

INSPECTION REPORT

LANE GREEN FIRST SCHOOL

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124174

Headteacher: Mrs. K. M. Bailey

Reporting inspector: Mr A. H. Markham
1390

Dates of inspection: 6th –9th May 2003

Inspection number: 248558

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bilbrook Road Codsall Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV8 1EU
Telephone number:	01902 842784
Fax number:	01902 842784
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Whitehouse
Date of previous inspection:	12th – 16th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1390	A.H. Markham	Registered inspector	Science Art Physical Education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	M. Davie	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
25778	A. Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Music Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
6169	M. Bradshaw	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Design and technology Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
12112	G. Carter	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education

3 Greenacres,
Puddletown,
Dorchester,
Dorset
DT2 8GF

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized first school with 233 pupils on roll aged from three to nine. The school is situated in Bilbrook, on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. Most pupils come from the immediate area, but in recent years a high proportion (currently 22 per cent) have come from Wolverhampton. The social circumstances of pupils are generally average, but the number entitled to free school meals (26%) has increased in the last two years. This is above average compared to schools nationally. A below average number of pupils (15 per cent) have special educational needs. Their main difficulties are moderate learning, emotional and behavioural problems, speech or communication problems and physical problems. Nine pupils (3.9 per cent) have a statement of special educational need, which is above average. There are 24 pupils from minority ethnic groups, ten having English as an additional language, but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. There are eight classes in the main school and a nursery. The average class size in the main school is 26 and six classes have mixed ages. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below average. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, a purpose built suite for information and communication technology (ICT) has been developed and improvements in general made to the building. There have been major staffing changes in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is successfully developing a team approach in the staff with a determined commitment to raising standards. The quality of teaching is good and this helps pupils to make good progress. The standards that seven year olds reach in national tests have been rising in recent years, although they are still not high enough in mathematics. Relationships in the school are very good and teachers successfully develop very positive attitudes and behaviour in pupils who, as a result, are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. The effective support provided for pupils with special educational needs helps them to have full access to all aspects of school life and to make good progress. The rate of improvement has accelerated since the new headteacher arrived and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership from the headteacher provides a clear educational direction.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Parents have very good views of the school.
- Relationships in the school are very good and successfully promote pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to school.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good.
- The nursery provides a very good start to education.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in ICT throughout the school.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and its use to inform planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in January 1998, improvement has been satisfactory. Standards in reading and writing have risen and are very good compared to those in similar schools. Standards in mathematics have also steadily risen but remain below average compared to similar schools. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good, with over two thirds of lessons seen being good or better and there is less unsatisfactory teaching than at the last inspection. The recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed but more remains to be done to improve standards in ICT and assessment procedures continue to need further attention. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved. There is a good strategic plan for the development of the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	E	B	C	A
writing	E	A	B	A
mathematics	E	D	E	D

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

The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 in national assessments in reading and writing have improved since 2000 and are now well above average in comparison with similar schools (those with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals). Results have risen steadily over four years at a greater rate than those nationally. Although there has been an improvement in performance in mathematics tests over the past four years, standards are still below those of similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that standards attained by pupils in Years 1 and 2 in reading and writing are average but standards in mathematics remain below average. In Years 3 and 4, average standards in English are maintained, but pupils make good progress in mathematics and standards are average by the end of Year 4. Teacher assessments in science show that the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard has been around average in the last two years. However, few pupils achieved higher standards in 2002. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in science are average.

Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music are average. In religious education, pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In physical education, standards are average at the end of Year 2 but above average by the end of Year 4. Standards in ICT are below average throughout the school. Insufficient attention has been given to teaching the basic skills as a result of inadequate resources and teachers lack confidence in the subject. These problems are being addressed and standards look set to rise.

Across the school as a whole, pupils achieve well in the light of their initial attainment, particularly in English. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress and many achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. They make particularly good progress in the nursery class. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately in relation to the targets on their individual education plans and make sound gains in learning. However, above average attaining pupils, who are few in number, could achieve more if they were sufficiently challenged.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic, work hard and keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal qualities are developed well. They co-operate well with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Below the national average. The school works hard to improve attendance but the situation is adversely affected by the number of pupils taking holidays in term time. A few pupils are frequently not punctual in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Virtually all teaching observed was satisfactory or better, seven out of ten lessons were at least good and three out of ten lessons were very good or excellent. Teaching in the Nursery is consistently very good. Strengths of teaching include teachers' subject knowledge, the good teaching of essential skills and very good relationships with pupils. Teachers plan effectively and manage pupils very well. Good use is made of the range of resources available, including classroom assistants. The pace of lessons is generally good, although less effective lessons are marked by not enough attention being given to meeting the needs of all pupils and the rate of learning consequently slows. The quality of teaching is helping to promote children's learning throughout the school and is the key factor that has resulted in the improving standards. Pupils show interest and concentrate well. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and other staff and, as a result, their progress is good.

The teaching of English is good throughout the school. In mathematics, it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers use pupils' literacy skills well to enhance learning in other subjects, but not enough use is made of ICT.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Insufficient attention is given to ICT and its use in other subjects across the curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Pupils are well supported, have full access to all aspects of school life and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Those pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral development is very good. Provision for spiritual and social development is good. Provision strongly supports pupils' positive attitudes, very good relationships and very good behaviour. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall satisfactory. Day-to-day care of pupils is good. However, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are limited and formal procedures to undertake risk assessments have not been completed.

The school works hard to develop effective links with parents. Communications are good and there is a supportive Friends Association. Partnership with parents has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher and is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	The headteacher provides strong leadership and has made a very positive impact on the work of the school since her appointment. She has successfully managed the high level of staff changes and has developed a hard working committed approach amongst the staff who work well together as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive and well informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and contribute effectively to its success. They fulfil their statutory duties, except for ensuring that there is a named governor responsible for ensuring that risk assessments with regard to health and safety are carried out.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place but assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory and fail to monitor adequately the progress made by pupils through the school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Staffing levels are satisfactory but changes in personnel have slowed improvement in the last two years. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Spending decisions are carefully based on the school's educational needs and priorities and money is spent wisely and effectively. The principles of 'best value' are satisfactorily implemented.

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. • Their children are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel well informed about how their children are doing. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. • Children are expected to do their best. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	

The great majority of parents are very positive about the school and its headteacher. The inspection questionnaires did not highlight any issues of major concern to them. They are particularly happy with the good relationships that teachers have with their children and the very good start to their education that children get in the nursery. The inspection team agrees with their positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children in nursery and reception make good progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most achieve, or in some cases exceed, the early learning goals¹. Children know that words have meaning and how books are read. They speak and listen well. Virtually all Reception children write their own names and form their letters carefully. Higher attaining children write sentences that make sense. Nursery children make good progress in their mathematical development, but progress slows in Reception. Although progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall, only about half the children achieve the early learning goals. Good progress in creative and physical development and in developing children's knowledge of the world means that most children achieve the expected standard by the time they start Year 1. However, there are limited opportunities for Reception children to extend physical skills associated with riding bikes and toys and climbing apparatus.
2. Results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated in the last few years, but there has been an improvement in the standards attained by pupils in the last two years. In 2002 results were average in reading and above average in writing in comparison to national figures. The number of pupils attaining higher levels in reading was above average and in writing the number was well above average. Results in reading and writing were well above average when compared to similar schools. Whilst the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard has steadily risen in the last four years, performance in mathematics in the 2002 tests was well below the national average although below average when compared to results in similar schools. The results of teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in science for 2002 were average overall, but few pupils achieved the higher levels.
3. On the evidence of the inspection, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are close to the national average, but better in reading than in writing. Most pupils have satisfactory skills in speaking and listening. They listen attentively in lessons and join in discussions enthusiastically. By the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils are fluent and confident readers. They use a range of strategies for attempting unknown words although some pupils are less skilled in using sounds to decipher words. Standards in writing are average. Most pupils write independently and use simple punctuation effectively, but many have a limited vocabulary and their stories lack imagination.
4. Standards are below average in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Higher attaining pupils have a secure understanding of the number system and are able to carry out written calculations accurately. Average and lower attaining pupils make mistakes in their number calculations because their skills are insecure. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of shape, measure and mathematical vocabulary.

¹ Early Learning Goals – these are goals for learning for children by the end of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes.) They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

5. Attainment in science in Years 1 and 2 is average. Pupils possess a sound scientific vocabulary and have a satisfactory grasp of the factual knowledge required by the National Curriculum. They are able to find answers to scientific questions by systematic investigation but their ability to make sensible predictions and observe changes is less well developed.
6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in English and science and standards are average. In literacy, pupils listen carefully to one another and their teachers. They give articulate, complete answers to questions and the majority of pupils are confident when asked to address the rest of the class. Most pupils are good readers. They read aloud clearly with understanding and discuss the characters and plot of stories confidently. They produce writing in a range of styles and the majority of pupils spell words correctly and use appropriate punctuation. However, few produce lengthy pieces of written work of high enough quality to achieve higher standards. In science, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of a range of topics and understand what is required for a test to be 'fair' when carrying out investigations. They are less skilled in designing their own experiments in order to test out their predictions.
7. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in mathematics and by the end of Year 4, standards have improved and are average. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the number system and use the four basic operations competently. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of shapes and their properties and different measures. The majority of pupils make good progress in developing their mental strategies and are able to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and to support their work in other subjects such as science.
8. The school has maintained the levels of attainment in English and mathematics described at the time of the previous inspection. Whilst standards in science are not as high as at the previous inspection by the end of Year 2, by the end of Year 4 they are similar. This is because of the low number of pupils achieving the higher levels in Year 2. Considering the numerous changes to staff, this is a good achievement.
9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average throughout the school. This is a similar position to the last inspection. The school has not kept up with the increased expectations of pupils in ICT. Prior to the recent opening of the computer suite, the subject received insufficient attention and pupils' basic skills are consequently under-developed. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have limited keyboard skills. However, they are developing an understanding of the different types of information and they use the computer to produce pieces of artwork using programs such as 'Paint' and 'Colour Magic'. By the end of Year 4, pupils' skills continue to be under-developed but there are signs that they are improving. For example, pupils have satisfactory skills in the use of branching databases having used this in their work in science on animal habitats. They can control a floor robot, making it move round a simple route. Their skills are less well developed in other aspects of the subject. For example, they have limited awareness of the appropriate 'tools' for checking spelling and reorganising text.
10. In religious education (RE), art, design and technology (DT), geography, history and music pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is average. Attainment in physical education (PE) is average at the end of Year 2 but above average by the end of Year 4. Pupils achieve well in this subject because of lively, enthusiastic teaching that motivates them to succeed.
11. Although the standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs in all year groups are often lower than those of their peers, they make good progress against the

targets set for them in their individual education programmes (IEPs). The progress made by pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is particularly worthy of praise, since although several such pupils are identified, there was no evidence of anything other than good behaviour during the inspection.

12. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including the small number of pupils with English as an additional language, make good progress and are achieving appropriately.
13. Test results over the past few years show variations in the relative performance of boys and girls, but overall that girls are performing a little better than boys by the end of Year 2. However, in the inspection, no significant variations in performance were noted in lessons or in the work seen for different subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The high standards found at the time of the last inspection have been successfully maintained. The school has worked very hard to maintain these very good attitudes and behaviour during a time when there has been a high level of staff turnover.
15. Children settle in nursery very quickly and make rapid strides in their personal development. They become confident and enjoy being involved. They persevere with tasks well and cooperate in a wide range of activities. Children relate well to their teachers and other adults and behave very well.
16. Pupils' very good attitudes to the school are a strength. When they arrive in the morning, they settle quickly and are ready to get on with their work. During lessons they move to their tasks with little fuss or disruption. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, following the teacher's introduction about place value, pupils got on with their tasks speedily, leading to a period of sustained concentration and a very good rate of learning. They also demonstrated their very good attitudes in the mental warm up to this lesson, by counting forward and backward in ones and twos attentively and enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs are nearly always as enthusiastic about learning as the rest of their peer group. The majority cooperates well in groups and contributes actively to class discussions. They are fully accepted by staff and pupils alike and included in all aspects of school life. Parents are pleased that their children take pride in their work and are keen to share it with them.
17. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is also very good. Unacceptable behaviour is rare, although two pupils were excluded for fixed periods last year because of aggression towards staff and other pupils; they have now both left the school. Pupils are very polite and kind and they are generally very well behaved in the dining hall. They enjoy themselves while playing outside, tag being a favourite game, and give a high rate of approval to the recently established quiet play area on the lower playground. Lessons move along at a good pace because pupils can be relied upon to behave well. This was demonstrated well in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson when their good behaviour allowed the teacher to whisk through the review of the previous lesson and quickly move on to new ideas.
18. Pupils' personal development is good. They respond positively to the responsibilities they are given around the school, such as register and dinner monitors. They demonstrate their thoughtfulness by the way they talk about the importance of the Friendship Bus Stop on the playground, where everyone keeps a look out for children who are lonely and looking for someone to play with. They are familiar with the school rules and try hard to follow them. The oldest in Year 4 are sensible and say they really

appreciate the patience the teachers show when helping them to learn. They talk about bullying and racism with a good deal of maturity and say that neither happens much. They are clear about what to do if they feel vulnerable and think that everyone should be treated equally because “although some of us are different on the outside, inside we are all the same.”

19. Relationships are very good throughout the school. All staff set a very high standard in the friendly and polite way they deal with pupils and other adults. Teachers have invariably established good relationships with the children in their classes and this means that pupils listen carefully and willingly benefit from constructive and helpful criticism of their work. Pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to develop their own initiative in lessons, using these successfully to improve their understanding and develop their independence. In a Year 3 and 4 ICT lesson, for example, they were encouraged to work at their own pace in order to secure their understanding and to move on only when they were ready. A strength in many lessons is pupils’ ability to work together. For instance in a Year 4 English lesson, they were successfully able to use one another as *critical friends*, evaluating each other’s written work in a supportive and honest way.
20. Attendance is below the national average and therefore unsatisfactory. This is mostly attributable to a very high number of pupils who take a family holiday during term time. In a typical year, about 30 per cent of pupils has a holiday during term. This year three of these were in excess of the ten days the school can authorise. Despite efforts by the school to discourage it, records show that many parents have taken their children out of school for a holiday again this year. This year’s figures will also be adversely affected because a large number of children were kept at home when two pupils at the school contracted meningitis. Punctuality in the morning is not as good as it should be, with some pupils regularly arriving a few minutes late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Pupils are well taught and this is helping to ensure a good pace of learning and improving achievement. During the inspection, virtually all teaching observed was at least satisfactory, most was good and over three out of ten lessons were very good or excellent. Overall there is little difference in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching in Nursery is very good, and teaching in the remainder of the school is good. The quality of teaching is better than that described in the last inspection report, despite recent staffing difficulties.
22. The teaching for Nursery and Reception children is good overall, and consistently very good in the Nursery. The teachers, often working closely with other adults, provide a stimulating learning environment. Careful attention is given to all areas of learning and the children are well prepared for entering Year 1. In particular, children’s confidence is boosted by the effective use of praise and carefully planned opportunities to develop independence. Children’s personal, social and emotional development is given good emphasis and, as a result, children share resources well and co-operate, for instance when tidying up after snack time. Teachers provide a good range of activities, which effectively promotes learning in language development. Early reading and writing skills are given a high priority. Mathematical skills are enhanced well in Nursery, but less emphasis is evident in the work of Reception children. Assessment is very well organised and the information gained is used effectively to plan activities. Most children concentrate very well and show confidence and independence. Most enjoy what they do and are confident to describe their thoughts and ideas to others in the class. Classroom assistants and other adults are used very effectively to help

Nursery and Reception children learn, and make a positive contribution to their progress.

23. The quality of teaching in the remainder of the school is good overall and virtually all is at least satisfactory. Teaching of English is good throughout Years 1 to 4, with examples of some very good lessons. In mathematics, it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 and 4. In other subjects, teaching in Years 1 to 4 is rarely less than satisfactory, and usually good or better. It is good in science, ICT, and PE. It is also good in art and design, and in geography in Years 1 and 2. The strengths of teaching are similar throughout the school; there are few weaknesses. Pupils' learning in the lessons observed was mostly good or better. This was because of the high proportion of good or very good teaching, which ensures pupils' good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good; effective in-service support following the previous inspection has helped to improve staff expertise in subjects such as DT although there remain weaknesses in ICT. Teachers usually challenge pupils effectively in their work. However, higher attaining pupils are not always extended sufficiently. Literacy is well taught and pupils' literacy skills are used well in other subjects, including the development of speaking and listening. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4.
24. Teachers and other adults manage pupils very effectively, so that high standards of behaviour are always evident. Lesson planning is generally good and pupils know what they are to learn and why. A range of methods is used well. Very good use is made of classroom assistants and other adults during lessons. Teachers know their pupils very well and check pupils' progress in lessons effectively. The quality of marking is variable but satisfactory overall, although there is not always sufficient guidance on helping pupils to understand how they can improve. With the exception of lessons that are satisfactory, the pace of lessons is good and pupils learn well. Resources are used effectively to support learning. In lessons that are satisfactory, there is not always enough attention given to meeting the needs of all pupils. Little use is made of ICT in lessons to support pupils' progress. In some subjects, such as DT, the lack of detailed curricular guidance limits the quality of teaching and its impact on standards.
25. Teachers are very aware of the range of pupils' special educational needs represented in the school. They plan carefully to meet these needs, usually following the requirements of IEPs. The practice of setting (grouping pupils by prior levels of attainment) ensures that help is concentrated in the most needy groups and that work is adequately matched to learning styles. Trained and experienced classroom assistants give good support to these pupils and ensure that they have full access to the curriculum. Where pupils' difficulties lie beyond the usual range found in schools, outside professionals help to design special programmes which are implemented by teachers or teaching assistants in order to help pupils to overcome their problems. The use of structured programmes such as Additional Literacy Support, Early Literacy Support or Springboard also helps pupils to move forward in their learning.

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

26. Children in the nursery and reception classes experience an interesting and well-planned curriculum, which helps them make good progress in most areas of learning. The environment provided for Nursery children is especially exciting. All adults working in the Foundation Stage give good attention to children's personal

development. Expectations are made very clear and children encouraged to behave well, listen to each other and to adults and to share in activities, including clearing up. As Reception children grow older, literacy and numeracy sessions are sensibly modified to prepare them for the more formal lessons in Year 1. Children are helped to appreciate different cultures, such as through work on the Chinese New Year and differences in individuals, for example, by mixing paint to produce different skin tones. The children's experiences in both Reception and Nursery are aided by the effective use of a wide range of visitors.

27. In Years 1 to 4, the school provides a broad range of learning opportunities that are relevant to pupils' needs and promote their academic and personal development.
28. Planning has improved since the last inspection to take account of weaknesses identified at that time. It is now good for English, mathematics and science and satisfactory for other subjects. Appropriate time is allocated to each subject and statutory requirements are met. Teachers plan satisfactorily for the different ages of pupils in the mixed age classes throughout Years 1 to 4. They prepare detailed long, medium and short term plans for English, mathematics and science. These show well what pupils are to learn and how they are to be taught. In other subjects, effective use is made of national guidelines as a basis for curriculum planning. Improved consistency in planning since the last inspection now ensures that learning in most subjects builds steadily on what has gone before.
29. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are successfully implemented throughout the school. For example, pupils use their letter writing skills in history when learning about the life of Florence Nightingale. Pupils also make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, when studying the local area in geography, they undertake surveys to find out what types of houses are found in Bilbrook and draw graphs of their results.
30. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Procedures to identify gifted and talented pupils are in the early stages of development, but interim arrangements are in place to ensure that the needs of particular pupils are met. For example, a talented musician receives tuition from staff at the adjoining middle school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The majority of pupils with special educational needs follow the mainstream curriculum along with their peers. The support of designated classroom assistants and the practice of setting or grouping generally ensures that they have full access to the same educational opportunities as any other pupil. Pupils with special educational needs join in extra-curricular activities along with their peers and have the same opportunities as any others to take responsibility or work cooperatively.
31. The school provides a good range of sports, music and other activities outside normal lessons. These are popular with pupils and places are taken up very quickly. Provision is better than at the last inspection. The school makes satisfactory use of the local community to support teaching and learning. For instance, local clergy visit the school regularly and, in return, the school uses local churches for end of term services. Pupils visit places such as Shugborough Hall to investigate life in Victorian times. Visitors such as the local police constable and a train driver work with pupils on the dangers of playing near railway lines.
32. Links with other schools are satisfactory. Regular meetings with local schools to transfer information, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, ensure that pupils move smoothly from one stage of their education to the next. Teachers visit

other schools to share in training activities, for example in keeping up-to-date with child protection legislation.

33. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. This includes a new programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). In Years 1 to 4, pupils have regular lessons in which they discuss matters such as the importance of healthy eating. Sex and health education and drug awareness issues are treated appropriately for pupils of their age and are often linked, for instance, to science and PE lessons.
34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers give regular opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss a range of beliefs in a climate where they can express views that differ from the rest but, know they will not be criticised for holding them. Teachers value pupils' contributions and encourage children to make connections between different areas of learning. Success is celebrated and shared with parents through assemblies and the 'postcard home'² system. These strategies help to develop an ethos in which pupils can flourish. Class and whole school assemblies give time for reflection and allow children to offer their own prayers. This allows pupils to think quietly and form their own views about spiritual matters. RE contributes well to the spiritual provision in the school, as in a Year 1 and 2 lesson where pupils wondered at the mystery of beauty and creation as well as at the responsibility of caring for the world.
35. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The code of behaviour in the school is adhered to consistently, with rules on display in classrooms and staff referring to them when they deal with any small incident or misdemeanour. All staff set an excellent example of caring and responsible behaviour, dealing openly and honestly with pupils and apologising if they realise they have perceived a situation wrongly. This allows pupils, too, to own up to difficulties, either in their learning or in their relationships with their peer group.
36. Provision for social development is good. There are many opportunities in lessons in all classes for pupils to work together cooperatively and they become mature and sensitive to each other's needs as a result. By Year 4, pupils show that they can act as critical friends to peers in their work. They develop a sensitive awareness of how positive attitudes can overcome criticism and hostility. They undertake small tasks in the school, which they carry out with an increasing sense of trustworthiness and responsibility.
37. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst subjects such as English use high quality resources, such as attractive books and taped stories, to attract and motivate pupils, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to experience drama or music within the school setting. Few visits are made to the outside community in RE and history. An artist in residence has produced beautiful ceramic murals with the pupils, but the amount of art work based on observation of famous painters is relatively limited.
38. Although the school is planning a multicultural week later in the term, awareness of cultural diversity does not significantly underpin the curriculum. There are a few displays of art and artefacts from other countries and some welcome signs in different languages. Festivals of other religions are celebrated in assembly.

² A postcard is sent through the post to parents of pupils who have done particularly well. Many parents indicated how pleased they were with this procedure and that they have a very positive effect on pupils self-esteem.

However, there is little evidence of real promotion of learning about other faiths and cultures within the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Children in Nursery and Reception receive very good care and support. Adults know the children very well and guide them carefully in all their activities. Formal assessment systems in Nursery and Reception are used very effectively to monitor children's progress, assess the effectiveness of teaching and inform planning. In addition, in virtually every lesson, careful observation of groups of children or individuals is used to record strengths and weaknesses. This information is used to help group children and provide necessary support.
40. Pupils continue to be looked after well by caring staff throughout Years 1 to 4. Systems for taking care of pupils are satisfactory overall, but there are some shortcomings in the steps it takes to ensure that academic progress is monitored and supported. A good level of care is given to pupils with special educational needs. Statutory requirements, such as annual reviews of statements, are carried out appropriately, and IEPs are reviewed termly by class teachers and any other professionals involved. This ensures that pupils' progress is regularly monitored and that appropriate action is taken if required.
41. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection issues. She has had training in this role and ensures that all staff are up to date with current procedures in order to provide care and safety for pupils. Staff have a good awareness of the children's' healthcare needs, ensuring the safe administration of medication and dealing with accidents and emergencies sensibly. Health and safety continue to be taken seriously. The building and grounds are regularly checked to make sure pupils are working in a safe environment and risk assessments are carried out. However, just as at the time of the last inspection, the governors do not have a named person responsible for ensuring that any areas of concern are followed up. Good systems have been introduced by the new headteacher to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed and updated, however there is no policy to deal with drug related incidents.
42. Procedures to ensure that pupils behave themselves are very good. The policy has been updated recently and provides a very good framework for staff to follow. All staff have had recent training and outside support agencies have been used well to support the work of the school. The prospectus states that the school aims *to create a happy and stimulating environment, which develops positive attitudes and relationships*; it does this successfully. Children are supervised well on the playground and say that they enjoy the company of the lunchtime supervisors. Mealtimes are well organised and provide a calm atmosphere in which pupils eat their dinner.
43. Good behaviour and hard work are regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Pupils collect and wear their stickers with pride and wait with bated breath during Friday's assembly to hear which planet has the most house points. Friday's assembly is also used to make special mention of pupils who have been kind and caring or demonstrated good achievement in their lessons. The headteacher acts as an excellent role model to the whole school community during these occasions. She demonstrates her high expectations in the caring way she reminds pupils to always say "please" and "thank you" when given an award and to present themselves in the best possible light by standing with their hands out of their pockets and their uniforms neat and tidy. Parents are very pleased with this aspect of their children's

development, as they feel the positive praise they receive helps them to understand expectations and learn to become responsible.

44. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers continue to be kept efficiently and the value of good attendance is celebrated through the award of certificates. Parents are reminded about the impact that poor attendance has on their children's achievements and requested to think about going away during school holidays. There is, however, no first day contact for absent pupils whose parents do not contact the school. Not enough has been done since the time of the last inspection to improve punctuality in the morning.
45. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their academic progress remain unsatisfactory, although the staff has done much work since the time of the last inspection to improve them. A high level of staff turnover and illness, coupled with the introduction of a system that proved to be unmanageable, has meant that progress in this area has been very slow. Additionally, a project with other schools in the area to computerise assessment data was not as successful as hoped. Whilst pupils' progress is monitored from the time they enter the school, the information is not analysed in order to inform planning and the setting of targets for pupils' attainment. The present procedures do not enable the school to make reliable forecasts about future attainment, including that of individuals and groups, so that gaps in pupils' understanding can quickly be addressed. Specific whole class targets are set by teachers for English and mathematics but are not used consistently or systematically enough as a tool to help pupils raise their attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Good links exist with parents before children start in the Nursery. All are able to visit the school with their children and this helps the settling in process. Parents also complete a valuable assessment document, which Nursery staff use to guide their work. The written reports on nursery children are detailed and give a clear picture of each child's strengths and weaknesses and how parents can help their children to improve.
47. Parents generally have very positive views about the school. They are particularly happy with the good relationships that teachers have with their children, commenting that *teachers know the children so well, that they get the best out of them*. They are also rightly pleased with the very good start to their education that children get in the Nursery. The vast majority of parents feel that staff are very approachable and willing to listen to their concerns. They all feel that the school has improved since the last inspection and are particularly happy with the headteacher's caring approach, high expectations and by how quickly she has got to know all of the children. They were impressed with the way the school handled the recent meningitis outbreak.
48. Two issues of concern were raised at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection: the traffic hazard caused by parents dropping off their children in the morning and the smoking of some parents in the playground while waiting to collect their children. The school is very aware of the high level of concern that both these issues cause. They are consulting with the local authority to try to find a way to ease the traffic problem in the interest of safety and will be consulting with the neighbouring middle school to try to formulate a mutual procedure for dealing with smoking on the site.
49. Links with parents are satisfactory. Efforts are being made to ensure that parents are consulted, for example, by way of a recent questionnaire, which was analysed and acted upon. Parents felt that homework procedures were not as clear as they would

like; the school therefore amended the regular curriculum information given to parents at the beginning of each school year to include homework requirements for each class. Most parents say they are now happy with the amount of homework set and with communications they receive about it. Newsletters are nicely presented and informative, always sent out on a Friday so that parents know when to look for them. They also give very good notice of forthcoming events and important dates to remember, such as staff training days. The governors' annual report has been improved since the time of the last inspection and now contains all of the required information and the prospectus is currently being reprinted with correct information. Parents have expressed interest in attending workshops about the work their children are doing at school, particularly in literacy, numeracy and ICT, but, because of staff turnover and illness, no workshops have taken place recently.

50. Parents are generally happy with the annual written reports they receive about their child and appreciate the regular sharing of individual learning targets. However, inspection evidence shows that there is too much variation in the quality of reports throughout the school, particularly in the information they give about progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's needs and progress. They are consulted about IEPs at parents' evenings or invited to come into school to discuss them if matters are urgent. They are always consulted in advance of annual reviews of statements and their comments are noted at the meeting itself. There is a good level of consultation between the school and outside professionals when the need arises.
51. The school has a very successful Friends Association, which is supported by parents, staff and the community. The committee is very enthusiastic and successfully organises activities such as the summer fayre, discos and visits by entertainers such as *Clown World* for the enjoyment of the school community. The funds raised are much appreciated by the school and have helped to purchase computer equipment and to pay for minor building works.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. Her strong leadership gives a clear educational direction to the school. She has worked hard to successfully develop a co-operative spirit amongst staff and create a committed and hard working team. Since her appointment the headteacher has introduced a number of changes. For example, she has developed effective curriculum planning procedures and introduced good procedures for monitoring and developing teaching. As a result, staff morale has been raised and the quality of teaching improved. The school successfully pursues its mission statement to be 'caring and achieving to realise the full potential of all'. This results in an effective learning environment with all pupils being happy and confident learners.
53. The headteacher has good management skills. These are evident in the way she delegates responsibility and develops the staff. Subject co-ordinators now have a clear view of their role. They evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum by monitoring planning, scrutinising pupils' work and observing colleagues teach. All co-ordinators produce detailed action plans for developments in their subjects. Subject management is continually being developed within the school and is an important factor in the improvement in standards attained. The Foundation Stage is well managed and the teamwork between the three teachers and other adults is effective in ensuring that children progress well in a happy, stimulating environment. The strengths of individuals are used to good effect.

54. Performance management arrangements are well defined and the process used well to support issues in the school development plan. Personal targets for improvement are discussed and agreed with individual teachers as a result of classroom observations, school evaluation and school improvement targets. A lot of time and effort has gone into ICT training this year, with the school taking full advantage of the government's scheme. New members of staff are inducted effectively into procedures in the school. Effective use is made of staff training opportunities to support particular priorities. Day-to-day running of the school is well organised and routines carried out effectively.
55. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are satisfactory overall. The outcomes of the evaluation are used in development planning. The school's development plan covers the areas for improvement well. It concentrates appropriately on raising standards in mathematics and ICT and developing systems for assessing pupils' progress. The plan includes in its scope, the curriculum, buildings and resources and is an effective tool for improvement. Although the plan gives a clear direction to the work of the school and there is a positive drive to raise standards, assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently organised to support this. For example, pupils' results in various school and national tests are not carefully analysed in order to inform planning.
56. The policy for special educational needs (SEN) is fully up to date and covers all the relevant points concerning identification and school practice, staff roles and responsibilities. The governor for SEN is involved and committed and visits the school regularly. The SEN budget is appropriately spent on support for the designated pupils. Staff are kept well informed of advice from outside agencies and often attend courses to enable them to support pupils more effectively. The special needs coordinator is currently the head teacher who is very effective in her role. However, the burden of time taken to do the job efficiently is considerable and the appointment of a SEN coordinator should be a priority for the future.
57. The work of the governing body is well organised and governors have a clear view of the strengths and areas needing improvement in the school. Individual governors are linked to a subject in order to gain a clear picture of the work of the school. There is a clear committee structure. The school benefits from the wide range of experience, expertise and local knowledge that the governing body represents. Governors use their expertise well to support the school, for example, a governor with building experience made careful checks to ensure that recent building works were implemented effectively. The governors examine evidence and challenge decisions in order to ensure that the school is competitive and has a suitably long-term strategic plan for improvement. The school's ethos effectively promotes racial equality, as is evident from the very good relationships between pupils. The policy for racial equality is clearly translated into practice.
58. Financial planning, control and day-to-day management of accounts are very good. Spending is carefully targeted on the priorities in the school development plan. Specific grants are used for their intended purpose. The headteacher and governors maintain close oversight of finances and ensure that money is spent in order to get the best value. All the recommendations made in the last local authority audit report have been dealt with.
59. The level of staffing is good, but the recent high number of changes has adversely affected stability of staffing. The headteacher and governors are aware of the problems this creates and are working hard to find a solution. Teachers have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience and there is a good number of

support staff. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses are knowledgeable and versatile and promote pupils' learning effectively. The school purchases the services of a pianist twice a week to support teachers and this is enhancing provision in music and supporting the raising of standards.

60. School administration is very effective and efficient. The secretaries carry out a varied range of responsibilities and make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. A very good standard of maintenance and cleanliness is ensured by the caretaker and cleaning staff, who take a pride in their work.
61. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, resources for ICT have improved and the ratio of pupils to computers is now good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the outside area for the Foundation Stage children is rather cramped and not easy for one Reception class to access. Although often used very imaginatively, there is insufficient space for a whole class to work together. The main school library area is also rather small. The school has made effective use of funding to make improvements to the building. A new entrance area has been built with medical room facilities and office space has been enlarged. The school is bright and attractive with high quality displays of work used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to create a stimulating environment for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To continue to improve the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1). Raise attainment in mathematics in Years 1 and 2*, by:
- Increasing the level of challenge in work presented to pupils.
 - Raising teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve.
 - Using assessment information to set targets for improvement.
(Paragraphs 4, 82, 86, 88.)
- (2). Improve standards in ICT*, by:
- Developing the subject knowledge and confidence of staff,
 - Ensuring that pupils are taught ICT regularly.
 - Establishing procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
 - Improving pupils' use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
(Paragraphs 9, 112, 116, 117.)
- (3). Improve procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress*, by:
- Developing the present approach to monitoring pupils' to include all subjects in order to check the progress they make and the standards they achieve.
 - Analysing assessment information in order to inform planning and set targets for pupils' attainment.
(Paragraphs 45, 55, 93, 106, 121, 130.)

* *These issues have been identified by the school and are included in the school development plan*

Minor Issues

Improve the attendance of pupils, by:

- Continuing to make parents aware of the importance of regular attendance.
(Paragraph 44)

The Governing Body should:

- Ensure that there is a named governor responsible for risk assessments being carried out and any areas of concern followed up.
(Paragraphs 41)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	22	15	1	0	0
Percentage	2	30	39	27	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	31

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	21	21	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	18
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	34	36	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (89)	86 (87)	90 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	20
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	32	33	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (82)	79 (87)	95 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	132	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	1	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	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

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	9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

Total income	517260
Total expenditure	504370
Expenditure per pupil	2165
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	12890

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	257
Number of questionnaires returned	107

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	35	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	49	11	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	7	3	4
The teaching is good.	51	42	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	50	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	37	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	46	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	45	6	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	39	50	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	2	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	10	0	21

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

Personal, social and emotional development

63. The previous report indicated that provision in nursery and reception was a strength of the school. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, maintaining the strengths identified then. Children are prepared well for their transfer to Year 1. Teaching is good overall. This results in children making good progress. Those in the Nursery in particular learn in a very stimulating environment, receive very good teaching and have effective support from other adults. Children in Reception are also well taught, with very positive relationships built up between adults and children. Teaching is effective in promoting the development of skills across all areas of learning, but, in particular, in aspects of literacy, knowledge of the world and personal development. When children start Nursery their attainment covers a broad range but is average overall. However, not all children in the Nursery transfer to the school's Reception classes, for instance, it is likely that only 28 of the current 43 Nursery children will transfer to Reception in September. Other children will move to different schools. The school's information shows that those who transfer to Reception tend to have had below average attainment when starting Nursery.
64. A good curriculum covers all the areas of learning. All children have good access to the curriculum and benefit from a wide range of activities and experiences. Assessment arrangements are very good with extensive information gathered across all areas of learning. Initial information and assessment data are regularly updated during the Nursery and Reception years to check on children's progress and to refine further the teaching. More formal assessments are also completed and analysed. These demonstrate, for instance, the good progress children make in mathematical development in the Nursery. The teachers identify children with specific educational needs and, where appropriate, produce IEPs to support their learning. These plans, together with the support of good classroom assistants, help children to make good progress and to grow in confidence.
65. Effective admission arrangements are in place. Links with local pre-school playgroups are well developed. Nursery children visit their Reception classes in the summer term prior to transfer in a well-organised scheme involving local schools. Children settle easily into Nursery, and rapidly become confident and independent.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority. Children make very good progress and almost all meet, and many exceed, the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. The very good progress is due to very well organised teaching throughout the whole school day. When children first enter Nursery, they are expected to take responsibility for their own possessions and to help with tasks around the classroom, such as clearing up or folding the tablecloth after snack time. During the day, Reception children begin to record accurately the independent activities they have completed. Children follow routines very well, share resources, and work and play with others without any problems. They have the confidence to answer questions and share their thoughts during whole-class activities. Teachers give children the chance to be independent, make choices about their activities and lead whole-class sessions. In Nursery, for instance, a boy was asked to lead the

children in keeping to his clapping rhythm and actions as others cleared away after snacks. In the outside area, the teacher encouraged a group of children to work together as a team as they explored “the surface of the planet they had flown to”. Teachers are very good at inviting children to contribute their own ideas. Children are encouraged to work independently and co-operate, such as in role-play in the castle and library. When sitting on the carpet, children are encouraged to listen carefully, to both the teacher and other children. Very good teaching helps to ensure significant progress in this area from the moment children start school.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Teaching is good in this area and children are supported well. Children make good progress and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most are on course to attain the early learning goals. Teachers plan many opportunities to encourage speaking and listening. The majority of children listen well and speak clearly. Replies to questions are mainly in short sentences. Good opportunities are taken by the teachers and other adults to increase the range and use of children’s vocabulary, for instance when engaged in role-play or art activities. When they start Nursery, children’s knowledge and understanding of stories and use of print are about average, or a little below. Through the effective use of stories, books and individual sessions, children make good progress. They handle books carefully, know that the pages are turned from right to left and understand the difference between words and pictures.
68. By the end of Reception, all children know that print carries meaning and that, in English, the page is read from left to right. Lower attaining children know initial sounds, but do not recognise or read many words. They use pictures well to explain what is happening. Higher attaining children read simple sentences well, talk about what they have read and build up words from the initial sounds. Virtually all children write their own name. Lower attaining children copy letters and words written for them. Higher attaining children write simple, understandable sentences, with spellings that are accurate or recognisable. Many children show examples of very good progress in developing handwriting skills; during two terms in Reception many average attaining children move from writing poorly formed or unrecognisable letters to ones which are clear and consistent in size. Assessment is well organised and teachers use this information effectively to help children improve, such as encouraging them to put spaces between words. The arrangements for teaching literacy are good. Whole class teaching introduces children to important areas such as stories, words, letters, sounds and simple punctuation.

Mathematical development

69. When children enter Nursery, their attainment is mostly average or below average compared with that of children of a similar age. Provision for the development of mathematical skills, including number and associated language, is very good in Nursery. However, progress slows in Reception because less emphasis is given to mathematical development than to communication and language. Teaching and children’s progress are satisfactory overall but only about half the children in Reception are on course to meet the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Through very good teaching in the Nursery, children develop a good understanding of numbers to ten. Songs and role-play help to consolidate number skills, such as when counting down for the ‘rocket’s’ take off. In Reception, a range of activities and satisfactory teaching reinforces number knowledge to ten and mathematical vocabulary such as longer and shorter. Knowledge of flat and solid shapes develops satisfactorily. Most children recognise shapes such as a square, rectangle, triangle, cube and sphere. The amount of mathematical work recorded in Reception is quite

limited and because it is mixed up with other subjects, it is difficult to analyse the progression in children's knowledge and skills. In focused mathematical sessions, good attention is given to the teaching of specific number knowledge and skills, such as estimation, but not enough thought is given to developing these in other activities planned within the classrooms.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Provision and teaching in this area of learning are good. Children enter Nursery with attainment that is about average compared with that of children of a similar age. They make good progress in most areas and, by the time they reach the end of Reception, most attain, or exceed, the standards expected. In the Nursery, stimulating teaching, based on space travel and the planets, resulted in a good awareness of features of the universe. The outdoor area was used very well to stimulate role-play related to space travel and visiting other planets or, as the teacher said, 'to infinity and back'. Well-organised science work developed knowledge of water flow through pipes when looking at the building of houses using a 'Bob the Builder' theme. The role-play castle was used very effectively to develop an awareness of life in the past, with children painting jousting scenes and knights in shining armour. In Reception, children learn about how tadpoles have to be cared for and that they grow into frogs. Using drawings, children in Nursery and Reception retell the Christmas story, including the journey to Bethlehem. Geography skills associated with maps are developed very effectively through identifying various locations around the school, drawing 'sound maps' during a school walk and recording the journey around the 'new planet' they visited. Children control the computer mouse with satisfactory skill and use ICT well to draw pictures of houses. They learn to control a programmable toy to successfully demolish a wall they had built. Following a visit of the guinea pigs, Ant and Dec, children designed and built homes for them using recycled materials.

Physical development

71. Teaching is good and children achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of Reception. The secure outdoor area is used well by the Nursery children to climb, balance and to ride and pedal wheeled toys. However, it is not easily accessible for Reception children and consequently they do not have enough opportunity to develop skills associated with riding wheeled vehicles or climbing suitable apparatus. The shortage of space also restricts opportunities for children to cooperate and to become aware of each other's space. This slows the progress they make in this aspect of their physical development, but their movement skills are developed well in PE lessons. For example, in a lesson with a Reception class, good teaching led to improvement in skills associated with ball handling. Children responded quickly to the teacher's instructions and they concentrated and behaved very well. Dexterity is developed through well-planned sessions to handle objects, such as puzzles, pegs, jigsaws and construction apparatus.

Creative development

72. Displays of good quality artwork demonstrate that children progress well in this area. Good teaching encourages children to use a variety of media, including paint, pencils, crayons and recycled objects. Children used paint to good effect to recreate the picture of 'The Giant Wave off Kanagawa' by Hokusai. Children's creative skills develop well; they control pencils, paint and crayons well when colouring in shapes and pictures they have drawn. Children show a good awareness of the use of colour when mixing paints to develop 'skin tone' colours. Children enjoyed listening to part of Holst's 'The Planets Suite' and described how the music of different planets made

them feel. In Nursery, very good teaching and effective support helped children perform well when singing a range of different songs. In assembly, Reception children join in enthusiastically with other children. Good opportunities are provided for role-play. While working in the library, Reception children checked books in and out, stamping the card as necessary. Nursery children cooperated well when cleaning out the 'castle'. Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure children make good progress. Most achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

ENGLISH

73. Standards in English by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are average compared to those expected nationally. Whilst attainment in reading is a strength, especially in Year 2, not many pupils attain higher levels in writing. However, standards in writing have improved, despite a changing intake. Pupils build on secure foundations in their learning and make satisfactory progress during their time in school.
74. Standards in speaking and listening are average. All teachers actively promote speaking and listening by skilful questioning, the use of drama and role-play and the conscious and careful teaching of new vocabulary. Year 1 and 2 pupils listen well in lessons and speak out confidently. However, their underlying difficulties in spoken language continue to show up, for example when they are asked to take part in a role-play of the story of Florence Nightingale, and they find it difficult to know what to say without a model to follow. In Years 3 and 4, they gain more confidence, become more used to acting in character and show that they can use spoken language in a variety of different ways to persuade, convince, recount or describe. They learn the new vocabulary taught in subjects such as science or geography well. However, in English, where the range of vocabulary required to express clearly, creatively and imaginatively is less clear-cut, they rarely reach the higher levels of self-expression that would help them later in their free writing.
75. Pupils do well in reading in all year groups and their progress is good. Overall standards are slightly above average. The school has recently invested in a range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction books, which has inspired pupils to want to read and to enjoy the experience. In Year 2, the majority of pupils are fluent and confident readers, using sounds, picture and context cues to help them along. However, a few pupils are still reluctant to use sounds and this is an aspect of reading that the school needs to concentrate on further. There are very few pupils who fail to make satisfactory progress in reading by the end of Year 2, because the school identifies them early, and puts in place a range of support strategies to help them.
76. Pupils in Year 4 are often independent readers, beginning to develop their own preferences for types of books and different authors. Activities such as the book club and book fairs help pupils to get an idea of a wide range of writers and illustrators and many become really enthusiastic about reading. They know how to retrieve information from non-fiction books and develop strong views about the plots and characters of stories. Even lower attaining readers are able to access most of the information they need to follow the curriculum in all subjects. They are developing sufficient fluency in reading to have their own views and opinions about what they read. Progress in reading is supported well by the home-school reading programme and by the efforts made by staff to ensure that pupils are heard to read regularly.
77. Standards in writing are no more than average in Years 1 to 4. This is largely because very few pupils have the range of vocabulary or the creative imagination required to use language to create special effects in their writing. However, the

school's recent focus on handwriting and presentation is bearing fruit and many pupils are producing neat, completed work that is clearly dated and well laid out. The spelling strategies of Year 2 pupils are often inaccurate but phonetically plausible. However, the consistent approach to spelling now adopted by the school is helping pupils to get to grips with irregular common words and to develop good strategies for learning new words. For example, the use of 'spelling machines' (devices to encourage pupils to memorise the look of words rather than copying blindly), helps pupils in Years 3 and 4 to learn practical techniques for remembering words.

78. By the end of Year 2, many pupils write independently, are beginning to spell accurately and use simple punctuation effectively. They enjoy writing stories and can also do straightforward tasks such as writing questions about the life and times of Florence Nightingale that they then answer by referring to a book. However, few pupils are capable of producing the kind of imaginative writing that would give them an above average level of achievement.
79. By Year 4, pupils have gained a wide experience of writing for a range of different audiences and purposes. However, despite good teaching, only a few pupils manage to sustain their ideas in a way that is relevant to the purpose for which they are writing, or to use language to create suspense or effect. This limits the amount of high achievement reached. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils spell and punctuate at least at an average level and are confident about getting their ideas down on paper.
80. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are carefully planned to cover all the strands of the national literacy strategy and pupils are well managed and supported. Many teachers use lively games and activities to demonstrate and practise routine aspects of the subject such as blending sounds or learning compound words. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and given extra help in withdrawal groups or supported by experienced and well-trained classroom assistants in lessons. Pupils' self-esteem is developed well as teachers value all their contributions to lessons, often using an inappropriate answer effectively to help the whole class to overcome a particular difficulty. The organising of classes into sets enables teachers to match work more accurately to pupils' needs. However, in a few cases, activities for pupils working both above and below the normal range are not sufficiently adapted to maximise their progress. The quality of resources enriches lessons because pupils are enthusiastic about the material they are studying and are motivated to do their best.
81. The subject is well led by a committed and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a very clear view of what she wants to achieve and how to attain it. Her own love of literature and story, together with her high expectations of what pupils can do is an inspiration to other staff. Cross-curricular links, especially with history, are strong and help to enhance pupils' performance.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. Current Year 2 pupils have made satisfactory progress overall, but too few pupils reach higher levels of attainment. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make good progress and reach expected levels of performance by the time they leave the school.
83. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils add and subtract numbers up to 100 without error. Average and lower attaining pupils are less confident and make mistakes, although their accuracy improves over the year. Pupils are developing sound problem solving skills because there has been an increased focus on this

aspect of work. They are beginning to learn multiplication tables and higher attaining pupils use them for division. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes and measure familiar objects in metres and centimetres.

84. By the end of Year 4, pupils add and subtract whole numbers using a good range of mental and more formal written methods. Higher attaining pupils also use standard written methods for multiplication; their work using whole numbers, decimals and money is generally secure. Pupils find the area and perimeter of simple shapes and many are beginning to understand rules such as 'area equals length times width' to calculate the area of a rectangle. Pupils have a sound grasp of the metric system of measurement and know, for example, that 132 centimetres can be written in decimal form as 1.32 metres.
85. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. Lesson plans are detailed and show clearly how activities are matched to the differing learning needs of pupils. However, pupils' work over the whole year shows that the pace of learning in Years 1 and 2 is slower than in Years 3 and 4 and the level of challenge in work set for higher attaining pupils does not increase quickly enough. As a result, progress is satisfactory, rather than good, in Years 1 and 2 with too few pupils at present reaching higher levels of attainment.
86. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes very well. This encourages a positive response from pupils, who generally behave well and have good work habits. Pupils work well individually and in pairs and lessons proceed calmly. Teachers are familiar with the national numeracy strategy and lessons follow the recommended three-part structure. Most lessons begin with lively mental sessions that engage pupils actively from the start. For example, in a lesson with Years 1 and 2, the use of 'talking partners' helped pupils to learn from each other as they discussed how to turn an addition sum into a corresponding subtraction sum. Lessons usually move on at a satisfactory pace but occasionally discussions are too long. This leads to fidgeting, reduces the time available for pupils' written work and restricts their progress. Although some teachers do it well, questioning pupils at the end of each lesson to revise what has been taught and to assess what they have understood is not a strong feature of teaching.
87. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because classroom assistants support them well, especially when working together in a group. Support assistants keep pupils well focused on what they should be doing and check work so that errors are quickly corrected. However, at times they could ask more searching questions, for example, to develop pupils' understanding of **why** the hundreds figure is the most important when sorting three-digit numbers into order of size.
88. Subject management is satisfactory overall, a new co-ordinator having just taken up her post. The national numeracy strategy is well established, but systems for assessing pupils' progress and the use of assessment information to guide planning, for example in setting individual learning targets, are unsatisfactory. There are sufficient resources for mathematics, but teachers do not use ICT sufficiently to support teaching and learning.

SCIENCE

89. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 4 are average. These standards are slightly below those at the previous inspection as a result of the changing characteristics of

the intake of pupils. However, considering pupils' below average skills on entry, the standards attained indicate satisfactory achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, progress in the development of their scientific enquiry skills is less well developed.

90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the life cycle of a frog, can name the parts of the human body, understand the conditions necessary for a plant to grow and know that a circuit has to be complete in order for a bulb to light. They know that some foods keep us healthy. Effective use is made of role-play in PSHE lessons to develop pupils' awareness of which foods are healthy when they enact making choices of what they want to eat. Pupils plant cress seeds in a variety of ways in order to develop a good understanding of the conditions required for healthy plant growth, monitoring closely the changes that take place each day. They name the main parts of a plant and have a clear understanding that plants are important to humans. They develop sorting skills when investigating similarities and differences between animals and humans to determine if humans are animals. Whilst pupils' understand how to carry out experiments and investigations, this aspect is not as strong as their factual knowledge.
91. By the end of Year 4, pupils show a clear understanding of the work they have covered. They know the most important parts of the human body, categorise materials using tables and charts and carry out surveys of the favourite foods of their classmates. They have a reasonable understanding of light and shade, carrying out a range of experiments to determine that light travels in a straight line. They know that plants need light and take up water in order to grow. They make predictions and test them out, developing an understanding of requirements for a test to be 'fair'. However, their ability to plan and carry out tests, evaluate the results and draw conclusions are less well developed because not enough opportunities are given them to devise their own experiments. Some use has been made of branching databases but, in general, the use of ICT is limited.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan work thoroughly and generally ensure that activities cater for the differing needs of pupils. However, the degree of challenge for higher attaining pupils is sometimes not high enough and this limits their attainment. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and their lessons are interesting and creative. As a result, pupils' attitudes are very good and they enjoy the subject, especially practical work. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were excited and enthusiastic when sorting model animals to develop their understanding that humans are more like each other than other animals. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were similarly excited when exploring the shadows made by the sun in the playground. They understood that some items are opaque and do not let light pass through and that others are transparent and do let light through. However, much of the practical work carried out is teacher directed and gives limited opportunity for pupils to devise their own methods.
93. Subject management is satisfactory. The school has a two-year rolling programme in order to cater for the split age classes throughout the school and clear guidance is given on the topics to be covered in each year. The co-ordinator has carried out lesson observation and monitoring information is used to support the development of an action plan, which is included in the school improvement plan. Assessment procedures are limited. Whilst teachers assess pupils' progress each term, the process is not well developed and there is no clear strategy for setting targets in order to raise attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Standards are average throughout the school and all pupils make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils cover a broad curriculum that includes work with paint, textiles and clay. The school has successfully incorporated ideas from national guidance to develop the curriculum and this ensures that all required areas of learning are covered.
95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a suitably broad range of skills using different media. Good attention is given to developing pupils' observational skills. Their sketchbooks contain some well-crafted portraits of their friends showing good use of crayon and pastel. Their skills in using a range of media are effectively developed in work linked to studies in other subjects. For example, pupils have created card pictures of Egyptian dolls, used paint to produce pictures linked to their work on weather and made effective use of silhouette in their pictures of the Great Fire of London in history. ICT has been used satisfactorily. Pupils have created attractive pictures of people and houses using programs such as 'Paint' and 'Colour Magic'.
96. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build appropriately on this start. Pupils explore the use of a suitably diverse range of media and techniques. The work of a range of artists is used as a basis for pupils' artwork. For example, they have based their work linked to the study of chairs on the style of the Victorian artist Horace Pippin. This has resulted in an attractive collage of a large chair and drawings showing close attention to detail. A visiting artist has worked with pupils to produce clay tiles and create an effective mural, which is displayed in the entrance hall. The work shows good development of skills using clay. However, sketchbooks are not used well. They are used to develop pupils' basic observational drawing skills, but work does not show sufficient attention to the development of a suitably wide range of techniques. For example, pupils' drawings show little use of shade and tone. There is, also, little evidence of ICT being used to support art work.
97. Only one lesson was observed and, therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgment on the quality of teaching. However, the work on display around the school and teachers planning indicate that the subject is given good attention and lessons are well planned. In the lesson observed the teaching was lively and effective. The teacher had prepared resources well and her clear explanation of the activity showed good subject knowledge. The pupils' enthusiasm for the subject was evident in their response to questions on the characteristics of different types of cloth. They used magnifying glasses well to explore the texture and appearance of the material, using words such as rough, smooth, coarse and shiny in their descriptions to the teacher. Work on display indicates that pupils take care over their work and have very good attitudes to the subject.
98. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and provides helpful guidance to colleagues. Effective use is made of visiting artists and visits to art galleries to enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

99. Standards are average throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Statutory requirements are now met, and attainment by the end of Year 4 has improved. The time allocated to DT is satisfactory, but whole school curricular planning is not detailed enough to ensure that all lessons focus sufficiently on the development of pupils' skills.

100. The limited evidence available indicates that, by both Years 2 and 4, pupils have made sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Work is more developed in the aspects of 'designing' and 'making' and pupils' skills in evaluating their work are less well developed. Evaluations are not extensive or detailed. Much of the work illustrated the use of a range of recycled materials. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 considered how the movement of gas (pneumatics) could bring about movement. They used this principle satisfactorily to design and make 'moving monsters'. Year 1 and 2 pupils have used photographs of playground equipment to inform their designs when making models of playground equipment using recycled materials. However, the swings, seesaws and roundabouts produced show the use of a narrow range of joining techniques. The work shows satisfactory use of literacy skills, but numeracy skills are not used to best effect. For example, there is little use of estimating and measuring skills in pupils' designs. Opportunities to use ICT have not been developed.
101. Teaching is satisfactory. The support of class teachers, classroom assistants and other adults helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Teachers give satisfactory attention to the 'designing' and 'making' processes, but not enough thought is given to evaluation and developing choices of techniques and materials available. Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject has been raised by suitable training, but staff mobility has limited the impact of this on standards. There is a lack of clarity in some lessons about the precise nature of DT. This is also reflected in pupils' responses to being asked what they had covered in the subject. Initial responses indicated some confusion between work in art, science and DT. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and lack detail and specific guidance. Teachers ensure that the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging pupils to persevere to complete their artefacts and co-operate when necessary.
102. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory overall. Curricular planning uses national guidance, but detailed interpretation is lacking. The choice of topics is not always careful enough to reflect skills acquired in other subjects; for instance the use of electrical circuits and switches in DT came before covering the subject in science. The school recognises that this is an area needing development.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards are average compared to those expected nationally. Pupils make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily by the end of Years 2 and 4. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
104. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection but the quality of pupils' work indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a reasonable understanding of the region around the school and of basic weather patterns. They draw maps of the locality, showing for example the school, village hall and road names. They draw pictures and write about what they see on a walk round the village, relating it to their own experiences. Higher attaining pupils write extensively. One good piece of work, several lines long, began "My friend has a Mom who works in the Health Centre. She does the papers for the doctors..." Pupils know the purpose of simple weather equipment such as thermometers, rain gauges and weather vanes. They know, for instance, that "The Chinook is a warm wind that blows through parts of North America". They draw good pictures to show the effects of cold weather, for example ice making roads slippery, and skiing in the Alps that requires lots of snow.

105. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 4 pupils know that towns usually provide a range of facilities such as supermarkets, banks and a library. Planning is satisfactory, but teachers rely too much on recording work in lists and tables. Consequently, higher attaining pupils do not develop the depth of understanding that they could and work is sometimes superficial. Pupils draw simple relief maps of countries such as India, but drawings are often not finished with enough care and keys are sometimes missing. The lessons seen were well prepared. Teachers used maps and aerial photographs from the Internet effectively to stimulate brief discussion about Bilbrook before moving on to discuss life in villages in countries such as Brazil and Ethiopia. Good photographs stimulated discussion well and pupils prepared long lists of questions that they would like to ask the children in the pictures, for example about the food they eat, the weather and what they do in their leisure time. Classes are managed well and pupils are generally interested in their work. However, in one lesson slow pace led to some minor disruption as pupils lost concentration and began to fidget. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs understand what to do and that they are fully engaged in the activities.
106. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has drawn up an action plan containing clear development targets, for example to provide more first hand fieldwork experiences for Year 3 and Year 4. Topics are chosen so that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily as they stay in the same class for two years. However, there is no system to record pupils' progress. There are sufficient learning resources for all aspects of the subject but teachers do not use ICT sufficiently to support teaching and learning.

HISTORY

107. The subject is taught in blocks and only pupils in Years 1 and 2 were doing history during the inspection. However, enough evidence was gained from a scrutiny of work in books and discussion with pupils in Years 3 and 4 to show that standards are average throughout the school. This is a similar situation to that reported in the last inspection.
108. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show a developing sense of chronology. They know that Florence Nightingale lived a long time ago and that she was important because of her contribution to nursing as a profession as well as for the work she did in the Crimea. They are also aware that, in her day, rich women did not work and that changes have occurred in the way we now view such matters. They develop a satisfactory understanding of life in her time by using pictures and videos to make observations about her clothes, the sort of equipment she had to help her and the kind of journeys she had to undertake.
109. In discussion pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a satisfactory understanding of the Celts and Romans. They showed an understanding of chronology, being able to give an approximate date of the Roman period and reasons why the Romans wanted to invade Britain. They also were aware that the Romans were particularly famous for road building, central heating and toilets and could discuss the courage of Boudicca in leading the revolt against them. They were less good at explaining the difference between primary and secondary sources and which might be more valuable. However, they had been inspired by the idea of archaeology and were aware that sources such as the Internet, books and CD ROMS were useful means of finding out more information.

110. A limited amount of teaching was seen, but, together with other evidence, this indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers use a range of resources to make lessons interesting. They use questions skilfully to see how well pupils have understood and develop their skills in English through work done in history. For example, pupils' letter writing skills have been developed well by writing a letter home as Florence Nightingale. Sometimes, though, as when pupils are asked to role-play historical characters, insufficient guidance is given and pupils are not quite sure what is expected of them.
111. The co-ordinator has been absent for some time and the subject is not due for review until 2004. These factors have made it difficult for the acting coordinator to implement changes, but she has made a good start by auditing and augmenting the resources and supporting colleagues with planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

112. Standards in ICT are below average and have not improved since the last inspection. Whilst there has been some improvement in the pupils' skills, they have not kept up with the increasing expectations in the subject. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress and they do not reach their potential. Until very recently equipment was unreliable and not easily accessible for class use. In addition, staff confidence in teaching the subject is low, despite having received training, and pupils have not been taught regularly.
113. However, there are good signs of improvement. A new ICT suite, large enough for whole class use, has been set up, and existing computers have been upgraded and moved into classrooms so that they are available at all times. Facilities, including the range of software to support the curriculum, are now satisfactory. Teachers are beginning to take lessons in the new suite, although there is no regular timetable for its use, and computers in classrooms are still not used enough at other times.
114. A number of good and very good ICT lessons were seen. Teachers explained well what pupils were to do and gave them sufficient time to practise for themselves. However, Year 1 and 2 pupils do not know how to use special keys such as *shift*, *caps lock* and *enter* to control the layout of work and they type very slowly. Despite this, they have a growing understanding that there are different types of information such as text, sound, graphs and pictures. They 'paint' self-portraits, add suitable captions to animal pictures, choosing different letter styles, sizes and colours, and prepare pictograms to show how they come to school.
115. Years 3 and 4 pupils have basic skills in control and modelling. They experiment with a floor roamer, giving it instructions to move round a simple route. Some pupils know how to write short control programs, for example to draw shapes on a screen. Pupils use a branching database to sort a set of animals, for example identifying a shark from the questions "Does it live in water?" and "Is it a carnivore?" Many pupils are confident computer operators, using the mouse to choose different options quickly and efficiently. However, their skills in word processing are less well developed. For example, many are unable to move text and use the spell checking tool.
116. Teachers use questions well, using pupils' responses effectively to consolidate and develop understanding. Lessons are well prepared and are taken at a good pace. Pupils' natural enthusiasm adds much to the busy activity seen in lessons and their good behaviour allows the teacher to focus on the lesson content without undue distraction. However, a number of teachers have limited subject knowledge and lack confidence. For example, in some lessons the use of a limited range of techniques

and examples resulted in too low a level of challenge for pupils. This limits pupils' progress.

117. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject. She recognises that there is much to be done to develop staff expertise, ensure that all pupils are taught regularly and set challenging but realistic targets for improvement. There are good guidelines in place for Internet use and planning is satisfactory overall. However, there is no scheme for assessing pupils' progress. The school acknowledges that not enough has been done to develop the subject and that standards are not high enough.

MUSIC

118. Pupils make very good progress in singing and the standard reached throughout the school is above that expected. Singing is better than at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress in other aspects of music and overall standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, there is insufficient information in the last report to assess improvements since that time.
119. No class lessons were seen and there is insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, singing practices are lively and enjoyable because teachers make singing fun. They ensure that pupils warm up with suitable exercises and sing new songs well for pupils to copy. Teachers use games effectively to encourage pupils to listen closely when learning new songs. As a result, pupils sing accurately from the start, with good rhythm, pitch and clear diction. They make very good progress in the short time available. Pupils hold parts securely when singing two and three-part rounds such as 'My Paddle's Clean and Bright!' and sing with good musical expression. Teachers mix familiar and new songs with short discussions very effectively to maintain pupils' interest and to test their understanding of basic musical terms such as 'tempo' and 'dynamics'.
120. Year 1 and 2 pupils know the names of familiar percussion instruments such as maracas and claves and copy short rhythm patterns accurately. However, they do not always hold instruments correctly when playing. Year 3 and 4 pupils have a sound grasp of different families of musical instruments such as 'strings' and 'wind'. They understand how music can be used to convey different moods and know, for example, that the composer Prokofiev used trombones and other brass instruments to make the music for the wolf in 'Peter and the Wolf' sound 'growly and low'. Little use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.
121. Planning follows national guidelines and is satisfactory overall. However there is no system for tracking pupils' progress. Year 3 and 4 pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and all pupils take part in carol services and other celebrations. Although changes in funding have led to the withdrawal of specialist instrumental teaching, provision is made for talented musicians to receive lessons at the adjacent middle school. The school has sufficient resources for class teaching, but some instruments are reaching the end of their life.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

122. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 4. This is similar to the standards achieved at the time of the last inspection. A well-balanced programme of physical activities is provided throughout the year, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Throughout Years 1 to 4 pupils make good progress and achieve well.

123. In Years 1 and 2, pupils compose and perform dance sequences well, communicating mood and feelings in response to the stimulus of music. They show satisfactory levels of control, co-ordination and balance and put a high level of effort into their movements. In a lesson based on the story of creation in RE, they showed good spatial awareness and used strong movements to depict the beginning and end of the creation. The teacher enabled the whole class to assess their own and others' performance but did not use pupils to demonstrate to the class in order to develop their expertise. Pupils' throwing and catching skills are satisfactory. In another lesson with Years 1 and 2, pupils accurately threw balls, quoits and beanbags into a hoop from varying distances.
124. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' throwing and catching skills are further developed and pupils perform with increasing competence. They enjoy the element of teamwork and competition in games involving bouncing and catching a ball with a partner. In a lesson with Year 3 and 4, pupils co-operated well and showed good hand-eye co-ordination when throwing a large ball against a wall for another team member to catch it on the rebound. They competed enthusiastically in an activity involving throwing a ball to their partner by bouncing it in a hoop for them to catch it on the first bounce, scoring points if the partner failed to catch the ball. In warm up sessions pupils' running and leaping movements are well controlled and they give careful attention to the importance of stretching their arms when making high leaps. Pupils put a good level of effort into their work and show a clear understanding of the benefits of vigorous exercise and its effects on the body.
125. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons well, explain activities clearly and encourage pupils to develop a range of skills. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner, containing appropriate warm-up activities and cool-down sessions. Teachers use questioning and developmental comments effectively to improve pupils' performance, but, in some lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to evaluate their own and others' performances to help them to improve. Relationships and class management are very good. This results in safe, controlled lessons where pupils listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. As a result, pupils have good attitudes, are enthusiastic, enjoy lessons and work well individually, in pairs and teams. They behave very well during lessons and are very supportive of one another.
126. Co-ordination is satisfactory. Curriculum guidance clearly identifies what teachers should teach to the pupils in their class. Resources are satisfactory overall, although some of the large equipment in the hall is unsuitable for the younger pupils. A wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a good contribution to the curriculum. Effective use is made of outside coaches to develop pupils' interest and skills in sports such as basketball and football and the school takes part in inter-school activities in a range of sports.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

127. Standards are average. This is similar to the situation found at the last inspection. However, the amount of work recorded in pupils' books indicates variation from class to class.
128. Pupils in Year 2 know that there are different creation stories and that the one associated with Christians and Jews records God's work over six days and his resting on the seventh. They know a range of features of Hinduism and retell the story of Rama and Sita satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 4 describe some of the key events

about the life of Jesus, including suitable detail about Christmas, Lent and Easter. They are aware of the use of symbolism. In the best work, this focuses on Christian symbols, such as the 'Cross' and its use on 'Hot Cross Buns', but in other work the religious aspect is not developed sufficiently. Pupils also begin to appreciate how religious beliefs can act as a motivating force, such as associated with Gladys Aylward and her work in China. Pupils make relevant use of their literacy skills and the subject is used very well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there is very little use of ICT.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but the variation in the quality of pupils' work indicates differences in teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence. In the lessons observed, pupils were interested, concentrated well and persevered. Reflection was strongly encouraged, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 considered how Gladys Aylward felt when told she could not become a missionary. Teachers use parables well. For example, the story of 'The Prodigal Son' was used effectively to provide pupils with an understanding of some of the moral and social concepts of religions. Work on a range of faiths raises pupils' awareness of different cultures. Lessons develop pupils' interest and, as a result, they show respect and behave very well. The effective use of support staff helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make similar progress.
130. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The curriculum is satisfactory and planned in sufficient detail, except for how to extend higher attaining pupils. It covers the faiths of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam and explores how faith can influence an individual's life. Pupils visit the local church, but opportunities to explore buildings associated with other faiths are not used to extend their knowledge. Assessment is unsatisfactory, although the coordinator is aware of this and there are plans for her to attend a course shortly to support improvement.