

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124220

Headteacher: Mrs S Peck

Reporting inspector: Mr T W M Comer
15109

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 4 April 2003

Inspection number: 248570

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address:
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Moorland Road
Cannock
Staffordshire

Postcode: WS11 2NX

Telephone number: 01543 510241

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Michael Lomas

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15109	Mr T Comer	Registered Inspector	Design & technology Information & communication technology Equal opportunities	Standards and achievement Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9504	Mrs S Gurney	Lay inspector		Pupils' personal development, Attitudes and behaviour How well the school cares for its pupils Partnership with parents
10859	Mrs O Cooper	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	The Curriculum
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	English Art & design	
23204	Mrs C Wojtak	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs	
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moorhill is a large primary school with 488 boys and girls on roll. It is over-subscribed. The high mobility of pupils is a disadvantage and 32 pupils joined the school during the course of the last school year. The school is situated on two sites – Junior and Infant – a quarter of a mile apart. The parents and the school opened a pre-school facility and a parent-toddler group in 2001. Also in 2001, the school opened an out-of-school care facility to provide a safe and secure environment for children which enables parents to look for work or to return to college. Nearly all pupils are of white UK origin and there is only one pupil whose home language is not English and this pupil is fluently bilingual. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is above the national average but is almost certainly an underestimate of the true picture. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above average but the proportion with formal statements of need is broadly average. The main categories of need are moderate or severe learning difficulties but there is also a sizeable number of vulnerable pupils who have emotional needs and demand considerable individual attention. The inspectors were made aware of the acute deprivation of the area which the school serves, which is Cannock's most deprived ward, and is among the 10 per cent most deprived, nationally. Pupils' overall attainment when they join the reception classes is well below average but this is by no means the case for all children and some are above average. Although some children are well prepared for school, many others have social, physical and emotional difficulties, speech and attention problems and inappropriate behaviour. The school benefits from a number of local and national initiatives, including extra money for staffing to raise standards and for target setting. The school has made family learning a distinctive feature and works hard to forge constructive links with parents.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and much of its work is good or very good. The teaching is satisfactory. Standards are below average but represent a satisfactory overall achievement for these pupils. The school benefits from the very good leadership of the headteacher, who is determined to raise standards. The school looks after its pupils very well and adds very considerable value to their personal development. The school's climate for learning is good, pupils enjoy lessons and behave well. The school has a good partnership with parents. It is efficient and gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school benefits significantly from the very good leadership of the headteacher.
- Children under five make good progress.
- Pupils achieve very well in science.
- Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Relationships and pupils' personal development are very good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The school looks after its pupils very well.
- The school has a good partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics could be higher, especially of the more able pupils.
- Teaching and learning, though satisfactory, can be improved.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in February, 1998. Since that time, the school has made a satisfactory overall improvement and a good improvement with the key issues arising from the last inspection but standards could have risen faster, especially in English and mathematics. The curriculum

for pupils under five has improved well. Governors take a much more active role than they did previously. The school's monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the curriculum, teaching, learning and achievement are better. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness have improved. Pupils enjoy equality of opportunity in all respects. The school now has a better partnership with parents. Attendance and punctuality have improved since 1998 though attendance dipped over the past year.

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				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E	D	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D	
Science	D	B	C	A	

Children under five (The Foundation Stage)

Children's overall attainment is well below average when they begin the pre-reception and reception classes, particularly in the key areas of language and personal and emotional development. They make good progress and achieve well from their well below average starting points. Their overall attainment is below average by the time they are ready to join Year 1 but they have made significant gains. In particular, their achievement is very good in their personal, social and emotional development. They achieve the national early learning goals in each of the prescribed areas of learning, except language and mathematics, by the time they are ready to join Year 1.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2

The 2002 results of National Curriculum tests for the previous Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and were lower than in previous years. The decline in the results occurred mainly because a high proportion of these Year 2 pupils, now Year 3, had learning difficulties and many had not benefited from pre-school education. The results of the teachers' assessments in science in 2002 were broadly average. The girls tend to outperform boys in reading in a similar way to the national picture but boys' and girls' performance in writing shows a smaller difference than found nationally. In mathematics, the boys slightly outperform the girls.

Overall standards are also well below average in the present Year 2 but represent a satisfactory achievement for these pupils. Standards are well below average in English and mathematics. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these subjects the more able pupils could achieve more highly. Standards are average in science and this is a very good achievement. Standards are average in other subjects except geography and history, in which they are below average, because pupils' literacy skills tend to limit what they can achieve.

Pupils in Years 3 – 6

The present Year 6 pupils' standards of work are below average overall. They are below average in English and mathematics, and literacy and numeracy skills are weak. Pupils' achievements are what would be predicted on the basis of their earlier attainment but the higher attaining pupils could achieve higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Standards are average in science and represent a very good achievement for these pupils. They are also average in art and design, design and technology, information technology and religious education. Standards are below average in geography and history, because, as in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' literacy skills hold them back. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets.

The results of the 2002 National tests were well below average overall. They were well below average in English and mathematics but average in science. The results are what would be predicted on the basis of the pupils' earlier attainment and exceeded the targets for English and mathematics set by governors in consultation with the local authority. Over the three-year period 2000-02, the girls outperformed the boys in English, but to a lesser degree than found nationally. By contrast, the boys did better than girls to a greater extent than nationally in both mathematics and in science. Over this three-year period, the strongest of the three subjects is science. The school's test results have not risen as much as they have nationally over the past four years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to their learning and take pride in their achievements
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming and helpful to visitors. Children generally behave well but can misbehave if the lesson lacks interest for them. Relationships with teachers and other adults and between pupils are very good. Pupils respect and help each other.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is a little below the national average. Most pupils arrive punctually but a few are regularly late.

Academic and personal successes are celebrated. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to undertake responsibility and do so willingly. They show genuine concern for local and world environmental issues. About half the children take part in some form of extra-curricular activity.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 satisfactory overall and results in a satisfactory rate of learning. The school meets the needs of all pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory overall progress. Teaching is better in the reception and pre-reception classes than in Years 1 – 6 and pupils make their fastest progress in these classes. The strengths of the teaching are teachers' knowledge of the curriculum appropriate for their classes and their good management of their pupils. The strength of the pupils' learning is their awareness of the progress they are making. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily but improve slowly from a very low baseline. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory and the teaching of science is good. There is room for improvement in teaching in Years 1 – 6. In general, the teachers should have higher expectations of pupils, particularly of the potentially higher attaining pupils, and especially in English and mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of	Good in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory in the main school. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented. Pupils have

the curriculum	equality of opportunity and enough time is given to each of the National Curriculum subjects to ensure that all can excel. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sport, art, music and dance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory in the main school. These pupils receive effective support from teaching assistants in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and this is a particular strength of the school. Pupils' gifts and talents are recognised, celebrated and encouraged. Pupils are prepared for life in a culturally and racially diverse society; they are taught to empathise with others in less fortunate circumstances and with different religious beliefs and to care for the environment. Daily collective worship has a very positive effect on the atmosphere throughout the school. School performances and external visits to museums, concerts and theatres contribute well to pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good and a strength of the school. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are also very good. Teachers know their pupils well. Attendance is very well monitored. Healthy eating is strongly promoted. Pupils are taught personal safety and the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol.

The school expects good attitudes and behaviour throughout the school and places a strong emphasis on raising self-esteem. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is effective throughout the school and pupils have targets in nearly all subjects. The vast majority of pupils are aware of their progress and of their targets and work purposefully towards them. The school has a good partnership with parents and good relationships with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and the school is well managed. The headteacher and senior staff monitor lessons and manage the performance of the teaching staff well. Subject co-ordinators monitor lessons but in a few subjects they need to show more clearly how standards can be raised further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Statutory requirements are met. The governors know their school well and are increasingly involved in taking major decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates its results and achievements and compares them with those of other schools, locally and nationally.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school benefits from the services of a large number of teaching assistants who support the pupils with special educational needs and others who need help with their learning.

The distance between the two sites is inconvenient but the problem is well managed. The accommodation is generally adequate although some pupils are taught in temporary buildings and there are no proper libraries. Although there has been disruption caused by long-term absence of staff, staffing is now good. The school's resources are generally good, especially for information and communication technology. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The home-school partnership is strong.• The headteacher and her staff are approachable.• Their children are happy in school.• The children learn to become mature and responsible young people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents raised no significant issues. |
|--|---|

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The Foundation Stage: standards achieved by children under five

1. Overall attainment is well below average when children begin the pre-reception and reception classes, particularly in the key areas of language and personal and emotional development. The children make good progress in all six areas of learning¹ and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they join Year 1, the children's overall attainment is below average but the majority of them have reached the early learning goals² in all areas except communication, language and literacy and mathematics.

Infants: the standards achieved by Year 2 pupils

2. Pupils are making satisfactory overall progress in Years 1 and 2. Overall standards are well below average in Year 2 but represent a satisfactory achievement. Standards are still well below average in English and mathematics but are average in science. Standards are average in all other subjects except geography and history, in which they are below average because pupils' literacy skills tend to limit what they can achieve in these subjects. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English and mathematics and also in most other subjects but pupils are achieving well in science and in art and design.

3. The 2002 results of National Curriculum tests for the previous Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and were lower than in previous years. The results of the teachers' assessments in science in 2002 were broadly average. The test results declined mainly because this particular year group (now Year 3) contained a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties – nearly half of the pupils. Also, many of these children had benefited from pre-school education. The girls tend to outperform boys in the reading tests in a similar way to the national picture. In the writing tests boys' and girls' performance shows a smaller difference than found nationally. In mathematics, the boys slightly outperform the girls.

4. Standards are well below average in English in the present Year 2 and are well below average in both reading and writing. However, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and achieve average standards. Pupils' handwriting is a strength and they learn to write in cursive script from the reception year onwards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but the more able pupils could achieve higher standards.

5. The present Year 2 pupils' standards of work are well below average in mathematics but pupils' achievement is satisfactory although, as in English, the more able pupils could achieve higher standards.

6. In science standards are average and this represents a very good achievement for these pupils. The teachers have made a special emphasis of investigative work which has helped to raise standards, which had dipped after the last inspection. Standards are highest in investigative work and in the area of life processes and living things.

Juniors: the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils

¹ The six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

² The early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

7. The high level of pupil mobility has a negative effect on overall standards. A comparison of the Year 6 test results of pupils who began Year 2 in this school shows that the large majority of these pupils made the expected rate of progress between Years 2 and 6 and achieved satisfactorily and some achieved well. Many pupils who join the school between Year 2 and Year 6 (nearly 40 per cent of the present Year 6) have social or learning problems and, despite the efforts of the teachers and their assistants, many of them do not reach expected standards by age 11.

8. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests were well below average overall but average in relation to the pupils' earlier attainment when they joined Year 3. The results were well below average in English and mathematics but average in science. A high proportion of pupils were much below the standards expected for their age in both English and mathematics, indicating a large number of pupils with learning difficulties. Over the three-year period 2000-02, the girls outperformed the boys in English, but to a lesser degree than found nationally. By contrast, the boys did better than girls to a greater extent than nationally in both mathematics and in science. Over this three-year period, the strongest subject is science. Although the long-term trend is below the national trend the three-year and four-year trends are actually above the national trend and show that standards are rising.

9. Standards are below average in English and mathematics but literacy and numeracy skills steadily improve. Pupils tend to do better in practical subjects and reach average standards in science, art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology. Standards are also average in religious education but are below average in geography and history, because, as in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' literacy skills hold them back in these subjects. No reliable judgements could be made about standards in physical education and music because no lessons were seen in these subjects. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 3 although there is room for improvement.

10. In English, the standards of Year 6 pupils' work are average in speaking and listening. However, they are below average in reading and writing and these weaknesses restrict what pupils can achieve in other subjects, especially in geography and history. Higher attaining pupils could achieve higher standards if the teachers had higher expectations of them.

11. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of the four number operations and apply them to solving problems with reasonable accuracy. They collect data and present it attractively in a range of graphs and this is the strongest aspect of the subject. Pupils understand two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties and measure and draw angles accurately. However, their investigative skills are weaker because they have too few opportunities for this type of work. The teachers are not developing mental arithmetic as consistently as they should and there is a lack of challenge. Despite this, pupils make better progress in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, where some untidy presentation of work is too readily accepted. Higher attaining pupils could achieve higher standards if the teachers were more ambitious for them

12. In science, standards are average overall and most pupils achieve very well in relation to their starting points in Year 3. This is because of effective curriculum planning. The teaching is good rather than very good and the higher attaining pupils could achieve even higher standards if the teachers aimed higher. Standards are highest in the area of life processes and living things (biology) and in investigative skills (practical work and experiments). Pupils have a good understanding of science although some are struggling to grasp the idea of a 'fair test'. Despite the fact that teachers develop literacy and numeracy skills well, weaknesses in basic skills, especially literacy, restrict what many of the pupils can achieve.

13. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in relation to their targets and those with statements of special educational needs achieve well, particularly in the case of those who remain in the school from reception to Year 6. Progress is very much linked to the quality of teaching: in some classes where the teacher and teaching assistants work as a team, pupils make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils are keen to come to school and have positive attitudes to their learning. In most lessons they co-operate with their teachers and collaborate well with other children. Most are eager to answer questions and, where the subject is made interesting, sustain concentration well and work hard. They show pride in their achievements and respond well to their teachers' instructions. The pupils are friendly and polite. They are welcoming and helpful to visitors. As an example, a boy spontaneously held up a football game at playtime to clear a safe passage for an inspector. About half the children regularly take part in some form of extra-curricular activity.

15. The teaching assistants are skilled at offering the right blend of support and challenge and relationships are extremely good with pupils, especially those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils have very positive attitudes.

16. Pupils generally behave well and parents and pupils agree that behaviour in school is mainly good. When the teaching is good, behaviour is often very good but sometimes, when teaching lacks pace and challenge, pupils can lose interest and misbehave. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions and consider them to be fair. The headteacher has never had to exclude a pupil. Playtimes are happy occasions when children play together and look after one another. Lonely pupils only have to go to the 'Friendship Stop' to ensure someone will come and include them in their play. Bullying is rare and pupils agree that these rare incidences are swiftly and effectively dealt with. Relationships with teachers and other adults and between pupils are very good. Pupils show respect for and help each other.

17. Pupils' personal development is very good and given high priority. Academic and personal successes are celebrated in weekly assemblies. Children build up records of achievement folders containing merit certificates, examples of good work and other achievements. They are given plenty of opportunity to undertake responsibility. The best example of this is the Environmental Committee (ECO) which comprises representatives from every class. Pupils show genuine concern for both local and world environmental issues. They check on the school's water and energy consumption and submit a weekly report. Because of their concern for the deer, they have petitioned their local member of parliament to try to have a speed limit enforced on Cannock Chase. They have interviewed builders and surveyors from the local authority over matters causing them concern. Citizenship is fostered by giving pupils the chance to vote on a range of issues. There was a competition for a design for the school litter bins and the pupils voted for the winning design which depicted a dolphin. The school has adopted a dolphin in the Moray Firth and a donkey in Devon and pupils voted for their names. Pupils willingly undertake various classroom responsibilities and children on both sites regularly help staff tidy up the dining rooms. The split site prevents older children giving much help to the younger ones but they give them valuable assistance on sports days. All pupils go on educational trips and Years 5 and 6 are offered residential visits. These all help to develop independence, self-esteem and maturity.

18. Attendance is slightly below the national average for primary schools and so far this year the trend is down, largely due to holidays taken in term time and a virus which badly affected pupils last January. Most pupils arrive punctually but a few are regularly late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching was good or better in half of all lessons seen during the inspection and there were very few unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is good in classes for children under five and satisfactory throughout the main school. Teaching and learning are good in science, art and design and religious education and satisfactory in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and music.

20. The teaching of children under five has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers follow the nationally recommended foundation stage curriculum in their lesson planning. The teaching is good in each of the areas of learning, and the great majority of the children make good progress towards the expected early learning goals. Pupils make fastest progress in their personal and social development, which is a priority for the school, and they become more confident and relationships improve. Although children make good progress in their communication and language skills because of the good teaching, the majority are still working towards these goals when they move into Year 1. Nevertheless, speaking skills improve strongly and the children's vocabulary gradually expands. The good teaching of mathematical skills enables children to progress well, and many are close to meeting the early learning goal by the end of reception. Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals in their general knowledge and understanding of the world, in their physical development and in their creative development by the time they are ready for Year 1.

21. In the main school, the strengths of the teaching are the teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum subjects and their good management of their pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are to achieve in lessons and summarise their successes at the end of them to reinforce learning. Teachers praise and encourage pupils, which serves to raise their self-esteem. The strength of the pupils' learning is their awareness of the progress they are making.

22. The use of drama and role-play is effective, in geography, for example, and in religious education it helps pupils to understand the relevance of Bible stories for life today. The teachers make much better use of information and communication technology than at the time of the previous inspection because they have received training and the school's resources are now much better than they were. Nevertheless, the use of computers should be extended still further, for example, for musical composition, and in mathematics and art and design. Teachers provide a wide range of activities outside the classroom support and extend pupils' learning and experience, and clubs and practices are well attended.

23. Expectations generally are not high enough, especially for higher attaining pupils, even in science, but particularly in English and mathematics. The teachers tend to make too much use of worksheets: these can be difficult for lower attaining pupils and too easy for the more able ones. This was seen to be the case in English, mathematics and geography, where the use of uninteresting worksheets fails to motivate and challenge pupils when they completed worksheets by filling in gaps when they could have composed sentences for themselves. In science, higher attaining pupils are sometimes given demanding work but this should be planned more consistently. In information and communication technology, work is not planned sufficiently for the potential higher attainers to reach levels beyond those expected for the majority of pupils of their age.

24. The effectiveness of pupils' use of information and communication technology is much better than at the time of the previous inspection but could be improved in mathematics, art and design, and in music.

25. The marking of written work in pupils' books is generally encouraging, but it is not always rigorous enough to show pupils specifically how to improve, for example, in English. Marking is inconsistent in science although some is excellent, particularly in Year 5. One of the chief reasons for the success of the teaching of art and design is that the teachers provide encouraging feedback to the pupils; consequently, pupils grow in self-esteem and become increasingly confident to explore different media and extend their own ideas.

26. The teaching assistants provide effective support when working directly with pupils in group sessions but their valuable time is sometimes spent passively for large parts of lessons when the teacher is addressing the whole class.

27. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory. The emphasis on the development of literacy skills is very good in science: pupils join in discussions and show awareness of key scientific terms. In some other lessons too little attention is given to the development of the pupils' written English, for example, in

geography and history lessons pupils should be expected to communicate their ideas through more extended pieces of writing.

28. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory and provides pupils with frequent opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in lessons. Pupils are taught to check their work with calculators to and use computers to present graphs and charts. In design and technology, pupils measure materials accurately when constructing models. Pupils learn to record the outcomes of science experiments in tally charts and graphs. In history, pupils work out periods of time since significant past events. They calculate distances between different places in geography and use co-ordinates correctly to locate positions on maps. Nevertheless, numeracy skills are still a weakness and remain a priority for the school.

29. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the main school. The teaching of pupils with formal statements of need is good. All of these pupils experience a balance of whole class teaching and of work in small groups. In general, teachers plan work for them that is achievable and include them in lessons. Most teachers and teaching assistants are skilled, enthusiastic and dedicated and much of what they do is good. Teaching assistants have received training which has raised their professionalism and encouraged them to plan work adventurously; for example, through games and role play which develop pupils' mathematical, reading and speaking skills. In most lessons, teaching assistants help individual pupils unobtrusively and in literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils are usually supported within the class.

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

30. The curriculum is broad and balanced and all statutory requirements are met. It includes all National Curriculum subjects, religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship and all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum for pupils under five (the pre-reception and reception classes). Pupils experience a satisfactory range of opportunities for learning which generally meets their needs and aptitudes and reflects the school's aims. The overall provision is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection, but with improvements in the planning for children in the reception classes and in a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

31. The time given for teaching each week exceeds the recommended minimum in Years 1 and 2, but falls ten minutes short in Years 3 to 6, which adds up to several hours over the course of a year. Most time is appropriately allocated to the teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy, acknowledging the need to raise standards, and time allocations to all other subjects are satisfactory. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented satisfactorily and more recently have been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils more effectively. For example, more emphasis needs to be placed on developing pupils' reading skills and the curricular provision has been amended to allow more time for this.

32. The curriculum in the pre-reception and reception classes is planned well to support the children's progress towards the nationally agreed goals in the areas of learning. Priority is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development with increasing attention to communication, language and literacy and mathematical development as children move through the reception year.

33. The school is totally committed to providing all pupils with equal opportunity and access to the learning experiences it has to offer and in the main is successful in doing so. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in most lessons, only being withdrawn for specific support, as specified in their formal statements or individual education plans, to help overcome their difficulties. The provision for these pupils is satisfactory. Additional funding has been provided to boost the performance of Year 5 pupils who have fallen behind and these pupils are taught effectively as a small group within class lessons. Additional strategies have been implemented to help other pupils who need extra support and these are helping the drive to raise standards. Teachers plan together in year teams to ensure all pupils have similar experiences and opportunities and there are common formats for planning. However,

the quality of planning files is variable: some are not easy to follow, whereas others show clearly what has been planned in each subject over each term. Teachers evaluate their planning satisfactorily in order to improve it in the future. The weaker aspect of the planning in some classes is in meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils by planning sufficiently demanding tasks.

34. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which extends beyond sport and music to art, history, French, information and communication technology and environmental issues. There are also activities such as dance, art and recorders, which are open to infant pupils. A good number of boys and girls take part in these activities mostly held after school. The booster classes for Year 6 pupils are also held after school and some choose to attend these to gain further practice and so increase their confidence prior to taking the national tests. The residential visits in Years 5 and 6, along with other educational visits and visitors to the school, provide stimulating experiences beyond the classroom.

35. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and for citizenship is good, in line with the importance the school attaches to this area of the curriculum. The school rules emphasise the need for self-discipline and care and concern for others. In personal, social and health education lessons and across the curriculum teachers provide good quality experiences for pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning, to each other and the environment. Sex and drugs education are carefully planned and sensitively taught, with a strong emphasis on the importance of stable relationships.

36. As was found at the time of the previous inspection, the school has constructive links with the local community which enhance the curricular provision. Grandparents share their experiences of World War II with the pupils, or of holidays when they themselves were children. The local Member of Parliament has worked with pupils to overcome traffic problems in the vicinity of the school and the local vicar teaches all year groups in religious education. Similarly, there are good links with other local schools which help to ensure continuity in teaching and learning when pupils transfer to high school. Pre-school education has been established within the school since the previous inspection, which is helping children to be better prepared for school routines. The school accommodates students undergoing initial teacher training, and graduate teachers, and provides good quality support and valuable experiences.

37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development which fosters good attitudes and behaviour throughout the school. This is even better since the previous inspection when the provision was found to be good. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well through the strong emphasis on raising self-esteem through celebrating their successes and achievements both within school and beyond and, in considering the feelings of others through discussion. Pupils are encouraged to consider the beliefs of others in religious education lessons and to empathise with people in difficult situations. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own thoughts, for example in assemblies, as pupils concentrate on the lighted candle and reflect on environmental issues or pupils with specific problems and who need the support of others. The positive effect this has is evident in the harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.

38. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. There is a very clear code of conduct, rewards and sanctions which is understood and appreciated by the pupils who in turn try hard to gain the prestigious Headteacher's Award. Moral dilemmas are illustrated and discussed in assemblies and pupils learn about making the right decisions in their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils make decisions about their behaviour and accept that others may choose to disagree if they make the wrong decision. Pupils have good opportunities to work in collaboration with others in lessons and in school projects through the work of the ECO committee. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative, for example they questioned why it was taking so long for work on the school to be completed. There are 'friendly stop' signs on each playground so no pupil is left without a playmate. Religious education lessons foster a strong sense of a school community and the need to include everyone in activities and to treat everyone fairly and with respect. Many posters around the school effectively promote care and concern for others and the importance of developing the skills to become life-long learners.

39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. The school makes considerable

efforts to prepare these predominantly white pupils for life in a culturally and racially diverse society through, for example, the study of a variety of faiths and the impact of people's beliefs on their daily lives. Visitors to the school enrich experiences for the pupils, such as when they experience *Bhangra* dancing. Through other subjects such as art and design, music, geography, history and English, pupils gain insights into their own and other cultures. External visits, for example, to museums, concerts, theatres and to the Victorian schoolroom at Shugborough Hall, provide good experiences and contribute well to pupils' cultural development. Pupils' own gifts and talents are recognised, celebrated and encouraged as they participate in school productions and other events.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school has a warm, caring atmosphere and very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. No health or safety hazards are evident and the governors ensure that regular risk assessment takes place. School security is very good and an internet security policy is in place. There are good first aid arrangements and fire drills take place at least termly. Teachers know their pupils well, relate to them very well and treat them with respect. They are aware of pupils' personal circumstances and show sensitivity and a willingness to help those in difficulties. Child protection procedures are very good. Two teachers are designated with responsibility for child protection, one of whom has been trained to a high level. She ensures that all teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the basic procedures and are constantly vigilant. The anti-bullying policy is very effective and the behaviour and discipline policy is also effective for the vast majority of pupils. Healthy eating is strongly promoted and fruit is provided for pupils to eat at break time. Assemblies and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) cover such subjects as care of the environment, keeping safe, the dangers of drugs, personal responsibility and citizenship. Personal development is very well promoted and residential visits offered for Years 5 and 6 play an important part in encouraging personal responsibility and preparing children for secondary education.

41. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and participate fully in every activity. Pupils are identified as early as possible and are very well taught in the Foundation Stage, where their progress is monitored carefully. Their progress continues to be tracked through tests and assessments throughout the school. Pupils' Individual Education Plans are well constructed and include targets, success criteria and resources. The targets are specific, measurable and achievable. Individual pupils are also beginning to be encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning. Teaching assistants make notes about progress in lessons, which are reported to the class teachers.

42. Attendance is very well monitored and the education welfare officer makes home visits where pupils' attendance and punctuality give cause for concern. The school does everything it can to encourage good attendance. Punctuality is not a great problem. There are a few persistent latecomers who are treated with a degree of tolerance because they often failed to come at all last year and inspectors find the school's handling of the situation sensible. The pastoral care of the pupils is very good and a strength of the school.

43. At the time of the previous inspection, assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was judged to be sound overall but unsatisfactory for children under five. Good procedures are now in place throughout the school. The headteacher is the assessment manager and works effectively with the assessment co-ordinators in the infant and the junior departments to monitor the school's performance. Their analysis of data identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils' attainment and points the way for improvement. In the Foundation Stage, assessments are now closely linked to the early learning goals. Information is collected from tests soon after children start school and again at the end of the reception year, as well as from regular observations of children at work. This data is used to plan the next steps of learning and to set targets. In Years 1 to 6, formal tests and on-going assessments are used to measure progress in English and mathematics. The statutory national tests are administered efficiently in Year 2 and Year 6 and these are supplemented by non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The development of key skills in reading, writing and number is monitored carefully each half term and individual records kept.

Teachers make helpful assessments at the end of each topic.

44. Information from the assessments is used well to monitor the school's performance, to develop the curriculum, plan new work, and to set targets for individuals and groups. It is also used to track the progress of all pupils, including those new to the school, which is crucially important. In reading, for example, assessment has identified particular pupils whose progress causes concern. As a result, a programme of individualised reading has been introduced and is being carefully monitored in order to raise standards. In Years 5 and 6, assessment data is used to form higher and lower classes for literacy and numeracy lessons, and to identify targeted groups in Year 5 for extra support. Targets based on assessment information are set for all pupils and shared with parents. The vast majority of pupils are aware of their targets and work purposefully towards them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. All parents interviewed, those who attended the pre-inspection meeting and the vast majority who completed the questionnaire have very positive views about the school, the teachers and the education provided. Parents find teachers approachable and helpful and say that the school works closely in partnership with them. Almost all agree that their children like school, are well behaved and make good progress. They say that the teaching is good; their children are expected to work hard and learn to become mature and responsible young people. They appreciate the range of clubs and activities offered. The school is oversubscribed, which is an indication of the confidence parents have in its leadership and management.

46. Links with parents are good. Almost all have signed the home-school agreement and the school regularly consults them when considering changes. For example, after events such as parents' consultation evenings the headteacher telephones 10 per cent of parents to canvass their views. It is never difficult for the school to get parents' help when it is needed and parents raise funds, help with swimming, accompany classes on educational visits, and help with school productions. Year 1 pupils had a Victorian day during the inspection week and almost all the parents spent considerable time and effort to dress their children up in period fashion. One of the school's priorities is to encourage parents to help their children with their homework and the teachers have run very successful family learning courses over a number of weeks. These have prompted several mothers to gain formal accreditation to become teaching assistants. The school worked together with parents to start its thriving parent-and-toddler group.

47. Much care is given to induction of new pupils into the reception and pre-reception classes. As well as induction evenings, booklets are issued giving ideas for activities which parents can do with their children at home. Every summer, families of the reception children are invited to join the reception staff on a family day out and this further strengthens the school's links with parents.

48. Partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school tries very hard to involve parents in a number of ways and always keeps them informed through speaking to them directly, or by letters followed up by telephone calls. Parental attendance at annual reviews for pupils with formal statements of special educational need is vitally important to the school and some statements show parents' views transcribed following a telephone conversation. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make and believe that the school has their children's best interests at heart.

49. The quality of information the school sends to parents is satisfactory. Parents appreciate the newsletters and the school's open-door policy. Teachers involve them with setting their children's targets. Annual reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are helpful and informative.

50. The school is constantly trying to strengthen its partnership with parents which it considers to be vital to the happiness and progress of the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction for the school. She shows vision and provides a very good example for all staff to follow. This is a school which cares for its pupils, puts them first in everything it does, and teaches them to respect and care for others and the world in which they live. The ethos for learning is good and the school enjoys considerable success with its aims.

52. The governors do their work well through their committees and ensure that statutory requirements are met. Since the previous inspection, the governors have taken an increasingly leading role in the management of the school. They play a full part in decision-making about important matters for the school's future. Together with the headteacher, they review the school's aims annually, and play a major part in the setting of the school's objectives set out in its plan for improvement and set challenging targets for achievement.

53. The management of the school is good overall. The consultative management style encourages active involvement of all staff in the running of the school. The headteacher and governors delegate authority effectively and all staff with sufficient experience are encouraged to take management responsibilities and to participate in meeting the school's objectives. The administrative and supervisory staff do their work efficiently and ensure that the school's routines run smoothly.

54. The senior management team comprises the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, the co-ordinator of special educational needs provision, and the co-ordinator of history, citizenship and environmental education. The headteacher and her senior colleagues analyse the school's performance effectively to see what works well and what can be improved. They compare the school's performance with that of others, both locally and nationally.

55. The management of the teachers' performance is good and is closely linked to raising achievement. The school has efficient systems for monitoring pupils' progress, performance management, staff and pupil target-setting.

56. Monitoring of the school's work is very thorough at senior level. A termly action plan is published which sets out areas to be monitored and who will carry this through. Subjects are generally managed satisfactorily. Subject co-ordinators have time away from their classes to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in other classes. This is done effectively in some subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science, though less so in some other subjects such as art and design and religious education.

57. The school improvement plan is a three-year strategic plan which takes into account school, local and national priorities and reflects the school's needs. The planning is linked to training and costs, and the time-scales for the achievement of the school's objectives are clear. Important objectives are linking individual targets for pupils to assessment, the development of the school's assessment database, expansion of the school's early intervention strategy, raising standards of reading, writing, mathematical and thinking skills, improving attendance, homework and the partnership with parents.

58. Provision for special educational needs is good and is well managed, ensures equality of opportunity for pupils and reflects the aims and values of the school. The school has fully implemented the recent changes to the national Code of Practice. The school benefits from increasingly skilled teaching assistants who do their work effectively. Many of the teaching assistants are taking training courses in their own time. Individual education plans are well written and records are meticulously kept. Notes made by teaching assistants in lessons, and continuous assessment, ensure that pupils' progress is constantly under review. The co-ordinator has one day per week to carry out administrative tasks and to maintain links with outside agencies.

59. The school has suffered from long-term absence of a teacher in the Infants but the situation has been

resolved and staffing is now good. The teaching staff are well qualified and trained and comprise a healthy mixture of experienced and newly qualified teachers. Induction procedures for staff new to the school are effective. The school benefits from a large number of well qualified and trained teaching assistants.

60. The school's resources are generally good, especially for information and communication technology. The accommodation is satisfactory overall although the distance between sites is inconvenient and leads to loss of time walking between sites because Juniors and Infants need to share facilities such as the computer suite. The Juniors site is not accessible to wheelchairs and parents with push-chairs. Toilet facilities, mentioned in the previous report, are being or have been improved.

61. The school's financial management is good. Governors receive financial statements each term and monitor the budget carefully. Financial delegation is sound. The school applies the principles of best value effectively. It consults parents and pupils before making major decisions. It compares its performance with those of other schools in the locality and ensures that it is competitive. When placing orders for goods and services, the headteacher and governors ensure that they receive value for money. The school is implementing the recommendations of its recent auditor's report, which were minor. An underspend in last year's budget arose because funds had to be kept over to meet invoices not paid because of dispute over their validity. Taking into account lower than average funding, the quality of education provided, the circumstance in which the school works and the pupils' achievements, the school gives sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve the school's performance still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should take the following action.

- (1) **Raise standards, especially in English and mathematics, by**
 - improving literacy and numeracy skills in line with the school's plans.
(paragraphs 1- 5, 8 -,12,20,27,28,31,57,79,80- 98,109,111,112, 118 and 123)

- (2) **Improve teaching and learning, by**
 - raising expectations for the potentially higher attaining pupils,
 - matching work more accurately to the needs of pupils of different abilities,
 - discarding undemanding worksheets,
 - and marking pupils' written work more consistently, in line with the school's policy.
(paragraphs 4-6,10,11,23,25,33,80,85,86,95,96,102,103,117,120,and129)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	34	38	3	0	0
Percentage	1	13	39	43	3	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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		488
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		136

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		38
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		128

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	30	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	20
	Girls	22	26	24
	Total	38	45	44
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	69 (88)	82 (88)	80 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	23
	Girls	25	24	29
	Total	44	44	52
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	80 (89)	80 (89)	95 (89)
	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	32	34	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	28
	Girls	21	16	26
	Total	42	40	54
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	64 (59)	61 (61)	82 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	25
	Girls	19	16	20
	Total	42	40	45
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	64 (70)	61 (70)	68 (97)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	486	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	520

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	858535
Total expenditure	863855
Expenditure per pupil	1841
Balance brought forward from previous year	74560
Balance carried forward to next year	69240

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	488
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	30	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	27	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	34	5	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	13	5	0
The teaching is good.	62	32	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	38	7	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	22	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	50	36	5	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	39	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	44	7	4	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Strengths

- The teaching is good.
- Most children make good progress in each of the six areas of learning.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the way young children learn.
- Pupils enjoy well-planned and organised practical activities.
- Assessment is used effectively to monitor the children's progress and plan their learning.

Areas for improvement

- A significant number of reception children do not reach the early learning goal for communication, language and literacy.
- Some reception children still need help with counting.
- Some reception children's writing is not yet fully legible.

63. All the staff in the pre-reception and reception classes work hard to provide an attractive, secure, welcoming, and calm environment, and the children like coming to school. The staff know the children well. Before starting school, parents and children are invited to visit, and pre-school and pre-reception children visit their next class before moving up. Parents have informal opportunities to talk to the staff each day, are encouraged to help their child settle and to help their children learn at home.

64. All staff work well as a team and plan their work jointly. They have high expectations of what they believe the children can achieve and monitor their progress carefully. They make good use of the information gained from assessments to monitor the children's progress and to plan lessons that stimulate and promote children's interest and involvement in learning. The children go outside every day, either on the playground or a soft-surfaced outside area. This attractive, secure area has grass, plants and space for apparatus on which the children can climb, scramble, balance and slide. In addition, there are free-standing games, a sand-pit, music equipment, benches and tables. The pre-school children, the pre-reception and reception classes share the area, which inevitably limits the time for each class.

65. When children start in the pre-reception and reception classes, their attainment is well below average for children of their age, particularly in the key areas of language and literacy, and personal and emotional development. The children make good progress, including those with special educational needs, in all six areas of learning¹ during their time in the pre-reception and reception classes, and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they join Year 1, the majority of children have reached the early learning goals² in all areas except communication, language and literacy, and are very close to meeting the goal in mathematics.

66. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in the provision for the youngest children. Teachers now make full use of the foundation stage curriculum as the basis for all their planning. A well-organised pre-school unit opened in 2001 to provide half-day sessions for the youngest children.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The teaching is very good in this area of learning, and the great majority of the children make very good progress and reach the early learning goal by the time they join Year 1. Most children lack

confidence when they first come to school. Many do not sit still or wait to speak and they find it difficult to interact with others, share equipment or take turns. The staff make social development a priority, treat the children with care and respect and make them feel welcome and valued. They participate in activities with the children and help them develop their confidence well so that they learn how to act in different social situations and the children learn to approach adults confidently.

68. The pre-school children sit together for their mid-morning snack, and encourage each other to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They care for each other, and when a child fell, the others were very concerned. By the time they are in the reception classes, they concentrate well because they are interested and excited by their learning. The children become increasingly independent, follow well-established routines and willingly tidy up after lessons. They dress and undress themselves efficiently for physical education, look after their own possessions, share equipment, and take turns. Children with special educational needs are included in all activities.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Most of the children have poorly developed language skills when they join the school, and cannot listen well. An increasing number have speech difficulties, and many speak hesitantly and quietly, using sentences of two or three words.

70. The good teaching ensures that children make good progress, and some more able children attain the early learning goal in this area of learning. However, the majority of the children are still working towards the goal when they move into Year 1. The staff improve the children's speaking skills and widen their vocabulary by listening and talking with them about what they are doing. In the pre-reception class, children learn to listen to instructions and their confidence increases so they talk happily with adults. Reception children share their news from the weekend with their classmates, who listen carefully. Although most join in and speak confidently, many others still cannot express themselves clearly and their vocabulary is limited.

71. The children enjoy stories and poems, and teachers read with good expression to show the children how to use their voices. During a shared reading session for reception children, only half could recognise any of the words. However, they paid attention to the first letter in the words, matching 'm' to 'moon', for example, and most knew letter sounds, and spotted the first letter of their name when it appeared in different words. The children regularly practise words that appear frequently and know that print is read from left to right. More able children can put the main events of a story in order, and use both text and picture clues to help with an unknown word. Labels and displays in all classrooms show them that print has meaning. Whilst the majority of pre-reception children recognise their own name, they do not begin to write it until they are in reception class. Writing skills are slow to develop, so plenty of practice and examples are provided. Children enjoy sending letters and cards at the mark making and writing tables, making letters from pasta to feel the shapes. Whilst some more able children in the reception classes can write two or three sentences legibly, they cannot write independently. Others still need to write over or copy the teacher's script and their writing is not yet fully legible.

Mathematical development

72. The teaching is good and enables children to progress well, and many are close to meeting the early learning goal by the end of reception. Teachers make mathematics fun for the children by using rhymes and songs, such as *Five Currant Buns*. Mental 'warm-ups' are turned into challenges and the children unite to 'beat the teacher'. Mathematical activities often link with other areas, including science, music, art and physical education.

73. Good resources, including jigsaws, matching and counting equipment make learning practical and effective use is made of the outside area; for example, travelling around a course, using balls, quoits and beanbags to count out the numbers landed upon. The more able children count and match numerals accurately up to 10. Counting the children at register time became a successful game that taught the

children strategies for mental subtraction.

74. Children learn to use mathematical vocabulary correctly. They know that seven is *less than* nine, compare sizes to find the *taller* or the *tallest*, and investigate which container holds *the most* sand or water. Most children in the reception classes recognise basic plane shapes of *circle*, *square* and *triangle*. They can sort 1p, 2p and 5p coins. They count reliably up to 10 and back, and some can go further. The more able children use blocks to make addition and subtraction sentences up to 10, and record these in picture form. One child was thrilled when he realised that *10 take away 5 makes 5* can be reversed as *double 5 makes 10*, and made a big step in his understanding. However, less able children still need a great deal of support and practice before they can subtract from 4, and are not yet secure in their ability to count reliably.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Most children have limited general knowledge and experiences when they first come to school. The teaching is good in this area of learning and the children make good overall progress. The great majority reach the early learning goal by the end of the reception class.

A wide range of practical and investigational activities are planned to stimulate the children's interest and response to the world around them. The outside areas are used effectively for observation and care for the natural world. The children learn about Christian festivals, for example, Christmas. They are taught to think of Jesus as a good friend, and to be a good friend themselves. The children make simple models, for example, a boat using recycled materials based on their own ideas, but writing about their ideas was too difficult for them. Pupils learn a sense of place when they follow routes round the school, tracking the pathways. They learn about the passage of time and, when they look at photographs, they are surprised to see how much they have changed since they were babies.

Physical development

76. The teaching is good in this area of learning and the children make good progress in developing their physical skills and most meet the early learning goal by the end of their reception year. All the children understand the importance of wearing the correct kit for physical education lessons and staff set a good example by dressing appropriately. Children warm up at the start of each lesson, listen to instructions well, and use large and small apparatus. In the pre-reception class, the outside area is used well to develop pupils' climbing, jumping balancing and skipping skills on the well-designed apparatus. In the school hall they move to action songs and rhymes to develop control, stretching, and turning.

77. By the time they are in the reception classes, the children are more co-ordinated and controlled in their movements, but tend to crowd together in the hall, rather than making use of the large space. When reception children investigated small equipment, some were really inventive, and found many different ways of sending quoits to their partner. Others found it hard to roll a hoop to their partner or to catch a ball. Small equipment in the classrooms develops better control of small objects and equipment, and they become more skilled when manipulating pencils and scissors, threading beads, joining apparatus and using small world models. Each class has computers and suitable programs, but some children cannot complete the activities because of lack of control of the mouse.

Creative development

78. Most children make good progress and reach the early learning goal for creative development by the time they enter Year 1 because they are taught well. Children have a rich experience of music and play a good range of percussion instruments. The pre-reception children respond well to musical and physical activities linked to favourite nursery rhymes, singing along and play their instruments with enthusiasm. Reception children sing their favourite action songs tunefully; they make good progress with listening skills, creating and copying simple rhythms, and exploring the sounds made by the different instruments. They recorded their composition using simple notation, and could play from this notation. The children enjoy listening to music and incorporate the pictures suggested by the music in their paintings, for

example, grey and blue thunderstorms. They express their ideas well in paint, crayon, collage and use colour to produce bold pictures. They construct models and experience different materials to create texture and effects.

ENGLISH

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- Standards of handwriting are above average.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of literature.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Higher attainers do not consistently learn as well as they could.
- The expectations of some teachers are not always high enough.
- Work is not always matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Library facilities are inadequate to promote independent study.

79. In the national tests in 2002, the standards reached by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were well below average and below those of most schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds.

From 1998, the results of national tests in Year 2 rose in line with the national trend before falling in 2002. The results in Year 6 fell in 2000 but rose in 2001 and again in 2002. Standards seen in Year 6 during the inspection are below rather than well below average. In Year 2, standards remain well below average. In both the infants and the juniors, standards are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection. This is due to the school's current and recent circumstances, mainly

- the falling attainment on entry to the pre-school, and rising numbers of pupils with special educational needs,
- the increased mobility of families, especially families in difficulties being moved into the area,

80. Given the above factors the achievement of the vast majority of pupils is satisfactory. Analysis of the performance of pupils in last year's Year 6 who had stayed at the school for the whole of their primary education indicates that they made satisfactory progress overall. The school has sound strategies to teach English through the National Literacy Strategy and through extra reading and writing sessions in all age groups. Well-organised grouping by ability in Years 5 and 6 contributes successfully to pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support in class and make satisfactory progress. An initiative in Year 5, though still in its early stages, is beginning to raise standards. This supports about 13 pupils with special educational needs through regular and well focused individual reading sessions, as well as targeting 14 lower attainers with extra teaching support each day in literacy sessions. Potential higher attainers do not consistently make the good progress of which they are capable. Group-work in class is not always sufficiently challenging to fully meet their needs.

81. Standards of speaking and listening are close to average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress due to the school's appropriate emphasis on this area of the English curriculum. Learning is supported very well through activities such as brainstorming, structured discussion and drama, both in English lessons and in other subjects. In Year 2, pupils listen attentively to stories and recite poems together with expression. They improvise simple words and phrases to act out nursery rhymes and pose relevant questions to characters when the action is frozen. Their vocabularies are fairly limited. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers but several show by their reaction that they do not always understand what is said and they are less attentive when listening to each other. Most Year 6 pupils answer the teacher's questions articulately and express their points of view clearly. Teachers take particular care to use subject specific language correctly so that pupils extend their vocabularies. For

instance, pupils discussed their geography field trip to Llandudno with reference to *urban* and *rural* areas, *leisure* facilities and *uncongested* roads. They use their speaking and listening skills to rehearse and organise their ideas before carrying out a writing task. For example, when preparing to write a letter of complaint they first make an imaginary telephone call outlining their grievances in an organised fashion. They listen carefully and make suitable responses to their teacher and to each other.

82. Standards of reading are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Nevertheless, almost all pupils are learning to enjoy literature and have positive attitudes to books. For a minority of pupils, their lack of independent reading skills slows their progress in other subjects. In Year 2, most pupils are aware of the difference between fiction and reference books. About two-thirds of pupils read simple texts accurately and retrieve specific information to answer the teacher's questions. They use their knowledge of letters and their sounds successfully to break down unfamiliar words. A significant minority of pupils find reading difficult. Whilst they associate letters with their sounds correctly they often use just the initial letter of a word to guess at its meaning. Overall, pupils are reliant on sounding out new words and do not make enough use of other clues, for instance, of pictures, context or syntax to help them read.

83. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with a wide variety of texts from the works of Shakespeare and Dickens to those of Jacqueline Wilson and J K Rowling. Many pupils enthusiastically bring their own books from home to read in daily quiet reading sessions. Average and higher attainers read stories accurately with growing confidence and understanding of the plot. They use inference and deduction when discussing characters. When looking for information they are beginning to pick out the main points in non-fiction texts. However, many pupils have limited vocabularies and do not always understand or recognise words they have decoded. Pupils' library skills and ability to work independently on in-depth topics are hindered by the lack of accessible library facilities in both the infant and junior departments.

84. Standards of writing are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. In Year 2, most pupils are beginning to write in sentences with some awareness of the need to use capital letters and full stops. Their spelling reflects their knowledge of key words and of letters and their sounds. For instance, in 'I hede a nus', (I heard a noise). Average and higher attainers are beginning to use adjectives to enliven their work, but generally, their choice is very basic as in, 'The *nice* water melon is *green* and *juicy*'. Very few pupils are working at the higher level, they are not yet able to extend their ideas logically in sentences and their choice of interesting and apt words is limited. Lower attainers are making sound progress from joining in group writing tasks to beginning to write their own captions, for instance, when describing a family picture. Year 6 pupils are becoming aware of the features of different types of writing, for instance, to persuade or complain. Average and higher attainers show some imagination in writing and are beginning to use words and phrases for effect. For example, when using a simile to describe the beach, such as 'sparkling like a big pile of glitter'. Correct punctuation, such as use of speech marks, is developing and spelling generally obeys the rules. Lower attainers write as they speak and sentences are therefore often grammatically incorrect, and spelling inaccurate, as in 'he don't have to use a *wepon*', or 'it is a *frod* (fraud) don't believe a *fin*g'. They have difficulty in sustaining their work to sequence their ideas. On the other hand, the quality of pupils' handwriting is a strength of the school: pupils are taught to write in cursive script from reception and by the end of Year 2 almost all write in legibly formed joined writing. Year 6 pupils take pride in presenting their work and their handwriting is joined, clear and fluent.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and a minority of good and very good lesson were seen. In the very good lesson, the teacher's expectations were high; the pace of the lesson was brisk and lively and tasks met the needs of pupils of different abilities. Lessons are generally carefully planned and there is a particular emphasis on the step-by-step development of skills. Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills as a priority and build on this foundation to develop reading and writing. Teachers share learning objectives with the class so that pupils know what is expected. The pupils generally concentrate their efforts and do their best. In some classes, however, teachers' expectations are not high enough and group tasks planned do not challenge the full range of attainment. As a result, higher attainers in particular, do not always make the

good progress of which they are capable. The use of uninteresting worksheets also fails to motivate and challenge pupils to learn well. For instance, pupils in Year 3 were required to complete worksheets by filling in the missing homophones when some pupils could more usefully have composed sentences for themselves. Relationships are very good. Teachers usually manage pupils successfully, and use praise and encouragement to raise pupils' self-esteem. Consequently many pupils are becoming confident learners and have positive attitudes to the subject.

86. Feedback from marking of work in books is also frequently encouraging, but it is not usually rigorous enough to show pupils specifically how to improve. The good number of teaching assistants are usually appropriately deployed to provide effective support when working directly with pupils in group sessions. However, best use of their valuable time is not always made in large parts of lessons when the teacher is addressing the whole class, and the teaching assistant's role is less effective. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used successfully to reinforce learning.

87. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially through opportunities to share ideas and co-operate in groups. Role-play activities increase self-esteem, and the range of literature studied from African folk tales to classical works and children's stories widens pupils' awareness of a range of cultures and genre.

88. Management of the subject is good and is improving. Standards have not improved since the previous inspection but reflect the changing characteristics of the annual intakes of pupils. Secure assessment systems are in place and the data generated is used to set targets. Together with the headteacher, the co-ordinator has a good picture of standards by monitoring pupils' work, analysing results of tests and assessments, and the monitoring of lessons shows the teachers how to raise standards. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

Key Skills Across the Curriculum – Literacy

89. Pupils make satisfactory use of their emerging literacy skills in other subjects although the weakness in reading tends to hold them back, and pupils need more opportunities to practise extended pieces of writing, for example in history and geography. Pupils research information from a variety of sources, such as CD-ROM and the internet. Specific vocabulary is carefully explained in subjects like science and music so that pupils understanding and use of terms is extended. Information and communication technology is used effectively, for example, in the writing of poetry.

MATHEMATICS

Strengths

- The subject is well led and managed.
- The management of the subject is helping the teachers to improve their teaching.
- Effective additional support helps pupils who need a boost to their performance.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good support for teachers and pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The work is not always matched to pupils' different abilities, particularly the higher attaining pupils.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Some teachers rely too heavily on worksheets.
- There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills.

90. Current standards of work are well below average in Year 2 and are below average in Year 6. Standards have declined since the previous inspection when they were broadly average. This decline is due to pupils' attainment on entry to the school being lower and to a higher level of pupil mobility. The

proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average in some year groups and reduces the attainment profile and this is a significant factor in Year 6. The school has already started to take action to raise standards and there are signs of improvement in Year 6, despite all the difficulties. This improvement is due to teachers receiving guidance in developing their skills, the extra support provided for pupils through implementing additional national strategies for those in need of a boost to their performance, employing more teaching assistants, and a teacher to teach a small group of Year 5 pupils. In addition, extra classes are held after school for Year 6 pupils to improve their performance prior to the national tests. The impact of these measures is beginning to show and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including that of pupils with special educational needs, who usually receive additional help in lessons. Some higher attaining pupils could, however, make more progress if they were given more challenging work to do.

91. The school's 2002 results of National Curriculum tests were well below the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with particular weaknesses in number and calculations. Nevertheless, a comparison of the Year 2 and Year 6 test results for individual pupils who remained in the school showed that the large majority made the expected rate of progress between Years 2 and 6 and achieved satisfactorily. A few made better progress and achieved well; those with special educational needs who were entered for the tests, made satisfactory progress. The high level of pupil mobility has a negative effect on overall standards.

92. Most of the current Year 2 pupils can order and count numbers up to 99 reliably and understand addition and subtraction of numbers, applying their knowledge when using money. Higher attaining pupils can give the change after purchasing items, whereas others give the amount of money required to buy them. Pupils begin to count in twos, fives and tens, but have more difficulty in applying their knowledge to solving problems. They have sound knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes and use standard measures with reasonable accuracy, such as when using centimetres to measure short lines. They can present information in bar charts, for example about their favourite foods and answer questions correctly using the information. The pupils begin to develop strategies for multiplying numbers, such as repeated addition, which many use successfully. Pupils' skills in the mental recall of number facts have been slower to develop but there is evidence of some improvement in these skills among pupils in Year 1. The pupils' written work shows that better progress is made in Year 1 where there is more challenge in lessons and tasks well matched to the pupils' next stage in learning. In Year 2, pupils are all given the same worksheet to complete, which does not challenge the higher attaining pupils and are too demanding for the lower attainers. As a result, the lower attaining pupils have much unfinished work in their books.

93. The great majority of Year 6 pupils have sound understanding of the four number operations and apply them to solving problems with reasonable accuracy, for example when calculating perimeters or areas of shapes. They understand decimals to two places and can change decimals to percentages or fractions. They have developed strategies for multiplying a two or three digit number by a single digit and, in Year 4, higher attaining pupils are multiplying a two digit number by another two digit number, showing reasonable understanding of the process. Pupils collect data and present it attractively in a range of graphs or charts and this continues to be the stronger aspect of the subject. Pupils have a secure understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. However, their investigative skills are weaker because they have too few opportunities for this type of work. For example, when studying nets in Year 6, pupils were not encouraged to work out for themselves how many different nets there are for making a cube.

94. Pupils measure and draw angles accurately and can present information in pie charts, line or block graphs. The oral, mental starter sessions are not always as challenging as they should be for pupils, such as when Year 6 pupils were asked to add on four, starting from zero. Year 2 pupils had undertaken the same task earlier that week. Despite this lack of challenge, pupils generally make better progress in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, where some untidy presentation of work is too readily accepted and the use of lined books does not help pupils in setting their work out clearly. Teachers in some classes need to raise their expectations of pupils and provide appropriate challenge if standards are to continue to rise. Pupils' skills in solving problems mentally are not as well developed as they could be, as they are not

encouraged to use what they already know to help solve problems. For example, pupils know that 10 per cent of 60 is 6, but do not use this information to calculate 15 per cent of 60.

95. When the lessons start with a brisk oral, mental session, which motivates and interests pupils, they make better progress and show good attitudes to their work, as they want to succeed in completing it in the time available. In Year 4, for example, pupils worked against the clock when recalling multiplication facts, trying to improve on their previous best score. This was followed by a team game in which pupils gave number sentences with the answer of 24, using any of the four rules of number. Most points were awarded for number sentences using division, least for addition, which encouraged pupils to use division. The game enabled all pupils to participate at their own level. This type of activity is not evident in all year groups and the scrutiny of work showed pupils do better in some year groups than others. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between classes. Some marking gives pupils' clear information as to what they have done well and where they can improve, in other classes there are few comments, or comments are critical of the pupils and not at all encouraging, such as when pupils are blamed for not concentrating.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall both in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 – 6, but varies between excellent and unsatisfactory. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from ineffective pupil management and too much time being spent on discipline, which led to many pupils making little progress in the time available and higher attaining pupils being insufficiently challenged. The key features of an excellent lesson in Year 1 were the brisk pace and level of challenge for all pupils, which were maintained throughout the lesson. The use of a counting stick for counting forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens and small whiteboards for pupils to record their answers within a short time span was very effective in helping them to improve their accurate recall of number facts. The teacher constantly used correct subject vocabulary and encouraged the pupils to use the knowledge they already had, such as doubling numbers, in order to solve other problems. This was followed by word problems and additional support was provided for pupils who had difficulty in reading the questions. The teacher quickly spotted those having problems, which led to further teaching to ensure pupils understood where they had gone wrong. In Year 2, lower attaining pupils are given work that is too demanding for them, which is noted in the marking, but the pupil then moves on with the rest of the class without further teaching. There is some weakness in matching the tasks closely to the needs of all pupils in too many lessons when all pupils are given the same worksheets to complete, which do not challenge the higher attainers, but are too difficult for the lower attaining pupils, who rarely complete them. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to lessons and the overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

97. The subject is now well led and managed, but it will take some time for this improvement to become fully evident in standards and the results of national tests. The co-ordinator has a good overview of standards and through a thorough analysis of pupils' performance in national tests has pinpointed areas for improvement. Action has been taken to improve the plenary sessions towards the end of lessons and pupils are more aware of their progress as a result. The teaching has been monitored and support given through demonstration and mentoring which is helping other teachers to develop their range of teaching methods. Taken overall, improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory, as the school is only just beginning to show improvement in standards.

Key Skills across the Curriculum - Numeracy

98. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in most other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils know how to use calculators to check their work and use computers to present graphs and charts, but the use of ICT is currently an area for development and training is being undertaken by all staff. In design and technology, pupils use their measuring skills to measure materials accurately when constructing models. Pupils record the outcomes of science experiments in tally charts and graphs. In history, timelines are on display in all classrooms and pupils use their skills to work out periods of time since significant events, or the length of periods in history. The distances between different places are calculated in geography and co-ordinates used to identify the position of features on maps. When reading word problems, pupils have to read carefully to understand what number operation is to be used to solve

the problem. The vocabulary of shape is reinforced in physical education.

SCIENCE

Strengths

- Pupils achieve very well.
- An emphasis on investigative work is raising standards.
- Pupils have a good ability to make predictions.
- Teachers develop pupils' science skills very well from an early age.
- Pupils have a good understanding of life processes and living things.
- Pupils enjoy science and are keen to learn.
- Teachers develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very well.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need for greater independence in pupils' learning.
- In too many lessons, pupils of all abilities carry out very similar tasks – higher attainers need to be challenged more.
- Pupils lack confidence in devising scientifically 'fair tests'.
- Teachers need to insist on pupils' use of correct scientific vocabulary.

99. In the work seen during the inspection, standards of pupils' work in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average and this represents a very good achievement for these pupils in relation to their earlier attainment. The school's emphasis on investigative work has had a most positive effect on raising standards, which had dipped after the last inspection, and is a very significant factor accounting for pupils' achievement. The school lays great importance on the development of skills, and this has helped pupils to understand basic scientific ideas from an early age. As a result, most pupils enjoy science, their attitudes towards the subject and relationships are very good. Pupils want to learn and they are most enthusiastic. The degree of independence given to pupils varies enormously between classes and the teachers sometimes set up experiments for the pupils which they should organise for themselves.

100. The National Curriculum test results for Year 6 in 2002 were similar to the national average, but well above that found in similar schools in comparison with pupils' previous work. Teachers' assessments of Year 2 also matched the national average.

101. Standards are strongest in the *life processes and living things* aspect of science (biology) and in investigative skills throughout the school and pupils' knowledge is often very good in these areas. Pupils have a very solid foundation in making predictions. Although their confidence in designing their own fair tests is less secure, most pupils in the junior phase can identify a fair test. Language is not always 'scientific' and teachers do not all insist upon the use of technical terms. By the end of the junior phase, some pupils find it difficult to explain their thinking articulately although their actions show that they are looking for evidence and questioning claims as a matter of course. The cultural significance of science is strongly promoted through a number of initiatives within the school and this helps pupils to gain a deeper understanding of certain science-based issues that will effect the future of the world.

102. The majority of pupils learn very well, given the low level of understanding of many pupils when they first enter the school. Nevertheless, learning could be further accelerated for both higher attaining pupils and pupils who need extra input if planning were to build on previous proven ability. Too often, all of the class carry out very similar tasks. This leads to a situation in which higher attaining pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to plan some of their own experiments and explore ideas. Sometimes work is too difficult for some pupils with special educational needs to manage without a lot of support. Although the work is completed in their books at the end of the lesson the quality of their independent learning is affected by their constant need for help. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants during discussion times, so that their learning is similar to that of the majority of pupils.

103. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan and prepare well for lessons. Class management is generally good throughout the school, and the orderly environment creates a very good atmosphere for learning. In a very good lesson Year 6 pupils put forward their own hypotheses about the properties of materials they added to circuits. They then carried out an investigation into insulators and conductors as they added different materials to their circuits. Their experiments were successful and pupils' learning, overall, was very good. Throughout the lesson, there was an atmosphere of excited concentration. The teacher and the teaching assistants were instrumental in inculcating a love for science in the way they gave prompt, appropriate pointers to pupils without interfering with their independence. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils confidently used their literacy and numeracy skills to complete a matrix, which revealed the amount of protein, carbohydrate and other nutrient groups contained in common foods. The emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills is very good in science. Pupils join in discussions and show awareness of key scientific terms. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes given suitably demanding work but this should be more consistent. Marking is inconsistent although some is excellent, particularly in Year 5.

104. Leadership and management are good. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The two subject leaders monitor lessons regularly throughout the school, giving critical and constructive feedback to staff. Resources are good overall, and support pupils' learning. ICT is appropriately used to reinforce pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work and to suggest improvement are sometimes missed, particularly in older classes.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet established.

105. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection and continue to be similar to those found in most schools. Pupils achieve well overall and those with special educational needs make good progress alongside their peers. The pupils' successful learning is due mainly to good teaching and to the breadth and relevance of the curriculum.

106. In Year 2, pupils explore colour through mixing paint to match a particular sample. They know how to make colour lighter or darker by gradually adding white or black, and that some colours such as orange and green can be made by mixing others. However, they do not have the vocabulary to describe tints and shades or primary and secondary colours. Most pupils are familiar with terms like foreground and background when sketching views in the playground. Their careful observational drawings of objects 'through the viewfinder' compare closely with the photograph taken. Pupils use these experiences together with thoughtful studies of urban landscapes of L S Lowry to build up townscape collages of their own using two-dimensional shapes. They pay particular attention to form and colour. In discussion, pupils speak about differences in the work of others but find it difficult to identify ways of improving their own. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are aware of different western styles of art and are familiar with art from other cultures, for instance, colourful African designs and Aboriginal art. Their knowledge of the influence of individual artists is not well developed. They develop their own ideas carefully with a range of media including three-dimensional work with *papier-mâché* and clay, as well as pastel and paint. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed making close observational drawings of mountaineering equipment. Their drawings are well controlled and show good attention to line, form, shape, tone and pattern. They did not evaluate their work or consider improvements.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching was good in three-quarters of the lessons observed. In one-third it was satisfactory. Good relationships create a positive climate for learning in lessons. They respect pupils' efforts and provide encouraging feedback. Consequently, pupils grow in self-esteem as they move through the school and become increasingly confident to explore media and extend their own ideas. Teachers use questions effectively to help pupils develop their designs and see possibilities. Lessons are successfully planned to build up skills step-by-step in half-termly topics, which interest the pupils and promote learning. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed to work with groups. They generally support teachers and pupils effectively. Resources are carefully prepared and accessible. As a result, pupils make thoughtful choices of materials and tools and are becoming independent learners. Whilst there are good opportunities in some classes, there is insufficient emphasis in others on promoting pupils' abilities to evaluate or sensitively criticise their own work and that of their peers. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology, for instance, to explore ideas or to model designs.

108. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress at the end of each topic and standards are beginning to be checked against National Curriculum levels.

109. The curriculum is enhanced for some pupils in Year 3 and in the Reception/Year 1 class by after school art clubs. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through the regular opportunities it affords for self-expression and for collaboration with others as well as for working independently. Cultural development is particularly well supported. Whilst speaking and listening skills are very successfully promoted, opportunities to use reading and writing skills to carry out research in art are not well established.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Pupils produce a good range of work using many different materials.
- Design is well taught.
- Finished products are often imaginative, attractive and well finished.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers manage their pupils well.

Areas for improvement

- There are weaknesses in the lower and middle attainers' written work and drawing.

110. Standards of pupils' work are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection and are average in both Year 2 and Year 6. In relation to their attainment when they began Year 1, these standards represent a satisfactory overall achievement. Pupils learn to work with a range of different materials, including food and textiles, and resistant, flexible and malleable materials. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons because they are supported effectively by the teaching assistants, particularly with their reading.

111. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. They all have design folders in which they keep their design specifications, their preliminary sketches and drawings, and their own evaluations of their finished products: this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Year 2 pupils have done some work with a mechanical construction kit in the recent past, incorporating wheels and winding mechanisms to an average overall standard. Displays of pupils' past work show that products are often attractively finished and imaginatively designed. For example, Year 2 pupils achieved average overall standards in their project to make a Chinese dragon or lion. Their drawings include labelling of the various parts and assembly instructions. In the case of the higher attaining pupils, the design work is

detailed and drawings are diagrammatic and their finished projects are attractive and colourful. The higher attaining pupils' evaluations are clear and cover mechanical operation, appearance and suggestions for improvement. The middle and, in particular, the lower attaining pupils' design work and evaluation of the finished products is much weaker and there is little written description and these pupils' written work is holding them back.

112. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 – 6. Year 3 pupils learn the basic principles of pneumatics and how mechanical devices work, such as levers and pivots in familiar artefacts, for example, wheelbarrows and scissors. Pupils use computers effectively in their design work, for example, Year 3 pupils used graphics software effectively in their designs for Joseph's coat of many colours. By Year 6, standards are average overall and some pupils achieve high standards. In a Year 6 project to make working models of fairground rides, very similar work to that found by the 1996 inspection, the design ideas varied widely in quality but they were clear and matched the finished products closely. The best of the models are original and imaginative and show detail and thought for the intended purpose; for example, incorporation of staircases for the customers. Pupils evaluate their finished work and suggest how it could be improved but they have not yet learned to modify their designs as the work proceeds. The construction is generally sound and the various parts are assembled effectively and fastened securely. The mechanical operation is generally good and often incorporates electric motors, geared handles or rubber bands. The pupils used the school's digital camera to record their finished models.

113. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and enjoy practical lessons. Their behaviour and relationships with teachers and with other pupils are good. Pupils collaborate effectively with others, and share tools and resources without fuss. They co-operate with their teachers and often tidy the classroom at the end of the lesson without having to be asked to do so.

114. The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The strengths of the teaching are the teachers' effective management of the pupils, the good use of simple resources and the teachers' good subject knowledge. The good teaching of design means that pupils learn good habits but their design work is not yet a strength of their learning overall because of difficulties some have with writing and drawing. Pupils are willing to work hard and at a good pace. Older pupils, in particular, are interested in the work and increasingly become adventurous and creative.

115. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well balanced. Monitoring of lessons is satisfactory. Pupils are assessed in design and technology each year in relation to National Curriculum levels.

GEOGRAPHY

Strengths

- The pupils enjoy the work and show interest in the topics covered.
- The use of drama is good.
- Teachers' questions probe the pupils' understanding.
- The pupils' ability to talk about key places, people, events and issues is better than their written work.
- Older pupils make effective use of the Internet for research.

Areas for improvement

- Tasks set for pupils often lack sufficient challenge.
- Pupils of different abilities are given very similar tasks.
- The worksheets often restrict pupils' learning.
- Too little attention is given to the development of the pupils' written English in some classes.

116. The standards of the pupils' work are below average in Year 2. Pupils at different levels of

attainment, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make broadly satisfactory progress during their time in the school. In Year 6, standards are average for pupils of this age and their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment.

117. By Year 2, the pupils have a basic sense of place in relation to their own locality, and are beginning to develop an awareness of places beyond this area, recognising some differences and similarities. They spoke knowledgeably about an island they had studied in a project called 'The Isle of Struay.' The work they are given enables them to develop satisfactory geographical skills. By Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of maps of different scales, and can interpret them with reasonable accuracy. They recognise some of the ways in which human activity affects the physical environment. They express their own views on issues such as local traffic, and relate these to global problems. The pupils are helped to make comparisons between their own locality and contrasting areas, such as a village in India. Year 6 pupils make effective use of secondary sources, such as the Internet, to research aspects of physical geography. The oldest pupils spoke knowledgeably and accurately when describing the scientific properties of materials used in protective clothing. Although the pupils make satisfactory progress in their geographical knowledge, many of the tasks in which they engage do not challenge them sufficiently to develop their study skills to the levels of which they are capable.

118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pupils enjoy the work and show interest in the topics covered. Good use is made of drama, and of questions to probe and assess the pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. These were very successful features of the teaching in Year 6, when the pupils were helped to understand important difficulties relating to survival in mountain environments. The teacher began the lesson by producing an enormous rucksack which became the focus of the lesson and led to interesting questions which fascinated the pupils and they were encouraged to handle the equipment. This was also a good example of an imaginative approach to learning: not only did it capture the pupils' attention, it enabled different groups of pupils to learn in different ways. In some classes too little attention is given to the development of the pupils' written English. Opportunities are missed for pupils to extend and communicate their knowledge and understanding through more lengthy pieces of writing. Too little is expected of the pupils in this respect, and as a result, their ability to talk about key places, people, events and issues is much in advance of their written work. Lessons are soundly planned and organised but the lesson sometimes departs from the plan and pupils of different abilities are given very similar tasks. This impedes learning for some groups of pupils. Learning is also often limited by the worksheets that are used.

119. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Subject leadership is broadly satisfactory and an effective strategy for monitoring and evaluating standards of work and the quality of the teaching and learning is beginning to be implemented. The content of the work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

HISTORY

Strengths

- History is presented in an imaginative and interesting way, using role-play.
- The pupils' research skills develop well.
- Teachers make good use of questions to assess the pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking.
- The monitoring of lessons shows how teaching can be improved.

Areas for improvement

- Literacy skills limit pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not always apply themselves to their work.
- Worksheets tend to restrict pupils' learning.

120. The standards of pupils' work are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils at different levels of

attainment, including those with special educational needs, make broadly satisfactory progress during their time in the school but their literacy skills limit their attainment in the subject.

121. By Year 2, the pupils have made satisfactory progress in the development of their knowledge and skills from a low starting point at the beginning of Year 1, and their overall achievement is satisfactory. They know how to use a range of sources including pictures, books, paintings and photographs. In their study of the Great Fire of London, pupils understood some of the reasons why the fire spread so quickly, and knew how to place the events of the fire in chronological order. The pupils show increasing awareness of the distinction between past and present, and use correct vocabulary to describe the passing of time. The school's 'Victorian day' during the week of the inspection, and the imaginative use of role-play, help to inculcate a love of the subject.

122. In the junior classes, the pupils make satisfactory progress, extending their knowledge of ancient civilisations such as those of Egypt, Rome and Greece. By Year 6, their achievement is satisfactory. The pupils' skills of searching for and finding information to support their work develops well. For example, Year 6 pupils, when studying the legacy of Ancient Greece, understood how to use a range of historical sources, such as books, photographs, artefacts, CD-ROMs and the Internet to research key events and important people of the period. Their application to the task is, however, not as steady as would be expected. A significant minority find it difficult to fully concentrate and produce their best written work.

123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pupils enjoy the work and show enthusiasm for and interest in the topics covered. Lessons are well organised but planning for different abilities is often not as effective as it could be. Teachers make good use of probing questions to assess the pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. This was a very successful feature of the teaching in Year 1, where the pupils were helped to understand some important cultural changes in Britain since the Victorian era. In three of the classes the teachers and pupils dressed in Victorian-style clothes and took part in a typical 'Victorian' school day. Some pupils preferred the style of learning in rows with chalk and 'slates' and some pupils preferred the interactive learning of the twenty first century. The high profile given to the subject is illustrated by the fact that every pupil entered into the role-play, dressed appropriately. Team teaching in one class helped the classroom come to life as the two teachers interacted and kept each other 'in role.' Too little attention is given to the development of the pupils' written English. Missed opportunities occur for the pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding through their own writing. Too little is expected of the pupils when too many worksheets are used and as a result, the pupils' ability to talk about key places, people, events and issues is much in advance of their written work.

124. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. An effective strategy for monitoring and evaluating standards of work and the quality of the teaching and learning is being implemented and clearly pinpoints strengths and areas for development. Teachers evaluate every lesson. Both marking and assessment have improved. The history club was mentioned by pupils as being an interesting feature of the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Strengths

- The subject is well managed.
- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy lessons in the computer suite.

Areas for improvement

- The more able pupils could achieve still higher standards.
- Computers could be used more effectively in mathematics, art and design and music.

125. Standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6 and are higher than found at the time of the previous inspection in 1996. In relation to their attainment at the start of Year 1, these standards represent a satisfactory overall achievement although the more able pupils could achieve still higher standards. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils did not have special ICT lessons but were taught wholly in the context of other subjects. Pupils' experience varied depending on which class they were in and some teachers lacked confidence in their ability to teach the National Curriculum programme of study to the pupils. This is no longer the case. The school's resources are much better than they were and all classes have ICT lessons in the school's computer suite. Teachers' knowledge of ICT is now generally good.

126. Year 2 pupils understand the main component parts of a computer system. They can use the keyboard and mouse effectively and can load and use software such as word-processors. Pupils understand that computers can be programmed with a range of different software, for example to produce graphics or to draw graphs. They understand that books, videos and computers can store information which can be retrieved. They are learning to find information purposefully: they can load an encyclopaedia from CD-ROM and use it to classify specified information on a simple attribute table, for example, which tropical creatures of a given list are birds or not birds, or which of a set of animals are furry or not. However, there is no planned provision to allow for potentially higher attaining pupils to progress further than the standard expected for their age.

127. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress in Years 3 – 6. The majority of the pupils achieve the standard expected for their age by Year 6 but few pupils exceed this standard. Year 4 pupils have learned to use a computer language (LOGO) to give instructions to the computer to draw two-dimensional geometrical shapes, including instructions to repeat a short procedure as part of a larger design. Year 5 pupils have used software effectively to write and illustrate their work in poetry. The strength of the pupils' work lies in exchanging and sharing information. Year 6 pupils use e-mail to correspond with children of their own age in another school and use the Internet, for example, to revise their knowledge of mathematics and science. They use computers and specific software to write text for particular purposes, for example, about matters which are of local interest, such as the rise in crime or incidences of deer killed on the road through Cannock Chase. They incorporate graphics into their work and use their digital camera to record their work in other subjects, for example, design and technology. Their work in control is satisfactory: in the past they have written programs to control the movement of an electronic robot; however, they lack the experience of programming that the Year 4 pupils have.

128. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to their work and usually behave well. On one untypical occasion during the inspection they took advantage of an inexperienced teacher and their behaviour was not what it should have been.

129. The overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory. The strength of the teaching is the teachers' knowledge of the subject and their teaching of the subject's basic skills. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons and make satisfactory overall progress. The teachers manage their pupils effectively. Although lessons are well organised the work is not always planned to match the needs of the potentially higher attaining pupils. This is surprising because the teachers assess the pupils' attainment regularly and set targets for them. There are few planned opportunities, beyond illustrating written work, for pupils to combine a number of different ICT tools to achieve a particular purpose, for example, to make a presentation to the class on a given topic – a suitably challenging task for higher attaining Year 6 pupils.

130. The management of the subject is good. The organisation of the subject is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and statutory requirements are now fully met. The monitoring pupils' work is also much better and enables the subject co-ordinator to intervene to eliminate underachievement. All lessons are evaluated as a matter of routine but the monitoring of teaching needs to show teachers more clearly how to raise standards further, especially for the potentially higher attaining pupils.

Key Skills across the Curriculum – Information and Communication Technology.

131. Pupils' use of ICT enhances their learning in most other subjects and reflects the school's distinctive values, for example, care for the environment. Pupils have sound skills of retrieving and communicating information and use these effectively. In English, pupils make good use of word-processing in their written work. In religious education, videos and the Internet are used effectively to find information. In design and technology, pupils use graphics software in their design work and older pupils record their finished products using a digital camera. In science, Year 6 pupils use the Internet to revise their work and Year 5 pupils use laptop computers effectively in their work on living things. In history, pupils use computers for research. In mathematics, however, pupils could use computers more effectively to illustrate numerical information graphically. In art and design, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to explore ideas or to model designs. In music, pupils use electronic keyboards but opportunities are missed to use computer software for composing.

MUSIC

Strengths

- Pupils enjoy lessons and behave well.
- Pupils use a good range of musical instruments for composition.
- Teachers provide a good range of extra-curricular musical activities.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and social development.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

132. Standards of pupils' work are average in Year 2 and their achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the standards and progress of pupils now in Year 6 because no lessons were time-tabled for them during the inspection. Discussions with Year 6 pupils and the enthusiastic participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school shows that pupils enjoy regular music lessons and respond well to all the elements of music, composing and playing, singing and performing, appreciating and evaluating. A peripatetic teacher provides support and expertise in lessons for younger pupils.

133. Pupils sing tunefully with enjoyment. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils composed their own music using percussion instruments, and recorded their compositions in simple graphical notation, with changes in dynamics shown by larger or smaller circles. They read their notation and played their compositions in time to the piano accompaniment, following the conductor carefully. Instruments were selected, named and played with confidence and regard for the different sounds they made. When the teacher played different tunes on the piano, pupils quickly recognised one as a calypso. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils made satisfactory progress in their listening skills when they listened to a Beethoven symphony, and reflected on how it made them feel, or where they could be. They 'took a pencil for a walk', to express ideas and illustrate the changes in the *tempo* and dynamics of the music.

134. Year 4 pupils enjoyed a visit from an Indian musician. The music and new vocabulary were introduced through a *Bhangra* dance, accompanied by strong, rhythmic drumming. Pupils responded well to the music with clapping, chanting, stamping and mime. However, the behaviour of some pupils limited their progress and response to this exciting activity. Year 5 pupils started a very good lesson with warm-up exercises to prepare their voices, breathing and posture. They showed good ability to create and maintain pulse and rhythm, stood tall and sang well with clear diction. The teacher shared her own knowledge and enthusiasm well, expected high standards and gave pupils the confidence to refine and improve their performance. They used musical vocabulary well, using *ostinato* and *diminuendo* appropriately. By the end of the lesson, they were able to perform *London's Burning* in three parts, accompanying themselves on the xylophone and the glockenspiel.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and a very good lesson was seen in Year 5. Lessons are planned well, and begin with suitable warm-up activities. Pupils regularly experience all the elements of music, and apply their knowledge to appraise the music they hear, for example when they discussed the moods suggested by three very different pieces of music. They work hard and use a good range of musical instruments when composing or accompanying themselves, record their compositions using signs and symbols and look for ways to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory overall progress; however, in some lessons, pupils make limited progress because they are not given sufficient support. The great majority of pupils enjoy all musical activities and behave well in lessons.

136. Music lessons are planned from a nationally recognised scheme of work, suitably adapted to the needs of the school. Outside lessons, pupils may join the thriving choir, or the recorder group. Some have flute or violin lessons from peripatetic teachers. Visitors to school enrich the curriculum, for example the Indian musician, and a jazz group. Pupils often participate in major events, including one at the National Indoor arena in Birmingham, and the recorder group played at the local schools music festival. Music contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils accompany songs in assemblies with a variety of instruments, and have given a concert at a local special school. Year 6 pupils performed a concert of songs they had written about the environment. They learn about composers from Mozart and Beethoven to Enya and Paul McCartney.

137. Music is led and managed well. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The assess and record pupils' progress accurately. The school is well resourced with a range of musical instruments, including electronic keyboards, which are used effectively but information and communication technology is not currently used for composition. Parents support their children's participation in concerts, festivals and after-school musical activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Lessons are well planned.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy the subject.
- Pupils work well together.
- The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Teachers provide a good range of out-of-school activities.
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Areas for improvement

- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively.

138. At the previous inspection, the standards of pupils' work were average in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils made satisfactory progress. Currently, standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection in Year 2 and are again broadly average. These pupils' achievement is satisfactory. No lessons could be seen during the inspection for pupils other than Years 2 and 3, so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards in Year 6.

139. Pupils enjoy all aspects of physical education, and respond by behaving well in lessons. They understand the effect of exercise on their bodies; they can explain the importance of warming up their muscles before exercise, and cooling down afterwards. Teachers remind their pupils to move with regard to others and to use the apparatus safely. Well-established routines ensure the apparatus and equipment are prepared efficiently and safely. Pupils have swimming lessons from Year 2 to Year 6. Records show that the great majority reach expected standards and can swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

140. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils work individually to create and perform a sequence of movements on the floor, then transfer to the apparatus. They build on what they have learned in earlier lessons, and use

this to extend their range of movements, linking their actions well. They move confidently, and show good control of their bodies as they climb, stretch, roll and twist. Year 3 pupils extended their range of movements to create and perform a dance. Boys and girls worked together to produce a series of well-linked robotic movements that they adapted well to lively music. They practised and refined their sequences, using all their body, changing height and varying the speed of their movements well. Their dances showed inventive ideas, and they evaluated their own and each others' performances sensibly, offering useful comments for improvement. In a games lesson, they played competitive team games to improve their hand-eye co-ordination. They made satisfactory progress in their ability to aim small balls into hoops and baskets accurately.

141. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers manage their pupils well and pupils concentrate on their work. Instructions are given clearly so that pupils understand how to improve their skills and knowledge. In the better lessons, there was a good level of challenge, and suitable opportunities for pupils to observe and evaluate their own and each others' work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; however, the teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to support them.

142. Physical education makes a useful contribution to all areas of pupils' personal development. They express feelings and emotions through movement and dance, learn to follow rules and play fairly. They work together in mixed ability groups, and meet pupils from other schools. They learn dances from other cultures, although this area is in the subject action plan for further development. Older pupils use the computer to record the results of their performance.

143. Teachers follow a nationally recognised scheme of work when planning lessons. This ensures pupils meet the full range of physical education activities regularly as they progress through the school. Athletics are planned to the county scheme. A range of activities outside the classroom support and extend pupils' learning and experience, and clubs and practices are well attended. Boys and girls attend football training, and there are also netball, rugby, rounders and cross-country running. There is a dance club for boys and girls from the ages of five to seven and some pupils pay to attend *karate* classes. The school participates in many local matches, tournaments and sports leagues. Older pupils make an annual residential visit during which they explore outdoor activities including canoeing and hill walking.

144. Leadership and management of physical education is satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is monitored each term, and areas found to need further development are included in future lessons. Parents support their children when they attend out-of-school activities. The subject co-ordinator has provided some training for staff, and has had some time out of class to observe and report on the quality of teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths:

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- There are good contributions from assemblies, visits and visitors.
- Good use is made of drama in lessons to help pupils understand the messages for life today.

Areas for improvement:

- Insecure subject knowledge amongst some teachers.

145. Standards of work are average in Years 2 and 6 and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6, with most progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is good enabling a significant proportion of pupils to exceed the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress

in most lessons and good progress when they work with teaching assistants.

146. In Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity, including the main festivals such as Christmas and Easter and of celebrations, such as baptism and weddings, but as yet have little knowledge of other major world faiths. They understand the purpose of places of worship, having visited the local church and are aware of some of the features such as the font and the altar. Much of the work is through discussion, with a strength in the way pupils are encouraged to consider the feelings of others.

147. By Year 6, there is much more depth of study across several major world faiths such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, while maintaining the main focus on Christianity. The good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, enables pupils to make better progress in these years. Pupils compare the similarities and differences between the major world religions and know about the important books for each faith, the key festivals and celebrations. They know the importance of the use of water in different faiths, for example for christenings, and for Muslims to wash before prayer. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Bible and know that the New Testament tells us about the life of Jesus. They can explain the difference between a pilgrim and a missionary.

148. The teaching and learning are good overall but better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 where they are satisfactory. Some of the teachers have an insecure subject knowledge; however, the use of drama in lessons in Years 3 to 6 is effective in helping pupils to understand the messages in the Bible for life today. For example, in a good lesson in Year 3, the pupils acted out the betrayal of Jesus, with the teacher taking the part of Pontius Pilate. By the end of the lesson the pupils knew why Jesus had been arrested and why the decision was taken to free Barabbas and not Jesus. Through discussing how Pontius Pilate must have felt at his dilemma, pupils learn about the importance of making the right decisions in their lives. A very good lesson in Year 6 again used drama, with different groups acting parts of the Easter Story. The group acting out the trial had difficulty in organising themselves but when this was spotted an adult stepped in and helped the pupils. As a result, pupils got to think about how Judas was disillusioned with Jesus and to analyse his motives for betrayal. Pupils made very good progress in their learning because they were taught to appreciate the emotions and highly charged atmosphere of events leading up to the Crucifixion. A very good lesson led Year 5 pupils to understand the thoughts and feelings of other living creatures. Pupils made links to other subjects, for example, science and personal and social development, in terms of respect for God's world. This lesson required pupils to use their literacy skills when accessing Bible readings, such as the Creation from the Book of Genesis. The use of ICT is planned well in lessons, with videos and the Internet being used to find information, for example, about pilgrimages to Lourdes. The local vicar is involved in the teaching in all year groups and this contributes well to pupils' religious understanding.

149. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed, with artefacts made available to support the teaching of major world religions. The co-ordinator monitors standards, planning and teaching, focusing on specific aspects, such as building assessment into the planning. No training has been provided in observing lessons and so some of the monitoring lacks rigour. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Overall progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

¹ The six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

² The early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.