. Thanks to the good support they get, they soon settle down and begin to acquire the basic skills of speaking, writing, reading and numeracy. Most make good progress in achieving the targets set for them.
3. Strong leadership and management have resulted in standards rising faster than the national rate of improvement from the time the present headteacher was appointed until last year. The school was given an achievement award by the government in 2002 in recognition of improved results. The cohorts in both Year 2 and Year 6 taking the tests last year had a larger than normal proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. In Year 6, just over ten per cent of pupils had Statements of Special Educational Needs compared with the national average of 1.7 per cent. There were 22 boys and only seven girls in the class. The results of past national tests show that across the country, boys do not perform as well as girls.
4. The results of the national tests in 2002, (the last year for which there is national comparative data), showed that, at age seven, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was well below average. In mathematics it was average. The results were the same whether judged in relation to all schools or schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Teachers' assessments indicated that attainment in science was well above average. The lower performance in language reflects the significant proportion of children joining the school with weak communication skills. Attainment at age 11 was below average in English and above average in mathematics. In science, it was average compared to all schools and above average judged against schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. In relation to their scores at age seven these pupils had made very good progress in all subjects.
5. Since the last inspection, there have been many staff changes. The achievement of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 has been affected by staffing problems that have necessitated the use of supply teachers to cover illness over a period of more than three years. Given, the problems of a high number of pupils not having continuous experience in the school, large proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and significant staffing difficulties, the school's performance is good. Most pupils achieve appropriately and many achieve well. The school sets very challenging targets for raising standards which it often exceeds.
6. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, the results of the present Year 2 and Year 6 are likely to be below the levels achieved in 2002. Both cohorts have large proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and, in both classes, fewer pupils have continuous experience in the school than is found nationally. Pupils in Year 6 have

been subject to significant staffing problems. No significant difference was found in the standards of boys and girls.

7. Attainment in English at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is, overall, below average. This represents improvement at Year 2 compared with the results of the national tests in 2002. Year 6 attainment broadly reflects the results of 2002 national tests. Inspection findings indicate that standards of speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Speaking skills have improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Year 2 pupils listen to instructions, stories and questions and respond in suitably organised sentences. Many pupils talk confidently in a range of situations and include appropriate detail. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have an awareness of standard English and when to use it. Much of the progress made is due to the high priority given to speaking and listening across the curriculum.
8. Reading attainment is below average. Given that many children enter the school with communication skills that are well below average for their age, most pupils make good progress. Pupils achieve well because skills and strategies are taught systematically. Year 2 pupils have an appropriate range of words they recognise on sight and a satisfactory knowledge of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. More able pupils read expressively to hold the attention of the listener. By the end of Year 6 more able pupils comment on the impact of the language used in the poems they read and make a personal evaluation of the style. Most pupils know how a library is organised and how to use the Dewey system to seek information. This was identified as a weakness in the last report.
9. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in writing is well below average. The school has identified improvement in writing as a priority. By the end of Year 2 pupils write for a range of purposes. Their stories are structured with an appropriate number of punctuated sentences. More able pupils use punctuation and more complex sentences to add interest, but a significant minority of pupils finds it difficult to punctuate their work consistently. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 use personification effectively to describe the night as, 'Flying low off the ground, slowly drifting, making no sound.' Throughout the school, expectations of handwriting and presentation skills are not high enough. Handwriting is taught regularly, but progress is too slow.
10. Standards in mathematics are broadly average in Years 2 and 6 as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 1 understand pattern in numbers and count confidently in steps of two. Most pupils use correct mathematical language when talking about shapes, referring to a 'blue cube', 'green sphere' and 'red cuboid'. The more able pupils in Year 2 identify the order of numbers up to 1000 accurately. Year 6 pupils show appropriate skill in using mental calculations to produce a given number using different methods. They find the area of irregular shapes and make use of scale drawings when measuring the canopy of a tree in the school grounds.
11. In science, standards are currently below average at age seven and 11. Nonetheless, data about pupils' prior attainment demonstrates that they generally make good progress as they pass through the school. Pupils aged seven investigate confidently. They predict the outcomes of investigations and know about famous scientists, including Edison. They understand that some changes to materials such as baking cannot be undone. Eleven year olds work above the expected level in recognizing a range of chemical symbols and in realising that balanced forces cause objects to be stationary. They know about photosynthesis and explain the causes of day and night. The last report noted that pupils in Year 6 were unable to explain the

need for fair testing or to recall what they had learned. Their progress was too slow. This is not now the case.

12. Inspection evidence shows that at age seven and 11 pupils attain good standards in art and design. Standards in all other subjects are in line with those expected for the pupils' age. It was not possible to make a judgement on the standards of seven year olds in music and physical education. In religious education, pupils attain standards that are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
13. Standards in design and technology have improved, having been below average at age seven and well below average at age eleven at the last inspection. The strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that all the Programme of Study is covered and learning resources are better.
14. In ICT many improvements have been made. Standards at age seven have been raised and are now satisfactory. Despite purchases in the intervening years, the number and quality of computers are well below the levels currently recommended. Pupils in the junior part of the school are not able to practise regularly enough and their standards remain below average. The school has plans to address this situation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Children in the reception class settle down quickly and are eager to learn. They behave well, respond positively to the caring ethos and learn the skills of independence and collaboration effectively.
16. The pupils like school. They arrive promptly and settle quickly into well-established routines. Their attitudes to work are good. In 84 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, attitudes and behaviour were judged to be good or better. The pupils are interested in their lessons and, across all the age groups, there is no shortage of volunteers to answer questions and join in discussions. A broadly similar picture was presented in the previous inspection report. Parents are satisfied with their children's attitudes to work.
17. Pupils with learning difficulties enjoy coming to school and are integrated well into classes. Good relationships exist between staff and children and between pupils. Good behaviour is always duly praised. Concentration spans are often short for pupils with special educational needs and staff understand this well. Work is suitably tailored to meet their needs.
18. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Parents believe that behaviour is good and the pupils are satisfied with the standards. There are incidents of excessive boisterousness, but no oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. The pupils are capable of self-discipline. For example, during the inspection a high standard of behaviour was maintained during wet weather at lunchtime, when they played quietly in classrooms with minimum supervision. Furthermore, the pupils are courteous and trustworthy and they look after property well. No exclusions were made during the last academic year. The good behaviour creates an orderly atmosphere which helps the pupils learn. Generally, good behaviour was reported at the previous inspection.
19. The pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, there are many older pupils who willing volunteer to help with younger ones at playtimes. There is a very positive attitude to race and disability and every member of the school community is

integrated well into school life. Charities are supported. Relationships within the school are good. The pupils co-operate well with each other and they like, and have confidence in, their teachers.

20. The pupils' personal development is very good. They respond very well to adults and to the wide range of opportunities which the school provides for them to show initiative and take responsibility. Pupils enjoy shared learning, which pairs older and younger pupils, and organising entertainment during the school assessment weeks. The school council is a good example of attitudes to responsibility. The councillors are very well intentioned and take their roles seriously. The rest of the pupils also regard the council as important. It provides them with an opportunity to influence the life of the school.
21. Attendance is satisfactory. It has been broadly in line with the national average for the last few years. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Illness is the main cause of absence. There are some holidays taken in term time but, currently, this is not regarded as a serious issue.
22. The pupils are punctual. Registration periods are prompt and efficient and this allows lessons to start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the school and contribute directly to pupils' achievements. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, approximately one in ten was very good, six in ten were good and three in ten were of satisfactory quality. This is a greatly improved performance compared with the last inspection, when 16 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and some poor lessons were seen.
24. Parents who met with inspectors and all those who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire sent to them, evaluate the teaching as good. Parents agree that the teachers and their assistants know the individual pupils very well. Many spoke of the self esteem the teachers engendered in their children, one mother telling how her daughter had been transformed from a 'little mouse' into a confident child. "The pupils give the teachers respect because the teachers give the pupils respect," is how one father explained it.
25. The consistently good quality of teaching in the reception class helps children to learn well. This is because the members of staff apply their very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn to classroom organisation and management. Lessons are always stimulating and interesting, with a clear focus on gaining basic skills and in learning to become independent.
26. At the time of the inspection Year 4 was taught by a supply teacher who had joined the school at the beginning of that term. Two students undergoing initial teacher training were also teaching; one in the infant part and one in the junior part of the school.
27. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 question pupils skillfully. In a Year 2 art lesson, the teacher's questions, including, "What can we use this kind of paper for?" stimulated a range of ideas which pupils then explored. This led to pupils producing better, more imaginative work. Good control and management of pupils enhance learning in a number of ways. One inspector wrote during a lesson: "The management of the class is very good because the teacher offers the pupils respect, so that all feel

valued and confident, and strive to do their best.” The methods used are good. The teacher in a science lesson for Year 5 made use of drama, drawings and computers to get the key ideas across.

28. Where teaching is less effective, the lessons lack pace and teachers do not set expectations about the speed at which pupils should work. A number of minor inconsistencies, such as teachers failing to check that all pupils can see or discussions that go on for too long, detracts from the success of a few lessons. As a result, the amount of progress made, although satisfactory, is reduced.
29. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is done well. As a result, pupils use them effectively to learn in other subjects. The teaching of the ‘core’ subjects of English, mathematics and science is good overall. In an inspiring English lesson for pupils in Year 5, expressive reading by the teacher and good use of role play significantly boosted pupils’ ability to identify the thoughts and feelings of characters in the stories they read. The teaching of art and design, history, music and physical education is also good overall. The few geography lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Not enough lessons of design and technology and ICT were seen to make reliable judgements.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan for pupils to learn basic skills and ensure that there are good levels of support in place to help them. Members of staff are patient and caring and understand their needs well. Teaching assistants play a vital role in helping pupils with learning difficulties improve their performance. All teachers have high expectations of these pupils who are well managed in all classes.
31. As a result of the good teaching pupils learn well. They show good levels of concentration and much interest in what they are taught. Most work hard, and thanks to the target setting system, understand how well they are learning.
32. The teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the success of lessons and to the progress of pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

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

33. The school meets the statutory requirements for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education. Appropriate measures are in place to teach pupils about sex and relationships and the dangers of drugs misuse. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good. They contribute strongly to the standards that pupils achieve. The importance attached to promoting pupils’ personal development alongside their academic achievement helps them to grow in confidence and maturity.
34. The curriculum for children in the reception class is good. Staff plan effectively so that all the areas of learning are covered well. High emphasis is placed on developing early learning skills of independence, sharing, communication and number work. At the time of the last inspection, the lack of suitable outdoor play facilities restricted opportunities for children to develop positive attitudes to outdoor activities. This is no longer the case. Children now enjoy the benefit of a new and secure outside play area which leads directly off the classroom. However, there is no covered area to protect children from the heat of the sun or from wet conditions. Good use is made of the school grounds.

35. Other areas of weakness identified in the last report have been addressed well. The whole approach to the curriculum has been changed. The strong leadership of the headteacher has resulted in many initiatives that have brought improvements. The main priority continues to be the development of literacy and numeracy and the school has gained a nationally recognized award testifying to the quality of its work in developing pupils' basic skills. There is now an emphasis on using time more flexibly and on developing the creative elements of the curriculum. The school has just been awarded 'The Arts Mark' in recognition of its work in this area. If it is judged that an extended period of time is needed for the completion of work in, for example, design and technology, then it is taken.
36. Special arrangements have been introduced to enrich the curriculum. Each term a week is devoted to a particular theme, such as science and technology, and a theme day is held on which the whole school studies, for example, Shichi-go-san, the Japanese festival. Every year an 'activity week' is organized, in which many visitors come in to teach skills not part of the formal curriculum. These include yoga, first-aid, Asian dancing, flower arranging and many more. These arrangements provide very good opportunities for pupils to study in depth and to understand the links between different subjects.
37. Overall, the curriculum ensures that boys and girls and pupils of different ages are given equal access to learning opportunities. The school responds fully to the legal requirements for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and are provided with targets for improvement. Reviews are appropriately carried out. The school does not currently have a register of gifted and talented pupils. The coordinator for special educational needs maintains close contact with parents, carers and outside agencies.
38. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. A good policy and programme of work guide the staff. The programme has been tailored to the needs of the school's pupils and all classes spend time each week learning about these areas. Springhead has done well in developing this aspect of its work and teachers have been given a good deal of training. It has recently been classified as a 'health promoting school' under a scheme which operates nationally.
39. The system of planning is effective, but the school is wisely reviewing its medium-term plans now that the staffing situation is more stable. Teachers conscientiously plan lessons and review the success of them. In subjects other than English and mathematics, they are only required to identify precisely what they will teach and to evaluate the lesson. As a result, they sometimes do not identify how they will meet the needs of different groups of pupils. This detracts from the progress made.
40. The school's links with the local area enrich pupils' learning experiences well. In addition to the 'activity weeks', many people visit the school, such as fire brigade personnel, museum staff and drama groups. Many trips are made to places of interest. These include civic offices, garden centres and waterways. Effective liaison with local schools, including a nearby special school, adds further richness to the curriculum. The school's mutually beneficial relationship with its local initial teacher training institution is well developed, with several students teaching there each year.
41. A very good range of extra-curricular activities such as football, gymnastics, dance, recorders, gardening, French and many others is open to both boys and girls. A strong feature of this provision is the relatively large number of clubs available to infant pupils.

42. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has a strong influence on pupils' personal development. Spiritual growth is fostered well. Acts of collective worship, such as one observed for infant pupils, are used to stress the importance of the love of family and friends. Reflection is encouraged, for example, after the reading of Bible stories such as 'David and Goliath'. Opportunities are missed to intensify this experience through the use of artefacts such as candles. The lack of a structured schedule for assembly themes makes it difficult to ensure a balanced approach.
43. Pupils' contributions are greatly valued by members of staff and everyone is conscious of the need to nurture pupils' self-esteem. Social and moral development are supported very well. The school has many means of doing this, including assemblies, rewards and incentives, but the most powerful is the very good model that members of staff provide for pupils. In a Year 6 assembly an inspector wrote about the "...very polite, firm and respectful manner of the teacher" and its effect on the pupils. The very good relationships the teachers forge with individuals and classes have a strong, positive influence on pupils' personal development. The consistent message of treating others as you would like to be treated, also has a strong impact, as do the many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, including acting as house captains and prefects.
44. Cultural development is promoted well. Islam and Judaism are taught in religious education lessons and a link with a nearby school with a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils helps to raise awareness and understanding of different cultures. There is not yet a systematic approach to ensuring that the curriculum and learning resources make a full contribution to pupils' knowledge of the main ethnic minority cultures in British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school is a very caring and inclusive organisation and it is a safe and secure place for the pupils to learn. Improvements have been made in this area since the previous inspection. The staff know and support the pupils well and all talents and achievements are celebrated. This contributes well to the development of self-esteem. The caring ethos extends to all staff. For example, the equal opportunities policy includes the whole-school community and contributions made by staff, parents and grandparents to the life of the school are publicly recognised.
46. There are very good procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare. The health and safety arrangements are very good. They include a clearly stated policy, a named list of responsibilities and a set of procedures, which are implemented effectively. Staff and governors are involved and statutory requirements are satisfied. No significant health and safety issue was identified in the inspection. Child protection procedures are very good. The policy provides clear and comprehensive guidelines, there is a designated teacher and a good programme of staff training. Supervision arrangements are good. The supervisors are clear about their roles, they have regular meetings with the headteacher and there are opportunities for training in behaviour management and first aid.
47. The procedures to monitor and record attendance are very good. The registers meet requirements. They are marked consistently and regularly monitored by the headteacher. There are well-organised arrangements to deal with parents, who are generally co-operative over attendance matters. An attendance policy is available for them. There are suitable procedures to follow up absence, to deal with temporary absence and with absence without a known cause. Unfortunately, however, the

monitoring and recording procedures have not resulted in an improved attendance level. This is satisfactory, but it has remained static for several years.

48. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. There is a positive approach to discipline. Good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated and the ideas of right and wrong are strongly promoted. For example, during the inspection, assembly topics included bullying and inappropriate social behaviour. The arrangements are detailed in a policy and they are understood by the pupils. There are other policies on bullying and racial harassment to help prevent oppressive behaviour.
49. The level of personal support for pupils is very good. This is due to the teachers' good knowledge of their pupils, positive relationships in the school and the confidence which the pupils have in their teachers. Pupils always have someone who cares to turn to. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is done well. A record of this is kept as pupils pass through the school and given to each pupil when they leave.
50. At the time of the last inspection there was no coherent framework in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. A great deal of improvement has been made. Results of tests, regular focused observation and discussion with the teaching assistants ensure children in reception are provided with appropriate targets. The headteacher has pioneered the development of a very good, new system for checking the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6, setting targets for raising standards for both pupils and teachers to achieve and deciding what should be included in the school development plan. This is known as the 'STAR' system, (setting targets, assessing and recording). Each term every pupil records one week's work in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education in their 'gold book'. This work is assessed, the outcomes discussed with individual pupils and targets set for improvement. Parents are told about the targets too. The involvement of both pupils and parents increases the effectiveness of the system. A representative sample of children in each class is selected as 'tracker' pupils. A special session is held in which their work is examined by the whole staff to check that they agree the accuracy of the assessments made by each other. Strengths and weaknesses of pupils' attainment are identified clearly and acted upon. For example, different texts have been made available to boys to boost their interest in reading. Teachers also assess pupils' progress throughout the year in all subjects, but the school agrees that the lack of agreed procedures for recording pupils' progress in history, geography, art and design and design and technology detracts from teachers' ability to match tasks closely to the needs of different groups and individuals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Evidence from discussions and the pre-inspection questionnaire shows clearly that parents like the school. They are most satisfied with the progress of their children, the teaching, the school's expectations and its management and the range of out-of-lesson activities. However, apart from homework, they are also very satisfied with all other aspects of the school. In general, inspectors agree with the parents' positive views but they judge the use of homework to be satisfactory.
52. The school has developed very good links with parents. These include the formation of a home/school partnership group which promotes initiatives to help the relationship between home and school develop. For example, the group pays for cover for the reception teacher's absence while she makes home visits. Parents can

participate in courses relevant to their children's education and there are invitations to them and grand parents to visit the school for lunch and afternoon activities. The school seeks parents' views and there are opportunities for them to contribute ideas about the school's development.

53. The information provided for parents is good overall. Newsletters are frequent and informative, policy documents are available in the reception area and details are issued about forthcoming topics with advice on how to help. There is also a range of meetings on curriculum issues. The school prospectus meets requirements, but the content of the governors' annual report is not satisfactory. The deficiencies have been acknowledged. There are three parents' consultation evenings per year and, in addition to a written report on their children's progress, parents receive progress targets which are intended for discussion during the consultations. The reports are satisfactory and meet requirements, but their small physical size limits the amount of detail. In most cases, achievement is stressed but there is little comment on areas of difficulty and how to overcome them. A new report format is being introduced.
54. Overall, parents respond well to the school's efforts to involve them. There is very good support for activities which directly involve the pupils such as school concerts and sporting events. An active parent-teacher association runs successful events to raise substantial funds for school use. Approximately 75 per cent of parents attend the consultation evenings but the number of parents who help on a regular basis in school is relatively small. Also, support for activities related to the management of the school is limited. For example, the committee of the parent-teacher association has difficulty attracting members with the necessary commitment.
55. There is a satisfactory contribution of parents to their children's learning at home. Parents are expected, at least, to hear their children read and evidence from discussions with the pupils suggests that this is widespread amongst the younger age groups. Estimates suggest that about 50 per cent of the pupils in school receive direct help at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher and key staff provide very good quality leadership and management. The governors have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and provide good support for the work of the school. Team work of this quality is a major strength of the school and ensures the stated aims and values of the school are met and all pupils have equal opportunity to achieve their best.
57. This team approach has enabled the school to make good progress in addressing the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection. This has had a significantly positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning and in the development of a rigorous system for monitoring standards. Although improvement is evident in promoting speaking, listening and research skills, progress in ICT has been slower because of limited resources.
58. The headteacher provides outstanding quality of leadership. She has a very clear commitment to raising achievement and attainment through good quality teaching and a rich range of learning opportunities. Her incisive vision of what must be done to ensure continued improvement gives the work of the school a very clear sense of direction. In creating a team approach she shows enthusiasm, energy and considerable respect for staff, governors, pupils and parents. In this, she is most ably supported by the senior management team and consequently there is a

common sense of purpose that permeates the life and work of the school and a strong, shared commitment to improvement.

59. The meticulously defined management strategies and systems of communication enable staff with management responsibilities to effectively monitor standards and the quality of teaching. For example, the headteacher and coordinators of English, mathematics and science undertake a review of pupils' work each term and effectively highlight any targets for improvement. This has a positive impact on promoting improvement in these areas. However, where the monitoring of standards of work is limited to a selected sample of pupils' 'gold books' completed specifically for assessment, without reference to the day-to-day work books, the monitoring is less effective. The provision of non-contact time for the monitoring of standards and quality of teaching in foundation subjects is appropriately undertaken on a rolling programme. The professional development of staff is high on the headteacher's agenda. As a result of this, although several of the staff are relatively new as coordinators, they tackle management responsibilities confidently. Outcomes of these initiatives have had a significantly positive impact on the systematic development of curriculum planning, the targeting of in-service training for staff and the quality of information on which the school development plan is set.
60. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching effectively, through a well-structured programme throughout the academic year, with the outcomes informing each teacher's performance targets. This is further supported by peer observations which focus on agreed criteria. These practices have had a significantly positive impact on the quality of teaching.
61. Governors play a very important role in the life of the school. They are led by a very effective chairman whose level of commitment and understanding of how best to support the school is a major strength. There are several recently appointed governors who already have a good understanding of their individual and corporate roles. Overall, governors carry out statutory responsibilities effectively. However, there are requirements, specific to the presentation of a school prospectus and the content of the annual report to parents, which are not fully met. Governors are becoming more involved in school life. For example, they have been involved in self-evaluation training with staff and have joined teachers when they have been moderating pupils' work. With appropriate support, governors have started to undertake classroom observations. The governors are able to monitor the work of the school through an appropriate range of committees and are fully aware of the results of the analysis of the standards pupils attain. These activities promote a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses which has a positive impact on the quality of strategic planning. This level of information and the high degree of mutual respect between the headteacher and governors, enables them to act as critical friends. An agreed policy for managing the performance of staff is in place and appropriate targets have been set for the headteacher.
62. The school has very effective procedures for development planning through full consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors. The resulting plan is comprehensive, thorough and practicable. It provides details of when, how and by whom prioritised needs will be met and financed, and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. This quality of planning is a major contributory factor in raising the quality of teaching and learning opportunities throughout the school. Very effective use is made of available funding to cover the cost of educational priorities. The relatively small contingency fund is suitably designated to improve resources and the accommodation. Through effective use of ICT, the school administrator, with the support of a local authority finance officer, monitors spending carefully. Regular

reports on budget spending are prepared for the finance committee. All funds delegated to the school for specific provision such as special educational needs are spent efficiently. When staffing costs are taken out of the budget, the amount that remains is limited. However, where spending is likely to be significant governors take appropriate action to ensure best value.

63. The quality of leadership and management for children in reception is good. The deputy headteacher and reception class teacher have a clear vision and ensure that children entering the school have a good start to their education.
64. The governor for special educational needs is very involved in the life of the school and supports the staff effectively. Together with the headteacher and coordinator, she has a clear view of the direction the school needs to take to improve the performance of pupils with special educational needs. Priorities include a firm desire to maintain the current level of staffing in order to secure the high quality support the pupils currently receive.
65. At the time of the previous inspection, the staff were not working as a team. The members of staff now work together very well. The number and qualifications of the teaching staff are matched well to the needs of the curriculum. Many pupils benefit from the subject expertise of teachers when they swap classes to teach subjects such as English and mathematics in which they have specialist knowledge. Support assistants and the coordinator for children with learning difficulties have a good understanding of their roles and that of others, and help the school to function well. There are very good arrangements in place for the induction of staff new to the school.
66. The school is surrounded by extensive playing fields and a new garden area has been developed. Children in the reception class now benefit from a secure, purpose built play area. This represents a significant improvement from the last inspection when the lack of suitable outdoor play facilities restricted their activities.
67. Storage space within the school building that was previously considered to be inadequate has been improved, but this remains an area for development. The range of display techniques used was also an issue, which has now been addressed, and pupils now benefit from a learning environment that celebrates their success. The toilets for both pupils and staff are currently inadequate as is access for disabled pupils, although plans are in hand to address this.
68. At the time of the last inspection, resources were inadequate in a number of areas. Current inspection findings show that in physical education resources are good. They are satisfactory in all other areas except for science, ICT, geography and history where more equipment and materials are needed. There is only half the recommended number of computers in school to support pupils and this detracts from their opportunities to make further progress in this vital area of learning. The need to further augment the range of books has been identified.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. To further the many improvements made over the last few years, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

(1) raise standards in English by:

- a) providing more opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend reading and writing skills through planned, purposeful activities in subjects such as history, geography and religious education;
- b) improving the pace at which pupils develop handwriting and presentational skills by promoting the use of them more consistently in day to day work in all subjects; and
- c) improving the range of books;

[See paragraphs 85, 87, 88, 91]

(2) raise standards in science by increasing the extent to which planning identifies how more able pupils will be challenged;

[See paragraph 102]

(3) raise standards in ICT in the junior part of the school by:

- a) increasing the number of up-to-date computers; and
- b) ensuring greater access by pupils to computers;

[See paragraphs 14, 122, 124, 127]

(4) further improve the effectiveness of the arrangements for monitoring standards by including day to day work in the scrutiny of pupils' standards; and

[See paragraph 59]

(5) devise and implement procedures for recording pupils' progress in those foundation subjects currently lacking them.

[See paragraphs 50, 109, 114, 121]

The governing body should ensure that all items of required information are included in the school prospectus and its annual report to parents. [See paragraph 61]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	27	14	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	61	32	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	194
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	42

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
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	14	13	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	13
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	17	17	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (91)	63 (91)	93 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	14
	Girls	11	10	13
	Total	20	18	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (91)	67 (91)	100 (87)
	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	22	7	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	19	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (83)	79 (80)	93 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (67)	86 (73)	90 (80)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

The number of girls taking the tests is small. In order to ensure that individual pupils cannot be identified, the data about the performance of boys and girls has been left out of the table above.

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	183	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	387, 870
Total expenditure	378, 057
Expenditure per pupil	1,948
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	184
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	36	2	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	33	23	4	0
The teaching is good.	75	23	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	31	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	23	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	39	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	19	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	29	0	0	0

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

70. In contrast to the findings of the last inspection, most children now experience some pre-school education, which helps them to begin to develop successful relationships with other children. For example, ten children are attending a pre-reception class at the school, which is held every morning in the spring and summer terms. This is having a very positive effect, particularly on the development of children's social and speaking and listening skills, which are at a low level when they arrive in school. A further bonus is that the qualified nursery nurse in charge of these children is also employed by the school to work in the reception class in the afternoons. This provides good continuity for the youngest children when they begin their full-time education.
71. The 24 children who are currently in the reception class are receiving a good start to their education and most of them are likely to reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they move into Year 1. The teaching is good in all areas of learning and on occasions it is very good. This enables children to be actively learning in their environment and to make good progress. Resources are well-prepared and attractive. Children are involved in a wide range of activities where there is a high level of challenge to which they respond well.
72. Good use is made of adult help to assist with individual and group activities. Work is marked well, and the information gained this way, and through direct observation, is used well to plan for the future.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Children enjoy coming to school, and are confident and happy. The teacher and support assistants have high expectations of behaviour and enjoy good relationships with the children who know the daily routines well, and develop good levels of concentration. Adults consistently encourage children to share and show consideration for others and are duly rewarded by the children who behave well, and respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. The children show respect for school equipment, and tidy up efficiently at the end of lessons. They learn to take turns, share and co-operate well when working on the computer, playing with construction kits or in the role-play corner. Resources are well-prepared, attractive and inviting. Children are given good encouragement and praise to raise their self-esteem, and show pride in their work and take great responsibility for their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

74. In this area of learning where teaching is very good, children enjoy listening to stories and most contribute well to class discussions, confidently sharing their experiences with adults and their peers. Following the example of their teacher, who speaks very clearly and uses expression well to make lessons come alive, the children name some of the animals and birds who entered Noah's ark as 'gangling ostriches', 'black ravens' and 'spotted owls'. Books are displayed prominently to encourage children to browse and share them with friends as well as adults. Most pupils hold a pencil correctly, form their letters accurately and know the names and sounds of the most commonly used letters. They write their names neatly. Some children, who have a higher level of ability, recognise frequently occurring words in the text, read books in

the school reading scheme and make very good attempts at writing simple sentences such as, 'Jack climbed up the beanstalk'. The teacher supports the children well and encourages them to speak about their experiences in a variety of situations by skilfully asking questions and giving them opportunities to 'read' their writing. Effective use is made of role play such as the enactment of preparing a meal to support children's speaking and listening skills. Children are encouraged to take reading books home to share with their parents and evaluative comments are written in their homework diaries. The teaching assistants support all children, including those with learning difficulties, well, enabling them to make good progress.

Mathematical development

75. The teacher takes every opportunity to use numbers daily and encourages the children to see pattern in number. Most children match objects to numbers accurately, and correctly place missing numbers into the sequence of numbers to ten. They confidently count backwards and forwards to 20, and those children with higher understanding of number know their numbers to 100. The majority understands 'one more than', and 'one less than', and can calculate simple problems involving addition and subtraction mentally. Mathematics is linked very securely into themes; for example, when children confidently carry out a survey to find the most popular food. In this activity evidence of very good planning for children's development is demonstrated as children develop their social, speaking, listening and writing skills alongside their mathematical understanding. The children approach their peers politely, question them about their preferences, record their findings on a chart, add up the totals and then sequence orally the most popular to the least popular foods. In another session, the vocabulary of measurement is successfully introduced. A group of children explain carefully how they have chosen an object that is longer/shorter than their cut out footprint. The children confidently recognise simple shapes, such as circle, triangle, rectangle and square, and are developing their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, such as cube and cone. Children with special educational needs are given good support in the class, and they make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. Teaching in this area is very good and during the inspection there were some very effective activities planned around the theme of 'Change' that increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, in an activity that investigates what happens when certain liquids are added to water, children are encouraged to predict, investigate and use descriptive language to identify their findings. They use their sense of smell well to identify bubble bath and recognise that it will change the colour of the water. Children are amazed to find that cooking oil, which they aptly describe as 'yellow' and 'see-through', will float on water. The teacher explains very carefully that these are two liquids, which 'do not mix well together'. When experimenting the mixing of milk with water, one child remarked that the effect looked like 'fluffy clouds above Jack's cottage'. An observation such as this demonstrates very clearly that the learning environment provided for these children is of high quality. They use the computer confidently to support work in English, mathematics and art. They use the mouse to move icons around the screen, and planned weekly lessons ensure that all children are learning new computer skills at a brisk pace. The teacher uses questioning well to probe children's understanding, and afterwards she records and assesses pupils' progress through pictures, writing, photographs and role play.

Physical development

77. Since the time of the last inspection, the new outdoor area has greatly improved children's opportunities for learning. Here they run and jump, with an increasing awareness of space. They control their movements well when they change direction and speed and develop skills in throwing and catching and working in pairs. In preparation for the coming sports day, children learn the importance of taking part as a member of a team and that each individual makes a vital contribution to that team. Children show good control when using small tools such as scissors, and paintbrushes and daily opportunities are provided for development of these skills. They are becoming more skilful when attempting jigsaws and assembling construction kit parts to make a building site.

Creative development

78. Children lap up the opportunity to explore colour and mix paint as they recall recently told stories using confident brush strokes and bright colours. Other children use fabric collage techniques effectively to make a large-scale picture of 'Jack and the beanstalk'. Others describe enthusiastically how to make thumb pots out of clay and compare them to cylinders. In a whole-class activity, children become engrossed in using instruments to create different effects as they tap out the rhythm appropriately. Both the teacher and her assistants value their work. Careful monitoring ensures that a good balance of activities is achieved, with every child having numerous opportunities to express themselves.

ENGLISH

79. Pupils' attainment in English is, overall, below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
80. This indicates improvement at Year 2 when compared with the results of the 2002 national tests. At Year 6, attainment broadly reflects the results of 2002 national tests. Inspection findings indicate the effect of the relatively high proportion of pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 who experience some degree of learning difficulty or have not had continuous experience in this school. From the assessment procedures through which the school tracks pupils' progress, it is evident that from entry to the time they leave the school most pupils make good progress overall.
81. Standards of speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. By the end of Year 2, most pupils listen to stories, questions and instructions responding in suitably organised sentences. Many pupils talk confidently in a range of situations adding appropriate detail when, for instance, explaining how to achieve an interesting shape by folding and cutting paper of differing qualities. The good progress made owes much to the importance teachers place on the systematic extension of pupils' personal and subject specific vocabulary and the direct teaching of the conventions associated with good speaking skills as opportunities arise.
82. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 have a good range of experiences through which to develop speaking skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 sensitively discussed how characters felt when about to be separated from their parents. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have an awareness of standard English and when to use it. When discussing a poem by Roger McGough pupils listened to each other, asked questions and used responses to develop their own thinking further. Much of the progress made is the result of the high priority given to this aspect across the curriculum and to the range of opportunities for pupils to engage in formal and informal

presentations. Work with groups such as a telephone company 'Road Show' and opportunities to explore language through drama also contribute well to their skills of speaking and listening.

83. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in reading is below average. Given that many children enter the school with attainment in communication, language and literacy skills well below agreed expectation for their age, most pupils make good progress. Good progress is made because specific skills and strategies are taught systematically and pupils have daily opportunities to talk about what is read with the teacher. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have an appropriate range of words they recognise on sight and a suitable knowledge of letters and associated sounds to help them tackle unfamiliar words. They take notice of simple punctuation to sustain sense and fluency. More able pupils use intonation to hold the attention of the listener. Most pupils talk about the story content and comment on the characters. Progress is enhanced by paired reading with older pupils and the support provided by parents has a significantly positive impact on progress and attainment.
84. Throughout Years 3 to 6 most pupils continue to make appropriate progress. In whole-class and guided reading activities pupils become familiar with the standard features of an increasing range of texts. For example, Year 4 pupils use a text book on ancient Greece and make appropriate notes. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils discuss poems with a common theme, comment on the impact of the language used and make a personal evaluation of the style. Lower attaining pupils are much less secure. Although they read the words, they are often unsure of what the text means. Most pupils know how a library is organised and how to use the Dewey system to seek information, but the frequency with which pupils use the school library, other than for borrowing, indicates that a significant number of opportunities for independent research are overlooked.
85. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attainment in writing is well below average. The school has identified improvement in writing as a priority. The advice of the National Literacy Strategy has been suitably adapted to ensure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught systematically so that pupils build on what they already know and understand. Most pupils cope appropriately when working through exercises, but a significant minority fails to apply what has been learnt in independent work.
86. By the end of Year 2, pupils write for a range of purposes. Instructions are appropriately sequenced using connectives and stories are structured with an appropriate number of punctuated sentences. More able pupils include punctuated dialogue and subordinate clauses to add interest, but a significant minority of pupils finds punctuation hard to sustain. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 6. Teachers consistently use the pupils' reading experience to raise awareness of how established writers structure their work and use words and sentences in interesting ways. Year 5 pupils write imaginatively of fear as, "...her heart pounding like a drum of war. Fear swirling through her mind...". Year 6 use personification to describe the night as, "Flying low off the ground, slowly drifting, making no sound."
87. Throughout the school, expectations of handwriting and presentation skills are not high enough. Handwriting is regularly taught but progress is too protracted and there is no consistent expectation that well-formed writing will be used in day to day work. The limited number of computers restricts the opportunities for pupils to develop and present their work through word-processing skills.

88. There are good examples of using speaking and listening skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils explain their thinking in mathematics and science. There are, however, too few opportunities provided for pupils to practise reading and writing skills in other subjects. This has a limiting effect on overall attainment. The school has identified this problem and has begun to take action to solve it.
89. The good progress made by pupils with special educational needs owes much to the appropriate use made of the advice of the National Literacy Strategy, the realistic targets set in individual education plans and the sensitive support of teaching and support staff.
90. The quality of teaching overall in the infant part of the school is good, with some very good teaching observed. In the junior classes it is satisfactory overall, with instances of good teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. This quality of teaching makes a major contribution to the attainment of all pupils. Where teaching is best, lessons have a clear structure and pupils are aware of the objectives so activities are seen to have purpose. The teacher obviously enjoys the subject and models reading, writing and speaking skills well. Good links are made between each element of the lesson. Through pertinent questioning, pupils across the ability range are included and encouraged to share their ideas. Praise is used effectively to raise esteem and confirm the progress made by pupils. Weaknesses occur where marking of day to day work uses unnecessarily effusive praise and does not indicate what the pupil needs to do to improve further.
91. The provision for English is managed effectively. The coordinator is relatively new to the post, but has already used the clear management procedures of the school to effectively review the standards and provision. She has identified appropriate areas for development. Very effective assessment procedures are in place and used well to track pupils' attainment and progress and inform planning at all levels. The library stock has been improved, but the need to further augment the range of books has been identified.

MATHEMATICS

92. Standards in mathematics are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. They are very similar to the standards found at the time of the previous inspection, but not as high as those reached by pupils in the same age classes last year. This is because there is a significant proportion of pupils (a third) in the current Year 2 with learning difficulties, and it is unlikely that more than a sixth of pupils in Year 6 will gain the higher level in national tests. Nevertheless, considering the starting points of pupils and the high level of mobility, this represents good achievement over time. This judgement is made for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils' good attitudes contribute to the good progress made.
93. The teaching is good. In the better lessons, teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They share the purpose of the lesson well with the pupils and questions are searching and identify carefully what pupils have and have not learned.
94. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate their understanding of pattern in numbers satisfactorily as they count confidently in steps of two. Most pupils use the correct language to explain the patterns made, for example, a 'blue cube, green sphere and red cuboid'. All pupils transfer a given pattern to a string of beads successfully. In a good lesson in Year 2, a mental warm up fired pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics as they recalled number facts systematically, for example, doubling and halving. The more

able pupils identified the order of numbers up to one thousand accurately. The teacher carefully demonstrated an investigation into symmetry and the activities set for pupils to test out their findings were appropriately graded to the abilities of the varying groups. This ensures that the lesson had a brisk pace and all pupils are well challenged. Literacy and computer skills are promoted well. Pupils operate an electronic toy, 'Roamer', efficiently, to demonstrate their skills in naming shapes of hexagon, pentagon and a triangle.

95. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in measuring using centimetres and half centimetres. The setting of time targets to which pupils eagerly and successfully respond enhances their learning. In Year 4, pupils demonstrate their understanding of the importance of using a scale to represent data on a pictogram. Computers are used to record and represent information accurately on a pie chart. This is an extension activity for the more able children while those with learning difficulties are suitably provided with learning targets which take smaller steps, for example, they complete a tally chart to represent findings accurately. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from being taught by a specialist teacher. This arrangement ensures pupils are working at appropriate levels. In a Year 6 lesson, where teaching was good, the teacher challenged pupils well, encouraging them to probe deeper. For example, when finding the area of irregular shapes, he extended pupils' learning by asking, "How might we make this measurement even more accurate?" Pupils who have a greater understanding thoughtfully replied that they could, "Put in more points of the compass, or use a protractor".
96. All pupils are encouraged to participate fully and teachers value their contributions. This makes learning enjoyable and helps them make good progress. Pupils behave and concentrate well, and demonstrate enthusiasm for learning.
97. The subject coordinator knows his subject well and ensures planning is appropriate and that junior children are challenged well. Infant pupils are also well challenged. However, the coordinator has too little knowledge of the learning of pupils in Years 1 and 2, and therefore does not have an overall picture which ensures that the application of mathematical skills is taught systematically. Arrangements for testing children's ability and the gains they make in learning have improved greatly since the time of the last inspection. Better use is now made of computers to reinforce and extend pupils' learning, but this is not as good as it should be owing to the lack of computers within the school.

SCIENCE

98. Much improvement has been made in the standards attained by seven year olds. The last report indicated that standards at this age were average. The results of the statutory assessments for the latest year for which national comparative data are available (2002) were well above average. The standards of pupils aged 11 were below average at the last inspection. The 2002 national test results indicate that the standards of 11 year olds were average compared to all schools and above average in comparison to similar schools. The weaknesses found in the last inspection have been addressed well. The improvement in results is due largely to better teaching, the introduction of efficient assessment procedures and more effective work by the coordinator.
99. Inspection evidence reveals that the standards of pupils currently aged seven and 11 are below average and that it is likely that their performance will not match the levels attained last year. This is due to the increased proportion of both age groups experiencing difficulty with learning and the effects of staffing changes on the pupils

in Year 6. Nonetheless, data about pupils' prior attainment demonstrates that they generally make good progress as they pass through the school.

100. The good understanding the teacher has of this subject leads pupils aged seven to investigating confidently. They were observed finding out which objects float and which sink. They predict the outcomes of tests and know about famous scientists, such as Thomas Edison. The many opportunities they have to try things for themselves result in them knowing much about materials. They develop an early understanding that some changes to materials such as baking cannot be undone.
101. The scrutiny of the work of pupils in different classes shows that they generally develop a sound and often good knowledge of scientific ideas. Pupils in Year 3 learn much about micro-organisms and in Year 4 about the composition of rocks. Eleven year olds work above the expected level in recognizing chemical symbols, such as *Cu* for copper, and understanding that balanced forces are at work on stationary objects. They talk confidently about photosynthesis and the causes of day and night. They do not explain sufficiently often when they write up their experiments how they make tests fair. The last report noted that pupils in Year 6 were unable to explain the need for fair testing or to recall what they had learned and their rate of progress was too slow. None of these is true now.
102. The quality of teaching is good. It has improved since the last inspection and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen this time. Skilful questioning provokes thought and experimentation. The number of 'Why?' questions in a Year 2 lesson on floating and sinking significantly enhanced pupils' progress. Teachers link new learning well to pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. In a Year 6 lesson about the circulatory system, the teacher built very successfully on the work done earlier in the week in a dance lesson dealing with the same ideas. More able pupils are not always challenged enough – teachers do not consider their needs sufficiently when planning. Teachers are not picking up English mistakes enough in their marking of pupils' work.
103. The coordinator's work in checking planning, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and improving teachers' knowledge has a good effect on standards. Visits to museums and other places of interest significantly enrich the curriculum. The monitoring of the standard of pupils' work is too reliant on the 'STAR' system* (see page 18). More checks need to be made on pupils' exercise books to gauge overall progress and to ensure that the standard of presentation is more consistent.

ART AND DESIGN

104. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is above expectations for pupils of these ages and good progress is made as pupils move through the school. This indicates significant improvement since the last inspection. Much of this progress is the result of the senior management's commitment to providing a rich curriculum and opportunities to work with established artists and crafts people.
105. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 explore a wide range of media often linked to work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 created trees by using textured paint and, after studying leaves, created their own using clay. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed an understanding of figure drawing well enough to collaborate to create a lively group scene using the style of Lowry. Portraits are made using appliqué and embroidery. Through the opportunities created by 'Arts Week' these pupils have experience of glass painting, collage work and creating with salt dough.

106. Similarly good progress is made in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good experience of the work of a wide range of artists as varied as Picasso, Seurat and Monet. They experiment with styles and techniques very successfully in their own work. The pupils' sketchbooks show that work is planned and skills, such as figure drawing, are developed over time. Pupils show good control of the various media they work with and presentation is thoughtful. This is illustrated well in portrait work after the style of Picasso.
107. Pupils of all ages work well in lessons and the nature of the work encourages pupils of all abilities to be actively involved. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs, including those with the potential for higher attainment, is good. The experiences provided in this subject make a significant contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of all pupils.
108. The scrutiny of work and the small number of lessons observed, indicate that teaching is good. Teachers share their own enthusiasm with pupils. They plan a range of activities that involves pupils in investigations and explorations of media and techniques so that lessons are interesting and progress can be readily recognised. The teachers judge well when to use direct teaching of knowledge and skills so that progress is supported actively. This was illustrated in Year 2 where cutting and folding skills were improved. Good links are made with work in other subjects as, for instance, in Year 6 where a picture of the village is being developed using collage to illustrate a local studies project.
109. The subject is effectively managed. The coordinator is relatively new to the post but has already monitored the work in the school. The action plan is costed effectively, identifies what needs doing and sets success criteria by which to evaluate the outcomes. In order to better ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding are built systematically on what pupils already know and can do, a review of the current scheme of work has wisely been identified. The school is aware of the need to put effective arrangements in place to assess and record the progress made by pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Limited evidence gained from discussions with pupils, the examination of teachers' plans and the scrutiny of displayed work suggests that standards are average at seven and 11 years of age. The strong leadership of the headteacher has resulted in many improvements since the time of the last inspection, when standards were below average for pupils aged seven and well below average for 11 year olds. Since the first inspection, the national planning guidance for this subject has been used as a basis for producing a programme of work, adapted to the needs of the school, which makes effective provision for the development of skills. This is implemented by all members of staff, although further work is needed to integrate design and technology more effectively into the topics chosen in some classes. The range of materials and tools is now satisfactory and food technology forms an integral part of the taught curriculum. Year 6 pupils were observed making bread. Pupils in both the infant and junior parts of the school now regularly evaluate their work.
111. The high expectations of the teacher in Year 1 result in pupils exploring sliding and lever mechanisms, producing good quality designs and making pictures with moving parts well. They choose subjects such as fish in the ocean. Thanks to the good subject knowledge of the teacher, pupils in Year 2 create above average design drawings when planning to make clothes for teddy bears. As well as labelling sketches with details such as zipped pockets, they write step by step plans of how they will make them. They sew the parts of the garment together carefully. Pupils

develop good skills in evaluating products. They examine toy cars and identify the good and bad points of their design. One boy wrote: "This one's good because the wheels don't come off."

112. Interesting work in Year 6 helps to promote satisfactory skills in designing and making. A large model village was made recently, complete with electric lighting. Each pupil worked with a partner to design and make the individual buildings. Detailed drawings showed how these would be constructed, where space would need to be left for the wiring and how they would be hung on the wall. In a project linked very well to work in science, pupils crash test model vehicles. They ensure that their experiments are conducted fairly and develop a good understanding of the importance of rigidity in structures. The pupils make good use of the Internet to study vehicle design and testing.
113. No lessons of design and technology were observed, so no judgement is made of the quality of teaching and learning. The standard of designs and products seen, and discussions with pupils indicate that teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. Those in Year 6 showed much enthusiasm when talking about the work they had done.
114. The knowledgeable subject coordinator, appointed two terms ago, has worked effectively to check the quality of planning and to audit and improve resources. She is aware of the need to put effective arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress into place and to increase the knowledge and understanding of those teachers who lack confidence. A science and technology week held in the autumn term has helped to raise the profile of the subject within the school. The lack of space for storage in most classrooms makes it difficult for pupils to select tools and materials readily.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

115. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 standards are in line with the levels expected in both subjects. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection report.
116. Only four lessons were seen during the course of the inspection. From scrutiny of children's work, talking to pupils and from the lessons seen, teaching is judged as satisfactory overall. Progress is also satisfactory and on occasions it is good.
117. Pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of old and new in history. They learn to appreciate the value of the past and its influence on our current lifestyle. In Year 2, pupils talk confidently about the types of toys, which the Victorians used, such as a wooden rocking horse. They know that we are fortunate to have electricity and that Thomas Edison invented the first light bulb making our lives much safer than our great grandparents'.
118. In a good lesson in Year 3, history was linked very successfully to art, mathematics, ICT and literacy in their study of the Roman invasion. Pupils enjoy learning the Roman numerals of one to 12 and know that some of our clock faces are displayed in this way. They have already decorated colourful tiles in a Roman mosaic theme and, from the use of a good video, they know the story of Romulus and Remus. The teacher thoughtfully introduces key words, for example, 'conquer', 'revolt' and 'invade' in the form of a mini-dictionary, which assists pupils' understanding of key words and promotes their understanding of alphabetical order. Information sheets are presented to pupils using a font, which pupils correctly identify as 'Times Roman'. All of this demonstrates careful lesson planning which successfully engages the

interests of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, and results in the good progress they make.

119. In Year 5, history, geography and literacy are closely linked in the study of Aztecs as pupils identify similarities and differences about life in other countries. The teacher makes the lesson come alive as pupils imagine that they are Spanish and enthusiastically sample food that the Aztecs would have eaten. They use the Internet to research information about Aztec foods and correctly identify tortilla, tomatoes, peppers and avocado pears as ingredients that made up the staple diet. They recognize that it is the added spices that give the food its flavour. The teachers' good subject knowledge and love of art ensures pupils have the opportunity to experiment with Mexican Huichol face painting to celebrate the maize harvest. All of these activities are celebrated on the classroom walls and provide a very stimulating environment for children to learn in.
120. In the spring term, all pupils in the school took part in a 'World Week', where geography and history were taught in a block. Pupils enjoyed this immensely and good relations were promoted with parents and the community. All classes dressed up in the costume of their chosen country and paraded through the village, after which they sampled the foods of the different countries. Photographic evidence of this week records the pleasure of such an event and demonstrates good links with many other curriculum areas.
121. At present, the headteacher is managing these subjects in the absence of a coordinator and planning is being revised. The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress are areas for development. Overall, there is a lack of resources to support the teaching of geography and history throughout the school. The lack of computers means that only a few pupils have access to the Internet or compact discs at any one time. Many books are old and on occasions they are in short supply.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. The school has worked hard to improve the provision it makes for teaching ICT. The situation is much better than at the time of the last inspection, but there are still not enough up-to-date computers to allow pupils in Years 3 to 6 to get as much practice as they need to cover the work they should. As a result, standards remain below average. The theft of some computers a few years ago exacerbated the problems the school has faced. At age seven, smaller classes and the narrower range of the curriculum makes it easier for teachers to ensure that most pupils cover the ground and standards are broadly average. At the time of the last inspection, the standards of seven-year-olds were below average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills by working on special programs. There is no difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.
123. Improvements since the last inspection include:
- (1) the Programme of Study is now covered in both the infant and the junior parts of the school;
 - (2) a wider range of equipment includes a digital camera, web camera, programmable electronic toys and scanners;
 - (3) all classrooms have two computers;
 - (4) all classrooms are linked to the Internet;
 - (5) a satisfactory range of software helps teachers use computers in different subjects;
 - (6) all members of staff have undergone the training provided nationally;

- (7) teachers are much more confident about ICT and are committed to developing work in the subject further;
 - (8) good quality planning as been put in place and is now implemented fully;
 - (9) the subject coordinator regularly and effectively checks the standards that pupils attain; and
 - (10) the use of specific software boosts the progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
124. The school has plans to create a computer room. It has earmarked a site, but does not have sufficient funds yet to implement its intentions. Money has been put aside to increase the number and quality of computers.
125. Relatively few pupils have access to appropriate computers at home.
126. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their books and the disks on which individuals save their work show that at seven most pupils use ICT to organize and present information successfully. They draft letters to their friends or their teacher and present the results of their surveys about pets. They enter, save and retrieve their work and employ graphics programs to illustrate stories and poems. Pupils access the Internet and make use of search engines in their quest for information about topics such as flowers.
127. Eleven year olds collect, access and interrogate information using spreadsheets. They present information in a variety of forms, including creating calendars using transfers produced on the computer. Internet use includes the downloading of music. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed working confidently to produce presentations for reception class children. They worked well in creating interesting effects such as animating text. However, the lack of opportunity to practise regularly enough was evident in their relatively slow keyboard skills. The lack of sound facilities on the machines restricted what they could include in their presentations.
128. Not enough lessons were seen to make valid judgements about the quality of teaching, but discussions with pupils and teachers and the examination of plans show that interesting and challenging tasks are set regularly. Pupils in Year 6 described how they had used sound sensors linked to the computer and Year 2 pupils had enjoyed embellishing handkerchiefs with iron-on transfers produced using the computers. The strengths of the teaching seen include:
- (a) sound knowledge of the programs and processes, helping pupils to tackle new learning confidently;
 - (b) good management of pupils, resulting in everyone applying themselves well to the tasks set; and
 - (c) clear instructions which ensure that pupils know how to proceed.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to work on computers reflect the positive relationships developed by teachers with their classes.
129. Computers are used to support work in a variety of subjects. Seven year olds carry out art work, doing drawings of subjects such as Rudolph the reindeer, work on spelling programs to improve their literacy skills and find out about the history of St Valentine's Day. Pupils aged nine combine work in art and mathematics by exploring ideas about symmetry. They demonstrated to an inspector how to look more closely at rocks using a microscope linked to a computer. Eleven year olds study the Victorian period, boost their mathematical skills and research design and technology projects using computers.

130. The subject coordinator has worked very hard and effectively to produce a programme of work tailored to the school's needs, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and monitor the standards that pupils achieve. The headteacher has made very good provision for the coordinator to work alongside other teachers and staff have been sent on training courses closely related to what they need to teach. As a result, levels of confidence are high and there is a strong shared commitment to raising standards. Another strong feature is the inclusion of ICT in the 'STAR' system of assessment and target setting.

MUSIC

131. It was not possible to observe all the elements of music, therefore a judgement on overall attainment is inappropriate. However, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attainment in performing is in line with what is expected of pupils of these ages.
132. Year 2 pupils sing with great enthusiasm. They memorise and sing songs maintaining pitch and good articulation. They recognise rhythm and sustain it well when using body percussion and when singing. They attend closely and follow a conductor well. Pupils are happy to rehearse to improve their performance. They follow a pictorial score effectively when playing non-tuned instruments to accompany their singing.
133. By the end of Year 6, pupils enjoy singing and perform songs in two parts well. In addition, they take on the roles of a 'backing group' effectively. Pupils are anxious to improve performance and readily rehearse paying attention to how other performers fit in. They read a simple score to accompany their singing with non-tuned and tuned percussion instruments. Good progress was made within each lesson seen.
134. Teaching and learning are judged to be good. This makes a major contribution to the progress pupils make. The objectives for the lesson are shared with pupils so that the activities are seen to have purpose. The introductory activity engages pupils' interest. The teacher specifically ensures that all pupils are included in the activities. Good use is made of opportunities to directly teach skills and techniques to improve performance. For example, pupils are prompted to assume the best posture for singing. Subject specific language is used to talk about the work. Lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are too busy to be distracted. Where inappropriate behaviour does occur it is dealt with promptly and calmly. The teacher uses praise well to raise self esteem and to confirm progress.
135. In lessons, pupils are willing to work hard to improve. The experience of belonging to a group working together gives much pleasure. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and fully involved in these lessons. The sessions make a significant contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of all pupils.
136. The subject is effectively managed, with good use of specialist teaching. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced which supports the systematic development of knowledge and skills as pupils move through the school. Resources are adequate, but the coordinator has identified the need to augment the provision of tuned and non-tuned instruments. The provision of the peripatetic service enhances the knowledge and musical expertise of the pupils in each group. The opportunities to work with musicians and performers in 'Activity Week' and involvement in school productions make a major contribution to the achievement of all pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Although the school makes proper provision for teaching physical education, it was only possible to see one lesson in the infant part of the school. Consequently, no judgement is made of the standards that seven year olds attain or the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils aged 11 attain satisfactory standards, overall, as they did at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in the standards of boys and girls. The school has worked well to address the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report.
138. The seven year olds observed in a games lesson showed satisfactory skills in throwing and catching. They worked with a good degree of control and used space effectively. The good pace of the lesson increased the pupils' enjoyment and the progress they made. The teacher involved the class well in evaluating the work they were doing. This helped the pupils to understand how well they were learning. More coaching during the practising of specific skills would have helped to raise standards.
139. A specialist teacher helped 11 year olds to attain above average standards in a dance lesson observed. Her good quality teaching and challenging tasks, linked to science work on the heart and lungs, led to pupils choosing and combining actions to represent the movement of air and blood through the body. The pupils worked with good levels of control and fluency. High expectations of what pupils can achieve, resulted in nearly all contributing ideas and finding different solutions to the task set.
140. The pupils in a Year 6 gymnastics lesson reached average standards. They combined rolls and balances into sequences of movement effectively, taking weight on their hands in a controlled fashion. More able pupils move fluently from a handstand into a forward roll. The good teaching and the constructive evaluation of performance by most pupils, for example, suggesting that a greater push would help in completing a backward roll, increased the progress made.
141. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have swimming lessons at a nearby pool. The bulk of the teaching is done by the instructors employed at the pool. The proportion of pupils able to swim 25 metres unaided by the end of Year 6 varies, but is generally lower than is normally found.
142. The quality of teaching seen in the junior part of the school is good. The teachers expect much of the pupils and allow them the right amount of time to develop and improve ideas and skills. The best practice seen was based on good management of behaviour, with praise used well to increase levels of motivation, coupled with clear instruction about how pupils could make their work better.
143. The headteacher took over the co-ordination of work in this subject fairly recently. Her highly effective leadership and personal interest in this subject are helping to raise standards. Her policy of employing specialist teachers and coaches, together with her enthusiasm for and involvement in physical education contribute much to pupils' achievements. She teaches nearly all classes gymnastics and although it was not possible to see more lessons, it was clear from brief observations made, that pupils often work at an above average standard. The after school gymnastics club she runs enhances the achievements of a significant proportion of pupils. The coordinator makes good use of her links with local clubs and organizations to broaden the range of pupils' experience, for instance, by facilitating golf lessons. The school is aware of the need to evaluate the arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress currently being tried out.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This reflects the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress.
145. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 learn about Christianity and Judaism and by the end of Year 2 they have an understanding of what it means to belong to a clearly defined group other than the family. They recognise that all groups have special celebrations and are aware of the main Christian festivals. They understand that all groups develop a set of rules by which they live, and link their 'Class Contract', for example, with the written rules for believers in Judaism that are found in the Torah. They know a range of stories told by, and about, Jesus which illustrates how God wants Christians to live.
146. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have an appropriate understanding of the basic beliefs and practices of Christianity. For example, pupils in Year 6 are currently involved in the study of the local parish church. They recognise that the Bible is a source of authority for followers of the Christian faith. They are aware that other major faiths have central figures, books of authority, and places of worship and begin to appreciate there are similarities as well as differences between faiths. Year 5 pupils look at both the Bible and the Qu'ran, while Year 4 pupils look at the ways religious groups offer help and support in their localities.
147. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where it is most successful, teachers' knowledge of the subject is secure. The introduction stimulates interest and pupils are quickly involved in active learning. Pupils are encouraged to offer their ideas in discussion so that they are learning from each other. Year 2 pupils illustrated this when they eagerly explained their feelings on rules. Purposeful, practical activities promote understanding as, for instance, when Year 6 pupils were using models of artefacts, found in most parish churches, in role play. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use learned speaking and listening skills, but scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that opportunities to practise reading and writing skills are often overlooked.
148. The subject is effectively managed. This contributes significantly to the effectiveness of teaching and the achievement of all pupils. In a relatively short time, the coordinator has used the management systems of the school well to evaluate the provision for this subject and draw up an appropriate action plan. The need to provide a scheme of work that supports the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding has already been acted upon. This has provided good support for teachers when planning. Resources are adequate. Appropriately, the school plans to add to the stock of artefacts. Educational visits to places of worship such as Chester cathedral, a mosque and the parish church have a significantly positive impact on the learning of all pupils.