

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITTINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lichfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124140

Headteacher: Mr M Roberts-Thomas

Reporting inspector: Jeff White  
17242

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 248553

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Common Lane Whittington Lichfield Staffordshire
Postcode:	WS14 9LG
Telephone number:	01543 432487
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C R Barnes
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> September 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17242	Jeffrey White	Registered inspector	Mathematics; the foundation stage; English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	English; art & design; history	
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; design and technology; special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
21858	D John Pryor	Team inspector	Music; physical education; religious education	
2766	Rashida Spencer	Team inspector	Science; geography	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is bigger than other primary schools and the roll has risen since the last inspection to 327 (174 girls, 153 boys). Thirty-seven pupils are in the reception year. Children born in the autumn or spring attend an early years group, in the term following their fourth birthday, which offers part-time pre-school experience. Children born in the summer start in the reception year at the beginning of the school year. Pupils are drawn from a wide area that includes the village of Whittington, the Whittington Army Barracks and various scattered communities further afield. Children's attainment on entry to the current reception classes was broadly above average but in recent years has more often varied from average to below average. A distinctive feature of the school is the high rate of pupil mobility. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic background and none is at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Twenty-four pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), a figure well below average. The school has received two School Achievement Awards for its national test results.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Whittington Primary is a good school and has made substantial progress since its last inspection. The governors, headteacher and staff, work very well together and are strongly committed to improving the school. Because of effective teaching, standards are good in the vast majority of subjects and pupils throughout the school achieve well. Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and their very good personal development contributes significantly to their achievements. A very good start to children's education is made in the reception classes. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Because of good or better teaching, standards and achievement are good in the vast majority of subjects
- Children in the reception classes achieve well, especially in developing their independence, because of very good teaching
- Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic and confident learners because their personal development has been promoted very well

#### **What could be improved**

- Make better use of assessment findings to help individual pupils' progress

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in September 1999 and was judged to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case and the school has made very good improvement in many aspects of its work. The last inspection's key issues have been addressed very well. Standards have risen in the national tests and in the work seen in the vast majority of subjects. Pupils in general now achieve better, including the most able and those with special educational needs. Other significant improvements have been in teaching, the curriculum, partnership with parents and in leadership and management. The quality of care and pupils' personal development are also better.

## 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	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	B	A	B	B
Science	B	A*	B	B

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

The results show that the school has been successful in maintaining or improving standards over time. Any variation in performance is explained by the high pupil mobility that makes it difficult for the school to set targets with any degree of confidence. In 2002 targets were exceeded in English but not met in mathematics. The school's trend in performance has been better than the national trend and pupils have achieved well compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English and science and high in mathematics. The school has also done well to maintain or improve standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 where mobility has also been high. Overall standards in the 2002 tests were above average. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science. In the vast majority of other subjects standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are good and in no subject are standards unsatisfactory. Standards overall are better than at the time of the last inspection mainly because of improvements in leadership, management, the curriculum and teaching and learning. Most pupils achieve well, including the most able and those with special educational needs. Improved provision in the reception classes has helped standards to rise. Children are well on course to exceed many of the expected learning goals for when they enter Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They are enthusiastic learners
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and often excellent especially when the teaching is very effective
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond very well to the opportunities to develop their independence and initiative. Relationships are very good
Attendance	The attendance rate is very high in comparison with other schools

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 overall quality of teaching is good and is often very good. Several excellent lessons were seen during the inspection and no teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. English and mathematics are taught well and literacy and numeracy skills are developed thoroughly in a good range of subjects. Key strengths in the most effective teaching include very clear exposition, very effective use of time and well-focused and challenging work. In most lessons pupils are very well managed and are often given good opportunities to explain their thinking. Pupils' good learning is often characterised by their sustained interest and enthusiasm, their thorough acquisition of investigative skills and their confident independence. These key skills are developed very well in the provision for the youngest children, where the adults work very effectively as a team. Throughout the school the classroom assistants give very good support to pupils' learning. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum is very good and a wide range of learning opportunities is provided
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good but very good in moral and social development
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care is very good

Partnership with parents is very good and is improving. Parents make a significant contribution to their children's education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good and the commitment to improving the school is strong
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors give a very effective lead in shaping the direction of the school. They fulfil their responsibilities very well
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation are good overall but evaluation of teaching is often too descriptive
The strategic use of resources	Spending is targeted very effectively to meet the school's educational priorities, for example, in staffing and the provision of information and communications technology

Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The governors apply the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and because of good teaching are making good progress</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard and are being helped to become mature and responsible</li><li>• Most parents are comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents would like more regular information on how their children are getting on</li><li>• Some parents feel there are not enough extra-curricular activities</li></ul>

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views. The inspection's findings are that, in general, good information is provided for parents on how their children are getting on. However, inspectors welcome the school's plan to provide parents with information on their children's progress at the end of each term. The level of extra-curricular activities is about average for this size of primary school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

- 1 Standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 have been at least above average since 1999. The school has done well to maintain or improve standards over time, given the high degree of pupil mobility, and its trend in performance has been better than the national trend. In 2002, over 40 per cent of the Year 6 pupils who took the tests had not joined the school at the usual time of admission. The picture has been similar for Year 2 pupils where standards in comparison with all schools have been average or better. Any variability in standards between successive years, in Year 2 and Year 6, has been because of the significant turnover of pupils. Since its last inspection the school has sought to ensure that those pupils who are capable achieve higher than the average National Curriculum levels. It has met with considerable success. For example, in 2001 the percentage of Year 6 pupils who reached Level 5 was high in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the work seen in the current Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English and science and high in mathematics. Since the last inspection most improvement has been made in mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. However, improvements have also taken place in English. Good teaching, more thorough planning, and better leadership and management are key reasons why standards have improved. In the national tests, Year 6 girls have tended to perform better than boys in English and boys have performed best in mathematics. However, during the inspection differences in achievement were not significant
  
- 2 Standards in English, in Year 2 and Year 6, are high in reading and above average in other aspects of the subject. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress. Pupils have regular chances to develop their speaking skills and widen their vocabulary in discussion of their ideas and when explaining their thinking, for example, in mathematics. A significant feature in the teaching of literacy is the opportunity for pupils to apply and develop their skills in a range of subjects including ICT, history and science. Because of the very successful development of pupils' independence they are confident in trying out their own ideas especially in Years 5 and 6 where they write in a wide range of forms. Pupils are also encouraged to express opinions about their reading and use a good range of fiction and non-fiction books and printed materials.
  
- 3 Standards in mathematics were average at the time of the last inspection and are now above average. Pupils achieve well. Expectations in the teaching are higher and they are very high in Year 6. As a result, a significant proportion of pupils is achieving above average National Curriculum levels. Regular effective teaching of mental skills is a key contributory factor in pupils' progress throughout the school. The most able pupils in Year 6 calculate very speedily and accurately. The use of ability groups (sets) in English and mathematics, in Years 1-6, has been successful in helping standards to rise because pupils' range of needs is well catered for. Standards in science were unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Year 6, at the time of the last inspection. Standards are now above average and pupils throughout the school achieve well. A strong emphasis on investigation is a key reason why standards have risen. By Year 6 pupils have made very good progress in scientific enquiry. Good planning in science has ensured that there is clear progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding from year to year.

- 4 Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) were unsatisfactory in Year 2 at the time of the last inspection and satisfactory in Year 6. Standards are now good in both year groups. The improvement is because of good teaching and a very good curriculum that provides regular opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Direct teaching of skills within the newly developed computer suite is having a marked impact on pupils' attainment and achievement. In the school's last inspection standards were unsatisfactory in religious education, they are now better than is typically seen for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Good or better teaching, thorough planning and better resources have all contributed to the improvements in standards.
- 5 In almost all other subjects standards are better than expectations for pupils' ages. In no subjects are standards unsatisfactory and they are better overall than at the time of the previous inspection. In the vast majority of subjects, apart from the better teaching, the hard work and commitment of the subject co-ordinators have contributed significantly to the improvements in standards. In general, pupils achieve well especially in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 6 Children in the reception classes are achieving well and, because of very good teaching overall, are on course to exceed many of the learning goals that are expected by the time they enter Year 1. Their personal, social and emotional development, in addition to their mathematical and creative development, is a significant strength because the children are developing very well as independent learners.
- 7 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs) including those with statements of SEN. In the lower sets for English and mathematics, there is a high proportion of pupils who experience SEN and the sets help teachers to plan pupils' work suited to their needs. For example, consistent and well-targeted support helps them to improve their basic skills in reading, writing, spelling, and calculating. Others who have physical difficulties are also given very good support. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and give effective support to pupils' learning.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 8 Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships with staff and each other are having a very positive impact on their achievements, especially in their personal development. Their independence and enthusiasm for learning are key strengths. This is an improved picture from that described in the previous report when the "ethos" of the school was judged to be satisfactory and "younger pupils often lost interest in lessons". Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and this is clearly evident in the very lively and keen interest they show in their work and in every aspect of school life. They show a very keen interest in extra-curricular activities such as football and cross-country. They are friendly, polite and helpful and think very highly of their teachers.
- 9 Very good attitudes are developed well in the reception classes. Children have settled very quickly and show very confident attitudes to learning. They work well with each other and are also developing considerable independence. These good habits are built on as pupils progress through the school where they find learning fun and exciting, which ensures that they are keen to get on with their lessons, try hard to do their best, and sustain interest well throughout the school day. By Year 6 pupils have established a very good work ethic and work independently with enquiring minds. For example, in a Year 5/6 history lesson they showed interest and excitement in

discovering how people lived in Tudor times. They raised excellent questions such as “*Did poor people get to watch Shakespeare’s plays?*” The few occasions when attitudes are only satisfactory occur when the teaching fails to generate sustained keen interest, as in a Year 3/4 science lesson when several pupils were not fully attentive and contributed little to discussions.

- 10 Children in the reception classes behave very well and this is usually the case with pupils throughout the school. There is little evidence of bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and pupils talk very positively about the friendly atmosphere in the school and in the playgrounds. Records confirm that incidents are very rare. In general, pupils praise the reward system and feel it is used fairly. One pupil was excluded on a temporary basis in the last three years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have a very good awareness of why rules exist, and are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of their actions on others as they get older. They often show appreciation of the efforts of others. Behaviour is especially good in the restricted space in the playgrounds and in the dining hall.
- 11 The importance of harmonious relationships is very evident in the reception classes where children work and play well together and are responsive to adults. Relationships throughout the rest of the school are also very good and pupils and staff get on together well. This pleasant rapport has a positive impact on pupils’ learning, especially the interaction between teachers and pupils during lessons. Pupils work together well in pairs and groups often improving their learning in lessons especially when constructively criticising others’ work. For instance in a Year 3/4 physical education lesson pupils’ considered analysis of others helped all to extend their ideas in developing gestures and expression in a dance representing preparation for an evening out.
- 12 Pupils show very good initiative and independence from an early age and continue to build on this so that by Year 6 they have become very mature young citizens. A very good example is their keen and responsible approach to being part of a school discussion group. Their constructive views have contributed to improvements to the school such as more playground equipment and seats and improvements to the toilets. Pupils are developing a very good awareness of moral and social issues. They reflect thoughtfully on issues such as the local environment. Pupils in last year’s Year 6 wrote about; “The nice and friendly community in which we live”, and also evaluated the impact of vandalism, litter and “dogs’ muck.”
- 13 Pupils show very good response to many aspects of their cultural development. Most have a very good appreciation or interest in sport, art or literature. In a Year 5/6 English lesson when discussing poetry pupils explored and experimented with language and showed a strong sense of empathy with the views and ideas of a range of poets. Pupils’ awareness of multi-cultural aspects of British life was enhanced in an assembly on how the festival of Diwali is celebrated in larger cities.
- 14 Overall attendance rates are very good and are well above the national average for primary schools. Levels of unauthorised absences and lateness are not significant and lessons start promptly.
- 15 Pupils with SEN behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to get on with their tasks and work very well together when working in pairs or with other groups of pupils. They listen to the adults who help them with their work and grow in self-confidence as they achieve their targets. The relationships between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants are a key factor in the increasing

confidence pupils show during lessons. Those pupils who experience emotional, behavioural and social difficulties are helped sensitively to behave well in lessons. As they learn to control their own behaviour they listen to their teachers and learn effectively.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

- 16 The last inspection judged the teaching to be satisfactory overall; it was satisfactory in the reception year, unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The teaching has improved overall and is now very good in the reception classes and good in Years 1 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and it was often very good. The school's results in national tests indicate that teaching has been effective in English, mathematics and science and this continues to be the case.
- 17 In most of the lessons in Years 1 to 6 teachers set high expectations and as a result pupils usually make good progress and the quality of learning is good. In the most effective teaching expectations are very high, irrespective of pupils' abilities, and consequently they achieve very well, for example, in a Year 3/4 class when pupils discussed features of a play script and then planned a play based on a well-known story. Teachers' exposition is suitably clear especially at the start of lessons. In the very good or better teaching, teachers' explanations are very clear, they ask well-focused questions and encourage pupils to explain their thinking, for instance in mental sessions in mathematics. Investigative skills are promoted very well in several subjects including mathematics, science and history. All lessons have learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. In the most effective teaching, good discussion, about what has been learned is well managed at the end of lessons.
- 18 Behaviour is well managed in the vast majority of lessons and pupils are relied upon to work diligently with sustained concentration. Teachers manage the sets well in English and mathematics and no time is wasted. A good feature of the teaching is that, within the sets, teachers are mindful to provide work at different levels of challenge if needed. Because of good or better teaching pupils are very interested in their work, want to do well and are intellectually challenged. When the teaching is satisfactory it could be improved by better pace in learning, more direct teaching and better sustained management of pupils. There are good examples of teacher's marking but its quality is inconsistent. Often it does not indicate to pupils how they could improve their performance.
- 19 Teaching in the reception classes is very good overall and the teachers and support staff work very well together. A good combination of direct teaching of skills and opportunities for children to choose activities that have clear learning purpose ensures that children are making good progress towards exceeding many of the early learning goals. The development of children's independence is a particularly strong feature of the teaching and learning.
- 20 The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is good and is supported by the pupils' IEPs that are carefully devised. Most pupils with SEN are taught in the lower sets of English and mathematics. These pupils are supported as individuals or in small groups and the valuable support of teachers and learning support assistants ensures they make very good progress. Teachers are patient but never let up on pupils; they keep them working hard and ensure that tasks are completed correctly. Teachers often use imaginative methods to develop pupils' understanding. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well; often assistants record how well

pupils have done in each lesson and report back to teachers on the successes of the lesson.

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

- 21 At the time of the last inspection the curriculum was judged to be unsatisfactory and was a serious weakness. Since that time there has been a considerable improvement and now the curriculum is very good and many high quality, learning opportunities are provided. The curriculum in the reception classes, in Years 1 and 2 and in some aspects in Years 3 to 6 was narrow and unbalanced, but is now broad and meets the needs of all pupils. Investigation, experimentation, designing and making, and thinking and doing are significant features of the curriculum. Teachers build on pupils' everyday experiences and their general knowledge to extend their interest in the world around them. They also ensure that wherever possible, subjects are linked together to enable pupils to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding, for example, in their use of mathematical skills in science, geography and ICT. A major strength of the curriculum is that teachers work in teams to prepare lessons. This results in a good degree of curriculum consistency and enables all pupils within each year group to receive their entitlement to a broad curriculum.
- 22 Teachers plan pupils' learning experiences so that they are rich and interesting. Curriculum plans are very thorough and tasks are planned to ensure that as pupils move from year to year their learning builds well on their previous experiences. Policies and schemes of work are of very good quality. They set out clearly, in each subject, the knowledge, skills and important ideas that teachers should include in their planning at particular times of the school year. These are based on national guidelines and have been adapted very well to cater for the school's classes, all of which in Years 1 to 6 contain two year groups. Since the last inspection a new timetable format has been started and this means that pupils work very hard and no time in the school day is wasted. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are organised in ability groups (sets) for literacy and numeracy. This organisation works well and enables a better match of work to pupils' needs.
- 23 The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The school provides some sporting activities and a good range of educational visits, some of which are residential. This provision supports pupils' social and personal development. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education and a wide range of practical learning activities features very strongly in all subjects. Teachers have taken care to include crucial aspects of personal development. The community plays a significant and positive role in helping pupils learn about drug and alcohol awareness. Issues of safe and healthy lifestyles as well as aspects of social and moral growth, living as a full member of the community and how society works, are all included in the curriculum. Local army personnel and the police force work well in combination to support learning in this area. Pupils are helped to become active citizens of their village community.
- 24 The overall provision for equal opportunities is very good. Pupil mobility is high and all new pupils are welcomed. Pupils with SEN are helped to achieve very well and good support by teachers and support staff ensures that they are as actively involved as much as possible in the full curriculum. The policy of targeting support for younger pupils and those in the lowest sets is sensible and works well. Teaching and support staff successfully achieve the requirements of the national Code of Practice.

- 25 Good strategies have been developed for teaching literacy and numeracy. Both aspects are used well in other subjects and thereby increase the opportunities pupils have to practice their skills. Pupils develop good numeracy skills; they are quick to use their understanding of number when working with grids and maps in geography, drawing graphs in science and measuring accurately in design and technology. Pupils use their reading and writing skills well in subjects such as history and religious education. When pupils write accounts they are lucid and informative. Their reading skills are also used well to research information using books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Pupils use their ICT skills very well across the curriculum. Teachers plan opportunities to use computers in most subjects and this is particularly successful in mathematics. The school's work to improve the curriculum has been very good since the last inspection and the management of the curriculum is in capable hands.
- 26 The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good, with that for moral and social development being very good. This is an all round improvement since the previous inspection.
- 27 Spiritual development is promoted well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on matters of significance and importance during acts of collective worship. Opportunities for reflection are also provided during lessons when pupils read challenging poetry, or discuss stories and accounts of important events. The work undertaken in personal, social and health education, especially the 'circle time' encourages them to develop an empathy for other peoples' points of view. It also successfully develops their self-respect, and respect for others, as do the methods used by the teachers in class. The school also provides opportunities for self-development in the residential visits planned for the older pupils. The programme of religious education helps pupils understand how some people use religious ideas, language and actions to express beliefs that are important to them. The staff are generally alert to the possibilities of wonder developing in the subjects they teach. One example is the excitement engendered in a group of Year1/2 pupils when they programmed the movement of a 'floor turtle'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good opportunities to write poems in which they explore issues of spirituality.
- 28 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good, not least because it is unobtrusive and implied, rather than presented as unreflective obedience to a code. There is an assumption, to which the pupils respond very well, that pupils will want to do the right thing. This ensures that it becomes natural to behave well, so that caring for others and choosing right rather than wrong becomes deeply ingrained. Another significant factor is the consistency throughout the school of the way in which all the adults give a good example of the best way to relate to one another. The pupils follow this lead well. In religious education, work on the Jewish rite of Bar Mitzvah led the pupils to explore the responsibilities of being an adult or a senior pupil, and to discuss it freely in class. The very good outcomes of this provision are even more significant given the larger than average proportion of pupils who move into and out of the school each year.
- 29 Pupils' social development is also fostered very well. Important elements in this are the encouragement of not only pupils' independence, but also of their support for one another. In addition, they are encouraged to accept responsibilities about the school. By supporting the community of the school and helping it to function effectively, pupils learn very well how larger communities and societies function, and how they are dependent on the sense of responsibility and the goodwill of their members. The good programme of work in personal, social and health education puts this learning into a formal context. The development of class representatives who meet with the



headteacher enables the pupils to understand how democratic institutions can function well. The encouragement of discussion in class, and the challenge to explain why they hold particular views, enable pupils to develop the skills needed to work for the community of a class or a school.

- 30 Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. They are provided with insights into the cultures as well as the beliefs of the faith communities studied in religious education and in geography. They are introduced to the art of communities from Africa and Asia, and from the indigenous people of Australia as well as to significant artists from the European tradition. The work they do in personal social and health education encourages them to approach cultures other than their own with sensitivity. They meet a variety of literary traditions in English and some different traditional songs and styles in music, but this is less advanced than in the other subjects. The pupils do not have many opportunities of meeting members of the other communities found in Great Britain, but the school makes good efforts to overcome this disadvantage

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 31 Very good care is provided and the provision is much better than at the time of the last inspection. In particular, great care has been taken in the organisation of the lunch break to accommodate the needs of the youngest pupils. The standard of care and social inclusion contributes very well towards pupils' very positive attitudes to school allowing them to feel confident, secure and valued.
- 32 Health and safety procedures and monitoring are very good and potential risks are identified well. Fire, first aid and security arrangements are good. Child protection procedures and awareness are also very good. Potential issues are dealt with in a sensitive but thorough manner. Very effective pastoral care and support enable pupils to feel valued and cared for. Staff have good knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds. Especially good is the support given to the youngest pupils. Adults working in the reception classes have a calm and pleasant approach and this helps children to settle quickly. The significant number of pupils who join the school, other than at the usual time of admission, are also made to feel very welcome.
- 33 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. The behaviour and expectation policy, which emphasises the use of rewards and praise, has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils see the rewards system as very fair and effective. Procedures to discourage and deal with bullying, racist or sexist behaviour are also very good and any potential incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. The school "referral" system is a very effective mechanism to deal with issues such as potential bullying, racist incidents, verbal abuse or disturbing others. The race equality policy is sound.
- 34 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Registers are well maintained and the close monitoring of absences enables the school to quickly identify and pursue any problems regarding the maintenance of prompt and regular attendance.
- 35 Special needs staff liaise well with outside agencies to ensure that the pupils' needs are fully met. Pupils' progress is monitored suitably and this information is passed to parents at the regular reviews of progress. IEPs are of good quality and concentrate on the skills and knowledge that pupils need to help them make progress towards

their targets. Records of progress are of good quality. The provision for pupils with statements of SEN is precisely targeted and is of very good quality.

- 36 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The youngest pupils are assessed on entry to the school and again at the end of reception, and information is used to help teachers' planning. Children are assessed against the "stepping stones" as they move through the reception year. A range of other assessments is carried out including analysis of SATs results leading to improved standards and performance in increasing the percentage of pupils achieving above average National Curriculum levels. The Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 co-ordinators analyse pupils' performance in tests thoroughly and identify pupils who need extra help. The mathematics and ICT co-ordinators have exemplary practices in analysing and tracking pupils' progress. These detailed records, and use of the information, have contributed to a rise in standards of attainment. Good records are maintained of pupils' progress in English and science. In other subjects National Curriculum coverage records are kept and these identify activities taught and, at the end of each curriculum unit, the subject and the year co-ordinators evaluate which aspects of the units need tailoring for the future. These good procedures inform the curriculum planning but as yet do not lead to specific targets for groups or individuals pupils, except in mathematics.
- 37 The policy for assessment is good and provides clear guidance to all the staff on what records need to be maintained. This approach ensures that all data is recorded consistently. Additionally, subject co-ordinators check pupils' work and interview them. The work is assessed against National Curriculum levels and portfolios are kept. A substantial amount of evidence is gathered but analysis does not always establish reasons as to why there might be specific weakness.
- 38 The school is at an early stage of making use of the assessment data. Information is used to determine ability groups in mathematics and English or booster groups to help pupils achieve better results in the national tests. The setting of aspirational targets is helping standards to rise. The school is now well placed to set targets for individual pupils and this will assist them in calculating how much value they have added, which is especially important given the level of pupil mobility in the school. Assessment findings are not being used to identify potentially gifted and talented pupils.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 39 Partnership with parents is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Information to parents on their children's progress was then unsatisfactory and is now good. The partnership, in addition to parents' encouragement of their children, has a very significant impact on pupils' achievements and attitudes to learning.
- 40 Response from parents to the inspection survey, and their comments at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection, were generally very positive. The school provides good information to parents including the annual reports on pupils' progress, which give very good detail and indicate how they could improve. Plans are underway to give updated information on progress at the end of each term. The level of extra-curricular activities is about average for a primary school
- 41 Newsletters give parents good information about the life of the school and also about work to be undertaken each term. Reading or homework diaries are used consistently to enhance the two-way communication between teachers and parents.

The school is open to parents and teachers are available for consultation at the beginning and end of the day. In the reception classes time is set aside at the beginning of each day for parents to talk to staff or stay with their children. This arrangement works very well; it ensures good communication between parents and staff and helps children to settle happily.

- 42 Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. They give help in the school, for example, in listening to pupils read or in helping with art and design lessons. Parents who communicated with inspectors made it very clear how important they felt it was to help their children's education, by, for example, supporting homework and the active parents' association. Parents ensure their children come to school regularly and promptly. The school builds on this support very successfully in a wide range of areas. For instance, the homework policy in the school prospectus contains very useful advice on how parents can contribute to their children's learning.
- 43 Very good relationships are fostered with parents of children with SEN and every effort is made to ensure that parents have the opportunity to take part in the identification and provision for their children's needs. Systems to inform parents of their children's progress are good.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 44 At the time of the last inspection pastoral leadership was strong and it continues to be so. However, there were weaknesses in managing the curriculum and monitoring and evaluating the school's work. These aspects of leadership and management have improved significantly and good use has been made of LEA support since the last inspection. The school's capacity to continue to improve is good.
- 45 Following the last inspection an improvement plan was devised and its progress is reported regularly to the governors by the headteacher. This has ensured that the key priorities for improving the school have thoroughly been considered by the governors. Governors' committees address six key questions, including "how high are standards?" and "how well is the school led and managed?" As a result they are now very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and are proactive in seeking best value, for example in deciding how best to fund the computer suite. Expenditure is controlled efficiently. Senior management systems have been improved and the senior management team has a clear strategic role. The headteacher acknowledges that he has learned to delegate more responsibilities to his senior management team and has enabled his subject co-ordinators to be much more active in developing and monitoring their assigned subjects. For example, they monitor planning, scrutinise pupils' work and give presentations to the governors. Year group leaders and subject co-ordinators work hard and, generally, carry out their responsibilities well. The deputy headteacher has not been at the school for long and is being well supported by the headteacher.
- 46 The school development plan is a better tool for guiding the school's future direction than it was at the time of the last inspection. It includes useful evaluation of the implementation of the previous plan and indicates success criteria and projected costs. It could be improved by more precise evaluation of whether standards have improved, for example, in ICT and religious education. The program for monitoring teaching is clear and suitably linked to performance management arrangements. Evaluations of teaching now need to be less descriptive and more evaluative

especially in relation to strengths and weaknesses, and the impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

- 47 The governing body has implemented very good procedures for monitoring the school's provision for SEN. The governors' SEN committee reviews provision, receives reports from the SEN co-ordinator and also reviews pupils' progress. The co-ordinator is ambitious for pupils and for the support that the school is able to provide for their varying needs. A number of notable features figure in this work including regular training of teachers and assistants to help maintain the high quality of the provision. Paperwork is efficiently managed and plans to keep provision under review are of good quality.
- 48 The school is well staffed by suitably qualified teachers. The very good recruitment procedures have helped to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This has been very significant given the very high level of turnover of teaching staff. The range of experience is helped by the school's effective use of job-share arrangements. Very good use is made of specialist teaching in English, mathematics and music. Support staff and teachers work well together. A good programme of professional development is linked well to school development.
- 49 The accommodation is satisfactory overall but has weaknesses. Outside play areas are inadequate and four classes are housed in mobile classrooms that are some distance from the main building. One of the "double" mobiles is in poor condition. However, good use is made of the overall accommodation and improvements have been made since the last inspection especially in the installation of a computer suite and the provision of facilities for the youngest pupils in the centre of the school; a significant factor in their personal development. Pupils appreciate the recently refurbished toilets. There is no separate play area for the youngest children but time for play is "staggered" so that the playgrounds are not too congested and also to enable the youngest children to have separate access to the play area. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are some strengths, for example, in the provision for ICT and art and design, and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in these subjects.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

50 The governors and headteacher should:

(1) Improve the use of assessment by:

- ensuring that marking indicates how pupils can improve their performance
- using assessment findings to set targets for individual pupils' attainment and progress
- identifying pupils who are potentially gifted and talented and ensure they are appropriately challenged

Paragraphs 18, 38, 62, 65, 69, 78.

## **Other issues which should be considered for inclusion in the action plan**

- Sharpen up the evaluation of teaching and use the findings to help improve the satisfactory teaching

Paragraph 46

- Ensure the evaluation of the school development plan indicates clearly how far attainment and progress have improved in all subjects

Paragraph 46

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	28	29	13	-	-	-
Percentage	9	36	38	17	-	-	-

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 one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	327
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	51
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	27	27	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	27
	Girls	25	26	26
	Total	46	47	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (93)	87 (100)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	26
	Girls	26	24	27
	Total	48	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	93 (100)	98 (100)
	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	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	20
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	34	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (89)	84 (89)	97 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	20
	Girls	18	15	17
	Total	36	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (93)	84 (95)	97 (98)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	323	1	-
White – Irish	-	-	-
White – any other White background	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Black African	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Asian	-	-	-
Mixed – any other mixed background	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Indian	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	-	-	-
Black or Black British – Caribbean	-	-	-
Black or Black British – African	1	-	-
Black or Black British – any other Black background	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-
Any other ethnic group	-	-	-
No ethnic group recorded	3	-	-

*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)	15.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	23.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	204

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	649,177
Total expenditure	707,254
Expenditure per pupil	2,028.16
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,420
Balance carried forward to next year	9,313

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	99

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	5	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	56	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	12	4	0
The teaching is good.	51	48	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	49	19	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	57	15	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	24	48	12	5	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	53	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	30	27	2	19

## **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**

- 51 Provision for children in the reception classes has improved greatly. At the time of the last inspection it was unsatisfactory and it is now very good. The school's part-time Early Years' Unit was not inspected during the current inspection because it only operates in the Spring and Summer terms. Parents, understandably, continue to raise concerns that Summer born children are disadvantaged because they are not able to attend the Unit. Attainment on entry to the current reception year was broadly above average but in other years has been more variable. Children are making good progress overall and are on course to exceed many of the early learning goals that are expected for when they start in Year 1. Attainment is particularly good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and creative and physical development. Personal, social and emotional development is a considerable strength. The staff work very well as a team and the quality of teaching is very good overall. Activities are very well organised and have clear learning objectives.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

- 52 Children have settled quickly into the routines of the reception classes because the quality of teaching and adult support in this area of learning is very good. The vast majority of the children are not yet five. They are already more confident than is often seen with children of this age and are well on course to exceed many of the early learning goals. They are helped from very early on to be independent and to co-operate with others. They select and tidy away equipment and resources sensibly and help to keep their classrooms tidy. For example, a child voluntarily tidied up a group of books when they were accidentally knocked over. "Jobs to do" include feeding the fish and selecting the right day of the week sign. Plenty of examples were observed when children helped each other, for instance in the role-play area. Registration time is used well to develop children's social skills. Every individual child says good morning to its teacher and adults ensure that children are attentive. The teachers and support staff have a calm, pleasant and purposeful manner that enables children to feel confident and safe. Children are enthusiastic and often excited by the activities. Nevertheless, they know when to listen carefully and they follow instructions well. Attitudes and relationships are very good and the children behave well. Teachers and support staff give very good support to a child with a statement of SEN. They ensure she participates as much as possible in all activities.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

- 53 The teaching is very good and most of the children should exceed many of the early learning goals when they start Year 1. Adults give particular emphasis to developing children's speaking and listening skills. Oral language is fostered well in all activities. A very good example is the development of mathematical language when children talk about shapes and their properties. The teachers and support staff ask a good range of well-focused questions and this is helping children to become confident speakers. Discussion is managed very well. Children's imaginative language is promoted well in the "space" role-play area that also gives opportunity for children to practise writing words such as "rocket" and "moon". Children listened carefully to a story and then talked confidently about what scares them. Teachers set high expectations when children are looking at and talking about books. Every opportunity is taken to focus on letter sounds and children are pleasantly but firmly encouraged to get the sounds

right. Books are shared regularly and children are beginning to recognise some familiar words and know how to look for clues in the pictures. The reception classes are well displayed with books, words and areas of interest that support children's literacy development.

### **Mathematical development**

- 54 The teaching of mathematical development is a particular strength and many of the children are already exceeding some of the early learning goals. In a very good lesson, children identified numbers to 10 and then rearranged them into the correct order. They counted forwards and backwards accurately. In another equally good lesson children counted accurately to 50. Children are developing very good knowledge and understanding of shape. Most identify common two-dimensional shapes and several can name shapes in three dimensions such as cuboid and cylinder. Discussion of shapes, for example, describing them after feeling them in a bag, is fun and managed very well. Teachers and assistants use mathematical terminology well and this is helping children to explain their work clearly. For instance, one child said; *"This shape won't roll because it's square"*. The staff take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical understanding. For example, children line up on a number line and are therefore becoming aware of the position and order of numbers. Children help count the numbers of children present each day and when "hot dinners" were counted responded well to the teacher's question; "What's one more than seven?" The classrooms are organised well to support children's mathematical development including numbers, shapes and their names.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 55 The teaching is good in this area of learning and children are on course to achieve the early learning goals. In many aspects, for instance in their use of ICT, they should exceed them. In a very good lesson in the computer suite the teacher made very good use of an electronic white board to teach key skills as children used a "colour magic" program. Children showed good developing control of the mouse and many knew which icons to use. They used the "shape tool" and "spray can" imaginatively when they made pictures of space rockets. In another effective lesson children investigated the difference between light and dark when they explored a range of florescent materials in the space "black hole" in the role-play area. In this lesson children developed their understanding of the importance of reflectors for safety purposes and they watched a short video very attentively. Children build with a good range of constructional equipment and choose materials they need to join things together, for example, when making a model rocket. Other work which is developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world includes labelling of body parts, pictures of "what's seen on the way to school" and opportunities to observe and explore made and natural materials.

### **Physical development**

- 56 There is no separate defined outside area for children's physical development so it is not possible for them spontaneously to move between indoors and outside. However, good use is made of the playground and hall, and the teaching is very good overall. Children are already exceeding many of the early learning goals. They have opportunity to play outside away from older children, and staff use the opportunity to take the children outside when possible. For example, children made good use of large shapes as part of their work in mathematics. In an excellent lesson in the hall, the teacher's very high expectations resulted in children attaining very highly. They

carried out a sequence of floor movements with great enthusiasm and showed good, careful use of space. They then demonstrated considerable skills and confidence as they moved across the physical education apparatus. The teacher monitored children's progress very carefully and ensured their safety at all times. In another lesson children moved imaginatively to music as they took on the role of "aliens" and "astronauts". Many opportunities are provided, especially as part of creative development, for children to develop their fine control skills.

### **Creative development**

- 57 Teaching is very good and provides a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their creativity. Children are making good progress towards exceeding the early learning goals when they start Year 1. Work in this area of learning is well linked to other areas, for example the use of an ICT paint program. Children work in a good range of media to create two and three-dimensional work. Good, imaginative pictures of trees have been drawn using children's handprints and pictures of autumn are colourful. Children respond very well to the chance to explore and experiment with media, for instance, in making a lunar landscape and painting pictures of light and dark. Children have used ICT to design pictures of their homes. A particular strength of the provision is the use of role-play. At the time of the inspection both classes contained a large "rocket" in which children could develop their imaginative play. The role-play area changes according to the particular curriculum theme being taught.

### **ENGLISH**

- 58 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average in reading and above average in speaking, listening and writing and generally reflect the results in last year's national tests. The literacy strategy has been implemented effectively and supports well the needs of pupils who stay at the school and the large proportion who join at non standard times. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. There has been good improvement since the school was last inspected.
- 59 A feature of the achievements of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is the confidence with which they discuss issues and ideas, give reasons for their views and argue logically. Listening skills are promoted very well. Because teachers make lesson introductions interesting and lively, pupils are attentive. They listen carefully to instructions and strive to meet the high expectations made of them in independent and group work. Teachers use standard English competently and expect pupils to reply clearly and to speak in sentences. Pupils make use of description and use subject terminology well. For example, by Year 6, pupils use terms such as metaphor and simile and refer to the text to give examples. They reflect upon poetry, understand rhymed couplets and identify examples of imagery in the work of James Reeves, John Masefield and other poets. They are aware of differences in styles of writing and the impact of rhyme and description for the reader. Their good speaking skills support writing well. Many pupils are confident to write independently and enjoy the challenges of writing for different purposes and audiences. Because they are given choices about the way in which they present their ideas they are skilled at matching words to create atmosphere and context.
- 60 The pace of learning is good because the quality of teaching is good overall. Very good and excellent features were seen in the teaching of pupils in Years 4 and 6. Pupils are taught in sets and staff support them well and have a thorough knowledge of their individual needs. Work is well matched to ensure that pupils are challenged

fully including the more able and those with SEN. No significant differences were seen between the progress of boys and girls. The good pace seen in lessons maintained the pupils' interest and motivation. Expectations of what can be achieved are high and pupils have very positive attitudes to reading and writing. They are proud of their achievements, eager to talk about their work and to read passages from their favourite books.

- 61 Reading is taught thoroughly and pupils achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good use of phonics and develop a love of books from an early stage. They build well on the strong start they receive in the reception classes. By the age of eleven they identify favourite authors and give reasons for their preferences. Pupils quote accurately passages of text which describe characters and events and compare the work of authors such as Rowling and Dahl. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable. Pupils are helped to understand the different features of English. In an excellent lesson seen in Year 4 pupils learned about the structure of plays and achieved highly because they were fully involved in decision making. They used intonation, learned about the relevance of stage directions and discussed and recorded how to plan an adaptation of a well-known story for presentation.
- 62 Pupils achieve very well in writing. By the age of seven, pupils attempt to spell unknown words and put together sequences of sentences that are descriptive and interesting. There are variations in the quality of teachers' marking, particularly in spelling. This leads to some inaccuracies that remain uncorrected and as a result pupils continue to make the same mistakes. By the age of eleven pupils write in a wide range of forms including stories, letters, plays and poems. Work is celebrated in the making of class books, which include samples of pupils' best work. Presentation and the quality of display are high. Pupils are encouraged to word process and use graphics very well to achieve publication standards.
- 63 The curriculum is well planned and literacy skills are applied well across subjects. This has a positive impact on achievement and enables pupils to understand how to apply their learning, for example when deciding how to record the differences between rich and poor people in Tudor times. Teachers' planning is thorough and lessons build well on the knowledge and skills taught at each stage. Lessons start promptly and activities are well timed. Efficient organisation and the management of resources promote good quality learning.
- 64 Teachers make very good use of the time at the end of lessons to assess how effective learning has been. In the best practice observed in Years 4 and 6 the teachers encouraged pupils to criticise their work constructively. Pupils valued their teachers' comments and those of their friends and understood how to make further improvements. Pupils showed very good care for one another as they reflected on their work and enjoyed their learning. The quality of oral marking is good. Teachers respond sensitively to pupils' responses and ensure that everyone is valued and encouraged.
- 65 Pupils make good progress over time particularly those who have been at the school for a good length of time. Teachers' assessments guide teaching and learning but the next step for the school is to use the information more precisely to set targets for individual pupils. The subject benefits from good leadership and the monitoring of standards to ensure the consistent good quality of teaching and learning. Resources are of good quality.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 66 Standards in Year 2 are above average and they are high in Year 6. This is a broadly similar picture to the results in the national tests although high pupil mobility has resulted in some fluctuations in performance. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and are making good progress. The most able pupils achieve especially well in Year 2 and Year 6 because of very challenging teaching. Pupils with SEN are well supported throughout the school and make good progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory overall. Numeracy skills are developed thoroughly across the curriculum, for example, in science and ICT, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills. Pupils are taught in ability groups (sets) in Years 1 to 6. This organisation works well and enables teachers to match the work to pupils' needs. In Years 5 and 6 two out of the four teachers teach the sets, an arrangement that makes good use of teachers' expertise.
- 67 Pupils in Year 1 are making significant progress in number, shape, space and measures. They work with numbers greater than 10 and accurately identify two-dimensional shapes and describe their properties. Some pupils identify more complex three-dimensional shapes. The most able pupils recognise sequences of number to 20 and identify odd and even numbers. In a good lesson, Year 1 pupils showed good mental recall of number facts to 10. Pupils' speed of mental recall continues to be developed well in Year 2. In a very good lesson, pupils quickly identified and explained number sequences to 100 and showed good knowledge of multiples. Year 2 pupils, in general, have good understanding of place value and their completed work shows that they have regular opportunities to learn number facts by heart. They also use standard units of measure accurately. In a low attaining set pupils in Year 2 made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of identifying odd and even numbers and consolidated their knowledge of shapes.
- 68 In all the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 pupils made at least good progress. A low attaining group in Year 3 made discernible gains in their understanding of number arrays and improved their mental recall of counting in groups of numbers. High attaining Year 3 pupils are achieving well, for example in mentally recalling multiplication facts. One Year 3 pupil accurately and very quickly calculated 500 divided by 4. The most able pupils in Year 4 calculate quickly, for example, when multiplying by 4, 5 and 10. They spot number patterns quickly and use mathematical terminology well when explaining their thinking. Very good teaching in a Year 5/6 set containing pupils of average and below average attainment ensured that pupils make very good progress in their constructing and interpreting of bar charts. Pupils achieved especially well in explaining their thinking, for example, when describing how they used "partitioning" to add together  $12+15+17$ . Year 5 pupils' work is of a good standard and for some of the most able pupils includes work typically undertaken in Year 6, for instance, ordering decimals. Pupils in the high ability set in Year 6 are given very demanding work and are achieving highly. In an excellent lesson, they mentally calculated very quickly in the "warm up" session at the beginning of a lesson. Explanations of their calculations were very articulate as they used a combination of operations to reach a target number. They also made very good progress in their drawing and interpreting of bar graphs based on grouped data. The completed work of pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 indicates that they have regular opportunities to use mental strategies to solve problems. Some of the most able pupils' work in Year 6 is of a very high standard especially in number and algebra.
- 69 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and often better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning



objectives. Mental work at the start of lessons invariably has brisk pace and fires pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers' make good use of time. Although many pupils have to move from their classrooms to join the sets they do so quickly and teachers waste no time in getting learning started. In the very effective lessons teachers regularly remind pupils of the need to work at a good pace. Teachers make good use of mathematical terminology and this helps pupils to talk confidently about their work. Questions are clearly focused and designed to challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils are acquiring and developing mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding thoroughly. They are very interested in their work, co-operate very well with others and also work very well independently. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are especially well aware of their progress. Assessment findings are used to allocate pupils to sets and the subject co-ordinator has devised a very thorough system for tracking pupils' progress throughout the school. There is scope now to make better use of assessment findings to set more precise targets for individual pupils' attainment and progress.

- 70 The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has observed teaching in each year group with a specific focus on the mental "warm up" sessions. The whole staff then discussed and shared practice. The co-ordinators' action plan for developing the subject is admirably clear and includes good reference to ICT.

## **SCIENCE**

- 71 In Years 2 and 6 attainment is above the national average and many more pupils than average attain the higher National Curriculum levels. These results show a marked improvement since the last inspection, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. The standards reflect the results in the national assessments and tests. All pupils, including those with SEN and the high attainers make good or better progress.
- 72 Pupils make very good progress throughout the school in their understanding of how to carry out scientific enquiry. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 carry out simple independent practical tasks when working on the early stages of investigating how sounds are made. They compare loudness or pitch of sounds and explore how they can be used to create sound effects. A strong feature of the teaching is that it enables pupils to make links with everyday things. For example, in one lesson pupils considered which sound effects would best describe the story read to them at the beginning. Teachers place great emphasis on pupils selecting and using materials independently. They encourage them to consider how they might record their observations but sometimes do not have sufficiently high expectations of the standard of the finished work.
- 73 In Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials are above average for their age. They recognise and name types of material such as metal, plastic and wood and, when presented with paper, they quickly put it with the wood. Pupils' knowledge of life processes is also developing well. They recall accurately and quickly the names of parts of a plant and describe more than one of their functions. For instance, they know that roots take in and sometimes store food and water and that they support and hold up the plant.
- 74 By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have made very good progress in carrying out practical scientific investigations. They plan their own investigations and follow a line of enquiry, making choices and exploring evidence to answer questions. They consider a range of variables and record their results as tables, charts, bar and line graphs. In a Year 5/6 lesson on sound, pupils had to consider which materials provided the best soundproofing. Use of correct scientific vocabulary was

encouraged and any responses that used language carelessly were not accepted. A minor weakness, which slightly marred these high expectations, was that insufficient emphasis was placed on ensuring that pupils also learnt to spell these technical words correctly. Pupils are encouraged to pose their own questions for investigation; consequently, they use their initiative and strive hard to consider what factors would prevent them carrying out a fair test. This was well illustrated when a group of Year 5 pupils, who had completed the above experiment, then realised that the whole basis of the experiment was weak. This was because it was not possible to measure the vigour with which each person shook the container with dice to test which was the best insulating material.

- 75 Teaching is based on good subject knowledge that enables pupils to be confident and raise questions and challenge each other. Teachers encourage these debates and handle them with a sense of fun. Their enthusiasm is communicated to the pupils who enjoy what they do and this has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to interpret and use numerical data. Some who were investigating which material offered the best insulation, selected many different ways to record their observations graphically, worked out averages, and converted them into percentages.
- 76 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand that matter exists in different states and that changes may occur when you heat, for example, chocolate and then cool it. They distinguish differences between melting and dissolving and explain what is meant by reversible change. Teachers prepare and organise resources well. Hence when pupils were investigating which materials were good conductors, pupils selected materials quickly and set up the simple circuits. Because pupils are used to carrying out practical investigations, they co-operate well and share resources. They are used to discussing and planning in pairs and groups. This they do with the minimum of fuss and a lot of maturity. Their good behaviour enables teachers to circulate and spend time with each group, raising questions and checking whether new learning is being consolidated. Support staff are well briefed and understand what learning outcomes are aimed for and they, too, support and intervene effectively.
- 77 A high percentage of teaching is good or better and none is less than satisfactory. Teachers' planning is supported by a well-designed scheme of work. Good planning ensures that there is clear progression as pupils move from year to year. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 identify different sounds and learn about pitch and volume and pupils in Years 3 to 6 plan and set up experiments based on a set of hypotheses. Learning objectives are clearly identified and shared and revisited regularly during sessions so that pupils recall what they are supposed to learn and find out. Activities almost always closely match learning objectives and present appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils.
- 78 A variety of teaching methods is used so that the whole class and individual work is combined effectively with group activities. Occasionally, teachers rush too much to get pupils on to the practical task and do not spend sufficient time for direct teaching which would give pupils a sound body of knowledge before they investigate. This has an adverse impact particularly on the low attaining pupils. Teachers make very good links with other subjects and particularly ensure that pupils apply basic skills learnt in their literacy, numeracy and ICT lessons. ICT skills are very well developed and applied. Pupils use data handling software and create graphs and charts. Lessons have good structures and are managed effectively, consequently pupils behave well and show a willingness to participate and concentrate on their work. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. A particular feature is the way they support and value each

other's contributions. They listen courteously and often help each other when they are stuck. Teachers are particularly skilful in encouraging pupils to think and in turn when some one 'is thinking' others wait patiently. Assessment is carried out at the end of topics. Teachers devise their tests in teams but criteria for marking is left to individuals and this leads to a lack of consistent information to monitor progress. Marking of work is regular but some teachers do not include suggestions to take pupils' learning further.

- 79 The recently appointed co-ordinator does not have science as her main specialism. She is aware of this and has identified further training. In the short time since her appointment she has already started to identify areas that can be developed further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 80 Standards in art and design are above the national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good improvement since the time of the previous inspection when the allocation of time for art was inadequate and too little attention was given to the development of subject specific knowledge and skills. The school now follows national guidance and teachers' expertise and subject knowledge have improved. Provision for art and design is now good and includes three dimensional work, ceramics, weaving, printing, pottery and painting. Very good attention is given to painting in the style of various artists, for example, Klimt, Modigliani and Warhol. Progression in learning is evident in the good range of pupils' work that is very well displayed throughout the school. A very popular art club that attracts a high proportion of pupils each week enhances the curriculum.
- 81 Very good links are made with history and geography, for example, in good quality portraits of leading members of the court of King Henry VIII and the representation, in paint, of the climates of the deserts and polar regions. Pupils applied their learning of hot and cold colours to the environments and wildlife through discussion of the animals found in hot and cold areas of the world. They showed very good general knowledge.
- 82 Pupils in Year 1 learn how primary colours can be mixed together to create new secondary colours. This work is extended with pupils investigating how to create tints of colours. In one lesson they took great care as they used differing amounts of white paint to achieve a range of shades. Important skills and processes are learnt, for example, the need to ensure that brushes are cleaned before applying white paint to other colours. The work of the Austrian artist, Hundert Wasser, and his techniques of merging colours to make new shades through a "bleeding" process introduced further investigations, combining paints to create different colours and textures. Older pupils created and printed designs to be used on T-shirts.
- 83 Very good attention is given to linking skills and knowledge across a range of media to improve the quality of art work. The school welcomes artists in residence to share their skills with pupils. In this way pupils' understanding of how skills are applied to create outstanding work is enhanced, for instance, designing and making clay tiles and shaping cardboard sculptures. Pupils are proud of their work and pleased to discuss the results of their efforts.
- 84 The quality of teaching is never less than good with half of the lessons very good or better. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are confident. Lessons are well planned. They begin promptly and pupils are challenged to apply the skills they learn. In this way pupils make good gains in the development of skills, knowledge and

understanding. Pupils are encouraged to use their sketchbooks to experiment with colour mixing and drawing parts of a bigger picture. Teachers promote good links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, pupils share materials sensibly and take great care to ensure they avoid accidents in a busy restricted workspace. Good teamwork between class teachers and the learning support assistants ensure that the activities are well organised. Pupils take responsibility for preparing and clearing away materials. This provides time for staff to focus their attention on improving pupils' skills and techniques.

- 85 The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is very enthusiastic and gives good support for staff. Assessment arrangements are informal. Samples of work are assessed at the end of each unit of work and are used to create portfolios of work. Additionally, there is good photographic evidence of pupils' achievements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 86 Standards are above the expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils in all year groups understand the design, make and evaluate processes involved in design and technology. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in Year 2 were found to be below average because skills and understanding were not developed systematically. These aspects have been addressed and now the curriculum is based on nationally recognised schemes of work which teachers have cleverly linked to other subjects such as history. The curriculum gives pupils a wide range of experiences and also enables them to judge the quality and suitability of their work when they have finished.
- 87 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their understanding of materials and how to strengthen their structures. Exploring a range of construction materials they combined large building bricks, straws, lollipop sticks and timber to create strong and rigid building materials. Good use is made of books that use interesting designs. For example, in Years 3 and 4 pupils enjoyed looking at some with moving parts and gasped at some of the intricate movement caused by levers and linkages. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a thorough understanding of how to design their projects. For example, they developed their ideas, for models of Tudor homes, in sketches, which were the basis for plans and elevations in much greater detail. These plans contained lists of the parts pupils would need and very accurate measurements. Pupils are regularly encouraged by their teachers to solve problems. As they talked about the Victorian toys they had made they showed a very good understanding of how to control the speed of their toys, using larger cam wheels and more pulleys.
- 88 The overall quality of teaching is good and has especially improved in Years 1 and 2. In those lessons where teaching was very good, teachers showed very good subject knowledge, the structure of the lessons was tight and they progressed at a very brisk pace. Pupils are encouraged to try out their ideas when they are designing and making. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 pupils understand that once their models are made they should look for ways to improve their work. Their evaluations of their model castles were of very good quality. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work occurred in each of the lessons that were seen and resulted in pupils gaining a very good understanding of the processes involved in design and technology. Skills are taught carefully and precisely and as a result cutting, sticking and combining materials are used by pupils to good effect.
- 89 Two part-time teachers, who took up the leadership of the subject four weeks before the inspection, manage the subject. They have made a competent start by auditing

the work throughout the school and have sound plans to continue the good work of the previous co-ordinator.

## GEOGRAPHY

- 90 In Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average, a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is now sufficient time allocated to the subject, the work is covered in depth and pupils are acquiring a good range of research and map skills.
- 91 Pupils in Year 2 have a good awareness of their own locality and identify key places, streets and amenities in Whittington. This work has culminated in a large, accurate and attractive map which pupils have produced and displayed. They have written lively accounts of what people do and are beginning to express opinions, such as; *"We like watching soldiers training in the barracks"*. They can give reasonably accurate directions on how to reach these places from the school.
- 92 Pupils demonstrate an increasing knowledge of different environments. They show a high level of understanding in selecting specific features that are found in the country and urban environment and which are depicted in their drawings. They use words such as *"terraced"* and *"semi-detached"* *"stables"* and *"kennels"* confidently. They appreciate how an urban area differs from the countryside. Pupils compare the hustle and bustle of a town with noisy cars, litter, pubs and cinemas with the leafy gardens, trees, animals and farms in a country environment.
- 93 By Year 6 pupils understand the origins of mountains and identify the locations of global mountain ranges. They use their knowledge of mountain environments in considering practical and physical problems when looking at the Ladakh near Tibet. As part of their study of the physical geography of Matlock, a contrasting location, pupils understand contour maps and some of them successfully convert them into a profile of the terrain. They use accurate and relevant geographical vocabulary to describe the terrain round Ladakh. Their knowledge and understanding of the mountainous regions enable them to identify specific conditions as isolated, windy and lacking in vegetation, because of low rainfall. They are confident in the use of symbols on maps, devise their own and also use those from Ordnance Survey maps. They work independently and research information quickly. They are particularly skilful in using and interpreting data, for example, of rainfall and temperature. They use their numeracy skills well in identifying which type of graph illustrates their findings appropriately. Pupils in Year 6 confidently carry out research, for example, they gather relevant information about Ladakh's mountains and weather from the Internet, make notes and compare this information with the resources provided by the teacher.
- 94 Teaching was seen in Years 1/2 and Years 5/6 classes and was either good or very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and include clear learning objectives, which are communicated well to the pupils. The lessons are well structured with a clear focus on geographical skills. Good planning ensures that the tasks provided match the needs of different levels of attainment in the mixed age classes. Pupils are challenged by the use of appropriate geographical vocabulary and highly motivated by the work, which requires analysis of information, and this made a strong contribution to their progress.
- 95 The curriculum co-ordinator provides a very strong lead. The nationally provided scheme of work has been adapted and teachers' planning ensures consistency in all

the year groups. Regular evaluation of the planning informs changes. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject and its ongoing development and monitors and supports teachers' planning. She is aware of the need to develop a systematic approach to assessment in order to set targets to facilitate the tracking of pupils' progress. Her passion for the subject is effectively communicated to the pupils and staff. She selects resources carefully and these effectively stimulate pupils' interest and provide for the development of their understanding. Good use is made of field studies, and educational visits, to extend pupils' understanding of the subject. These opportunities have a beneficial impact on attainment and progress.

## **HISTORY**

- 96 Standards have improved generally since the previous inspection but especially in Year 2. At the time of the last inspection there was not enough evidence to evaluate infant pupils' attainment and progress. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are now better than those normally seen. Improvements have also been made in planning. The school has adopted the latest national guidelines in history and coverage and time allocation are now good. Pupils in Year 2 were joint winners of a history competition organised by a local history society. They used a range of ways to gain information about their local project that studied the history of the local parish church. They illustrated their work by using computer-generated pictures. In addition, they interviewed local residents and made wax rubbings of gravestones in the church cemetery. Their very good work is celebrated in a prominent display near the main entrance of the school.
- 97 Pupils thoroughly enjoy history lessons because the teaching is good. The approach to the subject is lively and promotes investigative enquiry. The school has many good quality reference books that support pupils' research. The staff are very resourceful and provide stimulating materials to make lessons exciting. There are strong links with other subjects. In a Year 6 class, pupils were challenged to distinguish between wealth and poverty during Tudor times. Excellent resources enabled the teacher to ask demanding questions based upon a famous painting, "A fete at Bermondsey", which reflected life in the period. The study of art provided an opportunity to pose questions that required pupils to think hard about their responses and to use primary and secondary sources of evidence to support their opinions. The very good use of their speaking and listening skills also enabled them to structure their ideas based on evidence. Their responses were challenging and they showed good understanding of the need to back up ideas with reasons and supportive evidence. Pupils use Internet facilities at school and at home to supplement their gathering of information. Model making of Tudor homes supported comparisons of the designs of homes in the past with those of the present day. Another good feature of pupils' knowledge is their ability to place historical periods in the correct chronological order.
- 98 Pupils' work is assessed through discussions and observations of their knowledge at the end of each unit of work. The approach is used consistently across the classes and this provides a good framework from which to judge progress. The needs of different groups of pupils such as those with SEN and the most able are met well. Assessments are used to ensure tasks offer the appropriate levels of support and challenge, which ensures that interest levels and attitudes to learning remain positive.
- 99 The co-ordinator provides good leadership and is very enthusiastic. She attends courses and supports staff development well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

- 100 Significant improvement has been made in the provision for, and attainment in, ICT. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with the expected levels in Year 6 and below expectations in Year 2. Standards are now above expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is the result of better teaching, plenty of very good quality resources and a very good curriculum that provides lots of opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Pupils achieve well.
- 101 Pupils in all year groups have access to computers of good quality in their classrooms as well as in a computer suite. It is the work in the suite that is having the most dramatic effect on the rise in standards. A marked success is the way in which teachers plan the use of ICT as an integral part of pupils' work in many subjects. Because pupils are taught keyboard skills and how to load and save their work as soon as possible, they look upon computers as a significant tool for learning.
- 102 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good working knowledge of computers and how they can be used. They have a good understanding of the working environment of software programs. They write sequences of instructions to each other and floor robots. In lessons they responded very well to their teacher's questions about how the robot could receive instructions and how the unit of measurement 'understood' by the robot was its body length. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress as they combine text, illustrations and photographs and adapt these elements to meet the purposes of publicity materials. In Years 5 and 6 pupils developed further these skills to design a palace for Henry VIII. Pupils' good historical knowledge encouraged them to understand that if they were designing for Henry, their work would have to be of good quality or they would suffer the consequences. They were adventurous in their designs and made full use of the program's tools. There are good examples throughout the school of pupils' use of word processing, for example, in their writing of poems in Years 5 and 6. Pupils also have good opportunities to use the Internet for research.
- 103 Teaching is never less than good and at times when teachers show very good subject knowledge, it is very good. Lessons are cleverly constructed to build on pupils' prior knowledge and to use their learning from other subjects. ICT is used regularly in subjects across the curriculum. This is particularly the case in mathematics in which specific lessons are planned in the ICT suite to good effect. Because other subjects are used as illustrations, pupils are highly interested, see connections between their areas of learning and develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- 104 The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. High levels of subject knowledge and a great deal of enthusiasm ensure that staff and pupils work hard at all times. Monitoring and evaluation of pupil's work are excellent and have resulted in a meticulously planned curriculum and records of pupils' progress that chart how well pupils are doing. Teachers' knowledge of the subject has improved since the last inspection and more targeted training has been arranged. The school is well placed to continue to improve provision and attainment in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

- 105 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are typical for pupils of these ages. The range of musical opportunities in the school has narrowed over the past year or so due to circumstances beyond the school's control. The measures adopted have ensured that there has been no significant decline in standards. There was no judgement on

standards in music in the previous inspection, but progress seems to have been maintained.

- 106 Currently, a part-time temporary teacher teaches music throughout the school, for one day a week. There are also occasions when music is taught by class teachers. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is good overall. It shows a commitment to the subject, a good knowledge of music and of how young pupils learn the subject. As a result they successfully compose tunes using simple forms of notation. They perform these with confidence and make perceptive comments about the quality of what they are doing. In class they sing in tune and in time with enjoyment, and accompany their singing with percussion instruments. They learn songs and are familiar with music from a number of sources including some from cultures other than their own western European tradition. The teachers' management and organisation ensure time is used effectively. Pupils enjoy what they are doing and so perform well.
- 107 Music lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are enjoyable occasions and the pupils rise to the challenge to make music. They use musical notation so that by Year 6 most read simple music. They recognise tone, rhythm and tempo, and discuss how they affect the mood of the music they make or hear. Those pupils who have instrumental tuition play with confidence in lessons, supporting the untuned percussion instruments and other pupils' singing. They talk well about the music they hear in assemblies, and about a number of classical composers. They also enjoy, and comment on, the quality of the music that is used in dance and for gymnastic sequences in physical education. Teachers are careful to introduce correct terms for pupils to use in discussing music.
- 108 The generally good teaching throughout the school is based on a good knowledge and understanding of music, and of how pupils learn the subject. The enthusiastic teaching encourages the pupils to try things for themselves, for example, in preparation for a performance in the school, pupils wrote and rewrote music for groups accompanying a song written by Henry VIII. The skills the pupils are taught are effectively broken down into small sections, which after practice are brought together and result in improved performance. Teachers, through subtle questions, lead the pupils to realise what they need to do to improve what they are currently doing. This allows them to retain a sense of pride and ownership in their compositions. Lessons are well planned and matched well to the pupils' needs and abilities, though the assessment of the work is currently informal. This means that it cannot readily be used to improve the curriculum.
- 109 The singing in assemblies is adequate, but lacks a sense of occasion and pride, as less than enthusiastic performances are accepted and pupils are not challenged vigorously enough to do better. Pupils with additional educational needs are effectively supported and achieve well. Music plays a satisfactory role in the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there is room for more to be done to extend their musical cultural awareness.
- 110 The subject is managed by a comparatively recently appointed co-ordinator who has begun to come to grips with what is needed to improve standards and to widen the range of musical opportunities. Plans are in hand to redesign the scheme of work in the subject around a commercially published scheme to ensure proper coverage of the curriculum requirements, and to give teachers confidence to teach music to their own classes. This is intended to promote more music throughout the school. All this is at an early stage of development, but is moving the subject along the right lines to



improve achievements, enhance standards and to enrich the pupils' cultural curriculum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 111 Lessons were observed in gymnastics, dance and games. Standards in the work seen in Year 2 and Year 6 were above expectations. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Boys and girls achieve equally successfully, and those pupils who have additional educational needs are supported effectively so that they also achieve well. The activities planned are open to all pupils. The primary reason for this improvement is the good quality of teaching that is never less than satisfactory, often very good and occasionally excellent.
- 112 Pupils in the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes make a sound start. The well planned work ensures that by the time they are seven they balance, jump and land securely, and catch and throw a variety of balls and other objects accurately for both distance and direction with good control. They enjoy the work and participate very enthusiastically. They work co-operatively, share the equipment and resources generously and are happy to share in each other's successes.
- 113 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. They develop skills progressively particularly in gymnastics, and games. The best of the lessons are marked by the infectious enthusiasm of the teachers, good pace so that no time is lost, and high and increasing challenges to ensure pupils improve their performances. Where the teaching is satisfactory the levels of expectation are not so high and the teachers are less secure in their knowledge of how far to challenge the pupils to do more. By the time the pupils are in Year 6 they have a good degree of body control and successfully match movement to music. They create gymnastic sequences combining fast and slow, high and low, movements working as individuals or in groups. They match their movements to those of their peers. On the games field they develop good ball skills, such as passing the ball in rugby, basketball or soccer. The speed of their learning is the result of the careful planning of the lessons in which skills are broken down into small parts and then practised until they fit together effectively. Swimming was not observed during the inspection but the school expects most pupils to meet the minimum requirements by Year 4, and provision is made, for those who develop more slowly, to continue learning in Year 5 until they succeed.
- 114 Teachers working together in similar class groups jointly plan the lessons. In this way they share their knowledge and good practices so that pupils' achievements are improved. An extension of this practice through the monitoring of the teaching of the subject across class groupings is the logical next step for further improvements.
- 115 Physical education is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The work is planned using national recommendations to ensure that all curriculum requirements are met. The school's good standards in physical education are due in part to the enthusiasm engendered by the out of school sporting activities provided and encouraged. The school plays a full part in local sports activities and hosts some of them; it makes good use of outside help. Physical education supports the school's good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development significantly, as they learn to handle winning and losing, to devise and keep rules and to work co-operatively for the good of a team.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 116 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve standards that are better than generally expected. They have a secure understanding of the significant characteristics of the practices and beliefs of the major faiths found in Britain, including Christianity, about which they know and understand most. They relate this knowledge to other subjects and aspects of school life. This is due to the careful planning and the good, sometimes very good, teaching of the subject. It is a very considerable achievement by the school to have improved standards from unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection to good.
- 117 Lessons in both religious education and personal, social and health education encourage the pupils to grow in understanding about themselves. This is a solid foundation upon which later religious knowledge and understanding is built, for example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked at how babies are special, and at what they will need. The work moved from thinking about a real special baby expected by one of their teachers quite naturally to thinking about Christmas and the baby Jesus. They talked readily during an imaginative role-play with the teacher and a large doll. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of religious buildings as meeting places, and write about the characteristics of a Church and a Mosque using technical terms like minaret accurately. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. Imaginative and enthusiastic planning challenges the pupils to think hard and express themselves clearly.
- 118 In Years 3 to 6 pupils are similarly challenged to understand religions and religious ideas. They are taught to go beyond remembering simple facts and to think what religious actions such as those involved in Hindu worship mean to worshippers. They discuss and write sensitively about the responsibilities involved in becoming an adult, based on the Jewish rites of Bar and Bat Mitzvah. In the review of the subject conducted by the co-ordinator that involved talking to the pupils about religious education, a number said that the main reason for studying religions was the need to be sympathetic to the beliefs of other people. The pupils' achievements are the result of the good teaching that encourages them to express their own ideas without being afraid of getting them wrong. The older pupils recognised how 'circle time' with its rules for speaking and listening to each other respectfully, helped them to try out their own ideas in religious education lessons. This results in a very healthy independence of thought and freshness in their written work as well as good relationships between pupils and staff.
- 119 The very enthusiastic and energetic co-ordination of the subject has led to the improvements in teaching and planning of throughout the school. Monitoring of the teaching and of pupils' learning has been instrumental in identifying the parts of the subject where extra support was needed to raise standards. Resources for teaching the subject have been carefully matched to the requirements of the curriculum and well-planned packs have been created to support the teaching. This has increased the teachers' confidence and freed them to be creative and imaginative in their methods. The school recognises that there is room for this process to continue and also that assessment of pupils' work, related to the targets for learning for each lesson, needs to be simply but more formally recorded. ICT is not a significant part of the subject.
- 120 Religious education plays an important part in the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The subject is sensitively and openly taught so that it is acceptable to pupils of a variety of religious faiths or of none. Good support is provided for pupils with additional educational needs and they achieve well.

