

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLOWS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lichfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124161

Headteacher: Mr Duncan Birds

Reporting inspector: Mr David Carrington
15414

Dates of inspection: 7th –10th July 2003

Inspection number: 248557
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Anglesey Road
Off Weston Road
Lichfield

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Gordon Hudson

Date of previous inspection: 10th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
9479	Mrs Chris Field	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development The partnership with parents and carers How well the school is led and managed
22856	Mrs Kath Campbell	Team inspector	Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage	
20326	Mr Peter Clark	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Special educational needs
30144	Mr Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education English as an additional language	
10978	Mr Mike Sullivan	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	
22474	Mrs Jan Taylor	Team inspector		
2818	Mr Graham Warner	Team inspector	English	How well the school cares for its pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willows Primary School is located about one mile north west of the centre of Lichfield. Most of the 198 boys and 190 girls come from the local area, which is made up of mixed housing. There are another 51 children who attend the nursery on a part time basis. The falling birth rate locally means that the school is smaller now than it was when inspected previously. A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, though an above average proportion have statements. Most special educational needs are for learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen steadily since the 1997 inspection. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority families. All pupils speak English as their first language. When pupils start in the nursery they have below average levels of skill and knowledge.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Willows Primary School has a very good track record and has great potential to become one of the best. Pupils enjoy an effective education and standards are above average by the age of eleven. The school is led most effectively by a committed, hard working headteacher who ensures that all staff work very actively and successfully towards school improvement. The governors seek best value and this ensures there is no complacency in getting good results. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and the quality of teaching and learning is good. The curriculum provides effectively for pupils' needs. Pupils develop into thoroughly pleasant children who share excellent relationships. There are three aspects of the school's work that require continued enhancement, though the prospects for advancement are good. The school gives good value for the above average amount of money spent on each pupil.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress from their below average starting level to above average standards when they leave.
- At the age of eleven, standards are above average in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and religious education. They are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Children have a good quality education in nursery and reception classes and this enables them to build the skills and knowledge essential for their work in the infants.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They enjoy excellent relationships with other pupils and adults. Their personal development is a particular strength of the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good. There is some very good teaching in every year group.
- The curriculum and the care given to pupils are good and there is an effective partnership with parents.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good and this ensures all staff and the governors are very well committed to improvement. The action taken to meet the school's priorities is excellent.

What could be improved

- The system for assessment and setting targets for individual pupils is not consistent from subject to subject.
- The school does not identify gifted and talented pupils and sometimes the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in their work.
- Individual class teachers do not yet have sufficient involvement in planning the work for pupils with special educational needs in their class.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There were two key issues in the 1997 inspection report:

1. Improve the standard of speaking and listening.
2. Involve parents more effectively in their children's learning.

Improvement has been determined, steady and effective since 1997. The key issues have been achieved well and there is very good commitment, and excellent action taken amongst the headteacher, key managers, governors and staff to bring continued improvement. The school has a bright future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	B	A
mathematics	B	B	C	A
science	B	A	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Similar schools are those schools with between 20% and 35% of the pupils entitled to free school meals.

In the 2002 SATs, Year 6 pupils attained above the national average in English and science and matched the national average in mathematics. In comparisons with schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, pupils in Year 6 attained well above average standards. Pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in writing, below average standards in reading and well below average standards in mathematics last year. However, their attainment in relation to similar schools was average overall. The preliminary results for 2003 show that Year 2 pupils have improved their attainment considerably in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 2002. The 2003 results in Year 6 are very similar to those in school last year.

There have been some differences in the attainment of girls and boys in Year 2 over last three years, with the advantage to the boys in reading and writing but to girls in mathematics, which is goes against the national trend. In Year 6, the trends in attainment by boys and girls were broadly the same as the national trend. During the inspection, boys and girls made similar good progress, though in Year 6 and Year 1 there were a few lessons where some boys became distracted and their progress overall was not as brisk as that of the girls.

The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in Year 6 in 2002 was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in Year 2 last year was below average overall. The higher attainers were usually, but not always, set demanding work during the inspection. This is especially the case in mathematics. The school does not identify, or set targets for, pupils with particular gifts or talents and this is a missed opportunity.

Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress in their work and that they build skills, knowledge and understanding effectively from their below average starting level in the nursery. By the age of eleven, standards are above average in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and religious education and are well above average in ICT. They are average in mathematics, geography, music and physical education. The school recognises that, at present, standards and progress are not as strong in mathematics as they are in the other two core subjects. Progress in mathematics is not consistent, especially in investigation and problem solving aspects of the work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, they work hard and enjoy their activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and about the school is very good. There have been no exclusions for eighteen years.
Personal development and	Personal development is promoted very well and relationships are excellent.

relationships	Most pupils show very good levels of independence and responsibility in lessons and the respect shown for other pupils is very good.
Attendance	The level of attendance is well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good through the school and this has a positive impact on learning, which is productive and enjoyable. The proportion of lessons judged to be good or better is above average, and just over a fifth were very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. Subject knowledge and confidence, planning, expectations and the teaching of basic skills are all good. The management of pupils is a particular strength. Pupils concentrate well, work hard and levels of productivity are good. Measures to encourage pupils' knowledge of their own learning could be enhanced.

Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy the benefit of good teaching and this enables them to settle well to their education and make good progress. The good teaching quality continues in the infant and junior classes and this ensures that pupils' needs are met effectively overall and that they achieve well. There is some very good teaching in every year group, from nursery to Year 6, and this is a strength.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality and is relevant, broad, well balanced and offers some rich experiences for the pupils. Children in nursery and reception classes benefit from a well-planned curriculum that enables them to develop skills and knowledge systematically. The curriculum for infant and junior pupils is also well planned and the school's literacy and numeracy strategies have a good impact on progress and standards. The programme of activities outside lessons is very good and of benefit for the pupils who take part. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their individual targets. They are well supported in their work by non-teaching staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The pupils' personal development is well promoted and this includes their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. There is room for some improvement in spiritual development and the appreciation and understanding of the richness of other cultures. However, the overall impact of this provision is effective because the pupils show very good attitudes, and behaviour and relationships are excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and their health, safety and protection are all promoted carefully. Procedures to encourage good behaviour and attendance patterns are very effective. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, though they require enhancement in some subjects.
The partnership with parents and carers	Parents have good views of the school overall and they are valued members of the school community. There is a good partnership with them. The school provides good quality information for parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives a very strong lead to the school and is well supported by the effective deputy headteacher. The role of other key managers and subject leaders is developing well and there is very good commitment to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are interested, supportive and influential. They play a good role in the evaluation of school performance and are ensuring that the principles of best value are followed well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	School self-evaluation and improvement are very good. The action taken to meet the school's priorities is excellent and the capacity to maintain improvement is very good.
The strategic use of resources	The school has no major shortages of resources. The school's use of new technology is excellent and benefits the quality of education very well. The budget is managed very carefully and finance is spent prudently. Additional funding for raising standards is used very effectively. The school gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Expectations are good. • Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. • Behaviour is good and their children become mature and responsible. • They feel well informed about their children's progress. • The school is well led and managed and parents find staff approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing significant

Inspectors agree with the views of the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- In the 2002 SATs, Year 6 pupils attained above the national average in English and mathematics and matched the national average in English.
- Pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in writing, below average standards in reading and well below average standards in mathematics last year.
- There have been some differences in the attainment of girls and boys in Year 2 and 6 over last three years.
- The school does not identify, or set targets for, pupils with particular gifts or talents.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough in their work.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in their work and that they build skills, knowledge and understanding effectively from their below average starting level in the nursery.
- By the end of school, standards are above average in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and religious education and are well above average in ICT.
- Standards are average in mathematics, geography, music and physical education in Year 6.

1. There has been a steady improvement to standards in the SATs since the previous inspection in 1997. The school's overall trends to improving standards in the Year 6 SATs match the pattern found nationally. In the subjects not tested by the SATs, improvement has also been steady and there are strengths now in attainment in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history ICT and religious education.
2. Last year, the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils in their SATs were above the national average in English and mathematics and not significantly different from the national average in English. When these 2002 results are set besides those achieved in schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, pupils in Year 6 attained well above average standards in all three subjects. The targets for the proportion of pupils gaining or exceeding the average level 4 were exceeded in 2002 in mathematics but were missed marginally in English.
3. In their SATs, Year 2 pupils attained average standards in writing, below average standards in reading and well below average standards in mathematics in 2002. Their attainment in relation to that in similar schools was average overall.
4. The preliminary results for the 2003 SATs show that Year 2 pupils have improved their attainment considerably in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 2002. The 2003 results in Year 6 are very similar to those in school last year, though results in English are not quite as strong as in 2002.
5. There have been some significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys in Year 2 over the last three years. During this period the boys have performed better than the girls have in reading and writing. The girls did better than the boys in mathematics, which goes against the national trend. Boys also did better than the girls in the English and mathematics SATs in Year 6. However, in science, the girls attained at higher levels than the boys did during the same three-year period. Nonetheless, this was broadly the same as the national trend overall in Year 6. During the inspection, boys and girls were equally well motivated on the whole and worked with similar levels of productivity in their lessons. In general boys and girls made similar good progress, though there were a few lessons in Years 1 and 6 where a few boys lost interest and their progress was not as brisk as that of the girls or the remaining boys.
6. The school does not identify its gifted and talented pupils formally. Thus, school managers cannot be certain that such pupils are set targets that match their capabilities. However, the school is ready to extend its target setting and sharing practice to this group. In the SATs, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in Year 6 last year was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below average overall last year. In the lessons observed throughout the school, the level of challenge was inconsistent and, whilst good in other respects, lesson planning rarely indicated the actual skills, knowledge and understanding that these pupils were to learn. Instead, there was sometimes a list of activities or resources for them to

complete. Because of this, it is difficult for teachers to be certain that the higher attaining pupils are completing work that tests their mettle.

7. The evidence from the inspection, whether from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work or discussions held with the pupils, shows clearly that pupils make good progress in their work. They build skills, knowledge and understanding effectively from their starting level in the nursery where there are below average early language, literacy and numeracy skills. Because there is much to learn, most children still have skills below average for their age when they move into the reception classes. However, because the quality of teaching and learning is good, children of all backgrounds make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and most of the current reception year have achieved the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age and are well prepared for work In Year 1.
8. The good progress continues in the infant and junior classes. By the age of seven, standards are average overall and by eleven they are above average, which reflects accelerating progress as the pupils build on skills and knowledge that are firmly established early in school. Standards and progress in the eleven subjects taught in school are shown in the following table.

Standards and progress in subjects

	Attainment in Year 2	Progress in infant classes	Attainment in Year 6	Progress in junior classes
English	Above average	Good	Above average	Good
Mathematics	Average	Good	Average	Good
Science	Average	Good	Above average	Very good
Art and design	Above average	Good	Above average	Good
Design and technology	Above average	Good	Above average	Good
Geography	Average	Good	Average	Good
History	Average	Good	Above average	Very good
ICT	Above average	Good	Well above average	Very good
Music	Average	Satisfactory	Average	Satisfactory
Physical education	Average	Satisfactory	Average	Good
Religious education	Average	Good	Above average	Very good

More details are given about standards and progress in the subject sections in the final part of this report.

9. Overall, pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support to meet their individual needs. However, good, and sometimes very good, support is given in lessons and in withdrawal sessions, where pupils receive well-focused support from adults in additional literacy sessions, the main feature of many individual education plans. These plans, written by the member of staff responsible for the overview of special educational needs, are generally easy to understand and follow, and identify group and individual needs. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the need to develop more precise targets so that measurable success will be easier to determine over a given period of time.
10. The school is very committed to raising standards and staff work hard to ensure all pupils have similar opportunities to succeed. Overall, all pupils have equal opportunities to do well and the final standards achieved are good. There are some groups for whom there is still work to do to improve to the levels desired by the staff of the school. This particularly relates to the gifted and talented and higher attaining pupils, the few boys in Years 1 and 6 who do not hold their concentration as long as the other pupils and in mathematics, geography, music and physical education. However, most of these priorities have already been identified by the school in its improvement plan and there is ample evidence to show that the prospects for continued advancement is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- The strengths reported in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance by the previous inspection have all been sustained. Personal development is much improved since then due to the wide range and consistent opportunities for pupils to show initiative and work co-operatively and collaboratively in every year group.
- Relationships amongst pupils are excellent. Most show very good levels of independence and take on roles of responsibility, for example as school or class council representatives very well.
- Pupils show tolerance and respect for the views of one another and the school is an extremely harmonious community. The fact that there have been no exclusions for eighteen years is testament to the school's significant effectiveness in this area of school life.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, they work hard and enjoy their activities; behaviour in lessons and about the school is very good.
- The level of attendance is well above the national average and pupils are punctual to school.

11. The school aims place significant emphasis on ensuring that pupils have the necessary personal and social skills that will serve them well in whatever walk of life they find themselves. Personal effort and achievement are given very high regard by the staff and are central to the school's very positive ethos and learning culture. The importance of this is very evident, for example in the *Hall of Fame* display in the entrance that shows the smiling faces of pupils who are being celebrated for their personal achievements and is the first thing a visitor or parent sees when coming into school.
12. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy being at school and their enthusiasm helps to create a lively and vibrant atmosphere. The personal and social development of the children is very good. They behave very well and enjoy school. They are totally involved in their activities and respond well to each other's success. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and there is a strong emphasis on the development of independence. The staff pay very high regard to developing their confidence and self-esteem so that as they grow older they are able to take full advantage of the wide range of learning experiences on offer. Visits from people such as the local policeman and crossing patrol warden widen their experiences of the world about them and help them develop a growing understanding about the dangers around them and how to keep safe.
13. The attitudes of the majority of pupils to the school and their work are very good. Pupils behave very well, show high regard for one another and build excellent relationships. They enjoy coming to school and taking part in the interesting activities provided by the teachers. This pleases parents who think that the school produces well-behaved and mature pupils, who have positive attitudes to learning and they are right to do so. The majority of pupils work conscientiously and with commitment in lessons. This was observed during the inspection in an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 3 where pupils were playing a game of *bingo*, an innovative and engaging way of solving number problems set up very expertly by the teacher. All pupils, including those with special educational needs concentrated avidly throughout the session and worked with absolute concentration to see if they had answers to the number problems which the teacher had given great thought to matching to pupils' different abilities. She asked the higher attaining pupils to solve problems such as- *a half of 88* or *a quarter of 50* whilst others were asked to find answers that involved their four times table which had been learnt as homework. All pupils worked speedily and accurately and very much enjoyed the competitive element that gave added motivation. The winners were very proud to receive the gold star as recognition of their success and were pleased to receive the spontaneous applause of their classmates.
14. The standard of behaviour in classrooms and on the playground is very good. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils move around the school quietly, calmly and politely. Occasionally, a few infant pupils in Year 1 show fussy and immature behaviour in class that stops good progress being made and a handful of boys in Year 6 show low-level confrontational behaviour that takes time to manage. School rules, which are discussed and agreed by each class, are well known to pupils. They show respect for the environment, for the school and each other's property. There have been no exclusions during the current academic year, or indeed for the past eighteen years and this is testament to the school's significant effectiveness in this area of school life. Parents and pupils have few concerns regarding bullying. Pupils know whom to approach should any incident occur and told inspectors they feel safe and free from harm when at school.
15. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils show good self-esteem, a strong feeling of belonging and the determination to do well. Boys and girls of all ages mix freely and work together well. This was well demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson, as pupils worked in unison to make a parachute rise and

fall, make an igloo shape that all could sit under and use it to take the strain of everyone leaning outwards- balancing together in equilibrium. Pupils work and play very well together and care for each other; they are courteous to each other and adults alike. They consider each other's feelings and respect each other's views as observed in a Year 5 circle time when pupils were discussing human rights. Pupils hold tolerant views about differences and have a secure awareness of racial equality issues that are supported through work undertaken as part of the very well conceived personal, social and health education programme.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good and they are very keen to accept responsibility for duties in the classroom and around the school. For example, as lunchtime *playground pals*, assembly monitors, fruit and water monitors and register monitors. They are proud to act as members of the Eco Committee and members of the class and school councils. They discharge these responsibilities with significant accomplishment and collaborate well in the routines of school life. Pupils have a voice at Willows that is listened to by senior management. They are enabled to play an important role in the school's decision-making. Currently, pupils are thinking about how to improve the school grounds and how to make the new litter bins more effective in stopping litter falling out. At meetings of various class and school groupings, inspectors observed some very good ideas being discussed before corporate agreement was reached. The Eco Committee were observed to show very good moral responsibility as they decided to have a poster competition to help with the litter problem and realistically agreed that it would have to be judged fairly so as not to favour anyone's friends. Pupils in Year 6 are involved in the *Make it Real Game* that enables them to take on simulated, adult work roles, participate within a community, create a town with its services and businesses and to prepare and deliver an original presentation. So far the Mayor of Lichfield, a property developer and a range of managers from the world of work have been into school to share their experiences with pupils. The project was observed by inspectors to be very well organised in enabling pupils to think about the future and engaging them in productive work in their last few weeks in school, very well.
17. Pupils with special educational needs really enjoy coming to school. The majority have similar attitudes and behaviour to their peers, which is very good. Most listen very well and try to answer questions that have been set to meet their individual needs. Pupils' confidence is generally very good when their contributions to lessons are valued and when teachers and peers celebrate their successes. The majority of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need apply themselves very well and are highly responsive to additional adult support, particularly in one-to-one situations, to assist their personal as well as their academic development.
18. The level of attendance is well above the national average and pupils are punctual to school. Class registration times are carried out efficiently and all set fair the ethos for a happy, settled and productive day of learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- Teaching is good through the school and this has a positive impact on learning.
- The proportion of lessons judged to be good or better is above average,
- There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection.
- There are many more strengths in teaching than areas for improvement but measures to encourage pupils' knowledge of their own learning could be enhanced.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes have effective teaching and they make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good in infant and junior classes and pupils achieve well on the whole.
- There is some very good teaching in every year group, from nursery to Year 6 and this is a valuable strength of the school.

19. The 1997 inspection report judged that there was a good quality of education in school. Further to this, teaching was good and was a strength of the school. There was a tiny minority of unsatisfactory teaching in school at that time but generally, teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and in infant and junior classes. In the report it was stated that there was good planning, effective management of pupils, successful methods, well-focused target setting, a brisk pace to learning and good expectations. Teachers were judged to be very good role models for their pupils, especially in ICT, though there were weaknesses in the teaching of science, where teachers controlled the recording of work too much. The non-teaching staff were clearly a strength of the school.

20. The numerous strengths in teaching identified in 1997 have been sustained and good improvement has been made to aspects requiring development. Today, teaching is good through the school, which has a positive impact on learning. Throughout the school, learning is productive and enjoyable and is of good quality. The results of the 100 lesson observations during the current inspection are summarised below.

Teaching quality in percentages	
Very good or better	21
Good or better	77
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

21. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed a similar pattern of teaching, and demonstrates that pupils in all year groups are taught effectively. For example, The overall quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good, with some very good teaching in both nursery and reception classes. Teaching and support staff in nursery and reception are of very high calibre. They work well together and provide a totally consistent approach. Planning is good and relates well to the six areas of learning for children this age. Activities provide a good balance of independent and adult supported experiences. Occasionally, however, some tasks do not always provide enough challenge for higher attaining children.
22. There is also some very good teaching in every year group in the infants and juniors. This is a particular strength of the school. Again, the evidence of inspection is corroborated by the scrutiny of work, which very clearly showed a number of strengths. Teachers and support staff create the right conditions for learning and this has a major impact on progress and achievement.

Aspects of teaching	
Strengths	For development
Subject knowledge	
Teaching of basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT	
Planning	Identification of learning outcomes for higher attaining pupils
Expectations	Challenge for higher attaining pupils
Teaching methods	
Management of pupils	The concentration and motivation of a very few boys in Years 1 and 6
Pace of work	Time allowance for plenary sessions
Contribution of support staff	
Use of resources to promote learning	
Homework, which consolidates and extends learning in class	
Marking	Target setting and tracking in lessons

23. Overall, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the need to enhance its already good planning systems by the regular inclusion of pupils' specific needs that link directly into targets agreed within individual education plans. Teaching is less effective where the subject content of the lesson is far above the understanding and attainment level of a number of pupils with special educational needs, where an easier task would have promoted better interest and learning. In such lessons, the fast pace outstrips understanding for the slower learning pupils, with limited opportunity given to reaffirm and consolidate new learning. However, as observed during the inspection in small group sessions where these pupils receive well-planned additional adult support, the quality of teaching is often very good and sometimes excellent, as observed during a Year 3 literacy lesson. Generally, teaching assistants play an important part in ensuring pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
24. It is evident that the vast majority of the pupils concentrates well, work hard and produce good amounts of work in the available time. Their interest shown and concentration are very good and pupils are developing the skills of independent working very effectively. Because the evaluation of targets for learning at the end of lessons is inconsistent and the final part of some lessons is too rushed, pupils do not have enough opportunities to self-evaluate their own work.

25. The aspects for improvement identified above are relative issues for the school because teaching and learning are effective in assisting pupils to build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates. In all, pupils' needs are met effectively overall and they achieve well. This was demonstrated clearly in the 100 lessons observed. Representative amongst these is a Year 3 science lesson including a fair test to investigate the factors influencing the form of shadows. The teacher started this lesson with very challenging questions about opaque materials that were presented in a lively, stimulating and enthusiastic way. The teacher made excellent links to English in the development of specific vocabulary and to mathematics in considering the transformation of shapes seen in the shadows. There was very good provision made for group work of a practical nature as pupils investigated the impact of changing the light source on the resulting shadows. Higher attaining pupils were well engaged by the work that stimulated their inquisitiveness and challenged their understanding. One high attaining boy, for example, demanded to know the time of day before he would predict then draw the shape of the shadow. Another pupil was heard to remark that at the Equator there were no shadows at midday! To conclude, the inspector summarised the lesson as *a highly effective, well-planned session...not a second lost; high quality teaching results in very good learning*. Perhaps not surprisingly, teaching was graded as excellent in this lesson.

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

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The curriculum, which is socially inclusive to all pupils, offers a well-planned, rich and broad range of interesting learning opportunities.• The curriculum offers very good provision for information and communication technology.• There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which securely underpins pupils' very good behaviour and relationships.• There are not enough well planned opportunities for pupils to experience an awareness of the multi-cultural society that exists in Britain in 2003. |
|---|
26. The school is socially inclusive and, through its well-planned curriculum, promotes a rich learning environment to which all pupils have equal access. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, with particular strengths in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and information and communication technology. The standards being achieved in this range of subjects are better than they were in 1997, reflecting major improvements in the quality and rigour of subject planning across the school.
27. A very comprehensive programme has been introduced for the development of monitoring and reviewing all areas of the curriculum, resulting in well-focused and appropriate subject action plans that have successfully guided improvement.
28. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. Provision is broad, balanced and very relevant. It is greatly enhanced by numerous visits and visitors that effectively broaden children's knowledge. There are many opportunities for children to develop by selecting tasks independently, exploring and expressing themselves imaginatively.
29. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are very successfully integrated into groups within the class and are appropriately involved in any additional activities undertaken by the school. All staff ensure that the majority of special educational needs pupils are fully integrated into the full range of activities across the school day. For those pupils who require additional individual or group support in order to improve their basic skills, this is organised in such a way that it is least likely to cause disruption to learning and access to a full and rich curriculum.
30. The curriculum has been well planned to ensure that all subjects receive sufficient emphasis. The quality and thoroughness of teachers' planning are a strength of the school, ensuring the systematic development of skills and knowledge throughout the school as each subject is planned and evaluated thoroughly by the subject leaders. Planning reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000, with additions that suitably enhance the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils within the school. The school's strategy for teaching literacy and numeracy has been implemented well throughout all year groups. The English curriculum provides well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, as observed during a Year 3 lesson involving a discussion about the sources of light

and how shadows formed by the sun can be used for telling the correct time. The school's strategy for teaching numeracy is also good, and has an impact in particular on pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, design and technology, where pupils are required to measure accurately before cutting out materials to make a rotating model fairground ride.

31. The school provides for good quality of access and opportunity, with no significant variations noted in the provision for boys and girls. However, higher attaining pupils need to be given more well-planned opportunities to undertake more challenging, independent work in the majority of subjects. Often, higher attaining pupils undertake the same work as their peers before moving on to more challenging tasks. The school does not maintain a register of gifted and talented pupils, or set them specific targets for their work, and this is a missed opportunity.
32. A very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to develop their individual talents, particularly through a wide range of sporting activities that include gymnastics, netball and jogging suitably enhances the curriculum. Additional well-planned activities also include a French club and sewing club. Over recent years, the staff have put their energy into improving standards involving many meetings and additional training sessions. However, the quality and range of out-of-school activities remains a strength of the school. There is a very good personal health, safety and citizenship programme of work that provides a very useful range of experiences for all pupils. There is an agreed policy for sex education and drugs awareness programme. Other aspects of pupils' personal development, such as worries and concerns pupils may have, are dealt with caringly and sympathetically as they arise. The importance of healthy eating and the need for washing hands before eating are also emphasised to pupils in their work in science.
33. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. Links include musical festivals, local businesses and Lichfield Cathedral. There are also effective links with the secondary schools to which most of the pupils transfer.
34. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflecting a similar picture to the one at the time of the previous inspection. There are particular strengths in the opportunities for moral and social development, which are very good.
35. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. As a result of consistently good teaching in religious education, pupils develop a good insight into Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. Religious education also gives pupils an insight as to how religious beliefs impact upon people's lives, for example, the influence of the Qu'ran on the religious behaviour and lifestyles of Muslims. Assemblies give pupils opportunities for prayer in a secure and relaxed atmosphere, and the opportunity to further pupils' respect for the values and beliefs of others. However, planned opportunities for reflection are limited. Music played in assembly has yet to play a significant part in the spiritual life of the school.
36. Pupils' moral development is very good. This gives a very good moral ethos to the school. Members of staff are seen as good role models in the way they care for individuals and are seen to work very hard and to be fair. The difference between right and wrong is made very clear and any inappropriate behaviour is explained in a quiet, sensitive manner. All staff consistently implement the school's policies for behaviour and equal opportunities. Pupils are expected to respect the views of others and listen to each other, and most do in this very inclusive school. There are weekly awards in assembly, where pupils from each class are selected and the school celebrates together the good things that have been achieved by these pupils. The pupils are visibly proud of their skills and take their tasks seriously, such as when explaining to visitors how a particular model, built in design and technology lessons, actually works.
37. Social development is also a strength of the school. From the school council to the class council, overall provision is very good. In many lessons, pupils are given well-planned opportunities to work in pairs and in small, mixed-age groups, and to share work with the whole class. School trips and residential visits provide positive and corporate experiences for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to engage in the democratic process and to participate in community life. Pupils also take part in deciding which charity they should support each year, giving presentations in assembly to help raise money for that charity. The opportunities provided for pupils to experience leadership and responsibility are many and varied, and range from class responsibilities, such as taking the register to the office, to being a *PAL*, involving the organisation of lunchtime activities.

38. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to experience their own cultural heritage, for example, through visits to places such as Lichfield Cathedral. Opportunities for cultural development in art and design and music are somewhat limited. In history, pupils learn about life in Victorian Britain, comparing work and schooling with that found today. Visits make a good contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. Never the less, there are too few opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural society that exists beyond Lichfield. The school is aware that significantly more emphasis needs to be given to providing more well-planned opportunities as a means of supporting pupils' understanding of race issues, as part of the developing personal, social and health education programme. The school has recognised the need to consider the cultures of modern civilisations beyond those of Europe.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Pupils receive good personal support and guidance
- Child protection procedures are satisfactory
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good
- There are good assessment procedures, including effective target setting in English, but there is no consistent application of the procedures in other subjects
- Use made of information to guide curriculum planning is subsequently only satisfactory

39. All members of staff know their pupils very well. They work closely together in order to give the pupils an effective level of personal support. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils and pupils with one another are the bedrock upon which the school carefully nurtures its pupils. When children join the nursery a caring staff warmly welcomes them. Their transition into the reception classes is smooth and effective because of the thorough knowledge that staff have of the children. They settle in quickly and become accustomed to the school's routines. The thorough care and attention given to pupils is continued during the infant and junior phases and this enables pupils to progress well with their learning.
40. Staff are familiar with child protection procedures, which are satisfactorily covered by the part time special needs co-ordinator and the head teacher jointly. Routine health and safety procedures are good. However, there is not consistent enough supervision of pupils when they are working independently in the ICT suite.
41. Assessment procedures, to establish children's various stages of development on entry to the nursery, are good. They are completed during the first term and revisited before children move into the reception classes. Results are used effectively to plan work and monitor children who may have potential learning difficulties. Reception teachers also use initial assessments well when planning. They monitor progress on a day-to-day basis very effectively. However, because they do not use information to set targets for future development or predict standards children should achieve by the age of seven, activities do not always match the needs of individual children.
42. The school has satisfactory procedures overall for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress throughout the infant and junior phases. In English clear targets are being set for the pupils. The targets are constantly reviewed and then re-set so that progress is a continuous process. This is not the case in all subjects. In mathematics, the target setting process is bedding in soundly, but it is at an early stage of development and the subject leader acknowledges that more has to be done to ensure that the process tracks progress and improvement carefully and thoroughly in all parts of the school. In other subjects there is a lack of consistency in the application of target setting that would help to support the pupils' progress.
43. Assessment procedures in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are inconsistent and this requires redress, especially in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. Although pupils have their special needs identified early enough, and are given good levels of support by class teachers and teaching assistants, the school needs to ensure that the requirements of the Code of Practice are met consistently in its day to day support systems.

44. The use of assessment to guide planning is effective in English but is not given enough attention in other subjects. When targets are shared with the pupils visually in their English books it becomes a good opportunity for involving pupils in their own learning. Pupils' work is generally marked well. Consistent approaches to marking in English and some other subjects help the pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve upon their work. The head teacher is currently holding an overview role of the school's assessment procedures pending the appointment of a new post holder as the previous post holder left to a promoted post at the beginning of the term.
45. Pupils with special educational needs who are identified as in need of additional support are usually assessed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Prior to these initial assessments taking place, parents are promptly informed of the school's concerns. On completion, these assessments form an integral part of a pupil's individual education plan. The individual plans are shared with supporting adults and pupils concerned. A strength of the present organisation is that the majority of these pupils are already involved in reviewing their own progress against agreed targets stated in their respective individual education plan, and comments duly recorded. The new Code of Practice, related to the provision for and support of pupils with special educational needs, has yet to be fully embraced by all teaching staff. This is because the majority of individual education plans are written entirely by the special needs co-ordinator, thus making direct ownership by other staff, and direct links with ongoing planning, difficult to achieve. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed effective systems for collating information from a range of sources, including outside support agencies. This information is promptly shared with respective class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with statements are well looked after by the school and they make good gains in their learning.
46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are as strong as they were at the previous inspection. The school has a clear and perfectly understood code of conduct. All adults act as good role models for the pupils in their relationships with one another as well as with the pupils. Rewards for good behaviour are built up over a period of time and are much sought after by the pupils. The few pupils who misbehave are managed firmly but fairly through the teachers' consistent approaches. The procedures for eliminating bullying and oppressive behaviour are also effective and parents and pupils alike report that there is very little bullying in school. They also say that any instance of bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively. Incidents of racist comments are rare and are dealt with in a constructive manner. Their rarity is confirmed by the nil returns on racial harassment that the school has been able to make to the local education authority in the recent past. Overall, the quality of behaviour and relationships are a strength of the school and it has a very good reputation amongst parents and the community for the standard of conduct and the attitudes shown by pupils. It thoroughly deserves this accolade.
47. Pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively, largely because the effective team spirit supports all aspects of school life well. There is a positive and constructive atmosphere throughout the school. This is ably demonstrated in the class and school council meetings. These meetings are supported by the staff but are led by the pupils themselves so that issues can be discussed and resolved at all phases within the school. The *Eco Club* is a further tool for giving the pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their skills as future citizens of the world. During lessons, teachers are very consistent in their expectations of behaviour and pupils are acutely aware of what the rules are. They strive to be recipients of the awards that are made at the weekly achievement assemblies. The achievement certificates presented by the head teacher at the assembly are much prized and sought after by the pupils. There are good procedures for lunch times. There is an orderly atmosphere in the dining hall. There are an ample number of suitable games in the playground that are well supervised by a well-informed group of lunchtime assistants. Overall the school is a harmonious place to be and this is an able demonstration of the school's successful policy for educational and social inclusion.
48. A member of the school's senior management team keeps an overview of the attendance, which is above the national average. Procedures are tight and understood by parents because the school has produced a very helpful special leaflet for parents to re-enforce the importance of good levels of attendance. Prompt and regular attendance is the norm for the school. Consequently there is little need to involve the educational welfare officer, although the service is available to the school if it is required. Health, welfare and safety aspects of the school's provision have been well sustained since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- Parents have good views of the school overall.
- There is a well-forged home-school partnership that support pupils' achievements successfully
- Good quality information ensures that parents know what is happening in school, though annual pupil reports could stand improvement.

49. Parents hold positive views about the school and its reputation stands high locally. Parents find staff approachable and the school welcoming to any comments they have. The school regularly seeks the views of parents via meetings and questionnaires for example, and as a key stakeholder, pays good attention to the responses made. A significant number of parents support the school and their children's education through volunteer work in school, through the opportunities to visit schools when in session and through active involvement in the Friends Association for example. The partnership with parents has improved to a good level since the previous inspection when it was flagged then as a weakness and as such a key issue for action.
50. Parents told inspectors through their questionnaire returns and the meeting with the registered inspector that their children like school; teaching is good and pupils make good progress. They also said that behaviour is good and their children become mature and responsible; they feel well informed about their children's progress and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree with all the views expressed by parents.
51. Good quality information is regularly distributed to parents and this helps keep them abreast of what is happening in school. *The Getting Ready for Willows* booklet is very well put together and provides a super first link for parents of the youngest children in school. Weekly bulletins are produced to a high standard and contain lots of interesting news and updates as well as contributions by pupils. The bulletins are printed in colour and this makes them very attractive, enticing the reader to *dip in*, particularly good use is made of the school's digital camera to present images of children very much enjoying themselves at school. Policies are shared with parents and the school computer website has a section with some school documents for their use that include guides on aspects of the curriculum. The prospectus is a useful publication that contains all the required information and is updated annually. It is very accessible and easy to read with good use made of illustrations to enliven the text. The governors annual report provides parents with the information it is legally required to but is not such an appealing read. The quality of pupils' annual written reports, which draw on computer-generated comments to provide information, is satisfactory. Most usefully state at what level pupils are achieving in English and mathematics and also identify targets for improvement in these subjects. There is less detail about achievement in other subjects and no further use of targets. Reports usefully contain comments on pupils' personal and social development. However, these tend not to tie in with the programme of personal, social and health education that is being studied. Also, there is no opportunity for pupils to assess their own academic and social development or indeed contributions to school life. These are missed opportunities.
52. The partnership with parents of Foundation Stage children is very good. Information for parents of children starting school is interesting and informative. Formal meetings and a staged programme of visits prior to admission, establish very strong links between home and school. Parents are justifiably proud of provision.
53. All parents are promptly informed if their child is identified as needing additional help with their learning. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are discussed at regular, well-planned meetings. Targets for the future are discussed and parents' support is often requested in the form of hearing their child reading at home. All parents receive a copy of their child's individual education plan. Parents' attendance at review meetings is generally good.
54. Parents provide generous practical and financial support for the school. They give freely of their time and, each year, the Friends' association raises substantial amounts of money. Funds are currently being put towards development of the school grounds following the removal of unwanted mobile classrooms and plans are afoot to provide activity and nature areas. These will give the pupils more space and things to do at playtime and will support the curriculum in areas such as environmental education, science and technology.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The headteacher gives a very strong lead to the school, set very clear educational direction and ensures very good reflection of the school's aims in its work.
- The well-focussed deputy headteacher is a good partner to the headteacher and leads very effectively on professional development and performance management; both of which are strengths in the school.
- The leadership group comprises the headteacher and three senior managers when up to full strength that represent the key stages in school and it is this group who share strategic decision-making.
- A senior management team support well the pastoral aspects of school life whilst year leaders are more involved in the drive for better teaching and learning, and raised academic standards.
- The management role of subject leaders is good and their leadership role is developing well.
- There is very good commitment to improvement and very good capacity for the school to meet its well defined key targets.
- The governors are interested, supportive and influential. They play a good role in the evaluation of school performance and are ensuring that the principles of best value are applied efficiently.
- The action taken to meet the school's priorities is excellent and the capacity to maintain improvement is very good.
- The school has no major shortages of resources, although the library is a poor resource and badly located.
- Accommodation though adequate is not well maintained externally and fails to present the same very positive ethos as inside.
- The school's use of new technology is excellent and benefits the quality of education very well.
- The budget is managed very carefully and finance is spent prudently. Additional funding for raising standards, for example National Grid for Learning is used very effectively.
- The school gives good value for money.

55. The school has sustained the many strengths in leadership and management flagged up by the previous inspection. Excellent communication is at the heart of the school's effectiveness. All stakeholders know exactly what is expected of them and they rise to the demands and challenges with good heart. The award of the much-valued Beacon status gives everyone great pride as does the Centre of Excellence status for some of its work in the use of ICT. At The Willows, not only teachers but also every single person in school is a part of the process, including mid-day supervisors, site manager, cleaners and administration staff. The unity of purpose to strive towards still greater effectiveness is tangible. Children are at the centre of the school and it is because of them that everyone does their very best. Staff are a well bonded and a high performing team who collectively ensure that all pupils achieve well There is very good shared capacity for future success in supporting the school's ambition to raise standards still higher
56. The headteacher gives very good leadership to the school and does this in a way that allows individuals to use their management talents well. There is crystal clear educational direction that is enabling the school to build on successes and improve the standards. There is very good reflection of the school's aims and values in its work. The headteacher's style is consultative and empowering and he values everyone's contributions equally. He knows the strengths and shortcomings of the school fully and has worked very well with the governors and staff to form a partnership that is focused on sustaining what works successfully and making continued improvement to those aspects of the school's work that require enhancement. The exceptionally well-conceived school improvement plan is having high impact on driving forward improvement, with only six key targets it is the driving force behind all decisions and is fully on track with all the intended actions showing good effect. The priorities are linked clearly to the performance management cycle and staff professional development. There are diagrammatic action plan trackers for each priority area and a programme for school improvement that everyone is involved in promoting.
57. The headteacher is supported effectively by the well-focussed deputy headteacher who is a good partner to the headteacher and leads very effectively on professional development and performance management; both of which are strengths in the school. Interim arrangements for co-ordinating provision in the Foundation Stage are effective. The reception teacher, who will shortly take over co-ordination, is being eased into the role, with appropriate support from the deputy headteacher
58. The leadership group comprises the headteacher and three senior managers, when up to full strength, that represent the key stages in school and it is this group who share strategic decision-making. Between them

they have many talents and are influential in building staff confidence and seeking to share the very best practice in school that brings continuous school improvement. Currently, the school is without a Key Stage 2 leader as the post-holder has recently left for promotion to deputy headteacher, the last in a long line so to do because of the school's strong commitment to enabling staff to aim high and find professional success.

59. The senior management team who comprise teachers with two responsibility points or more take a lead on the pastoral aspects of school life. They see themselves as having higher status than others in promoting the pastoral well-being of pupils and leading on behaviour management. Year leaders also carry this role alongside the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the years for which they have responsibility. They meet more frequently than the senior management team and are proactive in leading improvement as well as reactive to the guidance provided by the leadership group. Subject leaders work hard to make the necessary advancement and both individually and collectively they are committed to improvement. All subject leaders are involved in monitoring pupils' work by looking at samples of books or through examining subject planning for example. The next step is for subject leaders to more frequently monitor the quality of learning in all years and to assess the standards being attained to enable sharper targeting of pupils' achievements.
60. As the school slims down to being a two form entry from September it will be timely for a review of all the leadership and management roles to reflect the changing nature of the school in order to produce the most efficient model. The headteacher accepts the necessity of this review and has clear ideas for the distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst all members of staff who contribute to the leadership and management of the school.
61. The school benefits from a well-informed part-time special educational needs co-ordinator. This generous staffing appointment allows her to work in close partnership with parents, teachers and teaching assistants. In discussions with teaching assistants, it is clear that she provides good leadership and is clearly dedicated to providing good quality support. However, whilst the management of special educational needs in its present form is satisfactory, she is aware of the need for the school to embrace fully the new Code of Practice related to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The present systems by which pupils are placed on the special needs register, requires greater clarity and corporate understanding. There is also an urgent need for teachers to take ownership of the writing of individual education plans, thus enabling the link between teachers' planning and pupils' individual needs to be more rigorously focused. This, in turn, would be monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator, thereby releasing her from her present role as writer and administrator of individual education plans. In its present state, the new Code of Practice has yet to be implemented appropriately across the school. Additional funding to support special educational needs pupils is sufficiently well focused and used effectively, especially for the appointment of additional teaching support assistants.
62. The governors are interested, supportive and influential. They play a good role in the evaluation of school performance and are ensuring that the principles of best value are applied efficiently. Governors are key players in taking the school forward. They are committed, knowledgeable and very proud of the school. They fulfil all legal responsibilities, though they recognise the need to strengthen the opportunities for reflection within the Act of Collective Worship. Governors make effective use of the available performance data to identify to what degree the school meets its aim of providing the best education for all pupils. They make the necessary checks and evaluations to ensure that the school achieves as well as schools with a similar intake of pupils, whether in Staffordshire or nationally. They have secure understanding of the principles of best value and apply these conscientiously to all aspects of their work. Governors, like the staff, hold high expectations of all pupils and they have developed very good systems to check that pupils rise to the many challenges set for them. The school is truly inclusive in educational, social and personal terms due to this concern for every pupil as an individual.
63. There are well-tried systems of self-evaluation. The Leadership group undertakes monitoring of the work of staff in the classroom in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This is a well-managed process and has resulted in several improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, the data on pupils' performance is looked at carefully. This enables a speedy response where pupils' progress is less than expected and helps all pupils to achieve to their full capabilities. The systems in place to track progress and give due support to pupils ensure that pupils' final level of performance is the cumulative work of all staff from the nursery through to Year 6 and is not

over-dependent on boosts given just before SATs. The school's strategies for performance management are excellent. Clear, sensible and very appropriate targets are set for staff that relate very well to the school's mission and educational priorities. The culture of self-analysis, evaluation and improvement in school is strong and staff are not afraid to identify and tackle weakness. They also celebrate success.

64. The school's budget is put to good use in the interests of the pupils. Extra funding to help pupils achieve at their level of capability is also used well. Thus, pupils with special educational needs are taught well and the progress that they make is no different from other pupils and the grants received to support ICT, particularly National Grid for Learning has very significant impact in enabling high level achievement. The school's use of new technology is one of its great strengths.
65. Satisfactory accommodation, a very generous level of staffing and adequate resources are all used very effectively to enable pupils to achieve well. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is spacious and attractive. Classrooms are bright and displays are lively and relevant. Every part of the generous nursery accommodation is put to good use. There is an appropriate range of large outdoor play equipment and resources are of good quality. Provision for reception outdoor play has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school has identified the need for enhancement of the ICT suite once a classroom is freed for that purpose. There are also plans in hand for upgrading the library, which is a poor resource and badly located. The external appearance of the school is receiving renewed attention following the appointment of a site manager. The headteacher is also giving his personal support to the development of the school's grounds by setting up the *DB Challenge*, a walk from coast to coast that pupils and community are sponsoring him to do with proceeds going towards a play and environmental area.
66. The school is clearly effective in providing a good quality education for pupils of all ages, gender and backgrounds and giving each the opportunity to reach for personal best. There is no doubt that the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. Willows Primary School has made good strides with improvement since its previous inspection in 1997 and the inspection team have no hesitancy in identifying that it has bright prospects for the future. This is largely due to the calibre of leadership given by the headteacher and key staff and the shared determination to succeed amongst all staff and the governors. Much of the work of the school is of good or very good quality. In order to reach excellence, the following relative aspects for development should be the focus of future work to sustain advancement.

1. Continue work to ensure that the system for assessment and setting targets for individual pupils is consistent from subject to subject.

By

Enhancing the assessment procedures in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education.

Maintaining the good work already commenced to improve assessment in mathematics and the setting of targets for individual pupils in this subject.

Improving pupils' knowledge of their own learning by giving pupils of all ages and attainment levels more opportunities to self-assess and evaluate their own work.

See paragraphs: 41, 43-5, 51, 59, 71, 108, 126, 133, 138, 142, 149, 159 and 174.

2. Identify the gifted and talented pupils in all classes and make sure that the work set for higher attaining pupils is always demanding enough.

By

Compiling a register of the gifted and talented pupils in each class.

Setting appropriate targets for these pupils.

Providing consistent challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

See paragraphs: 6, 10, 31, 71-2, 82, 109, 111, 113, 118, 137, 141, 146, 159, 163 and 172.

3. Ensure the revised code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is introduced successfully, particularly by involving individual class teachers more in planning the work for these pupils.

By

Ensuring that class teachers are involved in writing the individual education plans for pupils in their class.

Assessing, monitoring and evaluating the success with which the pupils meet their targets.

See paragraphs: 43, 45 and 61.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	17	56	23	0	0	0
Percentage	4	17	56	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25.5	363
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	111

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	56

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	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	31	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	22	25
	Girls	26	28	28
	Total	51	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	83 (91)	88 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	24
	Girls	26	28	28
	Total	50	53	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	88 (88)	87 (91)
	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	30	35	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	27	30
	Girls	25	28	34
	Total	49	55	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (91)	85 (86)	98 (99)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	27	30
	Girls	25	29	34
	Total	48	56	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (88)	86 (82)	98 (100)
	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	382	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	242

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

Financial year	2002-3
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	£
Total income	996 550
Total expenditure	968 952
Expenditure per pupil	2 346
Balance brought forward from previous year	26 480
Balance carried forward to next year	17 500

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
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	414
Number of questionnaires returned	134

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My Child likes school	58	37	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school	54	41	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good	53	39	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	42	46	6	5	1
The teaching is good	64	34	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	43	48	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	60	34	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents	41	44	11	1	3
The school is well led and managed	57	38	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	51	45	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	54	34	7	1	4

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

- Provision in both nursery and reception classes is good overall, with some very good features.
- Relationships are excellent and children develop personal and social skills very well
- Children make a good start and achieve the learning goals before moving into Year 1.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the Foundation Stage classes and support staff are of very high calibre
- Children learn within an attractive and stimulating environment where their work is valued
- Children in nursery and reception classes benefit from a well-planned curriculum that enables them to develop skills and knowledge systematically.
- Links with parents are very positive, information is good and arrangements for transfer from nursery to reception are very good
- The school has taken positive steps to address the issue of declining numbers

68. The school has made steady improvement since the previous inspection and has good capacity to succeed in the future. The recently developed outdoor area for reception children provides a wider range of experiences than in the past. The curriculum has also developed well and is of good quality. It is greatly enriched by numerous visits and visitors that broaden children's knowledge. Numbers of children have declined since the previous inspection. The school has taken a very positive, constructive approach towards resolving the problem.
69. Children's personal and social development is very good. All staff are totally committed to providing the best for the children in their care. In return, children quickly know that they are part of a very caring community. They love coming to school. Parents are rightly proud of provision.
70. When children join the nursery, many have poor personal and social skills. Speaking and listening skills are weak. Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are also below average. All children make good progress because they are taught well. Children with special educational needs make as much progress as everyone else because they receive a good level of appropriate support. A significant proportion of the fifty-two children in the current nursery class is on course to achieve the learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. Most of the forty-five children in the two reception classes have reached the early learning goals set for them and are well prepared for work in Year 1.
71. The school uses information gained from initial assessments well to provide an appropriate range of activities. Nursery and reception staff also monitor progress effectively on a day-to-day basis and keep good quality records of children's achievements. They know the children in their care very well. However, they do not use the information to set targets for individual children or predict future achievement and this lack of precision has a detrimental effect on provision. Higher attaining children, in particular, do not always make as much progress as they could because the work they do is sometimes too easy.
72. Teaching is of a consistently high standard, with some very good teaching in both nursery and reception classes. All adults manage children skilfully and use praise and encouragement very successfully to build confidence. Planning is good and children receive a rich variety of exciting activities to increase knowledge and independence. They have many opportunities to explore, investigate and use their imaginations. However, within this good quality provision, higher attaining children do not always receive enough to challenge them.
73. Staff work hard to provide an attractive learning environment. Classrooms are bright; displays are lively and relevant. Every part of the generous nursery accommodation is put to good use. Nursery outdoor play is a purposeful structured learning experience.
74. Interim arrangements for co-ordinating Early Years provision are effective. The reception teacher, who will shortly take over co-ordination, is being eased into the role, with appropriate support from the deputy headteacher. All staff provide a totally consistent approach throughout the Foundation Stage, despite the logistical difficulties of being housed at separate ends of the campus. However, the arrangements for

monitoring and evaluating nursery provision require strengthening. The school misses many valuable opportunities to welcome nursery children into its community, when it does not involve them in occasions such as assemblies on a regular basis.

Personal and Social Development

75. The teaching of personal and social development is very good. Children make rapid progress from the minute they enter the nursery because staff make learning fun. In the nursery, music is used very effectively to encourage co-operation. Nursery children could be seen hurrying each other along when they heard the *follow the leader* music that told them it was time to finish what they were doing and go into the playground. Once outside, a small group sat quietly under the trees holding hands so that they would not frighten the fairies that lived there. Staff work very well together as a team and they transmit their enthusiasm. Children respond by treating others with care and respect. They apologise unprompted when they bump into each other and they are particularly proud to be chosen as *Special Person* for the day.
76. Reception staff build very well on these secure foundations. They successfully create an atmosphere of mutual respect. Children contribute well in class lessons because they know their ideas are valued. A good example of this was observed during class council time. The elected representative was very confident and articulate as she reported back on the previous School Council meeting. Children of all abilities expressed views and opinions. There was a very strong feeling of community as children decided jointly that the *toilet door* problem could be solved within the reception classes and was not a whole school issue.
77. Children behave very well at all times. They work and play together amicably and value the success of others. There is a very strong commitment towards developing independence.

Communication, Language and Literacy

78. Children enter the nursery with weak early language and literacy skills. They make good progress because they are taught well throughout the Foundation Stage. Most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1.
79. When working in small groups, adults engage children in purposeful discussion constantly. Many activities encourage good development of speaking and listening skills. The *Willows Train Station* provided a good example of how children develop skills. A normally reticent girl could be heard explaining very clearly to her friend that she was going to London. She confidently purchased her ticket and, before taking her seat, asked the driver assertively whether she was on the right train.
80. The school promotes the development of reading well and children make good progress. Right from the start children love books. Parents of nursery children fill in simple records showing how much their child has enjoyed sharing a particular story. In the reception classes reading routines are equally well established and home reading diaries contain helpful comments about progress. Story sacks provide extra opportunities for both parents and children to share supplementary books at home. In discussion, children predict accurately how stories, such as *Walking Through the Jungle*, might end. They recognise rhyming words because they listen well and express clear preferences. A very confident early reader knew exactly why she did not like the story about Lucy. *'It would have been alright if the kitten hadn't scratched her'*, she explained. Another boy self corrected his mistakes. Even children who were not yet reading independently attempted unfamiliar words and talked on a simple level about characters in their stories.
81. Writing skills are developed well in the reception classes. Children progress from making unrecognisable marks at the beginning of the year to acceptable attempts at words by the time they reach Year 1. Higher attaining children write in full sentences and demonstrate a good awareness of punctuation. *Early emergent writing* progress books provide an effective record of individual progress. It must not be forgotten that these children start from a low base. It is only because staff provide so many rich opportunities for children to practise, explore and experiment with written language that children make such good progress and achieve the Early Learning Goals.

Mathematical Development

82. Most children enter the nursery with below average skills. They make satisfactory progress. Both members of staff use registration time very effectively to develop counting skills. Children work out how many are present and confidently write numbers up to twelve on the registration clipboard. Activities, such as the *Fishing for Numbers* game reveal the wide range of mathematical attainment. Most are secure, on a practical level, with numbers to seven, but some are still confused with numbers beyond three. Most know bigger and smaller and have a good basic understanding of shape. However, there are not always enough opportunities to develop mathematical understanding and not all activities match the needs of individual children. Consequently, some higher attaining children end up choosing tasks that are too easy for them.
83. Children move into the reception class with below average mathematical understanding. They are taught well and make good progress. Children with special educational needs receive an appropriate level of support and contribute fully in lessons. Both teaching and support staff promote mathematical language well and give clear, concise explanations. In a very good lesson on subtraction, the teacher introduced a wide range of activities to interest and excite. Children loved singing *There Were Ten in a Bed* and some managed to work out how many would be left if two fell out each time. Group work was particularly effective in this lesson, because all the activities were pitched at exactly the right level. Good teaching enables most children to achieve the Early Learning Goals and they are well prepared for work in Year 1.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

84. This area of learning is where children have the least advanced skills when they enter the nursery class. Staff start to rectify the weakness very effectively from the word go. They provide an impressive range of good quality experiences that ensures children develop skills very rapidly. Photographic evidence of previous work provides further insight into why children make very good progress. Exciting activities, ranging from hedgehog maintenance to investigating puddles, guarantee good learning. During the inspection, children awaited the arrival of the crossing patrol warden and police officer visitors with eager anticipation. Although some were not sure what their work entailed, the visits provoked much discussion and animated excitement. The playground was transformed into a road safety area, with working traffic lights and zebra crossings. 'Police officers' patrolled the edge of the road, and stopped any bicycles that were not abiding by the rules.
85. Children use a very good range of computer programs with impressive mouse control. They skilfully guide on-screen drills and screwdrivers to their correct positions. They work with total independence as they respond to instructions issued over their headphones.
86. Nursery staff provide children with a rich variety of experiences to gain knowledge about other cultures and lifestyles. During the inspection, snacktime included a whole range of ethnic food to sample, from poppadums to French bread.
87. Reception staff build well on the good quality nursery input. *Frogs, snakes and butterflies* fascinate children, as they study them in minute detail through magnifying glasses. Teachers use every opportunity to capture spontaneous moments. During the inspection, a large ant nest was uncovered in the outdoor learning area. It provoked much excitement and discussion as children watched eggs being transported to safety. Once again, good photographic evidence of past work reveals why children develop their knowledge and understanding so well. Pond dipping, testing waterproof materials, using sanding blocks, exploring the properties of ice, all develop skills very effectively. Science boxes, full of exciting objects for exploration and investigation, provide well for inquisitive minds. Information and communication technology continues to make a significant contribution. Children learn how to use a programmable toy and they build a car from a magnetic construction kit. They develop a good understanding of other lifestyles through celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Hanukkah. By the time they reach Year 1 children have a secure knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

Physical development

88. No direct teaching was observed in the nursery, but teaching seen in the reception classes was of very good quality and children achieved very well. All the current reception children have achieved the Early Learning Goals.
89. Most children enter the nursery with below average skills when using pencils, scissors and paintbrushes. They learn quickly because activities are purposeful. Although still at various stages of development, most cut out black and white strips for their zebra crossing pictures with reasonable skill. Staff make good use of outdoor facilities to develop physical skills. However, children miss the opportunity to explore and gain confidence when using larger spaces because they do not have timetabled use of the school hall for any activities.
90. Physical skills develop very well in the reception classes. The day-to-day routines of dressing and undressing are firmly established. Children know the importance of exercise and move with good control and co-ordination. In one very good lesson, they displayed great care and independence as they put away apparatus. Children worked well collaboratively. One child issued clear instructions to lift the bench only at his command. Reception children use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors competently. They complete puzzles and games with increasing skill. All persevere and make good progress.
91. Reception outdoor play provision, criticised in the previous report, is much improved. In addition to being used effectively as an outdoor classroom, it provides children with better opportunities than in the past to develop physical skills.

Creative Development

92. Creative development is below that of other children this age on entry to the nursery. Children make rapid progress because they are taught well. There are many opportunities for children to develop creative skills through painting, choosing materials independently and linking activities very successfully with topics, such as *Road Safety*. Children revelled in the opportunity to paint portraits and make models of the police officer who was coming to visit them. Everyone was justifiably pleased with the results. The crossing warden visitor was equally impressed with children's creativity. Music is a very important part of daily routines and children develop very clear preferences. On one occasion, some children wanted to hear more Vivaldi, whilst others preferred to listen to the Chinese music. They know a wide range of songs from *The Wheels on the Bus* to *Aeroplanes*. Staff use their expertise well to provide lively guitar accompaniment. The whole occasion is a quality fun learning experience.
93. Reception staff build well on secure foundations. Artwork is often linked very effectively to topics and there is a good balance of free choice and adult supported activities. On one occasion, children chose appropriate materials to create snakes for their *Zoo* topic. They overcame problems well and all succeeded in making a snake of which they were proud. Staff continue to use music effectively in the classroom and children respond with great enthusiasm during their weekly hymn practice.
94. By the time they reach Year 1, most will have achieved the Early Learning Goals set for this area of development.

ENGLISH

- Standards are above average overall in Year 2 and Year 6
- Good levels of attention are paid to developing speaking and listening skills
- Teaching and learning is good overall
- The curriculum is suitably enhanced by the imaginative use of resources, including the interactive whiteboards
- The basic skills are given rigorous attention
- Pupils with special needs are very well supported by both class teachers and teaching assistants
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- English is led and managed with zest and enthusiasm by an effective subject leader

95. Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress in improving standards and the quality of provision in English. Standards are now above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, largely because effective attention has been paid to the development of speaking and listening skills. At the same

time, attention to the development of skills in other aspects of English have not been ignored. The below average skills in communication, language and literacy that the pupils have when they start at the school are successfully developed and pupils make good progress in all aspects of English throughout the school. Although reading skills are average by Year 2, more focused attention to the teaching of reading skills in the infant classes, especially for lower attaining pupils, is needed to bring standards to the above average level found in other aspects of English such as writing. Generally though, teaching is consistently good throughout the school, which supports the pupils' progress effectively.

96. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified. They are then well supported by a skilled number of teaching assistants who work closely with class teachers to make sure the pupils learn effectively. The pupils with special needs work alongside their classmates in both infant and junior classes but are often taught as a group in the class activities time so that their rate of learning is maximised.
97. The school sets appropriate targets for all pupils in English. There is a systematic approach to the review of the targets. The targets are clearly shared with the pupils by putting them into their workbooks. When the targets have been achieved new targets, which are also shared and shown in the pupils' workbooks, replace them. Progress, or lack of it, is continually being reinforced so that achievement is always at the forefront of the pupils' learning.
98. Speaking and listening skills have been given an appropriate amount of attention since the previous inspection. They are now above average throughout the school. The school has devised a number of imaginative opportunities to support the pupils in developing these skills efficiently. Apart from the regular well-planned opportunities to engage in whole class discussions in lessons, pupils are given further opportunities in the class and school councils. Most pupils have good listening skills, which they use thoughtfully in the discussions being held. As they set the agendas for the class council meetings and are in charge of them, their motivation is high. In a very well conducted class council meeting in a Year 2 class every pupil had the opportunity to speak and most did so. All spoke sensibly and with confidence. They listened to one another as demonstrated by the way that points were followed up so logically. In a Year 6 class discussion on conflict, the class teacher had usefully linked the opening discussion to the conflict pupils were feeling about leaving their present school to start at another school. This followed up their induction visit to their chosen secondary school effectively. Some emotive discussion was followed by sensitively written poetry that expressed feelings and supported the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully at the same time.
99. Reading standards are average at seven and above average at eleven years of age. Pupils are developing basic reading skills effectively such as building initial sounds and blending letters together in the infant classes. They are making good use of other things such as picture clues in order to support their learning. Average readers read accurately and are able to build words so that reading is becoming more fluent. Above average readers are fluent and have good measures of expression in their reading. However, the lower attaining readers still need more time and support to develop reading skills beyond the hesitant level being reached currently. The skills taught to the pupils in infant classes are carefully built upon in the junior classes. This is clearly reflected in the reading in Year 6 where pupils read at an above average level. Regardless of levels of attainment, the pupils read with fluency and expression. They are able to recall with accuracy and delight in predicting some of the possible events in future parts of their books. All pupils enjoy reading for pleasure, with some choosing fiction and others non-fiction books for this purpose. Discussions with pupils throughout the school showed that there is a good level of support being given to them in developing their reading both at home and school. They read to adults regularly at school and their reading journals show the consistency with which they are being heard read. Good support from home is being given. Further good support to the development of reading skills has been provided through the recent school focus on guided reading time. This has successfully generated much careful thought about the characters in books and the way that authors create the atmosphere that is important to understanding. The school library is not located well in the school and is poorly stocked. It is not used effectively by the pupils because of its location. It is intended to re-locate the library from the beginning of next term in a more conveniently central area of the school in a learning centre that will ultimately include the re-housed ICT suite.
100. Standards in writing are above average throughout the school. This is shown in the scrutiny of the pupils' work and in lesson observations. The pupils often use their adept ICT skills to record their writing.

They write well in other subjects using the knowledge from their English lessons in subjects such as history and religious education to develop their understanding of basic writing skills. However, it is in the English lessons themselves that the pupils show their adaptability in writing in a wide range of ways. The pupils write letters, diaries and different forms of poetry with great skill. In an excellent lesson in Year 2 the pupils quickly identified the humour in the text that they were studying. They were able to express their opinions about the book and make recommendations about its suitability as a class reading book. Higher attaining pupils were writing in well-formed sentences. Both the class teacher and teaching assistant, through questioning them about how they wanted to write, were giving lower attaining pupils intensive support. The success of the lesson was built around the good choice of the resource that the teacher had made initially. The good choice of resources by teachers continues in the junior classes. In very good lessons in Year 4 classes the illustrations and sound effects created by the interactive whiteboards for the story of *The necklace of raindrops* effectively caught the pupils' imagination. This was demonstrated by the murmurs of exasperation when the teacher broke off the story in an interesting part. The teacher sustained the imagination, however, by indicating that the story would be continued. This ensured that the pupils were then well prepared to write about the credible and incredible events in the story. Emotive poetry is being written in Year 5 classes where the focus is on people. Poems about the family are very effectively allowing the pupils to write expressively such as the one about *My mum*. In Year 6 the pupils discuss conflict after their induction visit to their secondary school. After a whole class discussion they write well-structured and thoughtful letter poems to express their feelings.

101. The majority of the pupils very carefully present the written work. They take pride in presenting their work to a high standard. The pupils are well supported in achieving this because of the regular handwriting and spelling lessons that form an important part of their English work. The use of dictionaries and thesaurus helps the spelling skills to develop appropriately. Handwriting is taught consistently throughout the school. Although plenty of opportunity is given to the pupils to write independently the skills of grammar are not ignored and are taught and learnt as an on-going skill. A major factor in ensuring care is continually taken with presentation of work is in the thoroughly consistent marking completed by teachers. This is very helpful to pupils because it indicates clearly to them what they need to do in order to improve upon their work.
102. Teaching and learning is good overall. In the very best lessons teachers have secure subject knowledge. They plan tasks at different levels to meet pupils' needs effectively. The teachers choose imaginative resources. Support staff are deployed with care so that they work with a variety of pupils. The lessons are well organised and are conducted at a brisk pace. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and learning in English throughout the school. Where teaching and learning are least successful it is often because the pace is more measured.
103. Teachers are very confidently adapting the National Literacy Strategy in order to meet the pupils' needs efficiently. They are able to do this because the strategy is well embedded in the school's practice. Homework is used thoughtfully in order to support the pupils' needs appropriately.
104. A well-informed and hard working subject leader leads the subject with zest and enthusiasm. New initiatives such as the spelling have been introduced thoughtfully. On-going monitoring has been completed to ensure the value of initiatives such as the impact on learning of the focus on guided reading. The careful tracking of progress through the review and re-setting of targets has been supported through the teachers' knowledge of the analysis of national test results that have been completed jointly by the subject leader and head teacher. The school is well placed to continue improvement under the guidance offered by the subject leader and the capacity to raise standards further in English is good.

MATHEMATICS

- The report on mathematics at the last inspection was very positive.
- Almost all the strengths noted in the report have been maintained, particularly those relating to good teaching in lessons and the way in which children enjoy their mathematics work. However at present, standards in mathematics are not yet at the above average levels seen in English and science.
- Levels of attainment for infants and for juniors are as expected. Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are average.
- The quality of teaching is good. The standard of pupil behaviour is very high and pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons.

- The planning of lessons is thorough complying with the framework of the National Numeracy strategy. However there is scope for further development of investigative work and problem solving.
- The quality of presentation of work in books and folders is of an exceptionally high standard. This reflects a great pride in achievement.

105. The report on mathematics at the last inspection was positive, almost all the strengths noted have been maintained particularly those relating to good teaching in lessons and the way in which children enjoy their mathematics work. Today, however standards in mathematics are not yet at the above average levels seen in English and science. Nonetheless, standards are rising and are average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Good progress has been made in all classes and Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils have done much to close the gap that existed when they were at the end of their infant years.
106. The mastery of basic numeracy skills is a good feature of the mathematics work throughout the school. In part of an excellent lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were playing a game of bingo with the pupils crossing off on their bingo cards the answers to mental sums. A hard set and an easier set of questions were used alternately, with the higher attainers restricted to the harder questions so that all were equally challenged. Examples of questions included; 7 lots of 4, 85 less than 100, half of eight and double 40. The speed and accuracy with which pupils answered showed that the basics of numeracy, as a result of good teaching, are well established. Scrutiny of work and other lesson observations confirmed that this is so throughout the school. The quality of presentation in books and folders is of an exceptionally high standard and it is very clear that pupils take great pride in their work. These good habits of neatness and care are already well established by the end of Year 1. The excellent standards of presentation are brought about by the high expectations of teachers who mark the work regularly, adding encouraging explanations and comments where needed.
107. Almost without exception pupils work hard in their lessons, and discussions with Year 6 pupils confirm that pupils enjoy mathematics so much so that a substantial number arrive early to gain access to mathematics programs on the computers. ICT is well integrated into the teaching of mathematics.
108. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work undertaken by both juniors and infants also provides no evidence of any differences in the achievements of boys and girls. The use of interactive white boards is particularly successful in sustaining boys' interest and concentration. The interactive white boards are used very effectively in teaching mathematics and do much to enhance teaching and learning for all pupils. Teaching in all classes follows a similar pattern and the quality is good overall. Clear and challenging learning objectives for lessons are set and based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The recently introduced scheme for assessment in mathematics is an effective method of monitoring pupils' progress. However, the system of setting and sharing of targets with pupils that is used with other subjects, notably English, is not used in mathematics. At present, pupils' knowledge of their own learning, and involvement in monitoring their own progress is not well developed. The subject leader is currently evaluating the trial of the chosen system of target setting and tracking that was introduced in mathematics this year. This is at an early stage of development and requires more work to make it a rigorous and consistent tool for driving learning forward. The school is on the right tracks, however, and the potential for future improvement in assessment in mathematics is good.
109. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make steady progress in mathematics because of the effective support they receive. The children with special educational needs are taught alongside their classmates. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified specifically and this is a shortcoming. In a number of lessons observed and in the work examined by inspectors it was evident that the higher attaining pupils are not consistently given sufficiently challenging work. This impacts on their progress, which over time is not as brisk as it could be. This is a key factor in the relative differences in attainment between English and mathematics and is something that can be easily addressed, given the school's successes in other subjects.
110. There were some examples of problem solving taking place during the inspection. In a good Year 1 lesson pupils in shopping activities were learning about buying items to a cost of up to 20p and giving change. In part of the lesson the teacher acted as shopkeeper and concentration became so intense that for a time reality was suspended as pupils chose their purchases, mentally balanced their budgets and decided what coins they would need. They checked with one another and provided helpful advice when it was needed. In this, and in all other mathematics seen, the way in which children listened to one another and worked

together was a delight. The teaching assistant did much to ensure that two pupils with special needs took full part in the lesson. Money also featured in Year 6 problem solving lessons. Pupils were seen exploring how items could be purchased and change given if all our coinage were to be replaced by just 3p and 5p coins. The work proved absorbing, with much worthwhile discussion particularly on how a transaction involving 1p change could be completed. The teacher had carefully prepared tasks pitched at different levels to provide a good match of challenge to pupils' abilities. In the most successful lessons throughout the school, links were established wherever possible to practical applications. However, this is not consistent and generally, the work on problem solving and investigation is not as well developed or consistent in mathematics as it is in science. Nonetheless, there is very good commitment to make the necessary improvements.

111. The observation of lessons and also the scrutiny of other evidence show that the teaching and learning of mathematics in the infants is good. This is also the picture in the classes for older children. A good lesson for Year 2 on division as sharing or grouping illustrated many of the strong features seen in teaching throughout the school. The pace of teaching and learning were brisk. The interactive white board was used very effectively both by teacher and pupils as a learning tool; pupils were keen to come out to the front and work on the board. The use of questioning was skilful in ensuring that pupils were on their toes and keeping up. The teacher used a variety of techniques and methods to provide good explanations so that pupils developed not only accuracy in their calculations but also a good understanding of the processes involved. Work set was different for different groups of pupils and this ensured that pupils of all attainment levels were challenged. The teaching assistant provided very good support to assist those pupils in need of help. The breaking down of the process into small steps developed pupils' confidence and enjoyment in achievement so much that they were reluctant to leave their work for the morning break.
112. The leadership of the subject within the school is good. The subject leader has a sound knowledge of mathematics and expertise in teaching the subject and has made a sound impact on standards of teaching. She has her finger on the pulse of teaching and learning through scrutinising teachers' planning, checking on pupil progress and monitoring teaching to ensure that all is as it should be.
113. The management of mathematics needs fine tuning so that gifted and talented pupils are identified and set appropriate work and so that there is consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils. The setting and sharing of targets with pupils is also due for refinement so that pupils, through monitoring their own progress, gain greater knowledge of their own learning

SCIENCE

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Progress is good in infant classes and very good in the juniors.
- Teaching throughout the school is good and enables pupils of all abilities to learn successfully.
- Good attention is paid to all aspects of the science curriculum.
- The focus on practical and investigational work in science is good.
- The quality of leadership and management is good.

114. Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations clearly reflect that standards being achieved in the present Year 3, are well above age-related levels, reflecting the good and sometimes excellent teaching standards. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, building early skills and knowledge of science well. This gives pupils a firm base from which to build in Years 3 to 6. They make very good progress in these years.
115. National test results clearly indicate that a significantly higher proportion of girls achieve the higher Level 5, however, there is no significant difference between the genders when comparing the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected Level 4. Inspection evidence, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, supports this view. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be broadly similar to those found today. Therefore, satisfactory improvement has been made since then. Nevertheless, the school has rightly continued to place a high emphasis on scientific enquiry. Factors that also contribute to the subject's high profile throughout the school include, good and sometimes very good teaching, good implementation of all aspects of the science curriculum and the very good working

relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. Presentation of work in pupils' books is also very good, enabling accurate results to be recorded and interpreted.

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good understanding of how to carry out investigations and how to ensure tests are fair. The topics they have undertaken are well chosen and their practical nature is appealing to all pupils. In Year 2, for example, pupils were appropriately challenged to design a boat that would float and hold twenty marbles. This practical approach is very appealing to pupils. There is also good development of pupils' scientific language when teachers talk to pupils with the use of correct scientific language, and expect pupils to use it when discussing their work. Such activities make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' basic language skills. Pupils are very enthusiastic and their keenness to contribute was a key feature found in all of the lessons observed. Pupils were quick to point out that the best-shaped boat had a flat bottom and sides that enabled the marbles to be held secure. Additional adult support greatly enhanced their learning and all pupils remained focused throughout.
117. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 3, the quality of high demanding pace was enhanced by a very good range of stimulating and interesting artefacts related to light sources. The quality of teaching was both stimulating and enthusiastic, based on the teacher's very good subject knowledge. Higher attaining pupils clearly understood that, at mid-day, there is no shadow due to the relationship between the sun overhead and the earth's relative position in relation to light sources. Work was appropriately set to meet the needs of all abilities within the class. The teacher tailored her questions very well to meet the very wide range of attainment within the class. Very good teaching at this level motivates the pupils very well and it is evident that they found the work very interesting and most enjoyable. The teacher gave pupils very good opportunities to discuss their ideas. The relationships amongst pupils were excellent as they listened and responded to each other's suggestions and ideas. This kind of work at this level makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development, whilst discussion and questioning helps them to develop their speaking and listening skills. Work was appropriately set to meet the needs of all abilities within the class.
118. In the very best practice, planning takes into account pupils' individual efforts, whilst clearly identifying future learning targets in order to improve. Scrutiny of pupils' work reflects the marking of pupils' well-prepared work to a good standard, often giving sufficient information to help them improve. Where teaching was judged to be satisfactory, rather than good or better, there were insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to observe and plan their own experiments.
119. There are numerous well-planned opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate literacy and numeracy skills in science. Pupils record investigations using charts and labelled diagrams, and accurately use a range of measuring instruments. This was observed in Year 4, when undertaking an investigation into rocks, pupils related the passage of a given amount of water to a given time. Pupils understand the need for reading and recording measurements. There are some useful opportunities to further develop skills through the use of ICT.
120. The quality of leadership and management is good. The subject leader has correctly identified the strengths and areas for development and these are appropriately identified in the good quality action plan. The subject leader's very good subject knowledge is clearly reflected in the development of practical investigations. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is regularly undertaken in conjunction with reviewing pupils' work in their books. The target setting to support individual achievement in literacy is not yet extended to science work, and this is a missed opportunity. The curriculum for science covers all aspects that it should and is suitably enhanced by the use of the school grounds, for example in Year 1 and Year 6 where pupils undertake work on 'habitats' and 'pond-dipping'.
121. The school has good potential to raise standards achieved by pupils even higher.

ART AND DESIGN

- Attainment is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make good progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The curriculum for art and design is good, though the spiritual and cultural development of pupils could be enhanced.

- Assessment procedures need improvement.
- Art and design is led soundly and managed well by the hard working and committed subject leader.

122. In 1997 it was judged that standards in art were above average overall, that progress was good and the quality of teaching was good in infant classes and very good in the juniors. The school has sustained this quality effectively.
123. At present, standards are above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are enabled to develop skills and knowledge in a systematic fashion, which ensures that progress is good through the school. The examination of pupils' sketchbooks demonstrated this good progress clearly. These sketchbooks record the progressive development of skills and techniques from year to year. Pupils plan and design their artwork with substantial detail and experiment with materials, tools and equipment to produce artwork of good quality. This is especially evident in the sketchbooks of older pupils.
124. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and there is some very good practice. The focus on skills development in the sketchbooks is one example of teachers' attention to key aspects of art and design. Lesson observations showed similar good focus on skills and knowledge. For example, in a Year 5 lesson involving batik printing and tie-dye work, the teacher very carefully guided the pupils through the stages in both processes and organised the work very well to ensure all pupils had enough time and resources to complete their own batik and tie-dye projects. The pupils were very well behaved and attentive in this lesson and the pace of learning brisk. The lesson was well planned, expectations were good and the pupils managed effectively. These are characteristics of most art and design lessons. As in other classes, the focus on pupils self-evaluating their learning was not great and this was a missed opportunity for pupils to reflect on their achievements and to suggest appropriate ways to improve their work. However, this lesson was of very good teaching and learning quality because of the rate of productivity and the sustained extension of skills and knowledge.
125. Pupils also benefit from a good curriculum for art and design. It includes strong focus on work in three dimensions as well as in the more traditional two-dimensional aspects. The curriculum is enhanced by initiatives such as the arts week each year and by the programme of extra curricular activities, both of which have good impact on standards and the quality of education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well fostered overall in art and design, though the focus on the art of minority cultures could be enhanced and more time could be found for pupils to reflect on the artwork that they see and produce.
126. The procedures for assessment of art and design skills vary from teacher to teacher and this is a shortcoming. Whilst the curriculum is well planned with clear identification of the skills and knowledge to be taught, the assessment of the things learned is not consistently focused on key skills and knowledge. The subject leader accepts the need to improve assessment as the next step in building a totally effective quality of provision. She is hardworking, knowledgeable and provides good support for her colleagues in planning and resourcing art and design. Overall, the quality of leadership in art and design, as for several other subjects in school, is sound and the quality of management is good. There is good promise for the continued improvement of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Standards are above average expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching throughout the school is good and enables pupils of all abilities to learn successfully.
- There is good development of all aspects of the design process.
- Good management assures clear direction for the subject, but has yet to find ways to share the very good practice that exists to raise standards even higher.
- Assessment opportunities need to be introduced so that individual pupils' progress is available at a glance.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

127. There has been good attention paid to improving the provision for design and technology since the previous inspection. Standards are above the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. In recent years, the school's priority has been,

rightly, to improve literacy and mathematics, but good leadership places the subject of design and technology in a prominent position for continued positive development.

128. Displays in all classes clearly illustrate pupils' good work in design and technology. A feature of much of the work throughout the school is the good development of the whole process of designing, making and evaluating. The quality of the finished products is of a high standard.
129. Teaching is good overall. In a successful lesson in Year 1, pupils eagerly contributed to discussion involving the preparation of a fruit salad in a previous lesson. Pupils listened very carefully and it was very evident that this practical activity had been thoroughly enjoyed. In discussion with pupils, it was clear that they had learnt that the washing of hands prior to undertaking food preparation was very important. For many pupils, the tasting of blackberries, melon and kiwi fruits, was a first enjoyable experience, not to mention, the adding of apple juice to delay the effect of the prepared fruits turning brown. Digital photographs taken during the practical activity the previous week, provided a very good focal point to aid pupils' writing 'What we did'.
130. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 2 reflects the contribution of a working mechanism located in a plastic bottle, depicting the movements of *Incy Wincy Spider* controlled by cogs, wheels and elastic bands. The quality of skills is further enhanced in Year 3 during the manufacture of *Moving Monsters*. These life-like creatures actually moved arms, legs, heads and jaws by the means of well-devised pneumatic systems. In discussion, pupils expressed a real sense of pride in their finished creatures, promptly sharing the best features and what they would improve upon next time. They enjoyed working as a member of a team during their 'monster' construction, taking turns cutting, painting and designing.
131. The subject portfolio clearly illustrates the manufacture of pop-up characters to recreate a moving scene to illustrate pupils' own story of *Cinderella*. The well-planned links with literacy, mathematics and science underpins the subject's present high profile and pupils' eagerness to contribute.
132. During a good lesson observed in Year 5, pupils were positively encouraged to taste a range of biscuits, indicating the suitability for a particular age-range. Working keenly in groups, pupils were required to give their opinion which biscuit they liked best and why, and most were able to identify the main ingredient of shortbread, flapjack and cookies. The teachers' very confident subject knowledge enabled the lesson to proceed at a good pace, with all pupils displaying an eagerness to complete the task that involved the eating of the sample biscuits, after washing their hands. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 6 clearly reflects the wide use of materials and tools in the construction of moving fairground models. High quality finishing of the completed models has a very positive effect. Initial designs and the selection of suitable materials signals a good understanding of how materials can be used for different purposes. Very accurate cutting out and complex mechanisms enabled the fairground models to rotate via a system of electric motors, switches, wheels, gears and elastic bands, all operated by the touch of a switch. Work is displayed well to celebrate the achievements of all pupils, regardless of attainment and needs.
133. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has put into place a scheme of work based on recent national guidelines that will, in time, ensure progression and continuity of skills as pupils move upwards through the school. The subject leader has not yet undertaken direct monitoring of teaching and learning to enable her to gain a better insight into her subject's strengths and areas that would need future improvement. The use of assessment to support pupils' skills is, at present, unsatisfactory and continues to be an area for future development. The subject makes a very important contribution to pupils' personal and social skills. They grow in self-confidence as they listen to and share each other's ideas and evaluations. All pupils learn to value their own practical efforts because the teachers positively value their contributions.

GEOGRAPHY

- The sounds standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
- Pupils work hard, show interest and work well co-operatively.
- Good progress is made by all pupils because of the all round good quality of the teaching they receive.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides many opportunities for pupils to participate in interesting field study activities.
- The subject promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

- There is good leadership and management of geography.
- Assessment procedures are not yet securely in place.

134. Pupils achieve average standards in geography by the ages of seven and by the age of eleven, and this shows clearly that the school has maintained the standards attained at the time of the last inspection. They acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at an appropriate rate of, changing environments and weather, patterns in human and physical geography, and contrasting localities.
135. Pupils make good progress in learning about geography because they work hard and with interest, and are well behaved and focused in lessons. They co-operate well with each other in pairs and groups and are confident to share their ideas with others. The subject makes a positive contribution to their social and cultural development. Pupils are able to use maps and secondary sources, and ICT well to support their investigations. On field study visits pupils collect data on river surveys as they trace it to its source. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and this ensures that they also make good progress.
136. In Year 2 pupils use their visit to Llandudno to study the features of the seaside. In the classroom they draw on these experiences and discuss them together, including *sand, sea, promenade* and *horizon*. They know that the horizon is *the point where the end of the sea meets the sky*. This work links well to history when pupils examine photographs showing the seaside in times past. In Year 3 pupils learn about the weather and the Beaufort scale for measuring wind strength, and produce weather maps of the United Kingdom using ICT. Most of their work is completed using worksheets, and there are only limited opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills. Links with science figure in Year 4, when pupils work on ways of improving the environment through investigating sound. Using a decibel meter to measure sounds in school, they graph their results using a computer, as well as hand produced charts. Pupils in Year 5 make comparisons between Lichfield and Chembakolli, and produce good quality travel brochures for visits to India. A major part of Year 6 work involves rivers, valleys and mountain environments. Field study of the river Bradford in the Peak District provides pupils with the opportunity to trace its source. They study land movement, erosion and deposition and river bends and ox bow lakes. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress through the wide range of opportunities provided both in the classroom, and whilst carrying out fieldwork.
137. Teaching is good across the school with geographical knowledge and skills being taught well. Work is well planned consistently for all age groups, although there is a lack of challenges for the higher attaining pupils at times. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and demonstrate very effective management skills. Lessons are taught at a good pace and teachers are highly skilled at using ICT presentations. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT to carry out their own research, and are very effective in doing so.
138. There is effective leadership and management of geography by a conscientious subject leader who works hard to ensure the taught curriculum is comprehensively planned for each year group with clear learning targets. The geography curriculum has recently been updated. Regular evaluations are carried out, and work sampling is done to check on standards. Other monitoring activities are carried out including observation of lessons to ascertain the quality of teaching and learning. Currently the assessment procedures are not rigorous or consistent across the school but the subject leader is aware of this and has plans to make improvements.

HISTORY

- Pupils achieve above average standards by the age of eleven.
- Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- All round good teaching has a positive impact upon learning.
- Pupils work hard, produce work of good quality and progress well.
- Pupils receive an enriched curriculum that includes a good programme of well-planned activities.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Assessment procedures need improvement.

139. The good standards reported on at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. By the age of seven pupils are achieving at the levels expected for their age and they reach average standards. The older pupils build on this positive start and by the age of eleven the standards they achieve are above average. Progress is good in infant classes and very good in the juniors. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and is due to the overall good quality of teaching and learning that pupils experience. There is an enriched curriculum planned for them including workshops and visits to places of historical interest that also serves pupils well. History topics are taught in sequence and this helps pupils develop a sense of chronology. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to carry out their own research, and they use ICT with confidence. The school has good capacity for further improvement.
140. Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. They show keen interest and enjoyment in the subject, and they concentrate well in lessons. Good co-operative working in pairs and groups contributes well to their social development, and they are confident to join in discussion and state their ideas or points of view. Great care is taken over the presentation of their work, which is mostly of good quality, detailed and supported with pictures, sketches, or diagrams. There is good support from pupils' families who send along to school a good range of objects and artefacts to support the topic their child is currently studying. Links with other curricular areas create further interest when, for example, pupils produce Greek urns in their art and design lessons. Time lines are used in all Years, and these are helpful in developing pupils' sense of the order of historical events. Pupils carry out their own research and write up their findings in well-presented prose. Literacy skills are used and developed well across the school to support their learning of history with pupils writing at length independently, and in some depth to produce work of good quality.
141. The brisk rate of progress that pupils make in history is due to the overall good quality of the teaching they receive. Lessons are planned for each year group to ensure that there is consistency of entitlement in curriculum coverage, and of experiences. However, more challenging work could be set for the higher attaining pupils. Teachers who use some effective methods manage pupils very well in lessons, and staff and pupils enjoy good relationships. Lessons provide interesting and stimulating experiences through the effective use of artefacts and resources. The use of Roman and Viking workshops give pupils a closer insight into these aspects of history through role-play and looking closely at aspects of the lifestyles of those periods. These experiences are enhanced by a programme of visits to places of historical interest including the Roman site at Wall and museums in the city of York. Teachers plan visits for all year groups across the school and this enhances pupils learning very effectively. They also use ICT skilfully in the presentation of their lessons, and this has great impact and creates a clear focus for pupils and ensures their interest.
142. History is well led and managed jointly by two committed and enthusiastic subject leaders. Between them they ensure that a good level of planning and support is available for their colleagues. They have ensured that appropriate resources are available to support the teaching of the subject, and exploit opportunities to bring history alive through participation in, for example, the Civil War re-enactment in Lichfield. Monitoring activities are carried out to check on the standards of teaching and learning, and the curriculum is regularly updated. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is well promoted through history. Formal assessment procedures are not yet fully in place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- Standards, provision and quality in ICT are significant strengths of the school and have led to the justified award of Centre of Excellence status.
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make steady, systematic and very good progress in ICT.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some very good features.
- There is a very good curriculum for ICT, including very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Extra curricular provision is excellent, though the monitoring of pupils working independently in the suite requires greater consistency.
- The subject leader gives good leadership and management to ICT.
- The self-evaluation by pupils of their own successes in learning could be enhanced.
- The ICT suite is cramped, but it is used intensively. Overall, the school's use of new technology in its work is excellent

143. In 1997, the previous inspection team judged that provision in ICT was good overall and that many pupils attained above or well above average standards. The school has worked successfully to maintain these strengths and to build upon them. Because of the very strong lead given by the headteacher, the use of ICT is at the heart of the school, whether in lessons, in administration and management systems or as a means of communication both within and outside the school.
144. Pupils attain above average standards in ICT by the end of Year 2 and well above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is apparent in all strands of the subjects, including those where the level of resourcing is not yet at the optimum sought by the school. Thus, in the strand of computer control and modelling, pupils have early access to keyboard controlled robot-like vehicles and they use screen-based simulations to control movement and draw shapes. They do these things enthusiastically and successfully. A key element of the work is in data handling and the presentation of information. By the age of about eight, pupils are very competent in searching for data using the Internet or CD ROM. They gather the information efficiently, interpret it accurately and present it with clarity. Older pupils handle professional presentation packages, such as *PowerPoint* with dexterity and bring their work alive by the judicious mix of text, sound, image and animation. Inspectors observed numerous occasions when ICT was used effectively by pupils to support their learning in other subjects. This has good impact on ICT skills because they are kept sharp by constant consolidation and extension.
145. It is equally evident that progress is consistent and continual from Year 1 to Year 6. The curriculum is very well planned to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic and progressive way. There is a tight system of planning and evaluation of outcome at the individual and group of lesson level. The subject leader plays a valuable role in ensuring that pupils are set tasks that challenge, motivate and enthuse them. Because the curriculum is coherent in this way, pupils are enabled to achieve successfully and to attain good personal standards and they make very good progress through the school.
146. The quality of teaching also has a very strong bearing on the achievement of pupils. In all, the quality of teaching is good in infant and junior classes. Teachers' expectations are high and all pupils are set demanding and enjoyable tasks. Thus, in ICT, higher attaining pupils do well on the whole. As in other subjects, this is not entirely consistent, but higher attaining pupils are more successful in ICT than in some other subjects. Basic skills of ICT are taught effectively and the subject makes a strong contribution to the development of such skills in English and mathematics. The use of interactive white boards has a very good impact on sustaining boys' interest and concentration, as seen in mathematics lessons, for example. Interactive white boards are used very effectively in teaching ICT and other subjects and this is having a significant impact on the quality and rate of learning.
147. Some excellent and very good lessons were observed during the inspection. For example, in Year 3 a class of pupils were learning how to make their own *PowerPoint* presentations. The planning for this lesson was excellent and there was firm focus on self-assessment (see below, for the significance of this). The pupils loaded the software, changed the background of the screen by importing images from a website and integrated text with the images. The pupils were discerning in their choice of elements for their design and discussed the merits of different features before they used them in their work. One particularly talented boy animated his presentation and recorded a sound track to enliven the final poster, which advocated purchase of the new *Harry Potter* book – there were zooming noises, clapping and finally, the sound of a cash register as the price of £9.99 was revealed. The pupils made very good progress in this excellent lesson and some attained standards that would do justice to Year 6 pupils.
148. Pupils have a strong commitment like this to their personal learning in ICT lessons. They behave very well, share excellent relationships and are very keen to discover new things and develop new skills. Work in ICT makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal education, particularly their moral and social development. Pupils work hard and complete their tasks in good time. Much work is completed in most lessons and pupils usually leave the session anxious to return to take their learning a step further. Inspectors observed that in some cases, there was a reluctance to leave the computer at the end of the lesson, so engrossing was the work. At all times of day, from around 8am to 4.30pm, groups of pupils are to be observed working productively in the computer suite. The programme of extra curricular ICT activities is excellent, though the school needs to ensure that the supervision of pupils working independently in the suite is at all times rigorous, apparent and consistent.

149. The procedures for assessing skills and knowledge are well developed and the information gained is used carefully in the planning of the next steps in the work. In lessons, teachers usually share the learning objectives with the pupils at the start of the session. However, only in a few sessions do they review the learning at the end. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to reflect on their own learning and to evaluate how successful they have been. The final moments of the lesson are not often used for pupils to voice their opinions on their own learning.
150. ICT is a well led and managed subject. The headteacher has a personal commitment to the subject that ensures its wellbeing within the curriculum. He has firm plans for the development of a fully equipped learning centre, which will evolve out of the existing cramped ICT suite and separate under-resourced school library. The subject leader is equally enthusiastic and hard working and she has good understanding of the performance of the subject. She is influential in fostering improvement and has introduced a number of valuable initiatives to take the subject forward. At present, she is working to improve the opportunities for pupils in her own class to undertake the kind of self-evaluation discussed above. This, and the creation of the learning centre, are examples of the way in which the school has identified the right priorities for improvement to ICT.
151. The school is quite rightly highly regarded for the quality of its work in ICT and the standards achieved. Its Centre of Excellence status is very well merited.

MUSIC

- Infant and junior pupils achieve average standards
- All pupils have the opportunity to participate in school concerts and productions
- The school makes effective use of its expertise
- There are missed opportunities to develop teachers' confidence with the subject

152. When the school was previously inspected, pupils reached average standards. The school made good use of its expertise and extra curricular provision was good. Although the curriculum had undergone considerable change, certain aspects, such as listening and appraising, were found to be weak. Provision was not adequately monitored.
153. Infant pupils develop a good basic understanding of percussion instruments. Many experiment with different sounds. A good example of this occurred in a lesson where pupils found realistic and innovative ways to create musical interpretations of animals, such as lions. Most younger pupils repeat simple rhythms accurately and listen very well. They know an appropriate range of songs. All abilities make steady progress and acquire a secure breadth and depth of knowledge that prepares them well for further development in the juniors.
154. By the age of eleven, most pupils have made sound progress in their musical development. The vast majority of pupils understand loud and soft and they know how music conveys feelings. Pupils use instruments regularly in composition work and most know how to improve and refine. They develop an increasing vocabulary of musical terminology. One Year 4 pupil gave a very mature explanation of a pentatonic scale whilst others referred to instruments by their correct names in their composition work.
155. Infant pupils sing with great enthusiasm and enjoy their weekly hymn practice. During the inspection, they sang *Wake Up* with total commitment and enjoyment. By contrast, older pupils did not relish their hymn practice. Lacklustre singing resulted from too large a group of pupils and not enough staff supervision. However, this was an isolated example. A group of older pupils, who had been noticeably bored during the hymn practice, displayed totally different attitudes towards singing, when practising their songs from *Oliver* for a forthcoming performance. They showed animated interest and strong commitment. The songs had captured their imaginations and they sang well. Junior pupils continue to develop good balanced knowledge across the whole music curriculum. They listen to a wide range of music from a variety of cultures, not just at the beginning of assembly, but also as a regular feature throughout the day in some classrooms.
156. The school has tried hard to find ways to motivate boys, with some degree of success. *Showtime*, an after school club for older pupils, has been enthusiastically received by both boys and girls. It makes a strong positive contribution to pupils' personal development. School concerts and productions develop

speaking and listening skills well. Numeracy skills are developed to a lesser extent through music. Teachers use technology well. Keyboards, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras are regular features of provision. However, there are not yet enough appropriate computer programs to enhance pupils' learning.

157. In class lessons, pupils of all abilities work well together and there are high levels of co-operation. Mixed gender groups in a Year 4 lesson collaborated well and displayed much good humour as they prepared their *Dragon Scales* compositions. Pupils of all abilities made similar progress because they supported each other well and ensured success for all.
158. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with a small amount of good and very good teaching. Planning is well structured and teachers with musical expertise provide well for pupils. With such good levels of teacher skill, the school is well placed to succeed in the future. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the music leader successfully sustained pupils' interest for nearly an hour with exciting activities based on *The Awongalema Tree*. Pupils chanted, sang, played instruments and tapped rhythms with lively enthusiasm. In other lessons, where teaching is not of the same high quality, teachers spend too long on one activity, the pace of learning is not fast enough and, consequently, pupils start to lose interest.
159. Teachers make useful evaluations of topics and simple but effective assessment procedures also provide helpful information about progress. However, teachers' comments often refer to how much of the topic was covered or pupils' attitudes and do not pay enough attention to how well pupils of different abilities learn. This lack of rigour in evaluating work and the fact that teaching and learning are not monitored directly means that staff do not have an accurate view of whether standards are high enough. The school has yet to identify its musically gifted and talented pupils in order to provide sufficient challenge.
160. The school has taken effective steps to rectify the weaknesses and move the subject forward. Extra curricular opportunities remain strong and the curriculum is now better organised to ensure balanced coverage across the whole music curriculum. Instrumental tuition in flute and violin has recently been introduced. The school continues to make good use of its expertise but misses the opportunity to develop skills of teachers who are insecure with the subject when they are not involved in observing or participating in musical activities. However, despite the many improvements, provision is still not monitored sufficiently. The subject leader is new to the post and has not yet been given the opportunity to gain a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Standards of attainment in physical education are average for seven and eleven year olds.
- Teaching and learning are both satisfactory.
- Pupils experience an appropriate range of activities.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and are becoming good team players.
- Timetable for outdoor games in need of some review.
- Resources are generally good.
- Leadership and management are sound.
- Extra-curricular provision is good and has a positive impact on learning.

161. The standards in physical education reached by children of seven and eleven are broadly average. The report on physical education at the last inspection was very positive, almost all the strengths noted have been maintained, particularly those relating to teaching and the ways in which children enjoy their work. There is no difference in the standards being attained between girls and boys. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities including dance, gymnastics, games and swimming.
162. Pupils have weekly swimming lessons for three terms in Year 4. Scrutiny of the school's records show that almost two thirds of these pupils are able to swim at least a width of the pool. At present, the provision for swimming is too limited for all of the pupils to reach the target to swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6, and this requires review.
163. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and follow the school's scheme to ensure progression. Pupils are generally set activities matched to their

capabilities, though the opportunities for the gifted and talented in the subject to fully develop their skills are not yet in place.

164. The choice of dance on a theme of penguins and polar bears on one of the hottest days of the summer seemed rather strange, yet this Year 1 lesson demonstrated many of the strong characteristics of physical education lessons throughout the school. The pupils wasted no time in changing and were suitably dressed for dance. The teacher was confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and the lesson was well planned. Pupils in this, as in all other physical education lessons, listened carefully and did their best. Good quality coaching and demonstration led to clearer understanding of expectations and quality of movement. Girls, in particular, did very well in imitating penguin movements, they shuffled forward with feet turned outwards, hands pressed to sides, and, when looking around, leaned forward from the waist and twisted their heads in a very penguin like manner. The boys on the other hand excelled at being large, fierce polar bears awakening from their winter sleep. The pupils matched their movements to the well-chosen music, good progress was made in the lesson and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The good standards of children's behaviour seen throughout all the physical education lessons are well established in infant classes.
165. There were two gymnastics lessons seen, one in Year 3 and one in Year 5. In both lessons warming up activities and floor work were done well in developing sequences of movement showing symmetrical and asymmetrical shape. The teaching of this work was effective and good use was made of questioning and pupil demonstration. The importance of sequence was stressed but not quality of movement, landings were rather heavy, rolls lacked coordination and the completion of sequences lacked polish. Progress slowed considerably when apparatus was used. Rather than being chosen selectively all available apparatus was brought out. This took time to assemble and dismantle and the hall became over crowded with equipment and mats. Even though pupils were careful, much of the teacher's attention was now properly focussed on ensuring safety and less time spent on developing good quality movement and exercise. Teaching assistants made sensitive and careful intervention to ensure that pupils with special needs made progress as good as their classmates.
166. In the juniors pupils are extending their range of games skills; Year 3 pupils were seen in an outdoor lesson learning some basic tennis skills. Pupils worked well in pairs and individually. The organisation and teaching of the lesson was effective and pupils handled the equipment sensibly. The teacher made good use of demonstration by pupils to emphasise learning points. This lesson was characterised by the effective use of praise to encourage and enhance pupil confidence. This good feature was seen in all physical education lessons. The timetable for outdoor games is in need of some review, as thirty minutes had been set aside for this outdoor games lesson. This included time for afternoon registration, and time for changing into and out of physical education kit. These activities were done quickly but still took up over a quarter of the time allocated; leaving insufficient time in the lesson to practice and consolidate taught skills.
167. There is no evidence of any pupils missing out on the broad range of physical activities that the school offers. Pupils who have special educational needs, have good opportunities to gain success and achieve well. They are given sensitive support when this is needed. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
168. There is a good range of extra-curricular sports activities provided by the school. A group of Year 2 and 3 pupils were seen taking part in a particularly well run Gymnastics Club. The preparation of members for national athletics awards helps sustain interest and has a positive impact on standards.
169. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has good subject knowledge, monitors teaching and learning through teacher planning and records, and has undertaken some paired observation of lessons with a senior member of staff. The subject leader also ensures that resources are adequate to support the curriculum. Potential to use teachers' expertise to provide demonstration physical education and games lessons and staff training are not yet fully utilised. Resources are generous and generally in good condition.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has maintained the good standards reported on at the time of the previous inspection. |
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- The overall good quality of the teaching ensures pupils make brisk progress in learning *from and about* religious education.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The well-planned curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion and role-play activities, to learn about a number of other world faiths, and to visit local places of worship.
- The subject leader provides good leadership and management.
- The school needs to develop procedures for assessing how well pupils are achieving in religious education.

170. Standards in religious education are average by the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress in the infant classes to build a platform of knowledge and skills that stands them in good stead for their work in the juniors. Progress is very good in Years 3 to 6. Due to the good quality of support they receive, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the other pupils. This picture reflects the situation at the time of the previous inspection, and demonstrates that the school has maintained the overall good standards that were achieved then as well ensuring that pupils continue to make brisk progress in learning. By the time they are ready to leave school pupils are able to discuss confidently aspects of religious concepts including prayer, worship, celebrations and symbolism. Pupils have a very good understanding and knowledge of the Christian faith through stories from the Old and New Testaments and visits to local churches. They are able to make comparisons of the similarities and differences between different religions, including Judaism, Islam and Sikhism, with Christianity.
171. Good attention is paid to pupils' personal development especially their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to work well co-operatively, and develop their understanding of moral and cultural issues through discussion opportunities. They show positive attitudes in lessons, concentrate well, and play a full part in all activities.
172. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, use effective teaching methods, and use time and resources well. They have very good management skills, and the quality of relationships is very high, which in turn reflects positively upon pupils' learning. Consequently, all pupils make steady and consistent progress. There was no discernible difference between the achievements of boys and girls. The subject leader is responsible for planning across the school, and this ensures consistency in the learning opportunities for pupils. However, the same level of work is provided for all groups and this sometimes results in a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The presentation of work is good with neat and tidy handwriting, and carefully illustrated with drawings and pictures. Pupils use skills learned in literacy lessons, and, for example, write imaginative letters to their parents purporting to come from a sight seeing visit to Bethlehem. Teachers use ICT presentations well as a focus for their lessons and this is very effective in capturing pupils' attention and in influencing their learning.
173. Pupils, in a skilfully taught Year 2 lesson, that provided a few moments of spirituality, learn to identify the Christian belief of God's creative powers through looking at images of the sea. They close their eyes and listen to the sound of the sea, and think of words that they feel aptly describe the sea and also describe God's power. They suggest words like *strong, mighty, powerful* and *angry*. One pupil chose *wonderful* because ...*the sea is wonderful and God made the world*. As pupils move through the school they build upon these early experiences, and make comparisons with the way other regard the natural environment. For example, in a Year 5 lesson they learn about the Buddhists' Five Precepts and the way they respect and care for the environment, and are constantly searching for alternative sources of energy to avoid polluting the natural world.
174. The good quality of the leadership and management of religious education has ensured that pupils throughout the school receive a well-planned curriculum to enable them all to develop the appropriate knowledge skills and understanding. She provides good support for her colleagues and has carried out monitoring activities to ensure that the standards of teaching and learning are meeting requirements. She has made adjustments to the subject planning to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion and debate. The use of assessment to identify the standards pupils reach in their work is currently quite informal, and needs to be formalised and more consistent through the school in order to be more effective.