

INSPECTION REPORT

Gorsemoor Primary School

Heath Hayes, Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124183

Headteacher: Paul Bennett

Reporting inspector: David Watson
23494

Dates of inspection: 2nd-5th December 2002

Inspection number: 248561

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gorsemoor Road Heath Hayes Staffordshire
Postcode:	WS12 5TG
Telephone number:	01543 274788
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Carr
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D Watson 23494	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Mr R Elam 9092	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Sangster 20010	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	
Mrs S Gatehouse 26945	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	
Mr P Isherwood 20301	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs T Cotton 3751	Team inspector	English as an additional language English History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gorsemoor is a primary school with 423 pupils on roll, aged between 4 and 11, with almost equal numbers of girls and boys. The school is bigger than most primary schools. It serves a stable community on the edge of Cannock Chase. Attainment on entry to reception is below that expected for their age, especially in mathematics, and boys' attainment at this age is lower than girls'. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is judged to be close to 11 per cent and is in line with the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities (most of those currently at the school are Cypriots) or who are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 9.8 per cent, is below the national average, but the percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need (2.4 per cent) is above. Most of these pupils have moderate or specific learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, the building has been extended and there has been a significant change in the staff with the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has many strengths and gives good value for money. Standards in subjects such as English and mathematics are good and in many subjects pupils make good progress. However, in science standards are below the national average and pupils underachieve. Pupils' personal development is very good. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school and all pupils are valued. The leadership and management of the school are very good; the necessary steps to raise standards are being taken.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school there are significant amounts of good and very good teaching and in many subjects pupils achieve well by the time they leave school.
- The very good provision in the reception classes motivates and stimulates all children to become keen learners.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development; the provision for social development is excellent. This encourages the development of confident, sensible and considerate individuals.
- The well planned and enriched curriculum interests and engages pupils in their learning.
- There are numerous systems used to assess pupils and this information is used well to improve pupils' learning experiences. The approach taken to monitor and support pupils' personal development is also good.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides a strong and sharply focused leadership that drives school improvement.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and their needs are particularly well met.

What could be improved

- Standards in science by the age of 11 years.
- Opportunities for the development of pupils' awareness and knowledge of other cultures and to recognise the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. The rate of improvement since then has been good. The school is well placed to build further on this improvement. The quality of teaching is better, as are the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The key issues identified at the time of the last report have all been completely addressed. Standards of attainment in English and mathematics

are higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection, but standards have not improved in science.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English are currently similar to those shown in the table above for 2002, but are better in mathematics; standards seen were higher than normally expected for pupils aged 11 years. Pupils are achieving well in both subjects, but especially English. The school has set challenging targets for the tests in 2003 and inspection findings indicate that these are likely to be met and would therefore be higher than the results of 2002. Since last year, standards in science have improved but they remain below the expected level, as they did in 2002, and pupils continue to underachieve.

By the end of reception children make good progress and achieve the expected level in all areas of their learning by the time they start Year 1. Pupils build on this progress and by the end of Year 2 achieve well, and sometimes very well. In comparison with similar schools, standards in the 2002 tests were well above the average when compared with all schools and with those in similar contexts for both reading and writing. Pupil performance in mathematics tests, and on the basis of teacher assessments in science, was average when compared with the average in all schools as well as schools in similar contexts. Standards seen in Year 2 during the inspection are similar to those achieved in the 2002 tests for 7-year-olds in English, but are better in mathematics and similar to those achieved in science.

The school has addressed the imbalance in attainment between boys and girls noted at the start of reception, and the difference at the ages of 7 and 11 is less than that normally found. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils attain nationally expected standards in nearly all other subjects, including religious education. Standards in information and communication technology are above those normally expected for both 7 and 11-year-olds, and they are also above for 7-year-olds in history. Due to a lack of evidence, no secure judgement could be made about standards in either music or history by the age of 11 years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils put a great deal of effort into their work; they take pride in what they are doing and enjoy school very much.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – pupils behave well because they know it is the right thing to do. They are welcoming to visitors and play together well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils work very effectively in groups and with partners. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities with maturity.

Attendance	Satisfactory – the attendance rate is in line with the national average and punctuality is particularly good. Nevertheless, more than a third of absences are due to parents taking their children on holiday during term time.
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Pupils' attitudes, self-esteem and behaviour improve during their time at school. This is the result of the very good relationships made with staff. They enjoy being given responsibility. Older pupils are caring and supportive of those younger than themselves.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good and often very good and so is its impact on pupils' learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, due to the pace, vigour and appropriateness of the planned learning experiences. This is why pupils achieve so well. Throughout the school, pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults, both teachers and learning support assistants, who provide a secure environment in which pupils happily learn. Almost all the teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour and standards. Work planned is often challenging and fun. Pupils respond to teachers' expectations and they often try their best. Clear explanations, well-focused activities and probing questions make learning both enjoyable and relevant. Homework is regularly set and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and those skills needed in information and communication technology, is good.

In those lessons where pupils' learning is only satisfactory, it is often because work is not very challenging and the classroom organisation and management occasionally adversely affect the pace of learning. The teaching by the teacher for pupils with special educational needs and support staff is very good and this enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and to join in all aspects of a lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum is good overall; it is very good in reception. The school provides a good range of work that is relevant and planned well; there are good links between many subjects, including information and communication technology. Some excellent links with the community greatly enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils with diverse needs are given equal opportunities to be involved in all aspects of the school. There is a very good range of activities outside of school that enrich pupils' learning experience.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The very good support and guidance provided by teaching, support and visiting staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good, and at times very good, progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils who have English as an additional language are well catered for and they make good progress. The school is aware of how to meet the needs of first-stage English language learners should they arrive.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for social development is excellent and moral development is very good. The spiritual and cultural provision is satisfactory though the opportunities for understanding the multi-cultural aspects of British society are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The promotion of good behaviour and personal development is very effective. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall. There is a comprehensive range of very good assessment

	procedures recording pupils' attainment and progress in most subjects. Very good assessment procedures are used to guide curricular planning and to arrange relevant staff training. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Their achievements are celebrated very well.
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There are good links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. He is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. Staff work very well as a team to ensure that they are raising standards and ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They give good support to the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school monitors teaching and learning very effectively to identify areas of strength and weakness. Test and assessment results are analysed very well and the school addresses issues raised very effectively through a very well written school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages the finances available to it, including special grants, very well in the best interest of its pupils. The day-to-day administration of finance is very good. The school applies the principles of best value well to its management and use of resources. The school is well staffed and resourced; they are all used well. The accommodation has many strengths, such as two computer suites and a large playing field, but overall is satisfactory as two classes of pupils are taught in the two mobile classrooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children enjoy school. • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions. • Behaviour is good. • The leadership of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for homework. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information on children's progress and the links between the school and parents.

Sixteen per cent of parents returned the questionnaires and nine parents attended the parents' meeting. Parents are happy with the quality of education that the school provides for their children. Inspectors' judgements endorse the parents' views. The school sets homework appropriately and regularly with the amount depending on the age of the pupil. The inspectors found that the school provides good opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress but the end of year reports should have more information on how well their children are doing. The school makes strenuous efforts to involve the parents in the work of the school. The different types of clubs at lunchtime and after school have resulted in a very good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class - the Foundation Stage¹ - with attainment below the expected level for their age. Attainment in mathematics is particularly low and boys' attainment is noticeably lower than girls' in both mathematics and English. Because of the good education they receive most pupils achieve well so that, by the end of reception, they attain the early learning goals² in all areas of their learning.
2. By the end of Year 2 compared with when they leave the reception class, pupils continue to achieve well and sometimes, as in the case of English, very well. Much of this can be attributed to the quality of teaching that has improved since the last inspection. Some pupils in Year 1 in particular have their learning accelerated due to the excellent teaching they receive in several subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that standards by the end of Year 2 are very good in reading and writing and reflect pupils' 2002 national test results.
3. Standards in mathematics observed during the inspection are good and are better than the test results achieved in 2002. The improvement in mathematics is because the school not only now challenges its high-attaining pupils, but it has addressed the identified areas from its assessment data very well, for example pupils' attainment in shape and space.
4. In science, current standards meet national expectations and are similar to the teacher assessments of 2002.
5. Results in English and mathematics are better than at the time of the last inspection. They have risen at a faster rate than the national trend because of the improved atmosphere and purpose generated after the appointment of the current headteacher; these pupils have had the full benefit of the changes that he has brought about.

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

² Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

6. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain the expected level for their age in design and technology, geography, art, music, physical education and religious education. They attain above expected standards in information and communication technology and history. The school has addressed the difference in the attainment of boys and girls, noted in reception, through more closely matching the learning needs of the boys. In the 2002 national tests, the difference between girls' and boys' attainment was far less than that found nationally.
7. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time they leave school, they achieve well. However, progress in these year groups is slightly slower than in the rest of the school because the level of good and very good teaching is not consistent. Very good teaching was observed in each year group except Year 4, which has the lowest levels of good teaching in the school. This slows the rate at which pupils learn in this year group, but then they make significant progress in Years 5 and 6 due to the high quality of teaching they receive; nearly a third of lessons were judged very good or excellent.
8. In Years 3 to 6, overall standards have improved in line with the national trend. It has not been as rapid as Years 1 and 2 for two reasons. Firstly, the good and very good teaching is not spread evenly across the year groups. Secondly, those 11-year-olds from last year, as well as those currently in Year 6, have only had the benefit of the improved quality of education brought about by the appointment of the new headteacher three and a half years ago and not for the whole of their time at the school.
9. Results in the national tests for English for 11-year-olds rose sharply in 2002 because of the focus given to the subject, especially through the school's close links with a primary school in Northern Ireland (known as the 'Irish Project'). Results, however, have been steadily improving since the last inspection because of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and improvements in teaching and learning. Inspection evidence indicates that they are above the expected level for their age, reflect the 2002 national test results and meet the published targets. The average points score³ placed the school's results above the national average, and in line with similar schools. There is less of a difference between the attainment of boys and girls than is normally found.
10. In mathematics, results have also been steadily improving since the last inspection because of the National Numeracy Strategy and better teaching. In 2002, results were an improvement upon the 2001 results but they were not as high as had been predicted. The percentage of pupils at the age of 11 who achieved the higher Level 5⁴ was close to the school's expected target but there were fewer pupils who achieved the expected Level 4. The school's average points score was therefore below average when compared with all schools

³ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the Level attained by each pupil, for example in mathematics, is given a score – a Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 1 tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, is 27.

⁴ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, are expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age. At Key Stage 2 the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

nationally and with schools in a similar context. This was because of an unusually high number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need within the year group. All these pupils sat the national tests, but only in English were they provided with additional adult support to read their test papers and they achieved well. In both mathematics and science, however, no additional support was provided and pupils did not perform as well as expected. The inspection found that current standards in mathematics have improved considerably and are now above those expected for their age. Within the current Year 6, there are nearly two thirds fewer pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need than last year and there is good support for the average-attaining pupils and continued support for the higher attainers.

11. Over the last few years, standards in science have fallen in relation to the improving national trend. However, in the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002, the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was similar to the previous years, but the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 fell. Because of this, the school's average points score was well below average when compared with all schools and with those in similar contexts. A detailed analysis undertaken by the school of the quality of teaching and learning and the test results indicated flaws in the teaching of the subject caused by weaknesses in staff confidence and knowledge. The school and governors are now fully aware of these and appropriate action is being taken which is having a positive impact. Inspection evidence suggests standards have improved and are now only just below the expected level, although pupils are still underachieving. In the last three years, girls have achieved better results than boys in the tests in Year 6, but there was no indication during the inspection that this is still the case.
12. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected for pupils aged 11 and they have improved since the last inspection. This improvement and pupils' good progress is not only because of the very good co-ordination of the subject but also the impact of staff training and a good ratio of computers to pupils.
13. Standards in art and design, geography, art and physical education meet national expectations. Those in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. No judgements have been made about standards in history or music because history had not been taught to the current Year 6 in this academic year and music lessons in Year 6 could not be observed during the inspection. Standards in literacy and numeracy are good. This is exemplified in the subject paragraphs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This conclusion shows an improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection and reflects the widespread views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school. As at the time of the previous inspection, the attendance of the pupils is satisfactory.

15. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work. They concentrate well on their work, for example in sessions taken by the dyslexia support teacher and when working on spelling programmes with the special educational needs co-ordinator. All pupils concentrate well and show interest in what they are doing, as was seen particularly in a Year 2 English lesson talking about feelings of sadness and joy. They have the confidence to try to work out answers in front of their classmates as seen during mental mathematics in numeracy lessons. The positive encouragement of the teacher resulted in Year 3 pupils being prepared to volunteer answers when using text to support their point of view. In all classes, pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. All pupils, especially the very youngest, have coped very well with the sometimes high level of distraction caused by the building work.
16. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and dinner times. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way even when not supervised. In particular, they wait patiently for other classes when going to and from their rooms at the beginning and end of the day and for assemblies. At the end of dinnertime, they come into class in an orderly way and settle quickly to work. They show respect for property, for example when using the computers. Discussions with pupils confirmed that bullying is rare and the school has appropriate procedures to deal quickly with any aggressive behaviour that may take place. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
17. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when in the playground. In the classroom, even the youngest respect each other's space when sitting close together on the carpet and follow the rules of 'Circle Time'⁵. Good co-operation was seen when working in groups in a Year 3 physical education lesson developing a sequence of moves and balances. In the reception class, the very good relationships between the children and the teacher generated mutual respect, resulting in them all paying close attention and becoming engrossed in re-enacting the story of 'Mrs Wishy Washy'. The well established relationships between the Year 6 pupils gave them the confidence in a 'Circle Time' to talk about difficult situations they have faced knowing that their classmates would not laugh at them. Boys and girls and pupils from different cultural backgrounds work together very well when doing group work in the classroom and when playing at break and dinner times.
18. The pupils' personal development is also very good. Their good spiritual development was demonstrated when pupils in Year 4 showed their ability to understand the feelings of children in hospital who may not have presents at Christmas when discussing the 'Shoebox Appeal' during a personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils of all ages show great maturity when undertaking

⁵ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

the wide range of different responsibilities both in the classroom and around the school. These tasks have also enabled pupils to show they can use their initiative, an improvement on the last inspection. For example, Year 5 pupils organised themselves well, distributing two-dimensional shapes to their classmates during a mathematics lesson. A group of pupils, when acting as librarians, were prepared to repair a blind that had fallen down but, after discussion amongst themselves, sensibly decided that it should be reported to a teacher for an adult to deal with. They also cope very well with research projects for homework and with investigative work in mathematics and science. The school is aware that such opportunities for independent thinking will be even better when the completion of the building work will enable pupils to visit the new library and computer suite during lessons to research information.

19. As at the time of the previous inspection, attendance is satisfactory. During the past two years, it was over 94 per cent and made an appropriate contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. Absences are usually due to the inevitable childhood illnesses, though over a third are due to parents insisting on taking their children on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good, though a number arrive in the few minutes after the bell has sounded. Registration takes place commendably promptly at the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. Teaching was at least good or better in nearly all the lessons seen during the inspection; in 76 per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better, with 27 per cent of these lessons being very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The level of good and very good teaching is not constant across the school and this slightly slows the rate at which pupils learn. Very good teaching was observed in each year group, except Year 4, which also had the lowest levels of good teaching in the school. Conversely, in Years 1, 5 and 6 due to the high quality of teaching pupils receive (nearly a third of lessons were judged very good or excellent), pupils regularly make great gains in their learning in a lesson. The quality of teaching has improved dramatically since the last inspection, when teaching was good or better in only 40 per cent of lessons, and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are clearer about what they want pupils to learn in lessons and they offer an appropriate challenge to all pupils, especially the high attainers. Teaching has improved, due to the very good leadership of the school, coupled with very careful monitoring and targeted support. Parents commented on the level of good teaching at the school both in the parents' meeting and in the responses to the parents' questionnaire.
21. The quality of teaching of children in reception is good, with some very good features, and this has a considerable impact on children's learning in their first year at school. Teaching is based on very good planning that identifies clear targets in all areas of learning, ensures a good balance between teacher-led and independent activities and ensures all are included in the full range of class activities. Classroom organisation is very good and children have good access to resources, both inside and outside the classroom. Learning support assistants are exceptionally well deployed and their knowledge and very caring approach

ensure that the children they work with benefit greatly from their interventions. Relationships between staff and the children are very good, as is the management of all children, and this fosters a purposeful working atmosphere and positive developments, especially in children's personal and social development. Staff use good assessment procedures to track children's progress and use this information successfully to plan for the next step in children's learning.

22. What makes the teaching so exceptional in the few excellent lessons is how every opportunity is expertly used by staff, not only to engage pupils in fun and interesting learning in a very relevant manner, but also to reinforce the development of pupils' basic skills in numeracy and literacy. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the independent writing of poems based on 'Bad Day/Good Day' was very closely tied to work on spelling and phonics.
23. Teachers' subject knowledge across the rest of the school is good in many subjects, so they answer pupils' questions accurately and teach with confidence. This in turn extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work that they complete. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 3 about fractions, the teacher demonstrated high expectations and good subject expertise. This was visible in the clear explanations and the way she challenged pupils and used mathematical language appropriate to the topic and ability of the pupils. It was because of this that many pupils were working at a higher level than expected for their age. However, a weakness in knowledge and confidence in science has undermined pupils' ability to achieve their best. Teachers plan too few opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments and their own methods of recording.
24. Teachers' technical competence in the teaching of basic skills is very good and, consequently, they teach the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. This showed clearly in a very good numeracy lesson for pupils in Year 2 that recapped on their knowledge of multiples. In this lesson, the teacher's clear expectations and use of mathematical terms ensured all pupils gained a great deal in their understanding. Teachers also display individual expertise in other subjects, for example literacy and information and communication technology. This is having a positive impact on achievement throughout the school. Pupils have a good grounding in the basic skills of computing because of the way in which their planned learning experiences are organised but also because of the competence of many of their teachers.
25. In all year groups, teachers plan well and successfully identify specific learning aims and objectives. These are always shared very effectively with the pupils at the beginning of lessons, and frequently returned to during the course of the lesson, and again at the end of the lesson. This strategy enables pupils to be fully aware of the learning for each lesson, for them to be focused on their learning and for teachers to assess pupils' learning. Teachers' planning also shows well what different groups of pupils are to learn in each lesson.
26. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the level of challenge is appropriate most of the time. In the very best lessons, this challenge is very high and pupils are clearly motivated to learn. This was seen in an excellent Year 1 science lesson on magnetic forces. The extremely high

quality input from the teacher, plus her own enthusiasm, resulted in pupils making very good gains in their scientific understanding and curiosity.

27. Teaching methods are used effectively across the school. A strong feature is the use of relevant and practical activities to ensure lessons are made interesting to enable effective learning to take place. For example, in a good design and technology lesson, the teacher organised pupils to work in mixed-ability pairs in order to make moveable Christmas cards. Similarly, in a good physical education lesson in Year 3, a very well organised lesson had aspects of individual as well as group work, and whole-class evaluations and demonstrations. This enabled all pupils not only to be involved, but also to make good progress. In most instances, teachers use questions well. They often encourage pupils to think and explain their answers. Well-paced questioning adds to the brisk start to many lessons and the probing nature of many of the questions deepens pupils' understanding. A particularly strength is the way that different types of questions are asked to pupils of different ability so that they are all included; for those who are reticent this boosts their self-esteem.
28. On a few occasions, however, often in an attempt to ensure that the pace of learning does not slow, a few teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to think or articulate their answers. On these occasions, teachers answer for them, thus reducing the impact of this good technique. In all lessons, teachers make frequent and good use of pupils' prior learning. This was very evident in the spelling groups taken by the co-ordinator of special educational needs each morning.
29. Teachers manage pupils well in lessons and their expectations of behaviour are high. As a result, little time is wasted and pupils have more time to work hard. A strength of the teaching are the very good relationships between staff and pupils which ensure that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, are fully included in lessons and feel valued. This greatly enhances the quality of pupils' learning. In most cases, staff have established a very good positive rapport with the pupils and this results in a very good atmosphere for learning. All pupils respond positively to this and, as a result, their behaviour in lessons is mostly good or better. It was exceptional in the many activities undertaken in small groups, for example, during sessions taken by the peripatetic music teacher.
30. Teachers use time effectively in most lessons. Occasionally, however, aspects of a few lessons can be overlong and the pace of the lessons slows slightly, resulting in some pupils becoming disinterested. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on three-dimensional shape, each pupil shared the properties of their shape with the whole class; this was a lengthy process and several pupils became inattentive. Teachers use resources, such as whiteboards, interactive computer boards and practical equipment, effectively to demonstrate teaching points and to assist pupils in their understanding of new concepts. An example of this took place in several of the lessons in the computer suite, where teachers made good use of the electronic projector or the interactive whiteboard. In a very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher made excellent use of the interactive whiteboard so that pupils gained a deep understanding of erosion.

31. Overall, the quality of marking is satisfactory and underpinned by a recently introduced marking policy. Marking is good in English and pupils are appropriately informed about their own learning, but it is not as informative or as consistent in mathematics or science. In most cases, teachers provide good opportunities for homework, the regularity of which has been increasing as the term has progressed. They use it well to support pupils' learning in class.
32. There is early identification of special educational need. There are good quality individual education plans. Many targets are clear and measurable, for example being able to read a certain number of words or work with particular numbers in mathematics. However, a few targets are too general and, as a result, it is difficult to measure progress. The individual education plans are linked particularly well to the English and mathematics aspects of the National Curriculum. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and support assistants and, as a result, they make good progress in their learning.

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

33. The school provides a rich curriculum, which offers good learning opportunities for its pupils. It is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the statutory requirements for all subjects in the National Curriculum. Total weekly teaching time meets with national recommendations and religious education complies with the locally agreed syllabus.
34. The range and quality of learning experiences for children in the reception class is very good. The work that teachers plan develops children's knowledge and understanding across all the recommended areas of learning. Those children capable of working at higher levels are provided with opportunities to do so. Staff plan the work very carefully so that it is practical, interesting and matched to children's learning needs. The provision for children with special educational needs in reception is very good and these pupils make good progress. This is because the staff quickly identify the children's needs to give them the additional support that they need and lots of praise and encouragement. A stimulating environment is encouraging children to learn and is providing a happy and settled start to school.
35. In Years 1 to 6, subject co-ordinators have prepared detailed policies and schemes of work, in collaboration with colleagues and governors, to guide the teaching and learning of their subject. These help promote the development of pupils, increasing knowledge, understanding and skills in the National Curriculum subjects. Teachers use these plans well to prepare lessons and provide suitable activities to support the learning of all pupils in their class. However, in science there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry and make suggestions about how to record their findings.
36. There are good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills and these ensure that the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are well taught in each year. The school also makes good use of additional literacy support groups and special focus groups in mathematics, known as 'Springboard', in order to improve the learning of pupils nearly achieving average levels of attainment. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are also used well in most other subjects. For example, mathematics and science were very well linked in a Year 5 activity on monitoring outside temperatures, and literacy skills are regularly used in the wide variety of ways that pupils are expected to record their work. Pupils' planned learning experiences in information and communication technology are particularly well thought out so that, in the younger year groups, they are taught the basic skills which give them the confidence and ability to use different applications as they progress.
37. One of the strengths of the curriculum is how it has been planned to ensure that it is meaningful and relevant to pupils. There are appropriate links made between many of the subjects. Examples are using design and technology in Year 1 to make moving Christmas cards and using CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web to undertake independent study in history and geography. However, over and beyond this are the excellent initiatives, such as the 'Irish Project' and 'ECO

School Project⁶, that greatly enrich the curriculum across the whole school. A focus on the use of Irish literature in English is adding variety and depth to learning in literacy lessons, whilst study of the environment and its eco-systems is supporting understanding and learning in a range of subjects, such as science, art and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Links with work on Cannock Chase during 'Heathland Day' provide further opportunities for pupils to study and improve their understanding of how to protect their environment. However, aspects of art and design and technology need to strengthen so that they add as much to the whole curriculum as subjects such as information and communication technology.

38. The school encourages all groups of pupils to work in harmony and participate fully in school life. It is therefore a socially inclusive school. It monitors the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils and has looked carefully at the achievement of boys and girls and how best to promote them. For instance, new reading resources, some chosen with boys in mind, are helping to motivate boys with their reading and improve their achievement. Teachers regularly plan for pupils of different ability, and include extension work for the most able. Meeting the needs of high-attaining pupils has been further strengthened by staff training and the organisation of classes by ability in Years 5 and 6 for the teaching of English and mathematics. The school responds positively to the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, who speak and write English confidently, and so they make good progress with their learning. The school ensures all pupils are included in all school activities.
39. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. Teachers complete a concern sheet and consult the special educational needs co-ordinator and set targets for the pupil. If the action taken is not successful, an individual education plan is put in place. This approach ensures that pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities, both in and out of class, while also achieving well. The school uses part of the special educational needs budget very effectively to employ a specialist teacher for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia).
40. The few pupils from ethnic-minority groups have access to the full range of the curriculum. They follow the same curriculum as other pupils in school and, as they all have a good knowledge of spoken and written English, they understand their work and achieve as well as others. Although the school does not currently have any pupils at an early stage of English acquisition, they know the approaches that should be taken to induct and support such a pupil if one were to arrive and where they may acquire external support.
41. The arrangements for extra-curricular activities provide very good opportunities for pupils to benefit from extensions to the mainstream curriculum. The pupils gain from visits around the local area and further afield, both as day trips and on residential journeys. These show a significant improvement since the last inspection with all classes having at least one, and often two, trips during the year. The school provides a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school,

⁶ This is a European initiative. The award is given to schools which have incorporated conservation and the environment into many aspects of their work and demonstrated that they are a 'green' school.

including different sports, music, foreign languages and other clubs. Some are open to pupils in Years 1 and 2 as well as in Years 3 to 6.

42. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is very good and shows a major improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the various areas that should be taught and the scheme of work provides a good development of aspects, such as self-confidence, citizenship, health and relationships for all year groups. Teachers have received appropriate training and, as was apparent during the inspection, are confident in the use of 'Circle Time'. For example, in several lessons teachers were willing to enable pupils to discuss emotional matters. Pupils subsequently explained that they found such opportunities very helpful. Sex education and drugs awareness are planned at appropriate stages during pupils' time in the school and, where appropriate, the staff make good use of visitors, such as the nurse and a former policeman. Health and safety education also feature in the teaching of subjects such as science, physical education and design and technology. During physical education lessons, for instance, teachers not only insist on proper warm-up and cool-down routines, they ensure pupils understand the reasons for so doing and the effect on the body.
43. There are very good links with the wider community contributing to pupils' learning. A good variety of organisations help with the mainstream curriculum and with the pupils' personal development. These include health and social services, the 'Rangers Service'⁷, a bank and a local supermarket. Connections with the parish result in the pupils attending several church services during the year and the vicar regularly visiting the school. The choir takes part in local events, singing in the church and at a local old people's home. The 'ECO' committee made up of pupils from different year groups undertakes a range of environmental work. The school has recently received funding to enable the local community to use new library and computer facilities inside the building and to have access to a new pond and orienteering course within the grounds.
44. There are also very good contacts with other educational institutions. The links with local secondary schools enhance the provision for various subjects, including English with exchanges of letters between Year 6 and Year 7 pupils and the use of secondary school resources for science, information and communication technology and design and technology. Year 11 students come to provide sports coaching in the school. There are good links with two teacher-training institutions and pupils benefit from the additional support of student teachers who come in. Many pupils also gain from the opportunity to meet others from different schools when playing various sports fixtures.
45. The provision for social development is excellent and for moral development is very good. The spiritual and cultural provision is satisfactory. Overall, this is an improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection though the arrangements for understanding the multi-cultural aspects of British society are still limited.

⁷ The Rangers are council employees who tend the green spaces in the community and forge links between the council and the community.

46. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is excellent. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. This approach results in very positive relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. In the classroom, there are many opportunities to work together in pairs or groups. Pupils are encouraged, and are willing, to undertake various responsibilities appropriate to their age. Pupils were seen to be aware of social conventions, politely saying 'Good afternoon' and 'Thank you'. Many pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have duties around the school supporting younger pupils, such as prefects, school council, librarians and hearing readers. Year 2 pupils volunteered that they would willingly go to the older 'friendship buddies' in the playground if they needed any help. Pupils also have opportunities to mix socially outside school with sports matches against other schools and with the residential visits. 'Circle Time' effectively reinforces good social values.
47. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for positive values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct to which the pupils respond. These standards are expressed in the code of conduct, a moral code that leads to the pupils having a good awareness of right and wrong. This even extends to the youngest with children in the reception class recognising during a story time that the animals were naughty to get in the mud a second time. Pupils are self-disciplined and this makes for an orderly school. The staff are good role models and the overall positive approach of the school to encouraging pupils' moral development is evident in the way all adults show tolerance and patience when dealing with pupils who need extra help. The provision for personal and social education has developed well. Opportunities are taken consistently in assemblies, 'Circle Time' and lessons to deal with problems and concerns.
48. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are satisfactory. As well as providing time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to gain a sense of belonging to a whole-school community and to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Visits by the local vicar and opportunities to go to the nearby church enable pupils to develop an understanding of Christian worship. Other faiths are introduced in religious education lessons but there are no opportunities to visit other places of worship or to see visitors from other faiths. 'Circle Time' helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. Children in the reception class showed wonder at the sounds of a leafy forest during a physical education lesson. Year 1 pupils experienced a feeling of excitement during a science lesson using magnets to move metal objects. Nevertheless, the school does not always plan opportunities within lessons such as art, music or science to enable pupils to fully appreciate the exciting nature of the world around them or to reflect upon their own feelings.
49. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Its strength lies in the fact that many subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. Pupils are starting to appreciate the western cultural background from nursery rhymes and stories and work on, for example, the Romans and Tudors in history. The study of world faiths in religious education helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. In geography,

they learn how people live, such as the St Lucians. In music, there is a good supply of instruments from different cultures and, in art, famous artists are studied and stimulate pupils' ideas. However, at the time of the inspection, there were few displays of art material around the school relating either to western or other cultures. The school recognises that the local area represents almost exclusively one culture and has developed links with Irish and nearby inner-city schools to enable contact with pupils from different cultures. Nevertheless, visitors from other backgrounds are infrequent and curriculum planning provides few opportunities to learn about the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society. In addition, the school does not celebrate the background of the few pupils in the school from other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. During the inspection, the pupils highlighted how the staff are friendly and helpful and said they felt comfortable talking to them if they have a problem. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are very good.
51. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. One teacher is the designated person for child protection and the school follows local education authority procedures. The classroom staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The school is ensuring that the midday supervisors receive similar guidance. The provision for first aid is good with several staff having had full or emergency training, records kept of any treatment and letters home to parents as appropriate. The health and safety policy is currently being reviewed. Outside contractors are used to regularly check the fire extinguishers, electrical items and physical education equipment. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. There is also an Internet safety policy, a contract that has to be signed by parents and numerous warning to pupils not to access the World Wide Web without adult supervision. The school has carried out risk assessment for various subjects and for visits. Eighteen months ago the local education authority audited the school's arrangements in this area and most recommendations are now implemented. However, the school has not carried out the whole-school risk assessment that was highlighted as necessary and has been an outstanding statutory requirement for several years. The school is aware that it needs to take place as soon as possible.
52. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are excellent. This shows improvement since the last inspection. The discipline and behaviour policy recognises the needs of the pupils and reflects the philosophy of the school. It clearly sets out the expectations of good behaviour, emphasising rewards and the use of good practice in lessons. The parents are fully involved with a helpful summary which

the school sends to them. The teaching seen during the inspection showed that the staff consistently adopt this positive approach. Overall, the high quality of the teaching provides pupils with work at the right level so that they are fully involved and behaviour is not a problem. Though bullying or name-calling is very unusual, pupils emphasise that the school takes rapid and appropriate action if any occurs. If any pupils were to show any sustained difficulty with behaviour, the school ensures they are monitored and supported well through the school's special educational needs system.

53. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory and make an appropriate contribution to the attainment and progress of all pupils. The excellent relationships between the pupils and the staff mean that the pupils enjoy being at the school, want to be there and want to arrive on time. Pupils who attend every day in a school year are rewarded with a certificate. Teachers monitor the attendance of the pupils in their class looking for any patterns of absence and referring any concerns to the headteacher. In newsletters, parents are regularly reminded of the need for good attendance and punctuality. The school makes good use of the computerised system to produce totals, each half term, of attendance rates in each class. This enables it to identify any need to give especial attention to any particular groups of pupils. Nevertheless, the school authorises all holiday absences up to a total of ten days each year even if they are made up of several applications of one or more days. The guidance from the Department of Education and Skills is that approval should be given only to one application for the annual family holiday. The very good procedures in the morning ensure that nearly all pupils are quickly settled in the classroom for a prompt start to the day.
54. The school has developed a range of very good assessment procedures since the time of the last inspection. These include tests undertaken by children at the beginning and end of the reception year, statutory standard assessment tasks at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the optional standard assessment tasks in Years 3, 4, and 5. Running alongside and interlaced with these are other formal testing systems which, taken together, provide the teachers with a useful bank of information detailing every pupil's attainment and progress over time.
55. The assessment co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher work together to provide teachers with useful computerised information which indicates how well individual pupils are doing as well as how year groups are performing as a whole. Challenging but realistic individual and year group targets are derived from this detailed information. In addition, the analysis of test results is used to identify any weaknesses or gaps in the curriculum, especially in science, mathematics and English. This enables subject co-ordinators to review and make the necessary adjustments in planning and to organise in-service training where needed.
56. Individual target setting shows pupils what they need to work on in the weeks ahead. Regular school-based assessments in English, mathematics and science are recorded in their 'Assessment Books', together with details of their unique targets and levels of attainment. Teachers maintain very good reading records recording individual pupils' achievement and progress on a regular basis, and peripatetic teachers of musical instruments provide termly written reports for parents about pupils' progress. Assessment systems in other subjects, such as

information and communication technology, are used well and inform teachers about a pupil's level of skill, as well as the programs they have used. In other subjects, such as history, new end-of-topic assessments have not been fully used. In most other subjects, however, assessment systems to monitor and support pupils' progress are less defined. The school has already identified this as a future priority in its school development plan.

57. The school has very effective systems for monitoring and supporting the personal development of its pupils. Pupils keep a comprehensive record of their own achievements, both in and out of school, and these are monitored regularly by staff. They discuss their individual targets, which relate not only to attainment but also to attitudes and behaviour, with their teachers, who also discuss them with parents. Parents receive termly reports on their child's personal development, which is more frequently than in most schools.
58. The headteacher and his staff regularly celebrate pupils' progress in terms of academic development as well as personal development, through very effective assemblies. For instance, in the weekly achievement assembly, they nominate pupils who then have a special leaf to hang on the achievement tree. Effort, perseverance and determination are recognised as well as high performance. This very good practice exemplifies the school's caring and positive ethos in which every pupil can succeed at something. Pupils' efforts and achievements are celebrated by a range of rewards, such as 'smiley' stickers, house points or a postcard from the headteacher. The school places a strong emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and on supporting pupils in their development by providing support where it is necessary.
59. The procedures for assessing pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school uses a wide range of different tests and assessments to determine how they can best help pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by producing their own learning targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers regularly review the individual education plans to ensure that pupils are making good progress towards their targets. The school has good contacts with outside learning support services, using their advice effectively, and has its own dyslexia teacher. For these reasons, the school's provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are mainly very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. These reactions show an improvement on the comments made at the time of the previous inspection. Some parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considers that the provision of clubs and activities at lunchtime and at other times is very good. Some doubts were

expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors conclude that the amount of work the pupils are expected to do at home is appropriate. A few parents also feel they are not well informed about the progress of their children though the great majority are satisfied with the amount of information provided. The inspectors support this latter view though the reports at the end of year are inadequate as their quality is inconsistent. A few parents also feel the school does not work closely with them, though the inspectors conclude that the school provides good opportunities for parents to meet teachers and that the school makes strenuous efforts to encourage parents to become involved.

61. The school has established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. Each month the headteacher sends home attractive newsletters with a good range of information about the life of the school and the various activities that the pupils are involved in. At the beginning of the year, teachers send home details of what they will be teaching their pupils. This is supplemented with general meetings on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. Every morning and afternoon provides a good opportunity for parents to see the teachers. Teachers are in the playground at the beginning of the day and in the afternoon; the inspectors saw parents going into the school to talk to teachers. It is apparent that parents feel very welcome to come into the school. In the autumn and spring term, the school sends home a summary of pupils' effort and attainment in each subject area and parents also have appointments to see the class teacher for more information. The annual report on progress is sent home in the summer term. In some classes, this report provides a reasonable summary in each subject of what the pupils know and can do together with targets to help the pupils to improve. Nevertheless, it is poor in other classes, concentrating on the work covered or attitudes rather than the skills and understanding acquired.
62. Teachers inform parents at an early stage if there are problems with a child's learning. They are kept very well informed about their child's progress. Individual education plans include a note on what parents can do to help their child. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recognised the need to make the parental section clearer on the report. Parents are not involved in reviewing individual education plans' targets. They are informed about any changes made to the plans.
63. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Pupils are happy in school, work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. Pupils do the homework that is set because their parents create an appropriate learning environment at home. Nevertheless, not all parents sign the homework diaries, though other diaries are used well by parents and teachers for two-way communication. The termly meetings with parents are well attended by parents and a good number come to the curriculum-related general meetings. The teachers in the reception classes are especially welcoming to parents and encourage them to stay to settle their children as well as to help in the classroom. Parents are very supportive of the fairs organised by the 'Friends' Association' which also arranges social events for the benefit of the pupils. Several parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis and many more are willing to help on trips out and to ferry their children to sports matches.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very good. He has a very clear vision for the school. The headteacher leads in a determined manner and ensures that staff work very hard to provide a good standard of education for all pupils. He has identified areas of strength and for development and, along with his staff, has addressed these issues with rigour. There is a very strong commitment to ensure that all pupils, regardless of attainment level and ethnic, cultural or social background, are included fully in the life of the school.
65. The senior management team supports the headteacher very effectively. They are fully involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Daily meetings and a more formal weekly meeting ensure that they understand what is happening in school. The team is very strong and has a very positive effect on raising standards, particularly when monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom. The role of the subject leader is developing within the school. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, there is very good subject leadership, which includes monitoring of teaching and learning within the classroom. In the other subjects, monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders is not as strong but the school has recognised this and there is a well planned programme that ensures each subject is regularly reviewed. Very good procedures have been established for the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher and senior management team regularly observe teaching, in a variety of subjects, throughout the school. The observations are very well focused and discussions with staff highlight areas of strength and areas for development. These are then incorporated into both individual and whole-school training sessions, for example the recent work on meeting the needs of the high-attaining pupils. This has a positive effect on raising the standard of teaching and learning in the school.
66. The headteacher delegates duties effectively. A recently qualified teacher feels valued because, although no subject responsibility was available, the headteacher has given her other responsibilities including running the successful school newspaper. The special educational needs co-ordinator performs the role very effectively and ensures the school meets the recommendations of the recently revised Code of Practice for special educational needs. In the time she has been co-ordinator, she has reviewed and revised procedures, putting in place a very good system of identification and reviewing. She has used her non-class time very effectively to monitor special educational needs across the school and liaise with other agencies. She recognises the need to monitor the use of individual education plans in subjects other than mathematics and English. There has been good progress in the provision for special educational needs since the previous inspection.
67. The school development plan is of very good quality. It very clearly identifies what areas need developing, who is responsible, what it will cost and the timescale and success criteria for evaluation. All staff are fully involved in formulating the plan and the plan is discussed and modified by the governors. They are thus fully aware of how the school is attempting to raise achievement, as in the case of English and science.

68. The school's systems for performance management and professional development of all staff, including support staff, are very good. The individual teacher targets are closely linked to the whole-school targets and they are effectively monitored to ensure that they are having an impact on teaching and learning. There are very good procedures in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers. Mentors and other staff give very good support and this results in improvement in performance.
69. The governing body gives the school good support. They carry out all of their statutory duties with the exception of fully carrying out risk assessments. There is very good understanding of the areas of strength and weakness in the school. For example, why the standards in mathematics were not as high as predicted and why science standards have declined. Governors monitor the effectiveness of their decisions mainly from headteacher and co-ordinator reports, for example on the impact on the computer suite, but they are not fully involved at an early stage in formulating the school development plan. There is a very well established committee structure in place. The Race Equality policy is appropriate as it is based upon guidance given by the local education authority. The school is a local 'pathfinder' school aimed at the inclusion of pupils with disabilities. It is therefore implementing the Disability Rights Code of Practice and is improving its accessibility in terms of the building and pupils' learning experiences.
70. The school manages its finances very well. Spending on teaching and support staff is necessarily high. At the end of the last financial year the school had carefully and deliberately saved nearly 9 per cent of its budget to carry over into the current financial year. This is being wisely used to maintain the good staffing levels and also to fund the building of a new library and computer suite. This is an example of the way decisions about spending are always taken in the light of the best interests of the pupils, and linked to the school's development plan. The finance committee of the governing body monitors spending closely so that any surplus funds can quickly be made available to the school. The school has been successful in obtaining funding from a wide range of sources. Any special grants the school receives, for instance from the New Opportunities Fund, the National Lottery or to support pupils with special educational needs, are used very well.
71. The day-to-day administration of finance is very good. A recent audit report showed no major weaknesses in the school's systems and the minor recommendations made have been acted upon. The school applies the principles of best value well, for instance by sharing governor training with other schools and consulting parents on issues such as the provision for information and communication technology. The school makes very good use of the new technology both in its administration and its provision for pupils' learning.
72. The school is well staffed with teachers who are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum and needs of the pupils. In addition to the regular teaching staff, visiting instrumental teachers and additional support for pupils with special educational needs and have a very positive effect on raising standards. Very good improvement has been made in the number of support staff in school and, as a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have benefited from very good quality support. Support staff have undergone a wide range of training to improve their skills. The quality of the

teaching and non-teaching staff has a direct relationship with the good standards achieved by the pupils.

73. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Classrooms in the main school are adequate for the pupils' needs. There is a good information and communication technology suite, with another one due to open shortly. There is a hall and separate dining area. The main hall is rather small and, as a result, there is insufficient room for whole-school activities. There are two outdoor classrooms which do not have adequate facilities for parts of the curriculum, there is no water and toilet facilities are in a nearby separate block. At times some lessons are taken in the main school but valuable teaching time is then wasted as pupils move backwards and forwards between the buildings. In winter or adverse weather conditions, this situation is particularly unsatisfactory as pupils remain in the huts, socially cut off from the rest of the school unless they brave the elements. The school library is housed in one of the outside classrooms. The school has recognised the need to improve its facilities and it is moving into the main school when the present building work is complete. The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the school clean in difficult circumstances brought about by construction work.
74. The outdoor facilities are very good. There are benches and tables which allow pupils to sit and chat or be quiet. There is a large grassed area which has been planted with a willow maze. The school conservation area has been designated an area of special scientific interest because of the presence of newts; this has meant that access is restricted. The school is establishing another conservation area.
75. Learning resources have been improved greatly since the previous inspection. They are now good overall. There are particular strengths in English and mathematics, where resources for higher-attaining pupils have been improved. Computers are plentiful and well used to develop pupils' skills and understanding. The outdoor resources for pupils in the Foundation Stage are used effectively to develop learning. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good resources, including appropriate reading schemes and voice-activated computers. The resources for music are very good; they include a wide range of percussion instruments, violins, brass instruments, keyboards, clarinets, percussion pads and instruments from other cultures. These are used very effectively to enhance the music curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to further raise achievement in the school, governors, the headteacher and staff should:

- raise standards in science by the age of 11 by:
 - extending the knowledge and confidence of all staff;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments and their methods of recording;
 - making greater use of information and communication technology;

(Paragraphs 11, 23 and 119-125)

- provide further opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to appreciate the traditions of other cultures and to recognise the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

(Paragraphs 49, 130 and 171)

The following issues should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensure that a whole school health and safety risk assessment is carried out in the near future;

(Paragraphs 51 and 69)

- ensure that all annual reports to parents on pupil progress provide information for each subject on what the pupils know and can do.

(Paragraphs 60-61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

84

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	4	19	41	20	0	0	0
Percentage	5	23	49	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	423
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	33	28	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	29	31
	Girls	28	27	27
	Total	59	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(98)	92(95)	95(97)
	National	84(84)	86(86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	31
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	58	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95(95)	95(98)	95(98)
	National	85(85)	89(89)	89(89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	39	30	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	25	29
	Girls	27	21	27
	Total	58	46	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84(75)	67(71)	81(83)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	27
	Girls	27	24	27
	Total	54	50	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78(83)	72(78)	78(83)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
416	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24:1
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: Y R – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	884,264
Total expenditure	872,351
Expenditure per pupil	1,925
Balance brought forward from previous year	67,040

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	423
Number of questionnaires returned	73
Percentage of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	45	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	49	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	52	18	4	3
The teaching is good.	40	56	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	47	15	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	45	11	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	4	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	49	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	47	16	4	8

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

77. Children join the reception classes at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five years old. Some may have begun school on a part-time basis in the Early Years Unit in January or April. However, those children whose birthdays fall between April and September do not enjoy the benefit of part-time pre-reception experience and, accordingly, many attend other establishments, such as nurseries and playgroups. Attainment on entry is below the county average in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development. Boys score lower than girls across all areas. Children spend a year in the reception classes where they make good progress across all areas of learning due to good teaching. There is very good progress in speaking, listening and personal, social and emotional development because the team of adults places a particularly high value on these aspects and takes every chance to extend children's experience and skills.
78. Teaching in the reception classes is good, with some very good features. Teachers carefully and thoroughly plan a broad curriculum each day ensuring a balance between teacher-led and independent activities that also concentrate on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The very good liaison between teachers and classroom assistants and other adults makes it possible for groups to make very good use of accommodation and outdoor areas. Children are securely on course to achieve standards at least in line with expectations in all six areas of learning and in religious education. Some are already achieving levels that are above expectations in reading, because of very good teaching. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because they are identified early and very good support is provided to meet their particular needs. There are currently no pupils learning English as an additional language in reception. In line with the school's policy on equal opportunities all children are involved in all activities and are encouraged to play harmoniously together.
79. Improvement in provision for children under five since the last inspection has been very good.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. Children are developing confidence in working independently because teachers organise very good opportunities for extending children's experience and skills. For example, children are encouraged to work and play together in the role-play areas. They readily take turns, help each other to fasten dressing-up clothes, such as cloaks, and share the responsibility for tidying up. Although there is an adult close by, children are given time and space to practise their skills of tolerance and negotiation without direction. They are developing a good understanding of other children's feelings, and beginning to realise the consequence of their action on others. Most show courtesy and respect for each other through speaking one at a time and listening attentively.
81. Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development. They show sincere interest in children's activities,

talking, listening and questioning as needed. Children with special educational needs receive sufficient support to let them practise their independence successfully whilst playing and working alongside others. Most children are well on course to reach the expected level by the end of the academic year.

Communication, language and literacy

82. Children are encouraged to listen very hard because teaching is very well paced, enlivened by interesting resources and stimulating comments and questions. Teachers keep the momentum of the daily literacy lessons moving along with a good range of short, sharply focused activities. Most children develop their speaking skills with confidence because teachers give good support, provide encouragement and show genuine interest in what they have to say. A very good feature of teaching is the way teachers deliberately but sensitively draw in the more reticent children and seek their opinion, showing that their contribution really counts.
83. There are very good opportunities to develop listening skills. For example, through well told stories such as 'Mrs Wishy Washy' children are encouraged to join in and all eagerly chant 'Wishy washy, wishy washy' as the story is acted out and the muddy animals are scrubbed clean.
84. A love of books shown by many adults and regular whole class story times also encourage a similar love of books in many children. Most handle books properly and know that the story is told from left to right, identifying the beginning and the end. Many confidently identify letters in their own names and the majority of children identify many other letters too. The more-able children read sentences fluently and with expression, and accurately identify words at random, such as 'was', 'went' and 'windy'. They distinguish between these using correct letter names and sounds and can correctly arrange a jumbled sentence to give it meaning. Another positive factor in their rapid progress is the close liaison with parents who listen regularly and helpfully complete the home-school reading diary. Therefore, nearly all the children are well on course to reach the expected level or higher in reading by the end of the year.
85. There are very good opportunities for children's development of writing skills. Because of clear and careful demonstrations, children watch closely as teachers and their assistants model the shapes of letters on whiteboards and in the air, and use their 'magic pencils' to imitate. They cope very well with writing in a cursive style. They have a reasonable knowledge of initial sounds and nearly all children write their names correctly and use marks confidently to represent writing. Most children are well on course to reach the expected level by the end of the academic year.

Mathematical development

86. Teachers plan a wide range of mathematical experiences that are often practical and also involve discussion and singing, thus capturing children's imagination and concentration. Every day children have a short and exciting 'Morning Maths' time. They pay close attention and are eager to identify individual numerals up to 10 in quick succession. Most children use the names of numbers correctly and confidently count from nought to 20. High attaining children use the word 'zero' and know that it means 'nothing' or 'nought'. Children are very aware of numbers

around them and count how many children are playing in the role play area – the stable at Bethlehem – and that there are three shepherds and three wise men but only one manger. They enjoy making patterns of shapes using rectangles, squares and circles, and develop their knowledge and understanding of sequences by ordering coloured solid shapes to make a given pattern. They regularly use two-dimensional shapes to make pictures.

87. Children make very good progress in mathematical development because of very good teaching, and are well on course to reach the expected level or higher by the end of the academic year. Classroom assistants play an important part in helping children understand their tasks fully, for example as they explore the properties of water and the capacity of bottles and jugs. In such sessions the assistants are particularly good in engaging the children in discussion which encourages their language development as well as forming basic mathematical concepts. Children with special educational needs also make very good progress because of the very good support they receive from classroom assistants and teachers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

88. Children are making good progress and during the year receive a wide range of interesting and relevant experiences including information and communication technology, science, history and religious education. For instance, at the appropriate time of the year, children sow seeds, make cress sandwiches and observe tadpoles develop into froglets.
89. There are frequent visitors to the reception classes, including the vicar who showed the children his different robes and explained when they were worn and why, and the community policeman who explained to the children the importance of observing the 'Stranger Danger' rules. The school nurse visits the classes to talk about how necessary it is to wash hands and eat healthy food. These visitors and visits to places such as the farm as well as the care they give to the class pets, a goldfish and a guinea pig, help to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world.
90. Teachers plan relevant experiences for all the children. Because of this children pay close attention to their work, as seen during the inspection. Pupils listened attentively to their teacher's explanation of the meaning of the Advent Calendar. They therefore gain an understanding of important festivals; this is well supported by their participation in assemblies. Using computers, children have mastered the technique of clicking, dragging and dropping using the mouse, putting strawberries in boxes and accurately fitting them into their compartments. They know and use the terms 'mouse', 'monitor' and 'printer'.
91. Because of enthusiastic and good teaching, and very effective support from classroom assistants, children make good progress and are well on course to reach the expected level over the course of the year. This is also the case for children with special educational needs.

Physical development

92. At the time of the last inspection, outdoor play was restricted due to the lack of a suitable area. This has been entirely addressed and now children enjoy two separate areas for outdoor play. One is devoted to imaginative home play with a 'Cosy Cottage', a garden and two wheeled toys. Children also play with water and sand here when the weather allows. The other area is large and well marked out with tracks and roadways so that several children can safely use it for riding large wheeled toys, such as scooters, bikes and tricycles. Both areas are secure and always supervised by an adult.
93. Because of the wide range of activities that are regularly planned, children gain confidence in handling large apparatus and develop good skills in managing small equipment, such as paint brushes, the computer mouse and gardening tools. Regular timetabled periods in the school hall provide good opportunities for movement and physical education using small apparatus, such as balls and hoops. In addition, they have regular access to climbing apparatus on the main playground.
94. Children make good progress in physical development and are well on course to reach levels that are at least in line with expectations by the end of the school

year because of improved provision, good teaching and support from class assistants.

Creative development

95. This aspect of the children's experience in the reception classes is very rich. Teachers provide many very good opportunities for children to experience a very wide range of exciting activities in art, drama, literature and music. Planning for these is rigorous and takes into account children's readiness to work independently, for instance in providing opportunities for serious and meaningful role play in the Bethlehem stable setting for the birth of Jesus.
96. Children enjoy music, repeating clapping and tapping patterns accurately after listening carefully. They carefully use a range of untuned percussion instruments to imitate *rhythms*, but are less successful in maintaining a steady *pulse* because the teacher's own subject knowledge of these two musical elements is not entirely secure. Nevertheless, both teachers and children enjoy singing a range of familiar songs and nursery rhymes, have good diction and sing in tune with good rhythms. However, there is little instruction on how to improve their singing. Opportunities to listen to music are provided in regular assemblies, although not in classrooms.
97. Because art is central to many activities in the reception classes children regularly use paint, crayon and pencil crayon, and complete colouring activities swiftly with remarkable accuracy. Their eagerly drawn pictures show a clear sense of shape and proportion. Teachers often plan for them to work in groups or individually, thus encouraging their social development. They have therefore developed the confidence to express themselves and use a range of skills in creating a wonderful collage monster and decorating their own Christmas trees. Children use computers very well to link information and communication technology with art and mathematics; for instance, they use a mouse to click and drag shapes such as circles, squares and triangles to make pictures of rockets, castles and animals.
98. Children make very good progress due to very good teaching. This is particularly so for children with special educational needs who receive very good support and guidance. Classroom assistants and other adults make a very good contribution to this aspect of the children's development because they are very well briefed by the teachers. Children are well on course to reach the expected level of attainment by the end of the year.

ENGLISH

99. Results for pupils aged 7 in the national tests for English have improved significantly over time. For the past two years, pupils have attained well above the levels achieved nationally. Current inspection findings reflect this and show that, by the age of 7 years, attainment in reading and writing is well above average. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds have been more variable over time, but in the national tests of 2002 attainment leapt to above average because of the school's effective focus on literacy. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are currently as high as those achieved in 2002, although standards in reading are well above the expected level. As in the 2002 national tests, the inspection found no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls at 7 or 11; an issue identified in the previous inspection.

100. Pupils start Year 1 with the expected level of skills in English. Based on this level of prior attainment, pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is because teachers' expertise in the teaching of the basic skills is very good and their high expectations encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. Progress in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged as adequate. Present progress is good and teachers offer high-attaining pupils sufficient challenge, something they were not doing at the time of the last inspection. This improved progress is because of the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with good teaching. However, the rate at which all pupils learn has been enhanced by the organisation of pupils in Years 5 and 6 into classes based on ability for the teaching of English and also by the considerable enrichment of pupils' planned learning experiences through links with the school in Northern Ireland.
101. The school works hard to provide opportunities for all groups to learn and work together. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need make good progress with their learning and are well supported in lessons by learning support assistants. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition. Those very few pupils at the school who have English as an additional language speak and use English fluently and accurately; they all achieve well.
102. At 7 and 11 years of age, standards in speaking and listening are good. Throughout the school, pupils listen carefully in lessons and are interested in what others have to say. The fact that many lessons are brisk and interesting captures pupils' attention so that they want to listen. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to speak during lessons, often during the introduction and when discussing the lesson at the end. This is particularly evident in many numeracy lessons and in some of the information and communication technology lessons. Teachers' good questioning skills encourage pupils to speak at length and teachers often encourage pupils to speak loudly and clearly. In Years 1 and 2, pupils speak confidently and respond clearly to what they have heard. Younger pupils use language successfully to imagine and create: for instance in role-play activities related to a 'day in the park'. Pupils currently in Year 2 are competent speakers, who explain their ideas clearly. Teachers are very insightful and in a Year 2 group, where there are nearly twice as many boys as girls, the teacher makes sure girls have the opportunity to ask and to respond to questions. By 11 years of age, pupils successfully add to discussions and give their own points of view. They act in a mature way and talk freely to adults. For instance, they are keen to talk to visitors from Ireland and pose relevant and searching questions, relating to a wide range of social issues.
103. By the age of 7 and 11 years, standards in reading are well above average. Discussions with pupils indicate that the vast majority enjoy reading, and read regularly at home and in school. Pupils' good speaking and listening skills enable them to discuss books in greater depth and this in turn supports very good progress in reading. In Year 2, basic reading skills are taught well and so pupils make sense of unknown words by recalling words by sight and linking letters with their sounds. Higher-attaining pupils read with expression and use the whole sentences to help make good guesses at unknown words. Lower-attaining pupils are not as fluent in their reading and have fewer strategies to use when it comes

to tackling new words. By 11 years of age, most pupils are fluent and mature readers, who read with a deep understanding and meaning. Older pupils buy books for themselves and make comparisons between different authors and styles. One pupil in Year 6 explains, 'I'm a book person. I like books where you have to use your imagination and you are taken into a different world'. Another stated a preference for, 'more factual books, like the 'Call of the Whales'.

104. Teachers manage reading well. The range and level of books provide a good challenge in lessons and in guided-reading time and there is a good balance between reading scheme books, books from children's literature and non-fiction texts. Teachers keep very good records of pupils' reading which helps them guide pupils to more challenging texts and offer support when needed. In an attempt to boost boys' attainment in reading, the school has looked at the range of reading resources it provides and has included more non-fiction and adventure stories. Throughout the school, extra time for reading is planned into the school timetable. This is used well not only to meet individual needs but also to give pupils plenty of opportunity to read in school. Pupils with difficulty with their reading benefit from the expertise of the learning support assistants and are proud of the progress they make. In Years 3 to 6, a significant strength is the use of Irish literature to enrich teaching and learning experiences in English. Discussions with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils show how successful this initiative has been in motivating boys, in particular, to read by choice. Books such as 'Under the Hawthorn Tree' are popular with a number of pupils, including boys, who empathise with the characters and so develop a deeper understanding of character and plot. In a similar way, the study of Irish books is adding to the pupils' social and cultural development, by widening their knowledge of other cultures and traditions. However, discussions with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils indicate that they are not able to undertake personal research in the school library because of the limited access to this resource, currently located in a mobile classroom in the playground. Despite this, pupils have the appropriate skills to research information from books and the World Wide Web.
105. Standards in writing are well above average by 7 years of age and above average by 11 years of age. Throughout the school, pupils take pride in their work and it is neat, tidy and well presented. From the start of school, handwriting is taught consistently and in a cursive style. The basic skills of spelling and grammar are taught progressively, year on year, so that by the time pupils leave school at the age of 11 they have achieved well.
106. Good literacy teaching is the norm in Years 1 and 2, although at times it is very good and in Year 1 occasionally excellent. This high-quality teaching links the spoken and written word very well. When pupils make their own books, for instance, they draw from their understanding of traditional stories and narrative structure to produce their own original work. Stories such as 'The Little Foal' show the pupils' expertise with writing more complex sentences. Pupils have a good knowledge of letters and their sounds (phonics) and this enables them to write sentences independently. Even in Year 1, pupils correctly spell words such as 'glove', 'above' and 'mother' without help. By Year 2, pupils write confidently and have very good spelling skills which help them to write at a good pace and at length. Writing is purposeful and often linked to learning in other subjects, such as history. Writing about the plight of soldiers in the trenches in World War I is an

example where pupils have understood the writing task clearly and produced very good work.

107. By 11 years of age, standards in writing are above average. Teachers provide a wider range of writing tasks in lessons, an improvement upon the narrow range offered at the time of the last inspection. Pupils regularly write for different audiences and purposes and do so with a good deal of independence. For example, in biographical writing in Year 6, higher-attaining writers organised their own ideas and thoughts in writing whilst, in a parallel class, less confident writers followed smaller guided steps to complete the same task. There is a well established 'fish bone' planner that most pupils find a useful tool to help them shape their ideas for non-fiction and story writing. This enables these pupils to work independently, organising their work logically and choosing words to good effect. However, lower-attaining pupils are not as confident about the different writing conventions as most pupils at the school. For instance, when writing a newspaper report some of these pupils began as if writing a piece of narrative, 'Once upon a time...' or 'One day...'. Teachers' knowledge of the basic skills of grammar and punctuation is very good. They continually reinforce these and remind pupils to use in their work a wide range of grammatical rules, such as paragraphs, spelling conventions and complex punctuation, for example speech marks. In lessons, teachers hold a good balance between enriching writing, through a wider use of vocabulary and descriptive language, and encouraging the use of these skills in a finished piece of work. Teachers have carefully and successfully integrated Irish texts into their teaching. A lesson based on 'Jimmy's Leprechaun Trap' is an example of this. As pupils explored the meaning of Gaelic words and sayings, they widened their knowledge about language. However, an analysis of pupils' writing provides less evidence of drafting, reading through and improving longer pieces of original writing.
108. Throughout the school, pupils use their skills in word processing well to produce interesting final pieces of work on the computer but a lack of access to computers in the classroom limits incidental and spontaneous use during lessons. The computer suite, however, is regularly used by pupils to search the World Wide Web or CD-ROMs for information. For example, Year 6 pupils searched the World Wide Web for information about mountains in geography and Year 2 pupils used CD-ROMs to find out about the Victorians in history. Such activities have helped improve pupils' research skills. Computers are also used well to support lower-attaining pupils. In a very good lesson, the computer suite was used to study the poem 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon'.
109. Teaching in English is good overall. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. This helps create a trusting and pleasant working atmosphere in which pupils have the confidence and are willing to attempt new work that is more challenging. Teachers mark pupils' work well and their useful comments provide a key to improvement. Lessons are well managed and move at a good pace. Very little time is wasted so pupils work hard and are productive. The grouping of pupils into classes based on ability in Years 5 and 6 is well thought out and parallel year groups plan together. This enables teachers to match work to meet the needs of different ability levels and to provide an appropriate level of challenge in work set. Teachers make good use of the expertise of learning support assistants, whose help is valued by the pupils. Homework is regularly set. Pupils frequently have

reading and spellings to take home, as well as longer pieces of writing, as they get older. For example, writing horoscopes and small advertisements for the class newspaper in Year 4.

110. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The two co-ordinators work well together and have a clear focus for the way forward and the raising of attainment. The National Literacy Strategy has been carefully implemented and enriched by initiatives linked to the school's contacts with a school in Northern Ireland. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects, although the use of photocopied sheets, particularly in science, does limit their opportunities to develop their recording skills. The quality of teaching and learning has been closely monitored through observations and the analysis of planning and pupils' work. The procedures to assess pupil attainment and monitor their progress are very good. The insights gained into the quality of English teaching and pupil progress has enabled the school to target specific areas and groups of pupils to maximise their achievement, for example improving boys' reading. Resources are good and accessible in lessons. The school library is shortly to be relocated, but at present is not used well enough as a learning resource.

MATHEMATICS

111. The 2002 national test results showed that attainment at the age of 7 was average and at the age of 11 years was below average. Standards seen in the inspection period were higher than those in the national tests. Attainment was above average in both at the ages of 7 and 11, with a significant number of pupils working above the expected levels. The school has analysed test results very effectively and identified areas for development, for example shape and space, and started to address them. Teachers ensure all groups of pupils are fully included in lessons. The use of setting (grouping by ability) and work that challenges the higher-attaining pupils has ensured that pupils are now achieving well. The smaller numbers in sets with pupils with special educational needs, linked to work set at the correct level and mathematical targets on individual educational plans, result in these pupils making good progress. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language have no problems in understanding the language of mathematics and they also make good progress. No significant difference was observed in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls.
112. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded throughout the school; the quality of teaching has improved, with unsatisfactory teaching being eradicated. Work now challenges higher-attaining pupils. The school is addressing areas for development very well.
113. By the age of 7, pupils have a better than expected understanding of the basic skill of number. Lower-attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value in two-digit numbers and higher-attaining pupils work confidently with three-figure numbers. They add and subtract 10 and 100 to a given number, use conventional symbols and apply their knowledge to simple money problems. However, most pupils are not confident enough in this to apply their knowledge to more complex money problems or those that involve larger amounts. In work on shape and

space, pupils carefully and accurately measure using standard and non-standard measures, such as hand span. Lower-attaining pupils show a good understanding of time, with most identifying hour and half hour. The majority of pupils recognise a wide variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes, with average and higher-attaining pupils confidently naming properties, including the number of sides and corners. Pupils regularly collect data, such as birthday months and number of house points, and accurately record them on graphs.

114. By the age of 11, pupils have built well on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired earlier. There is good understanding of the four rules of number. Higher- and average-attaining pupils work with six-figure numbers and show good mental mathematical skills. Pupils apply their mathematical skills to 'real-life problems', for example 'How long will it take to travel one mile at three miles per hour?' In work on multiplication and division, pupils understand inverse operations. Pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. There is particularly good understanding of ratio and proportion. The higher-attaining pupils plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Lower-attaining pupils are confident in plotting in the first quadrant. In the area of shape, space and measures, pupils identify properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They record the perimeter of a regular shape but not all are confident in using formulae to work out perimeters and areas. In data handling, pupils have a better than expected understanding of probability and the probability scale. They collect and analyse data using a variety of graphs at a level appropriate to their age.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; at times, it is very good or excellent. All teachers plan their lessons effectively based on the National Numeracy Strategy three-part lesson. Plans are modified after evaluation of lessons; this was done very effectively in an excellent Year 5 lesson on triangles. Pupils know what they are going to learn because lesson objectives are outlined at the start of the lessons and are revisited at the end to ensure they have been covered. In lessons, teachers use recaps to ensure that pupils have understood previous work. Teachers use methods that interest the pupils, for example the interactive white board in Year 5 and number fans in Year 2. In a lesson on measurement with a lower-attaining group, the teacher made the lesson interesting when she asked pupils to measure a window for new curtains. All teachers pay good attention to developing mathematical vocabulary both in lessons and on the good quality classroom displays. In the very good quality lessons, pace is brisk and pupils are kept interested. There are a small number of lessons where pace slows just before group or individual work and there is a little time lost. Teachers work hard to ensure all pupils are included in the lessons by setting work at different levels; this is linked with additional support and mathematical targets on individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. There are times when a small minority of pupils are not challenged enough and repeat exercises when they have obviously mastered a skill. The morning mathematics sessions during registration and the early part of the morning are used effectively to develop mathematical skills, especially in number work. All teachers are very competent in teaching the basic skill of number. Analysis of work shows that teachers miss opportunities to develop learning by the use of constructive marking. There is some good marking but this is not consistent. Homework is used effectively to develop learning. Pupils are well managed by staff and there are good relationships between adults and pupils.

116. Pupils respond very well to their teachers and other adults. They listen carefully and respond very well when in groups. Standards of behaviour are consistently very good and this enables teachers to concentrate on imparting knowledge and giving help to pupils having difficulty.
117. Mathematics is developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. In science, pupils are given opportunities to measure and read scales. Number skills are developed effectively in music when pupils play complex rhythms and count beats in a bar. Measuring skills are developed in design and technology and pupils develop an understanding of number in geography. The use of word problems and an emphasis on using mathematical vocabulary develops pupils' literacy skills. There is satisfactory use of information and communications technology in the subject. Pupils are given opportunities to use mathematical programs including datahandling and setting the programmable toy with a range of directions and turns. There are good opportunities to develop social and moral understanding when pupils learn the rules of mathematics and work together in groups.
118. There is very good co-ordination of the subject. The subject co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how to raise standards. The quality of teaching and learning has been monitored and strategies put in place to ensure continued improvement. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively to develop learning. Resources have been improved since the previous inspection and now meet the needs of all pupils.

SCIENCE

119. In the national teacher assessments in 2002 the results achieved by pupils in Year 2 were average. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, they were well below average, continuing the downward trend of recent years. However, while the standards being achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 are still average, those achieved by pupils in Year 6 are now below, rather than well below, average. Standards have improved because the school has recognised that there have been weaknesses in the teaching of the subject and they are attempting to redress these through support and guidance offered by the co-ordinator and further staff training. However, standards remain below the expected level because these improvements have had insufficient time to make a significant impact on standards and there remains a weakness in teachers' knowledge and confidence so that there are too few opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments and their own methods of recording. In the last three years, girls have achieved better results than boys in the tests in Year 6, but there was no indication during the inspection that this is still the case.
120. As science is now a school priority and the quality of teaching is satisfactory, most pupils made reasonable gains in their knowledge and understanding in the lessons observed. However, because of the teachers' lack of expertise and confidence, their expectations in the past have been low and lessons have lacked an appropriate challenge. Therefore, pupil progress over time has been unsatisfactory and many have underachieved. Similarly, the few pupils who have English as an additional language have made unsatisfactory progress, not because of difficulties

understanding the subject as they are all fluent in English, but because the work presented to all pupils has been insufficiently challenging. Although pupils with special educational needs are adequately supported, teachers in the past have not closely matched the work to their particular ability and these pupils have also made unsatisfactory progress.

121. On the basis of their own definition of a good car (one that goes the fastest) pupils in Year 2 have devised their own fair test. They understand that each car would have to start from the same point and have the same amount of push behind. They have a secure understanding of a fair test. In earlier work, they have distinguished successfully between healthy and unhealthy foods, drawing up their own rules for keeping healthy, and in Year 1 they showed that they understood some of the properties of materials, for instance in providing insulation.
122. In their work on materials pupils in Year 6 have demonstrated a reasonable understanding of dissolving and evaporation. They know that some solids dissolve in water and predict whether these dissolved solids can be separated from the liquid by filtering. They know that the temperature of a liquid determines the rate at which a substance, such as sugar, dissolves. In a piece of homework, they wrote in detail about how burning is not a reversible change. In a lesson, many pupils showed that they understood how to construct an electrical circuit and most could describe the difference between parallel and series circuits. In earlier work in Year 5, pupils have successfully recorded temperature using a sensor; they have also investigated sound to see which material is best for soundproofing, as well as exploring the pitch and volume created by musical instruments. However, most pupils do not think scientifically and the level at which they plan, record and evaluate their work is below the expected standard for their age and their ability. Their recording of results is particularly weak because sometimes the results are recorded before the method is described and, on other occasions, a few pupils do not record their findings at all.
123. The overall quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, although an example of excellent teaching was seen in Year 1. It is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, although there are also examples of very good teaching. The excellent lesson in Year 1 on magnetism was wonderfully crafted so that it maximised pupils' learning. An expressive and enthusiastic teacher brought together a series of seamless activities, very well resourced, that captured pupils' imagination so well that they did not realise that they were learning factual information, as well as developing their ability to think scientifically. Teachers throughout the school plan lessons well. They make good use of resources and the support of classroom assistants in conducting investigations. Sometimes, however, the pace of the lesson slows because teachers have to intervene to provide additional explanation. In some classes, teachers make too much use of worksheets, which means that pupils do not always have the opportunity to devise their own methods of recording. This demonstrates teachers' low expectations of pupils' ability both in science and literacy and is why the recording of results is particularly weak. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher matched work on the use and care of teeth very well to the needs of all pupils in the class, so that learning could proceed at a good pace with minimal interruption; pupils' understanding was developed further by the use of a good range of resources. Teachers place a good emphasis on the use of correct scientific vocabulary, such as 'conductor'

and 'insulator' in Year 1. In Year 2 because of the teacher's good, probing questioning pupils developed their understanding of a fair test. These are examples of a good link between science and literacy. There are also some opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills. For instance, pupils in Year 4 recorded on a graph the results of their investigation into which material provided the best insulation for a drink. There is some good work with computers. For example, in Year 5 pupils have used electronic sensors to measure and record the outside temperature, but the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other year groups is limited. On many occasions, however, teachers set the scientific problem and organise a practical activity to solve it. This minimises the opportunities for pupils to think scientifically, plan their own experiments and record and evaluate their findings independently.

124. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive and they work well together on investigations. The strong emphasis placed by the school on environmental issues, reflected in its status as an 'ECO School', encourages pupils' interest and learning about living things and the world around them. They have a very responsible attitude to the school environment and take a justifiable pride in what has been achieved by their own efforts. Their interest in science has been developed further by a science week, which last year included a theatre group giving a presentation on sound. Pupils in Year 6 also take part in a basic first aid course. Science makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development.
125. The subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of the subject and provides good support to colleagues both in planning work and the provision of training. He understands the reasons why standards have not been as high as they could have been. These have been explained to the governors, who are now fully aware of the steps the co-ordinator is taking to raise standards. He recognises the need to support colleagues who are less confident in their knowledge and also the need to give pupils more opportunities to develop their investigational skills. There are good systems in place to check the progress pupils are making as they move through the school. Good links have been established with one of the receiving high schools, through units of work that can be continued at high school level and also in the opportunities for older pupils to use the laboratories there. As standards at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection there has been a deterioration in this subject, although the potential for improvement is now good.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Standards in art have remained the same since the time of the last inspection and meet national expectations at both Year 2 and Year 6. During the inspection, only one lesson was observed, so judgements are mainly derived from teachers' planning, pupils' work, displays and discussions with the co-ordinator, staff and pupils.
127. Although the school is alive with bright and informative displays and posters, there are not many examples to be seen of pupils' individual responses to art. Some exceptions to this judgement are in Year 6 where some pupils have used watercolours to portray their interpretations of reflections in a landscape and in Year 2 where pupils have closely observed fruit and vegetables and drawn their

own impressions of what they see. Both these examples demonstrate that pupils have an imagination and creative flair appropriate to their age.

128. Pupils' sketchbooks show very little work since the beginning of this school year. It is not clear therefore how the systematic development of skills such as sketching and shading are being taught. There is no evidence of work on proportion or perspective. Drawings to illustrate work in other subjects such as history are disappointing as too often they lack detail and the proportions are weak. The standard of work seen and pupils' satisfactory progress indicate satisfactory teaching. However, in Year 2, some good detailed drawings, individual responses to the task of 'Santamobiles', were seen as part of the planning process in design and technology.
129. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 made very good progress because of very good teaching. They have very good attitudes to the subject and rise to the challenge of drawing an arrangement of real musical instruments from close observation. They make good use of viewfinders and most use their pencils appropriately to indicate shading. They concentrate very hard and persevere diligently because the teacher is supportive and encouraging, and frequently interacts with individuals. The provision she makes for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good, as is her very good use of music, such as Pachelbel's *Canon* to establish a suitable 'mood'. In conversation, pupils recalled the work of artists such as Picasso, Van Gogh, Salvador Dali and Leonardo da Vinci. They could describe the differences between the styles of these artists and remembered the unusual features of Salvador Dali's work extremely well. They were less aware of some other styles, such as the French Impressionists, or of more recent artists, such as Hockney. Such discussions on various artists do add to pupils' personal development and the development of their speaking and listening skills; however, there was little evidence of pupils undertaking further research or formally recording their work in art appreciation. Therefore, the use of their literacy skills in this subject is more limited than it needs to be. In the past, all pupils have worked with a range of media including charcoal, paint, paper and card but have had little experience in working with ink, clay or textiles. They do not immediately recognise the terms 'collage', 'perspective' and 'proportion' and have not visited any art galleries.
130. The co-ordinator is very conscientious and determined to raise standards in art. For example, she has plans to establish a portfolio of pupils' work across the whole breadth of the art curriculum including photographs of three-dimensional work. Although she has other considerable responsibilities, she is fully aware of the urgent need now to improve staff expertise and develop the profile of art in the school. Art is already included as a priority in the school development plan. Pupils do receive an adequate range of artistic experiences, but they are not as well planned as other subjects. For example, although pupils have some experience of painting, weaving paper and drawing, there is little evidence of three-dimensional work, printing or *batik*. There are some examples of pupils using computers in their art work; for example, Year 2 pupils use paint programs and older pupils use clip art to illustrate their written work. However, the use of information and communication technology is not very well planned in all aspects of art; currently it is far more incidental. Pupils' awareness of their own artistic culture and their understanding of art in Britain's multi-cultural society is limited.

For example, there was little evidence of studies of the local environment, such as features of the school grounds or the local church, or of Islamic tiling or fabrics. However, pupils in Year 6 showed unusually good sensitivity when appraising the work of a pupil with special educational needs because his work was very important to him and he had tried very hard.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

131. Standards in design and technology by Year 2 and Year 6 meet national expectations as they did at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time. However, in lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress because of good teaching. All pupils have equal access to design and technology as the school makes a great deal of effort to ensure that all pupils are included in all activities.
132. By Year 2, pupils have explored different ways of fixing materials together. They have successfully chosen split pins to join arms and legs to two-dimensional representations of animals so that they become effective puppets with moving limbs and tails. They have planned a Christmas card using a sliding mechanism, discussed which materials to use and which to discard. They choose colours with care to make sure their designs are really effective, for example using shaded card as a background to their moving snowman. In the first lesson of the unit, they designed a 'Santamobile' making good use of literacy skills because they had listed the resources needed and written the instructions in the correct order. In the second lesson, they put their plans into practice using a wide range of materials, such as wood, card, paper and straw.
133. By Year 6, pupils know that materials can be securely joined in different ways, such as sewing, gluing and stapling. They have studied how packages are constructed by taking boxes and containers apart. They know and use confidently the terms 'net' and 'tab'. They enjoy designing and making their own packages and are especially keen to design a package to hold sweets. Older pupils recall homework projects to make a sarcophagus for an Egyptian mummy.
134. The teaching of design and technology observed during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. In these lessons pupils both practise and acquire new skills, and in the very best of lessons also have a very enjoyable time. The excellent teaching in Year 1 is characterised by clear learning objectives, very good pace, a strong sense of purpose, excellent links with literacy and provision for all pupils. For example, pupils who missed the first lesson of the unit were given time with a classroom assistant so that they 'caught up' and could play a full part in the second lesson to complete their project on time. Excellent liaison with classroom assistants and other adults means that pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and contribute to discussions successfully.
135. Pupils have very positive attitudes to design and technology. They listen hard to explanations and work carefully at their making activities because of very good support from teachers and other adults. They are willing to try different materials and give clear explanations for their choice. They enjoy their activities because

teachers have used exciting and innovative stimuli, such as a letter from Father Christmas requesting help to make packages for all the presents.

136. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development in design and technology is limited. Pupils' social development is very well fostered by teachers who encourage pupils to work together. Links with other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy, are very good as there are many chances to discuss their ideas, provide reasons for their decisions and evaluate their work. However, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical or computer skills are limited.
137. The school has until recently been concentrating on raising standards in other subject areas, but now the co-ordinator is ready to implement the action plan for design and technology contained within the school's development plan. She is keen and enthusiastic, and determined to raise standards through improving staff expertise and confidence.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Standards meet the expected level at the ages of 7 and 11 years. The school has made satisfactory progress in maintaining these standards since the previous inspection.
139. All pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and the use of appropriately phrased questions ensures that they make progress in line with their classmates. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language have no problems in acquiring geographical skills and knowledge and make satisfactory progress. There is no difference in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls.
140. By the age of 7, pupils have a satisfactory understanding about the local area of Heath Hayes. They understand that there are different types of places within this country, for example the seaside. Pupils have an appropriate amount of knowledge and understanding of other countries for their age. For example, they are able to compare houses in Staffordshire with those in India. They recognise places on maps and produce simple plans. When talking about weather, pupils use terms correctly, including 'windy', 'cold' and 'wet'. There is good knowledge and understanding of simple environmental issues that affect the local area, for example problems with litter.
141. By the age of 11, pupils show very good understanding of environmental issues both locally and on a world scale. When talking about cutting down the rainforests, pupils show a clear understanding of the effects on people and animals. They take great pride in ensuring that the school environment is well maintained and talk proudly about the school's 'Eco Award'. In physical geography, pupils show a satisfactory understanding of mountain regions and a good understanding of river development. Pupils show satisfactory knowledge of life in St. Lucia but their skills in comparing and contrasting it with Staffordshire are superficial.

142. The quality of teaching overall is good and at times very good. There are lessons where teaching is not quite as strong and the quality is satisfactory. In the satisfactory lessons, pace is inconsistent and methods do not catch the imagination of all the pupils and, as a result, pupils become restless. Very occasionally, teachers do not have the full attention of all the pupils and, as a result, a little time is lost when teachers have to remind pupils to concentrate. In the very good lessons, teachers use methods that interest the pupils. In Year 5, pupils learn about river development very effectively when teachers use trays with sand and allow pupils to pour water on to watch how it flows. Teachers of younger pupils use the local area effectively, for example to carry out traffic surveys and develop observational skills. The residential sessions are used very well to develop pupils' understanding of physical geography. Pupils understand what they are going to learn because teachers explain lesson objectives very clearly at the start of the session. Subject knowledge is secure and teachers make specific reference to keywords to develop vocabulary. In almost all lessons, pupils are very well controlled. Teachers develop both literacy and mathematical skills satisfactorily in geography. Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop their reading skills as teachers provide good research material for them to study. Opportunities to develop writing skills are limited in many classes because of the overuse of worksheets. Mathematical skills are appropriately developed when pupils record temperatures and rainfall and discuss the height of mountains. There is satisfactory use of information and communication technology. Pupils confidently use computer programs and access the World Wide Web when researching geographical projects, such as mountains in Year 6.
143. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Most pupils show very good attitudes but occasionally a very small group of older pupils take too long to respond and do not give the teacher their full attention for the whole lesson. In discussions, pupils talk about geography confidently. Most pupils apply themselves very well and work without direct teacher supervision.
144. There is satisfactory co-ordination of the subject. The subject co-ordinator has put in place a good quality policy document and scheme of work. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning to identify areas of strength and for development. The assessment procedures are informal at present and, as a result, there is no guarantee of a step-by-step development of skills as pupils move through the school. The co-ordinator has recognised this in her action plan and there are plans to implement more formal procedures. Visits out in the local area and further afield, for example Cannock Chase and Ironbridge and a residential session, enhance the geography curriculum. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities to consider the beauty of the world; pupils work together and they learn about other cultures.

HISTORY

145. By the age of 7, standards in history are above the expected level for their age and pupils make good progress. This is a good improvement as the last report judged them both to be satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the focused support they get from both teachers and learning support assistants. Those pupils who speak English as an additional

language have a good command of the English language and make similar progress to other pupils. There was no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In this current academic year history has yet to be taught in Year 6 so no judgements have been made about the standards achieved by 11 year olds.

146. Over the last few weeks, the focus for work in Year 2 has been linked to World War I and 'Remembrance'. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the facts about the war, but also the conditions in which the soldiers had to live and fight. Pupils ask 'why?' and 'how?' questions about life in the trenches and empathise with the plight of the soldiers. Using these facts, and their ability to empathise they have written 'postcards home'. One pupil, for example, wrote, 'How is it at home? It is terrifying here. I am trying very hard to survive. I am in France'. Such work makes a significant contribution to pupils' social development. This also demonstrates how well history is used to develop pupils' literacy skills. By using lines of historical enquiry and studying photographs and artefacts at first hand, the pupils have traced the history of a local hero. Pupils know a reasonable amount of factual information about famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and events in the past, but can also explain happenings, such as why the Great Fire of London had to be stopped and how this was achieved.
147. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. Effective teaching has enabled the pupils to gain insight into the past. All teachers plan carefully so that appropriate support is given to pupils of different ability. This was evident in the types of questions different pupils were asked. Some were asked to recall events or people; others were encouraged to explain their feelings or why things happened. Resources are also used well. For example, in Year 2, the good use of resources collected by a local family whose relatives fought in the Great War captured pupils' imagination and made their learning relevant. Lessons are very well organised and proceed smoothly, making it a pleasant learning atmosphere. Teachers frequently provide good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills, for example in their research and writing about evacuees. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and what pupils find interesting. They have, therefore, harnessed the pupils' enthusiasm, as in the study of the Ancient Egyptians in Year 4, which has motivated pupils to work hard. Research for projects, such as a local history study of the mining villages nearby, is undertaken at home thus extending the pupils' learning and their understanding of their own community.
148. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has provided the school with a recent focus on history that has included the adaptation of the national guidelines for the subject to meet the needs of the pupils, as well the introduction of end-of-topic assessments. These guidelines are used well but the assessments are new and have not been extensively used. Resources are accessible and effectively support pupils' learning. There are good links with other subjects. For example, pupils use CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web to research topics about the Victorians and local history, they use simple time lines to show important dates and events and use maps to pinpoint areas that were 'blitzed'. Good use is also made of the local area, such as Weston Park, to make history more alive and enrich the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. Standards in information and communication technology are above the expected level for both 7 and 11-year-olds. This is a good improvement upon the findings of the last inspection and is due to the very good co-ordination of the subject, an improved ratio of computers to pupils and an improvement in the quality of teaching. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
150. Throughout the school, pupils' technical skills and knowledge are good. They have particularly good control of the mouse and use it with confidence as demonstrated by pupils in Year 2 moving objects around the screen to create a town map. They open and close a variety of programs with ease (including documents and data files in Year 6) as well as saving and printing them.
151. Pupils in Year 2 use word-processing programs to change text size, use the shift key for capital letters and most other keys to navigate around a page of text. In lessons seen, all pupils enjoyed using a paint program. All were able to use different tools and colours to create different pictures. Some higher-attaining pupils also used the eraser and used the 'fill' function to great effect. Pupils have used information systems such as CD-ROM to locate facts about topics, for example the Victorians, but their work on handling data is less well developed. Pupils have had a wide experience of controlling a programmable toy. They are fully conversant with all the basic commands. They understand a complete rotation, estimate distances and turns and link a series of commands to follow a pathway using both the programmable toy and an on-screen turtle.
152. During Years 3 to 6, the skills that have been embedded lower down the school are used well in a variety of applications. In a publishing program, pupils highlight texts, cutting, copying and pasting it into different documents while also using the spell checker. Pupils also use their word processing skills to send and receive emails. Most pupils use the shape tool carefully to create and resize shapes, as well as pictures, and some of the high attainers make a repeated design. Their good knowledge of text and graphics (the importing of word art and clip art) is used in the development of multimedia presentations. Pupils in Year 6 are currently creating multimedia presentations about their own school that include several screens, to send to their link school in Northern Ireland. Some work has included animation but pupils are aware not to include too much that can detract from their message. When using both CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web, pupils quickly open web browsers and use the 'navigate' and 'search' buttons to find the information they require, as they did on their local history topic. Pupils have experienced spreadsheets in mathematics. They appreciate the importance of accuracy and have entered data onto a prepared spreadsheet when looking at trends in the use of gas, electricity and water at Gorsemoor. They have used a variety of pie and bar charts as well as line and scatter graphs to show their findings and interpret the results.
153. The quality of teaching observed was good overall and has improved from the last inspection when it was judged satisfactory. The good teaching in most of the school provides pupils with secure basic skills, but the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 provides numerous opportunities, especially in Year 5, for pupils to use and develop these skills in a variety of programs and subjects.

154. Teachers' planning is particularly good. Lessons such as those in Years 1 and 2 using a paint program were carefully planned so that pupils' skills were built upon in a progressive manner, all pupils gaining in confidence as well as technical skills. Because of the training and support provided by the co-ordinator, most teachers were confident in the programs that they used. This enabled them to support and encourage pupils as they worked and assist them when they faced a difficulty. Even when faced with difficulties, pupils persevered until it had been overcome. However, not all teachers were confident in using the electronic projector in the computer suite that could have added a very good visual stimulus to the lesson being taught. All lessons observed were being taught in the computer suite, thus making good use of this valuable resource. Both the start and the end of the lesson are used well. At the beginning, teachers encourage pupils to recap on their previous learning after which they share with them the purpose of the lesson. At the end, the opportunity to discuss the lesson and evaluate pupils' work is used well, especially in Years 2 and 5, to include the pupils in the assessment of their work and give the teachers an insight into what they need to plan next. However, on a few occasions, insufficient value is given by a few teachers to the basic skills that some pupils acquire at home, so their schoolwork is not challenging enough.
155. In many of these lessons, teachers' organisation and classroom management were so good, that at times pupils' levels of independence and concentration placed the teachers in a supervisory role that provided them with the time to support those few pupils who were struggling with their work. However, in a minority of cases, the pace of learning was slowed due to the frequent interruptions made by the class teacher and gathering the pupils to sit back on the carpet. Support staff, when available, are used very well. In both the Year 1 lesson and the Years 5 and 6 special educational needs support lesson, learning support assistants added considerably to the progress that lower-attaining pupils made by their supportive and sympathetic manner, as well as their own subject-specific knowledge that allowed them to provide direct and meaningful guidance. These pupils, therefore, made similar gains in their learning as their classmates.
156. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has a very good idea of how best to teach the subject. She has used this to drive forward the improvements in information and communication technology since the time of the last inspection. Her understanding of the strengths and areas of development are based upon her very good technical knowledge and experience of teaching the subject, but also her monitoring of teaching and learning. However, more regular and detailed observations may provide teachers with clearer individualised development points. A useful assessment procedure that involves pupils assessing their own capabilities is used consistently across the school. The curriculum is well planned so that there are numerous links with a variety of other subjects, such as English (pupils in Year 5 with special educational needs used computers very well to study poetry), mathematics and history (the Old Heath Hayes Project in Year 6). However, although some pupils have used computers well in science (for example, monitoring temperature in Year 5), there are insufficient links with this particular subject. Skills and applications learnt in school are regularly extended, not only in the computer club but also in the 'Home Learning Initiative' (evening sessions where parents and children can work together). Within

the suite, there are numerous signs explaining that pupils should not go on the Internet without the supervision of an adult and this is backed up with an code of conduct that parents are expected to sign.

MUSIC

157. Standards at the age of 7 meet those expected nationally. No lessons were observed in Year 6 and therefore it is not possible to give a secure judgement on standards at the age of 11 years. Discussion with pupils shows that standards are at least at the expected level. Pupils of all attainment levels and linguistic backgrounds achieve well. Those who receive instrumental tuition are achieving very well because of the very high quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and make progress in line with classmates. There is no significant difference between the attainment or achievement of boys and girls. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
158. By the age of 7, pupils sing tunefully showing a good sense of rhythm. They clap and tap rhythms and understand that music has dynamics such as soft and loud. The highest-attaining pupils use the correct terms for 'crescendo' and 'diminuendo'.
159. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. Pupils in Year 5 play recorders and read music. They identify notes on a staff and compose simple tunes using given notes. In discussion, Year 6 pupils show an understanding of rounds and part-singing. When listening to music, they talk about mood, for example 'relaxing'. The large number of pupils who play instruments attain a higher than expected level; for example, a group of violinists who have only been playing since September play simple tunes very well.
160. The quality of teaching overall is good because of the very high quality of peripatetic teaching for a large number of the pupils in Years 3 to 6. In the class lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Lesson objectives are always explained so pupils understand what they are going to learn. Resources are used very effectively, for example recorded music in Year 2 and recorders in Year 5. Time is lost in lessons because teachers do not always have the full attention of all the pupils. In lessons taken by peripatetic teachers, the quality of teaching is consistently very good. There is very good subject knowledge shown in the insistence on correct technique, for example when tonguing in brass lessons and using the bow in violin lessons. The visiting teachers relate very well to the pupils and ensure that sessions are both instructive and enjoyable.
161. Pupils have good attitudes to music. They all handle musical instruments with care. One or two pupils find the temptation to hold or play the instrument at the wrong time a little too difficult to resist. When given the opportunity to work together, for example in a Year 4 lesson on composition and in Year 5 work with recorders, pupils co-operate very well with each other. Pupils enjoy music. The pupils who have instrumental teaching show very good attitudes, with the majority practising their homework.

162. There are good links between music and other areas of the curriculum. Music was used very effectively as a stimulus in a Year 6 art lesson. Pupils develop their listening skills very well in music and there are opportunities to develop counting and rhythm skills. The use of electronic keyboards and recorded music helps to develop pupils' information and communication technology skills. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appraise music and it is used as a stimulus to develop inner feelings. There are many opportunities to play and sing as a member of groups and ensembles. The scheme of work includes music from non-western cultures and the musical resources include instruments from other continents, including Africa.
163. At the time of the inspection there was no co-ordinator of the subject. The previous co-ordinator who had left at the end of the previous term had produced a very good policy document and the planning left has ensured that the subject is still taught effectively. The lack of a co-ordinator means that monitoring may not be carried out to ensure that effective teaching and learning are maintained and that the action plan is carried out. Assessment is at an early stage and mainly informal. As a result, there is no guarantee of step-by-step development of skills as pupils move through the school. The resources for the subject are very good and include a very wide range of percussion instruments, keyboards, guitars and orchestral instruments. These resources are used very effectively to develop learning and improve standards in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. In the activities observed during the inspection, pupils achieved the standards expected for their age both in Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the focused support they get from both teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have a good command of the English language and make similar progress to other pupils. There was no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
165. In Year 2, pupils developed appropriate movements as 'snowmen' in response to music. They were able to express their own feelings, for instance of lightness or excitement, and also express an opinion about the work of others. In this dance lesson, the teacher gave them good opportunities to develop their vocabulary by using a wide range of words to describe the snow they were imagining, such as 'slushy' or 'crunchy'. In a games lesson, pupils' ball skills were not as good, but they made good progress in the lesson because of the range of activities the teacher had planned to develop these skills. However, they had no opportunity to apply them in a competitive game. It was not possible to observe gymnastics in Years 1 or 2 during the inspection.
166. In Year 6, pupils were observed carrying out a range of fitness tests. They were able to take their own pulse and other measurements, for instance of how high they could jump. However, there were no opportunities to see them taking part in any other physical education activities during the inspection. Pupils in Year 5 were observed doing gymnastics and games. In the gymnastics lessons, they showed satisfactory skill in developing a sequence of movements, using different

rolls and balances. They showed an awareness of the effects of exercise on the body. In the games lesson, pupils worked singly and in pairs to improve their skills in controlling a large ball in football or netball. Pupils swim throughout the school year and provision is good, with the result that by the time they leave school the majority are confident swimmers, meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum to swim 25 metres unaided.

167. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall, with some very good teaching seen as well. Teachers always use warm-up and cool-down routines, although sometimes the warm-up is a little too brief to have the desired effect. A good feature is that individual pupils in Year 6 have developed and led warm-ups themselves, which makes a very good contribution to their personal development. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and provide effective demonstrations of skills, often working well together with two classes. In a lesson with Year 5, for instance, one teacher gave a demonstration of passing the ball while the other was able to comment. Sometimes, the pace of lessons is too slow, however, because explanations are too lengthy and this limits the amount of exercise pupils get.
168. The curriculum is supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including opportunities for competition against other schools in football and netball. Individual pupils have obtained local and national recognition for their talents in football and karate, with good support from the school. There are also very good links with local football, cricket and tennis clubs, who help with coaching. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good opportunities to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities, such as rock climbing on a residential visit, which they enjoy greatly. Pupils work well together in lessons and this contributes well to their social development. Year 6 pupils also take responsibility by helping with the management of equipment, getting it ready for other classes.
169. The co-ordinator for the subject is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and effective. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school, but has clear ideas for the development of the subject. The school has a good range of equipment; new gymnastics equipment has been ordered for the hall. The space in the hall is limited for large classes of older pupils, but the school has good outside areas for physical education, including a grass football pitch.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the focused support they get from both teachers and learning support assistants. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language have a good command of the English language and make similar progress to other pupils. There was no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
171. In Year 2, pupils show a good understanding of some of the aspects of the Christmas story. They know that candles are used at Advent in the Christian church and also feature in the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. They find it difficult to understand light as a symbol, but, by the descriptions they write on their 'flames'

of something good they could bring into the world, they show that they know what is of value and concern to them. They also understand the significance of harvest festivals in both the Christian and Jewish faiths. Earlier work in Year 1 indicates that they know some of the stories from the New Testament, such as the occasion when the boy Jesus was left behind in the Temple. They do not know about many other religious traditions.

172. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils know about some of the main tenets of Sikhism and Islam, as well as further developing their knowledge of Christianity. In a lesson observed in Year 6, they grappled with the difficult concept of the Incarnation of Jesus, through the medium of Christmas carols. Although they found this difficult, they persisted and showed a good sense of respect for the beliefs of others. They have looked at the origin of this idea in the Old Testament, as well as comparing different accounts of Jesus' birth in two of the four gospels. In discussion, they showed that they understood that some of these differences come from the different audiences to which the stories were directed. They still, however, find it difficult not to treat symbols too literally as, for instance, when they write about the role of bread and wine in Christian worship.
173. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well, using the guidance of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers also make good use of the resources available to them. For instance, in a lesson with Year 4, the teacher used the services of the school cook to help pupils make rings out of salt dough for their Advent candles. During the inspection the vicar of the local church, who is also a school governor, came into school to discuss the concept of the Incarnation with pupils in Year 6. However, the school makes little use of visitors from other faiths or of visits to places of worship, except to go to the church for services at festivals. As a result, the subject does not make as great a contribution as it could to the development of pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures represented in society.
174. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and its needs, which have recently been a focus in the school's development plan. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are mostly positive. They work well together, for instance in making their Advent rings in Year 4 or looking at Christmas carols in Year 6. The school has good systems in place to check pupils' knowledge and understanding after each unit of work. There are a reasonable number of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills; pupils are often asked to write their own accounts of religious events. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote about the Ascension and those in Year 1 wrote about the Christmas story. In Year 5 there are some good examples of pupils using their computer skills and pupils have created picture posters using clip art; such opportunities, however, are limited in other year groups. Pupils rarely use their numeracy skills in religious education.