

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **HUTCHINSON MEMORIAL C of E (A) FIRST SCHOOL**

Checkley, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124333

Headteacher: Mrs S Harvey

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Matthews  
RgI's No. 19410

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 248588

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Uttoxeter Road Checkley Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST10 4NB
Telephone number:	01538 722385
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Ardron
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19410	A. C. Matthews	Registered inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11437	T. Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29989	P. Goodsell	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hutchinson Memorial First School is a church-aided school set in a rural community. The pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. The roll has fallen since the last inspection in 1997 but the school is a similar size to other first schools in the area. There are 67 full-time pupils – 36 boys and 31 girls aged between four and nine – and eight part-time children aged four, taught in four classes. All pupils come from white British backgrounds. A very low proportion is eligible for free school meals. Only six pupils are on the special needs register and none has a statement of special educational need. The school had an unusually high mobility rate during the last year, with 11 pupils joining and 12 leaving the school at other than the normal times.

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

Hutchinson Memorial is an effective school with many good features. The headteacher provides good leadership and management and is well supported by a dedicated and hardworking staff. The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress through the school and achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by knowledgeable governors and all staff.
- As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well, have good attitudes to their work and get on well together.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of good quality and leads to a calm, purposeful and positive atmosphere in school in which everyone feels valued.
- Parents have a strong regard for the school and give good support to help their children's education.
- Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class.

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

- The way the school monitors its performance and tracks pupils' progress through the school.
- Teachers' planning to ensure pupils of all abilities are consistently challenged.

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

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

Since the last inspection in October 1997 pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the headteacher have all improved. In relation to the key issues of the last report, the school has improved the curriculum by introducing programmes of learning in each subject and has adopted the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage for children in the Reception class. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved, and computers are used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Subject leaders now play a stronger role in the organisation of the core subject, but do not monitor pupils' progress regularly enough. There have been improvements in pupils' attendance and the opportunities for pupils to work independently in such subjects as ICT and science. Whilst the school development plan outlines appropriate priorities for improvement, timescales are not consistently stated. The results of Year 2 National Curriculum test results are carefully analysed and inform the teachers' yearly planning but the results of other assessment are not used to track pupils' progress through a year to ensure they are achieving appropriately. The school now has a strong team and a good capacity to build on the above improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A*	A	A	B
Writing	A*	A	A	B
Mathematics	B	A	C	E

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

Children's attainment when they start in the Reception class is average. They make good progress in the Reception year because of the well-focused teaching and most will achieve the expected standards by the time they start in Year 1 in all areas except for language and mathematical development where their attainment is higher than that expected nationally. Pupils presently in Years 1 and 2 also make good progress and, by the end of Year 2, have well above average attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science, due to an increase in the proportion of pupils working at the higher levels. The school has set very challenging targets for these Year 2 pupils to achieve in the 2003 National Curriculum tests and evidence from the inspection confirms they are on course to meet these targets. In art, pupils' attainment is higher than national expectations and in all other subjects pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations.

Pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These pupils have very well developed speaking and listening skills and the standard of their reading is good. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in subjects such as science and history and this experience helps them to develop their writing, spelling and grammar further. Pupils are developing good skills in their science investigation work. The quality of pupils' art work is good and is carefully displayed around the school. Although pupils' attainment in ICT is average, pupils use computers well to support their work in subjects such as literacy, numeracy, science and geography. Pupils sing well and this enriches occasions like school assemblies. Pupils' attainment in all other subjects is in line with national expectations, except for physical education where pupils have above average swimming skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their individual targets. Higher-ability pupils are usually well challenged and achieve well, although their progress is sometimes restricted by the use of unchallenging worksheets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good at all times.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have good relationships with each other, and show increasing confidence as they become older.
Attendance	Very good, with pupils arriving promptly for school.

The strong relationships through the school create a caring and supportive atmosphere. The wide range of extra-curricular activities further develops these relationships.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and this relates closely to the good progress that pupils make as they move through the school. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in science, art, swimming and ICT and achieve well in these subjects. During the inspection, a significant proportion of good teaching was observed in all classes, resulting in pupils being well challenged overall, and enthusiastic about their learning. English and mathematics, including the skills of literacy and numeracy, are taught well through the school and help pupils to achieve good standards by the end of Year 4. A clear strength of the teaching is the capable management of pupils' behaviour in the classroom, allied to the teachers' good subject knowledge. The most important area for development is the more discriminating use of worksheets to ensure that the work builds effectively on pupils' previous learning and pupils of all abilities are effectively and consistently challenged. Teachers' marking of work is thorough and very good in English in Year 2, where it leads directly to improvements in pupils' work. However, not all marking clearly informs pupils what they need to do to improve. Homework is set regularly and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and particularly their reading.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets all statutory requirements and gives good support to the school's aims. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported and make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social skills and to take responsibility for helping in the life and work of the school. The development of pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is a comparative weakness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are unsatisfactory and, as a result, the school does not have enough information to track pupils' progress accurately through each year.

The school has good links with parents who play an important role in the life of the school. Parents receive good quality information from the school and give good support to their children's learning, both at home and in school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and management and is well supported by all staff who are committed to raising standards further. The role of subject leaders in maintaining and improving the quality of work in their area is not well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their expertise could be used even more in helping the school to evaluate developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is carried out regularly but does not clearly indicate to staff how they can be even more effective. The school does not assess pupils' progress regularly enough to ensure they are achieving appropriate standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its budget carefully to improve its resources and accommodation. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily overall but well in its consultation with parents, when buying resources and in its provision for extra-curricular activities.

Staffing is well matched to the needs of the curriculum and good use is made of teachers' expertise in some subjects. Resources for learning are good, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has maintained a much higher than average carry-forward in its budget to maintain small class sizes during a time of falling rolls. This carry-forward will enable the school to maintain the present staffing structure for one further year before it reconsiders its staffing options. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the outside play area for the Reception children and in the pupils' toilet areas.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's enjoyment of school.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching and the good progress that children make.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the headteacher.</li> <li>• The good range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Children's behaviour.</li> <li>• The improvements since the last inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework provision.</li> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• The approachability of the school.</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents.</li> <li>• Reading books going home with Year 1 pupils.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse parents' positive views but do not share parents' concerns about homework provision, the school's approachability and the way it encourages parents to help in its work, which they feel are at least satisfactory. Inspectors also felt that information about children's progress was adequate, but did agree that it was in the interests of all parties to resolve the issue of Year 1 pupils being allowed to take home their school reading books. The school does not have school uniform and some parents are keen for the school to review its policy.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Although they have a full range of attainment, baseline assessment shows that the majority of children are of average attainment on entry to the Reception class. The good teaching means that the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and this reflects a noticeable improvement since the last inspection. By the time they begin in Year 1, the great majority of the children make good progress and reach the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. About half of the children exceed the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
2. At the time of the last inspection in October 1997, standards of attainment were average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 4. Since then, standards have fluctuated at the end of Year 2 according to the prior attainment of the intake but overall, the school's national test results have improved faster than the national average. In 2002 the school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 was well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, attainment was above average in reading and writing but well below average in mathematics. The principal reason for the weakness in mathematics was the below average proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. There is no comparative data for Year 4 pupils. However, inspectors found that the measures adopted by the school, especially the policy of maintaining small class sizes is having a positive impact on standards in both Year 2 and Year 4. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards of the present Year 2 pupils are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, with an increased proportion of pupils working at the higher levels, particularly in writing, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. The disparity between the attainments of these two groups is explained by the variation in pupils' attainment when they started school. The good quality leadership and the clear focus of the school on improving attainment, indicates that the school has the capacity to sustain the recent improvements over the coming years.
3. However, the school's main task in maintaining the high standards seen during the inspection, is made more difficult by the recent high level of pupil mobility that it has experienced. For example, a significant proportion of the higher-achieving pupils who were in last year's Year 2 cohort, have since left the school and this has changed noticeably the attainment characteristics of this group. The other factor that will have an impact within the next year is the school's falling roll, which will necessitate a cut in staffing and a rise in the number of pupils in each class. At present, many pupils are taught in single age classes and their learning benefits from the individual attention they receive. To maintain the same standards with two

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<sup>1</sup> *Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in six areas - communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.*

age groups in each class is a challenge that the school must plan for carefully to ensure its present standards are maintained.

4. Standards in other subjects are in line with national expectations, apart from art and design where standards are consistently above them. In information and communication technology (ICT), although standards are in line with national expectations, pupils make consistently good progress. Specialist teaching by the co-ordinators enhances pupils' progress in both of these subjects. Since the last inspection, there have also been improvements in pupils' attainment in swimming. Standards have been maintained in all other subjects.
5. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls. In the last three years, boys in Year 2 have been consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls, however, while being ahead in reading and writing, have been below average in mathematics. Evidence from the inspection, shows that this year there is little significant difference between the genders. The absence of a clear pattern from year to year and the consistency of approach to learning throughout the school, indicate the need to continue to monitor the differences carefully to ensure all pupils achieve appropriately.
6. There are a small number of pupils with special educational needs but all make good progress towards the targets set for them. Pupils receive good support from home and from their teachers. Some pupils also benefit from a visiting specialist teacher who, through using a good range of teaching methods and effective use of a computer program, successfully reinforces pupils' learning. These pupils also benefit from small class groups where their specific needs are well addressed by their teachers. The higher achieving pupils are generally well challenged through the school and attain above standards. Occasionally, some work is set that is not sufficiently challenging and when this occurs these pupils make unsatisfactory progress. The gifted and talented pupils achieve appropriately.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and their attendance is very good. Most pupils are keen and eager to come to school and they display consistently good attitudes to their work and to their fellow pupils and teachers. They arrive at school at the start of the day with a look of eager anticipation. In lessons, most pupils show a good willingness to listen and, particularly when the teaching is good, they demonstrate a keen interest and involvement in activities. This was evident in a Year 1/ 2 music lesson in which pupils showed significant involvement in the challenging lesson to compose a short piece of music to depict the strength of the sea.
8. The behaviour of pupils in the school is good and in some cases, for example, on the playing field at lunchtime, it is very good. Pupils also behave well when eating their lunch and they demonstrate a friendly and courteous appreciation for all staff as well as to the school's many visitors. There have been no recent exclusions from the school. A good example of positive attitudes and behaviour was seen in a whole school assembly which was used most effectively to enhance pupils' understanding and appreciation of the importance of water in their everyday lives.
9. Pupils are provided with a range of responsibilities around the school designed to enhance their personal development and to develop positive relationships. Older pupils prepare the school hall for assemblies and select pieces of music to be played as pupils enter the hall. During one such assembly, several pupils read out thought-provoking and well-constructed poems and stories related to the theme of water. Older pupils are encouraged to look after younger ones and pupils demonstrate a keen willingness to help teachers in the classroom, such as with

handing out resources and collecting books at the end of a lesson. Pupils demonstrate good relationships in the way they work and play together and in the way they show due regard to their teachers and other adults in the school.

10. Official returns for the last school year show that attendance at the school has improved considerably since the last inspection and is well above the national average. There is little evidence of pupil lateness and lessons start on time. School registers are correctly filled in at the start of both sessions. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance are a significant strength of the school and have a positive impact on their progress.
11. The arrangements for children starting in the Reception class are good with the result that they come into school happily and confidently. They quickly learn the routines of the classrooms, for example, putting their reading folders away and organising their coats and physical education kit. The children behave very well in the Reception class. The children enjoy learning, concentrate well and persevere to complete the tasks that are set by the teachers. They play and learn well, both alongside one another and increasingly together. The children are encouraged to take care of their own and the school's belongings and to put away equipment and tidy up after themselves. There is a good balance between activities that are directed by teachers and teaching assistants and those that the children choose for themselves. This gives them good opportunities to become independent learners and has a positive impact on their progress.
12. The pupils with special educational needs are included in and encouraged to take part in all aspects of learning activities. They have very good relationships with the adults who support them both when they are working individually and in small groups. Other pupils are helpful, kind and supportive to pupils with special educational needs and include them in all their activities when playing and learning.

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

13. Overall the quality of teaching is good and this leads directly to pupils making good progress as they move through the school. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement, particularly in the reduction of unsatisfactory teaching which, during the present inspection, represented a very small proportion of the lessons seen. The improving quality of teaching is spurred on by the increasing use of teachers' specialisms and the school's determination to maintain small class sizes. There are consistent and characteristic strengths of teaching across the school and across subjects. Identifiable strengths are the capable management of the pupils, which leads to them behaving well and working hard. Teachers use questioning well and the good relationships in the school encourage pupils to try hard and want to do their best. The main area for development is to ensure a more consistent selection of tasks to match pupils' needs and the more effective use of marking to provide guidance for improvement. In many lessons observed, the main task was for pupils to complete a worksheet. These do not consistently challenge the wide range of ability in each class and are also restricting the development of pupils' writing and handwriting skills. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly but do not consistently identify areas where pupils needed to improve. The best marking was seen in the work of Year 2 pupils, where the teacher's comments lead directly to improvements in the pupils' work. Teachers make good use of ICT across the curriculum because their skills have been improved considerably since the last inspection and they are developing a good understanding of how the subject can support pupils' learning in other subjects. Generally teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good, as is the effective way in which they use the experienced support staff and the wide range of resources. Overall teachers make satisfactory use of homework to support learning in the

classroom. The exception is in pupils' reading, where parents' support is an integral part of their children's good progress in this area.

14. The consistently good quality of the teaching in the Reception class enables the children to make a good start to school, to make good progress and to achieve well. The teaching has a number of strengths, including the good use of questions and talk to promote and challenge the pupils' thinking and communication skills. The class is well organised and the children are very well managed. Very good use is made of the classroom assistant who effectively supports individual and group activities. The teacher and her assistant provide a good number of productive learning activities both indoors and outdoors and plan carefully for all six areas of learning.
15. English and mathematics, including the skills of literacy and numeracy, are taught well overall. On the few occasions that pupils' learning is not as good as it should be, work is not matched carefully enough to pupils' needs in order to challenge them sufficiently and help them achieve at the appropriate level. Most teachers have high expectations and usually set work that is challenging for all levels. However, the mathematics scheme is based on work sheets and sometimes these do not provide sufficient challenge for the higher-achieving pupils who do not make the progress of which they are capable. The pace in lessons is brisk, with teachers using questioning well and displaying good levels of enthusiasm, enabling pupils to make good gains in their learning. The introduction to lessons is effective because pupils are clearly informed about what they are going to learn and the expectations of the teacher. In the best lessons, these objectives are revisited at the end of the lesson, where the pupils' skills are consolidated and extended. The progress of the older pupils is sometimes restricted in literacy because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the skills they have developed through grammar, vocabulary and spelling exercises in their extended writing. Also the expectations of the teachers of the older pupils are not consistently high and occasionally careless spelling and untidy presentation are not commented on and pupils are confused about where or how they should improve their work. The regrouping of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons this term is working well, with high expectations of the teacher clearly influencing the standards of pupils' work. The teaching of the Year 3 pupils for these two subjects by a part-time teacher for the Christmas and spring terms was well intentioned as these pupils' results had not been as high in Year 2 as that of past Year 2 groups. However, the impact of the teaching on this group did not result in the pupils significantly improving their attainment in these two areas. The great majority of lessons observed during the inspection were managed effectively, with pupils' interests being well maintained. Teachers use pupils' well-developed speaking and listening skills productively during class discussions. Pupils listen very well to each other's responses and also benefit from their teachers reinterpreting answers so that all pupils in the class benefit from these contributions.
16. Art and design and ICT are taught well and design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are taught satisfactorily. The only exception is in swimming where pupils benefit from the input of experienced swimming teachers and achieve good and often very good standards.
17. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the visiting teacher and classroom assistants who are well deployed. Class teachers have a number of targets identified for each of the pupils to work towards. One is specifically worked on at home and one within the pupils' classes. The pupils who work with the visiting teacher each have a period of individual attention when they are withdrawn from their class. This time is used effectively because the teacher plans the work very thoroughly and utilises a good range of teaching methods, including the use of a computer program to reinforce the learning taking

place. The pupils work in small class groups in literacy and numeracy and this enables their specific needs to be well addressed by their class teachers. All these features contribute to the consistently good progress made by these pupils. The school could now usefully consider in-service training so that all the teachers develop expertise themselves in writing the individual education plans for these pupils.

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

18. The last inspection identified a number of key issues relating to curriculum provision. Overall these have been well addressed. The school now has schemes of work for all subjects that give a broad coverage of the National Curriculum and which ensure all statutory requirements are met. Provision for the children who are in the Foundation Stage has been greatly improved and is now a strength of the school. Good use is made of teachers' expertise in art and design, music, science and ICT when they teach these subjects to all infant and junior classes. All of the pupils make good progress and reach good standards in English, mathematics, science and art because the learning experiences are carefully planned. The school gives a high priority to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by making good use of the opportunities provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Overall, the school has a good quality and range of learning opportunities, including extra-curricular activities which are well enhanced by a good range of educational visits out of school and visitors to the school. All the pupils are fully included in all areas of the curriculum and there is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has very good relationships with its partner institutions and they, together with the wider community, make a very positive and supportive contribution to the pupils' learning.
19. There remain some areas for improvement in the curriculum. For example, in some subjects there are too few occasions for pupils to develop their independence in learning because too many worksheets are used and these often restrict the responses of the higher-attaining pupils. The linking of ongoing assessments to the planning of the curriculum is a weakness. The school has yet to develop a tracking system for individual pupils that ensures that pupils are making appropriate progress through each year towards the targets set for them. There are good informal opportunities for pupils to express their opinions about improvements to the life of the school but no forum such as a School Council has yet been established. However, the school does take into account the views of pupils, for example, following comments made by pupils, the recent refurbishment of the older pupils' toilets by the headteacher has proved most successful and popular.
20. The provision for the curriculum in the Reception class is good and the children make a good start to school. The planned curriculum fully takes into account the Early Learning Goals for Reception children and the teacher plans literacy and numeracy activities that prepare the children well for their transfer to Year 1 and the National Curriculum. Good use is made of the outdoor play area that has been developed since the last inspection. It is well organised and has a good range of play opportunities that enable the children to link outdoor play to their well-planned learning activities. The classroom assistant gives good quality support and this makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by these children.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress. The pupils are taught in small class groups for literacy and numeracy and are usually withdrawn once a week to work individually with a specialist teacher. The teacher has a number of targets identified for each of the pupils to work towards. These strategies work well to support all the pupils experiencing learning difficulties. However, individual education plans have only recently been adopted and they now need to be refined. Although they have

appropriate areas for improvement set, it is not always clear how these will be carried out and by whom. In addition, the plans are long term and smaller steps need to be identified towards the targets set.

22. The good range of educational visits and visitors to the school has a positive and constructive effect on the pupils' learning. Events are often linked to the topics being studied, such as when the older pupils visited Uttoxeter as part of their history and geography topic. The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by visitors to the school. These include parents, governors, local clergy and friends of the school, for example, a retired policeman who talks to the pupils about aspects of keeping safe. Together with the good use of the teachers' talents and those of other adults who work in the school, the pupils experience a wide range of learning experiences that contribute significantly to their overall development as individuals and members of the community. There is a very good number of out of school clubs for sports and other activities. These are organised mainly by the teachers with some help from parents. Enthusiastic members of the gardening club are engaged in a range of gardening and nature activities that are enhancing and improving the school grounds. Also enjoyed and well attended are the music and ICT clubs. Parents come into school every week to operate the library enabling pupils to exchange their books regularly. Some pupils benefit from instrumental tuition provided at parents' expense.
23. The school has good arrangements for the personal, social and health education of the pupils. This includes provision for education about the use and misuse of drugs such as medicines and smoking. Good use is made for example of the 'Life Caravan', which provides a range of activities suited to the different age groups in the school. The school includes topics on healthy eating, the care of teeth and elements of sex education as part of the science curriculum. The personal development of pupils is enhanced by opportunities to show initiative and develop responsibility and concern for others. The school supports a large number of charities through events that are often suggested and organised by the older pupils.
24. The school has very effective links with the local community and this make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Good relationships are enjoyed with local churches and clergy; this enhances the pupils' understanding of Christianity and the church year. The school has links with the local industries and is supported by the community at many social and educational events. It welcomes members of the community into the school to provide opportunities to enhance the learning experiences of the pupils. For example, the school has maintained close contact with an elderly lady who attended the school over 90 years ago and who has shared her memories with the children as part of their history topic. Partnerships and links with the cluster and middle schools are very good, and effective arrangements assist the smooth transfer of the pupils to their new schools at the end of Year 4.
25. The good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. All the staff work hard to develop the pupils' self-esteem and promote the good relationships seen; as a result, the pupils enjoy their learning, are confident and happy in school and feel part of a living community. Spiritual development is promoted well throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and acts of worship and the school makes good use of the teachings of Christianity, to support its provision. Assemblies in particular show how the pupils' efforts in school and in outside activities are valued and appreciated. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon the spiritual dimensions of life; musical and artistic ways of looking at feelings are explored, and the pupils are given good opportunities to value their individuality. They show respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs and the relationships between adults and pupils are good. The pupils are encouraged to look for beauty in their surroundings and spontaneously and naturally remark on such things as the beauty of flowers and the stream of light that emanates from a torch switched on in a darkened room.

26. The school teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong and promotes and fosters values such as honesty and fairness; the adults in the school provide good role models for the pupils. The teachers make the pupils aware of the expectations of a code of positive behaviour. The pupils have opportunities in lessons to work together co-operatively and to compete fairly, and they treat one another with courtesy and respect. The school values the suggestions put forward by pupils for the shared responsibility of improving the school and its surroundings although it has not yet established a school council. The size of the school means that children of different ages know each other well. The older pupils set a good example for the younger ones in their behaviour and mature approach to work. Joint activities enable the pupils to build relationships with members of the other classes. Pupils are meaningfully involved in the large number of charities the school supports. This work has a positive impact on the pupils' personal development, enabling them to learn about and support the needs of people in situations that are less favourable than their own. A good example of this is the on-going support given by the school to a child in a village in Kenya.
27. The school works well to promote the pupils' knowledge of their own culture. The pupils learn about artists and art forms, such as the work of Andy Goldsworthy and Ken Done. They have opportunities to listen to range of music. In literacy sessions, the pupils hear poetry and prose and are encouraged to begin to appreciate the rhythm of language and ways in which it is used to promote ideas, feelings and emotions. The opportunities for the pupils to learn about living in a culturally diverse society and to consider aspects of cultures not represented in the school are more limited, and this is an aspect of the curriculum that is underdeveloped. However, there is some good work being undertaken. This was evident in inspectors' interviews with pupils in which they demonstrated a mature knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Martin Luther King. Having used the Internet to find information about him, they listened to his most famous speech and discovered some of the major happenings in his life. They explained how shocked they had been to find out how he had challenged segregation in America, and they were adamant that "it doesn't matter what colour your skin is" as all people should be treated the same, regardless of their backgrounds.

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

28. At the time of the previous inspection the school was given a key issue 'to ensure that assessment is judged against National Curriculum levels and is used to inform curriculum planning'. This has been only satisfactorily addressed. The teachers know the pupils well and group them correctly for literacy and numeracy lessons. They have worked collaboratively on grading and matching writing against National Curriculum requirements. The school has recently introduced the standardised optional national tests for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. The school is making a useful analysis of these and the Year 2 National Curriculum assessment test papers and is using the information to identify the areas where improvement is needed in teaching and learning. In the end of year reports for parents targets are set for the pupils for the following year. The school has rightly been concerned about the drop in standards in last year's Year 2 National Curriculum test results and as a result is working more closely with parents in this area. At the beginning of this school year the parents received details of the mathematics their children would be covering for the next three terms so that they could take a personal interest in their progress and support when appropriate. This has worked well, and attainment in mathematics is now equal to pupils' attainment in English and science.
29. The school has only very recently begun to track individual pupils' progress but does not yet set targets for the level of attainment that the pupils should achieve by the end of each year. For example, in mathematics the analysis has shown which work has not been previously covered and the teachers are now working to cover these omissions. However, the

information that is gathered is not yet being fully used to ensure work planned for the pupils ensures they make the optimum progress through each academic year. A start has been made in setting individual targets for pupils in English and in making the pupils and parents aware of these targets. However, these targets are not readily available for the pupils when they are working in lessons to remind them what they are aiming for. In addition, although the pupils' work is marked regularly and positive comments are often made, the marking does not consistently identify to the pupils what they need to do next to meet these targets. However, there is very good practice in the teacher's marking of English in Year 2 and this is having a pronounced impact on these pupils' progress. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, assessment systems are underdeveloped and do not yet identify the progress pupils are making in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding in the different subject areas.

30. The pupils with special educational needs receive committed support from the visiting teacher, class teachers and classroom assistants within the school. The adults all know the pupils well and work hard to help the pupils achieve success. There are good procedures for the initial identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and satisfactory ones for the assessment of their on-going progress. The arrangements to make use of support from external agencies, such as the local education authority Support Service Team and the educational psychology service, are effective.
31. Soon after entry into the Reception class, a baseline assessment is carried out and the information is used to identify areas for development with individual and groups of children. The teacher's satisfactory arrangements check how well all the children are learning on a daily basis and whether they are making enough progress. The information gained from assessing the children is used to group them and to plan further work. The children with special educational needs are well identified at an early stage and good support is given to them. These features enable them to take a full part in the activities planned for the Reception class and for them to make good progress.
32. In the Reception class, the start to the day is calm, positive and well organised and the children come into school happily and confidently. The arrangements for the day-to-day exchange of information between parents, carers and the school staff are effective. At the end of the day, the children are given into the care of the known adult who is collecting them. The teacher monitors and supports the personal development of the children well. The teacher and classroom assistant have a very good knowledge of each child and establish very good relationships with them. This encourages the children to work hard and to behave very well.
33. The procedures for child protection and welfare are good. Those for the monitoring and promotion of attendance are very good and for behaviour they are good. Child protection procedures are effective. The school teaching staff, who are well supported by a range of support staff, provide a high level of welfare support and guidance to individual pupils. The day-to-day pastoral provision for children at the school is of a high order and appropriate records are maintained of all accidents to children. Parents are quickly and efficiently informed of all injuries to the head. The school carries out regular health and safety audits of the site and the few minor problems that came to light during the inspection are already receiving prompt remedial action by the school. This school is very inclusive in its promotion of equality of opportunities for all pupils at the school.
34. The school is significantly proactive in the monitoring of individual levels of pupil absence and the outcome can be seen in the very high levels of pupil attendance at the school. Much effort is made to promote this high attendance at the school and parents are discouraged from taking their children out of school for holidays during the school term. External support agencies provide a good level of support to the school in monitoring and promoting its attendance.

35. Although a very tiny minority of pupils at the school demonstrate occasional challenging behaviour, the school has introduced effective systems for the monitoring and control of any such patterns of behaviour. In a very small number of cases, children have Individual Education Plans linked to their behaviour management. The school gives a high priority to the monitoring and promotion of positive behaviour and the outcomes of its work are seen in the calm atmosphere in the classrooms. Teachers know their pupils very well, have high expectations, and act as very positive role models for children to follow. As a result, levels of disruption are kept to the very minimum and have very little impact on learning in the classrooms.
36. Pupils are provided with several opportunities to enhance their own personal development and this has a positive impact on their self-esteem. Although the school monitors children's progress in this area and offers targets for improvement, discussions with some pupils suggested that they were not fully aware as to the main areas on which they needed to concentrate to secure continued improvement.

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

37. Parents' views of the school are good, as are the school's links with parents. The parents' meeting with the inspectors was moderately well attended and the parental questionnaire was returned by around 40 per cent of the parents. Based on this return and the notes taken at the parents' meeting, the majority of parents are supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and are making good progress. However, a significant minority of parents felt that their children did not receive the right amount of homework and that they were not kept well informed about how their children were getting on. A less significant minority felt that the school was not always approachable with any concerns and that it did not work closely with parents. One such concern involved the school's policy of not having a school uniform. Although this is clearly a matter for the school and the governing body, the inspection team did note some pupils who were not suitably dressed for school and presented a possible health hazard. For example, some girls wore strapped sundresses that gave little protection against the hot sunny weather during the inspection week.
38. The information provided by the school through the prospectus and via the annual governors' report to parents is good. Information provided to parents via regular newsletters is also of a good standard and informative. The pupils' annual reports to parents are satisfactory although they lack sufficient detail in the core subjects. The reports do include, however, brief target areas for improvement and a note of each child's attendance record at the school.
39. A majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement designed to promote effective relationships and links between the school and parents for the education of the pupils. Parental support for their children's education at home and at school is good and this has a positive impact on the level of learning by many pupils. Homework is provided to enhance pupils' learning and although some of the interviewed pupils were not particularly enthusiastic about homework, most of them appreciated that it did help their learning. The active Parent-Teacher-Friends Association plays a significant role in fundraising and providing additional support to the work of the school.
40. Discussions with some parents and grandparents during the inspection confirmed the largely positive views of the school's work and several discussions with pupils further supported the

good relationships between the school, parents and children. Parents give very good support to major social events and celebrations such as Christmas. The school's strong partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and is a strength of the school.

41. Good arrangements introduce Reception children to the school. These include the children visiting the classes and meetings for parents before their child starts school. In order to form early links with the children, the school could usefully consider extending the 'welcome pack' to include items that give the teachers more information about the children, such as their likes and dislikes. The children take books home on a daily basis and this makes a good contribution to their progress in learning to read. The school builds good partnerships with the parents and carers of the pupils with special educational needs. The parents are kept informed as to the targets set for their children and are given useful suggestions about how they can help their children at home. This effective liaison between home and school helps these pupils to make the good progress seen.

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

42. The headteacher provides good leadership and management and is ably assisted and supported by a hardworking staff and supportive and knowledgeable governors. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and much of this is due to the headteacher's vision and determination to improve standards. She is keenly aware of her own strengths and uses the skills of others to good effect. All the staff in school work very well as a team. Collectively they have a good combination of skills and, as such, provide a strong team that has a good capacity to build further on the improvements that have been made. The quality of leadership and management in the school has improved since the last inspection.
43. The governors have improved in many aspects of their work and now provide good leadership in helping the school to move forward. The linking of governors to an individual subject has made them more keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. Particularly effective is the way that the literacy co-ordinator has done three classroom observations with the literacy governor. The knowledge is shared with the full governing body, which is now in a stronger position to challenge the headteacher on aspects of the school's work. The governors work closely with the school, particularly in the monitoring of the school budget. The budget carry forward has been kept significantly high during the last three years to enable the school to maintain its high pupil teacher ratio, despite falling rolls. The carry forward from the present financial year is well within the expected limits and will not be sufficient to maintain the present staffing for a further academic year. The governing body is aware of this and is working closely with the local education authority in addressing this issue.
44. The school has made good overall progress since the last inspection. In relation to the key issues the last time the school was inspected in October 1997, the school has improved the curriculum by introducing programmes of learning in each subject and has adopted the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage for children in the Reception class. Attainment is now in line with national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT), and computers are used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Subject leaders for the English, mathematics and science now play a stronger role in the organisation of their subject, but do not monitor pupils' progress regularly enough. Pupils' attendance has improved considerably and there are now planned opportunities for them to work independently in such subjects as ICT and science. Whilst the school development plan now clearly outlines appropriate priorities for improvement, timescales are not clearly stated. The results of pupils' assessments now inform the teachers' yearly planning. In other areas there have been improvements in pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the headteacher.

45. The school aims are highly appropriate, reflect strong Christian values and are well incorporated into the school's daily life. It is successful in creating a happy and secure environment in which pupils develop confidence and individuality, and achieve their full potential academically, morally, socially and spiritually. The development of a positive self-image, the raising of standards, and the ability for pupils to work independently and co-operatively are constantly reflected in the life of the school and its planned future developments. As a result, the school has a very happy, disciplined and purposeful atmosphere where all pupils are valued and fully included in all its activities.
46. The school has good procedures for drawing up its school development plan. Consultation with parents, through a questionnaire, governors and staff ensures that the priorities are appropriate for the school. Finance is appropriately allocated. However, timescales are not clearly identified and greater use could be made of the expertise of governors to help the school to evaluate its developments. Despite these comparative weaknesses, the development plans of the past have been instrumental in addressing the key issues and have led to improvements in English, mathematics and science.
47. The school's main priority for development is to improve the rigour with which it monitors its performance and evaluates the progress of the pupils. At present, the headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching in the classrooms. However, the monitoring does not consistently make teachers aware of areas on which they need to focus to improve their practice. As a result, its impact is unsatisfactory. Similarly there are weaknesses in the way in which the school evaluates pupils' progress. The annual assessments that pupils undertake are carefully analysed and changes made to future learning experiences to address the weaknesses. However, this does not guarantee that individual pupils will make the progress of which they are capable. The school is aware that it needs to assess pupils' progress more regularly through the year, particularly in an area such as writing which is at present a school priority. This will enable the school to identify pupils whose progress is giving cause for concern and allow the school to devise strategies to address the weaknesses of these pupils during the year.
48. The number of teaching staff is larger than average for a school of this size. The school has a deliberate policy of supporting small classes and also using the expertise of teachers to teach more than one age group. As a result five teachers, each bringing different skills to the pupils' learning, teach pupils in the class for the oldest pupils. Classroom support staff are well deployed to support the school's aims of quality provision for all pupils. The mid-day staff contribute significantly to pupils' very good table manners and the calm atmosphere of the lunch time period. The school secretary plays a significant part in ensuring all aspects of school administration and finance are well managed.
49. The teacher in charge of the Reception children is newly qualified and has been very well supported by the headteacher in her first year of teaching. She has a good understanding of the needs of the children and of how to provide a curriculum that meets these needs. She works very well together with her classroom assistant to provide activities that challenge the children and stimulate their interest in learning. At the time of the last inspection a key issue was to develop a secure outside play area and plan activities that ensured the development of the creative and physical skills of the children. This has been well addressed and overall the classroom, practical and outside areas provide good facilities to support learning in the Reception class. The school accommodation is satisfactory and pupils benefit from a good size playground and playing field. The new caretaker works hard to keep the building in a clean and orderly condition. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but are good in English, mathematics and art and design.

50. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator. She ensures that special educational needs provision in the school is well organised and that all statutory requirements for special educational provision are in place. The governing body is supportive of the work done with the pupils with special educational needs and is well informed about how it is carried out by the school. The school makes good use of its specific grant, particularly in the way that pupils with special educational needs are supported through the school. The school gives satisfactory consideration to the principles of best value through the work of the headteacher, the governing body and the school secretary. It carefully considers its pupils' attainment in comparison to other schools, has an open channel to parents and shows good regard to competition by ensuring that all purchases are competitively priced.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to improve the standards of attainment and the quality of education even further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
1. Improve the monitoring and evaluation of its provision and the assessment of the pupils' and the school's performance by:
    - Ensuring teachers clearly understand their strengths and what they need to do to be even more effective;
    - Creating regular time for co-ordinators to monitor the learning and standards in their subjects and implement strategies for improvement where necessary;
    - Developing methods of tracking pupils' progress through the school
    - Setting appropriate targets for individual pupils of all abilities to achieve by the end of each year
    - Developing succinct record keeping systems to record relevant elements of individual pupils' progress.  
(Paragraphs 47, 29, 74, 77, 89, 93, 99, 102, 105, 109)
  2. Improve significant aspects of teaching and learning in some classes by:
    - Identifying and sharing the best teaching practice in the school;
    - Always selecting work to match the full range of abilities in the class
    - Using worksheets with more discrimination;
    - Ensuring that marking always provides guidance on how the pupils can progress.  
(Paragraphs 13, 15, 47, 69, 70, 79)

In addition the school may wish to include these minor issues in future development plans:

Create more opportunities for children in the Reception class and Years 3 and 4 to develop their writing. ( Paragraphs 59, 69, 70)

Ensure targets on pupils' individual education plans are planned for a shorter timescale, and clearly identify personnel and relevant support activities. (Paragraph 21)

Set short-term reading targets in pupils' reading diaries to guide parents when they hear their children read at home. Paragraph 74)

Extend the range of pupils' multi-cultural experiences. (Paragraph 27)

Ensure timescales are clearly stated for all initiatives in the school development plan. (Paragraph 46)

Ensure pupils' handwriting style is maintained in all subject areas. (Paragraph 71)

Plan a greater use of drama in literacy lessons. (Paragraph 67)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	20	5	1	0	0
Percentage	0	0	77	19	4	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 four percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR- Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	71
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR - Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0
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)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	8	16

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (100)	100 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	71	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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.5
Average class size	17.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	209,720
Total expenditure	195,168
Expenditure per pupil	2,502

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### **Percentage of responses in each category 32%**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	50	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	59	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	50	17	0	0
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	62	21	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	29	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	46	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	59	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	38	54	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	59	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	29	4	0	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**

52. Children are admitted to the Reception class on a full time basis in the September of the year in which they are five years old. A small number of children join before that on a part-time basis in the Easter or summer terms after their fourth birthdays. At the time of the inspection there were eight children attending on a part time basis, and thirteen attending full time. Almost all of the children joining the school in the Reception year have had the benefit of playgroup or nursery experience. Baseline assessments, which are undertaken within the first six weeks in the Reception class, show attainment on entry to be in line with expectations for children of this age. The teacher's planning is good and takes account of the Early Learning Goals identified for children of this age. Satisfactory records are kept of the children's progress over time. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and the well focused support they receive enables them to achieve well. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has created a discrete outdoor area, adjacent to the Reception classroom. This allows the children extended play activities when the weather is fine, but the planned learning experiences are restricted when it is wet.
53. Staffing levels are favourable overall. The teacher and classroom assistant work hard to ensure the needs of all the children are met. As a result, the children are eager to take part in the good range of activities that are provided for them. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good for children of all ages and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The classroom assistant makes a valuable contribution to the children's learning in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development so that by the time they join Year 1, a significant proportion of children exceed the Early Learning Goals in these two areas. In all other areas of learning, children achieve the expected standards.

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

55. Although there is a range of attainment, the majority of children enter the Reception class with average personal, social and emotional development. The children make good progress whilst in the Reception class with most of them achieving what is expected by the time they start in Year 1 and some exceeding the Early Learning Goals in this area. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, the adults who work in the Reception class ensure that the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and, as a result, they quickly develop positive attitudes to learning.
56. The teacher has high expectations of the children's behaviour and ability to take care of themselves. The children are confident and independent when taking care of their personal hygiene and are increasingly so when dressing and undressing, needing only occasional help with fasteners. The children's personal and social skills are developed well because they are provided with opportunities to work together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. They persevere with tasks and behave very well. There are very good relationships between the two adults who work in the Reception class and the children. The children are gaining confidence in speaking to adults. They respond well to questions and try hard to think things through for themselves because there is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and of children-chosen activities. There are good opportunities for the children to develop independence and self-reliance; for example when they need a new reading book, they are able to select the correct one independently.

## **Communication, Language and Literacy**

57. When the children enter the Reception class there is a range of attainment but the majority of children have average language skills. The teaching in this area is good with some significant strengths. These are particularly evident in sessions to foster speaking and listening skills and in the teaching of reading. Overall the children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception year, the proportion of the children who achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy is above average. A significant number of children exceed the Early Learning Goals and are beginning to work within the first level of the National Curriculum.
58. The children enjoy listening to, and reading, stories and information books. They concentrate well in literacy sessions and overall the basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are taught effectively in a good variety of ways. The children have good listening and speaking skills and use these well when communicating with their teachers and other adults in individual and group discussions. The children respond well to stories such as 'How Billy Duck learnt to swim' because the teacher gives the children opportunities to talk about the characters in stories and explain how they feel about events.
59. The teacher develops and builds the children's early reading skills well through the sharing of books and stories and the good teaching of phonic skills. The majority of the children know the individual letters of the alphabet by sound and the more able ones recognise rhyming words sound patterns. The children recognise, read and by the end of the Reception year can write their names. They know a good range of words by sight and some use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. The teaching of reading is approached systematically and this enables the children to make good progress in learning to read. However, the book corner in the classroom is not an inviting or stimulating area and the children rarely choose to read in the corner during free-choice sessions. The children take reading books home to share with parents and carers and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement and their attitudes to books.
60. Whilst in the Reception classes, the children acquire a satisfactory understanding of the writing process, they hold pencils correctly and are taught the correct way to form letters. There are opportunities provided for the children to encourage them to write for a variety of purposes although informal ones are more limited. However, on too many occasions in writing sessions, the children copy what the teacher has written and opportunities for children to develop their own independent writing skills are missed. This results in a slowing of progress in these skills. In addition, there are insufficient alphabet and word charts displayed near to the writing table to encourage the children to link letters and sounds, and write words themselves.

## **Mathematical development**

61. The children enter the school with overall average skills in mathematical development. The teaching is consistently good and this enables the children to make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding and skills. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of the children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and a significant number are working within the Year 1 level of the National Curriculum. Where the best teaching is seen, the teacher makes the learning fun through games; she involves all of the children who then build their confidence in counting and using number skills.
62. There are good opportunities for the children to count and use numbers, and this enables them to develop a good understanding of the number system. The children all recognise numbers one to ten in digits, and many of the children can count to at least 20 and confidently beyond.

They understand the concept of simple addition and subtraction, working within 10. The children are given a good introduction to finding the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They can confidently compare different objects to see which are smaller or bigger, taller or shorter. Occasionally, the work is not closely matched to the children's needs and when this happens their progress slows.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

63. The majority of the children enter the school with attainment in line with national expectations for children of this age. The teaching is good and, as a result, by the end of the Reception year the majority of the children have achieved the level expected in knowledge and understanding of the world and some will have exceeded it.
64. The children are given good opportunities to use the computer. They confidently use the mouse to 'point' and 'click' and they know how to use a variety of programs. They can word process their names, and know how to print off their work. They enjoy drawing patterns and creatures using a 'paint' program. A travel agent's role-play area has been set up with maps, brochures, telephone and tickets; this is a popular area for the children and gives them some knowledge of the wider world and a developing understanding of how holidays are chosen and booked. The children have opportunities to investigate magnets and to see which materials are attracted to them. They taste Indian food and explain their likes and dislikes. They are beginning to identify what is considered a healthy meal. They name the parts of their bodies and understand how family members are related to one another. There are very good opportunities for the children to learn about Christian faith and customs through festivals and Bible stories. The children also develop a satisfactory understanding of other faiths and traditions, such as when they make hands with Mendhi patterns, learn about Diwali, and celebrate the Chinese New Year.

### **Physical development**

65. In the Reception classes, the children develop their physical skills well. Most of the children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and a number exceed them. The teaching in this area is good and the children make good progress. The children show a good awareness of space by not bumping into each other as they move and they take care when they are playing not to act in ways that may harm other children. They throw balls and beanbags backwards and forwards to each other accurately. There are good opportunities for children to develop skills on wheeled outdoor equipment and to climb and balance using the outdoor and indoor equipment. The children dress and undress themselves. They have good opportunities to develop fine motor skills using felt-pens, pencils and scissors, as well as through joining together pieces when completing jigsaws and making models.

### **Creative development**

66. The children enjoy a good range of experiences in music, art, story and imaginative play. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good, and the children make good progress in their creative development from when they enter the school. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 and a significant number exceed them. In sessions such as whole school assemblies, the children sing songs and hymns competently and enthusiastically. They become well involved in creative activities using a good variety of media and materials. They know a range of colours and paint lively portraits, such as the disciples of Jesus. They use crayons accurately to portray an underwater scene and, using a light wash, are delighted by the results. The school has a satisfactory variety of role-play resources for both indoor and outdoor play which help to provide a good stimulus for children's creative play.

For example, in an inflatable boat on a rough sea (blue plastic) the children have great fun rowing through a storm! Materials such as wet and dry sand, water and modelling dough are available for children to explore and experiment with on a regular basis. Particularly popular is the box of soil with which hills and roads are created for model cars and trucks.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Standards in National Curriculum tests in reading and writing for Year 2 pupils have been consistently well above average for the last four years, with the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels being well above average in reading and above average in writing. Evidence from the inspection confirms that pupils' attainment is well above average at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, with a significant proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. These results show a significant improvement over the attainment reported at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is above average and this too shows a good improvement since the last inspection. The principal reason for the difference in the attainment of the two groups is that the present Year 2 group of pupils entered the school with higher attainment than the present Year 4 pupils and also has a higher proportion of more able pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress due to the consistently good quality teaching they receive and the dedication of the staff to raising standards. Staff work hard monitoring and evaluating test results, identifying areas of weaknesses and then introducing appropriate strategies to address them. By these means, the school is having some success in addressing weaknesses in the standard of writing. There are, however, some weaknesses in the way that the school tracks pupils' progress through each year.
68. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are well above average and the pupils have made good improvements since they first entered the school. At the end of Year 4, pupils are achieving above the nationally expected standards. Progress has been good for all pupils. In Years 1 and 2, teachers successfully build on the earlier work in the Reception class. This results in pupils becoming attentive listeners, showing good confidence when contributing to class discussions and when asking questions. This was clearly seen in a Year 1 literacy lesson when pupils put forward questions they would be seeking answers to when reading a text about caves the following day. Teachers show very good skills in encouraging pupils to make contributions to class discussions. Pupils listen very well to each other's answers and also benefit from the teacher reinterpreting of the answers so that all pupils in the class benefit from the contribution. The good relationships teachers have with their pupils encourages everyone to want to take part in lessons. The development of mutual trust and respect is a powerful influence on the pupils. As they progress through the school, pupils are continually encouraged to participate orally in all subjects. For example, pupils' responses to good questioning in a Year 4 ICT lesson enabled them to understand quickly how to use a 'branching' database to identify different musical instruments. Skilful intervention by the teacher successfully extended the vocabulary the pupils were using whilst, at the same time, praising them for the efforts they were making. Opportunities such as this provide a good example of how the ethos of the school, which places great emphasis on the building of pupils' self-esteem and personal development, has helped pupils to gain in self-confidence in their speaking and listening skills. Whilst pupils have opportunities to use their speaking skills in school productions, teachers could extend the pupils' skills further by incorporating aspects of drama more readily into literacy lessons.
69. Pupils are making good progress in developing their reading skills. Higher-attaining pupils are achieving particularly good standards at the end of Year 2. The introduction of practical activities to teach letters and sounds for the younger pupils gives them good confidence to try out new words that they have not met before. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and are

developing good confidence because of the school's strong emphasis on reading and the structured approach to developing the pupils' skills. For example, a Year 1 pupil exclaimed; "Hey, I know these words," when he found the word list at the end of a book he had just finished. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of the text they are reading, such as when they read in groups to their teachers and discuss what they think might happen in the next part of the story. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and the visit to the school by Sally Marsh, a children's author, had an obvious impact on children's attitudes to books. Pupils make regular visits to the library to change their books but very few pupils have the necessary skills to use the Dewey system to locate specific texts.

70. Writing standards throughout the school were identified last year as a target area and are part of the school development plan. The targeting of writing with clearly focused writing sessions, over and above the normal literacy hour, is leading to improvements, particularly in Year 2. These pupils use punctuation accurately and show a very good use of vocabulary. For example, one pupil wrote; 'He smirked at me, then swam away'. Pupils obviously enjoy writing and often there is a huge sense of fun in their work, clearly seen in their class poem on *Dominic's Cow to the Rescue*. Pupils' writing is developing well because the teacher is imaginative in encouraging them to write for a wide range of purposes. The letters from Goldilocks, apologising for breaking into the three bears' house, were not only very well written, showing a very good appreciation of the correct use of vocabulary and punctuation, but also used language which genuinely conveyed remorse. The writing in pupils' stories is very well organised and their ideas are extended coherently. Higher-achieving pupils are writing at length and their work is improving by the very helpful marking that not only praises pupils for the work they have done but also clearly points out to them how they can improve further.
71. Pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and not as pronounced as in other years. Much of this is due to an overuse of worksheets. Whilst these give pupils opportunities to practise the development of their grammar, vocabulary and spelling, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length and make use of these newly-acquired skills. Despite these restrictions, pupils are making clear progress in the development of some aspects of their writing. They have a good understanding of how similes can add colour to their writing. One pupil described an animal as having 'a tail as bushy as a giant's eyebrow'. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their spelling and punctuation, with higher-achieving pupils having a good knowledge of paragraphs and inverted commas. However, teachers' expectations are not always clear in the marking and sometimes careless spelling and untidy writing are not commented on. As a result, pupils do not have a clear understanding of appropriate standards or know where they need to improve their work.
72. Worksheets are having a negative impact on the development of pupils' handwriting. The teaching of handwriting skills is progressive through the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use lined paper when writing and there is a clear development in the neatness and regularity of their style in these two years. However, in Years 3 and 4, whilst pupils use lined paper for handwriting lessons, many of the worksheets they use are unlined. This has an adverse effect on the development of their skills, with a significant proportion of pupils reverting to printing or reducing the size of their writing.
73. A prominent feature of the work in English is the way in which it is supported in many other subjects. This is a planned strategy through the school and is certainly having an impact on pupils' progress. For example, in history, Year 4 pupils write about chariot racing in Ancient Greece whilst in science pupils use their literacy skills well to write about the investigations they have undertaken. The impact of the work in other subjects in speaking and listening, reading for information and writing in different styles, means that pupils are now experiencing

a rich variety of language that will help them develop further both their skills and confidence. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included in every aspect of the work in English.

74. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is this good quality teaching, particularly in Year 2, that has enabled the pupils to reach high standards in all aspects of the subject. The targeted writing sessions that have occurred outside the literacy hour have also had an impact on the improved rate of learning. The introduction to lessons is effective because pupils are clearly informed about what they are going to learn before they start. These objectives are also revisited in the effective plenary sessions at the end of lessons where the pupils' skills are consolidated and sometimes extended further. The teaching of basic skills, particularly letters and their sounds, is consistently good and gives pupils the knowledge and confidence to build new words. Pupils recognise common beginnings and endings of words and are provided with clear strategies that help them to spell and read. A good feature of the lessons in Year 1 is the use of the knowledgeable classroom assistant who gives very effective support to individuals and small groups. Their relationship with the pupils is very good and they make a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT in literacy lessons; for example, pupils in Year 1 word-processed information about caves that they had gleaned from reading their class text together.
75. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator works closely with class teachers to analyse the results of National Curriculum tests. As a result of this analysis, the learning experiences for the pupils are modified to address the perceived weaknesses. The most important priority to be addressed in the subject is the introduction of regular assessments, particularly in writing, which will enable the school to track pupils' progress through each year. With this ongoing information, weaknesses could be identified and strategies devised to ensure every pupil makes appropriate progress through each year. The monitoring of teaching is carried out by the co-ordinator, but the process lacks rigour and areas for improvement are not consistently identified. Target setting is well established in English and gives parents a clear understanding of what new learning their children will be undertaking during the year. However, not all pupils are clear about their own individual literacy targets and teachers' marking does not consistently inform children how they can move towards these targets. Parents give good support in listening to their children read. This support is extended to helping in the school library during some lunchtimes when pupils exchange their library books. The teachers, when they hear pupils read, make pertinent comments for improvement. However, these assessments are not shared with parents and as a result, their work with their children does not always reinforce the work in the classroom. Resources for the subject are good overall and particularly good for reading where a wide range of quality books helps pupils to develop their enthusiasm and skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. Standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 2 and above expectations when the pupils leave the school. This represents a good improvement from the findings of the last inspection when standards were found to be in line with national expectations. The pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and overall make good progress as they move through the school. The higher standards seen in Year 2 reflect the above average attainment of the pupils in that cohort on their entry to the school. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy means that the basic skills of numeracy are well taught and the curriculum covers all the required areas of the National Curriculum. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The use of ICT skills in supporting learning in mathematics is satisfactory. Homework is set regularly and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

77. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was given a key issue 'to ensure that assessment is judged against National Curriculum levels and is used to inform curriculum planning'. This has been only partially addressed in mathematics. The teachers know the pupils well and group them correctly for numeracy lessons and at the beginning of each school year the parents receive the overall key objectives for each year group in mathematics. The school has recently introduced the optional national tests for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. The school is beginning to make useful analyses of these tests, together with the Year 2 national test papers, and is using the information to identify the areas where improvement is needed in teaching and learning.
78. However, there are areas for development that the school should take account of in order to ensure that all pupils are well challenged and achieve well. The school has only very recently begun to track individual pupils' progress and has not set targets for the levels that the pupils should achieve by the end of each year and key stage. The information that is gathered from the recently implemented assessments is not yet being fully used to inform planning in order to carefully match the needs of all the pupils and to raise further standards of attainment. At present the pupils do not know what they need to learn next, information is not available when the pupils are working to remind them what they are aiming for, nor do classroom displays give the pupils information about what they need to do to achieve the next level. The school does not monitor its performance sufficiently and has not fully carried all out the tasks identified in the present school development plan in order to do this. Another important area for development is the rationalisation of worksheets to ensure that the work builds effectively on pupils' previous learning.
79. The pupils make good progress in their development of understanding of number, shape, space and measures, and in their ability to handle data. The Year 1 pupils count and order numbers to a hundred. They learn to add a single digit number to a two-digit number by using partitioning. They work out the change needed within amounts up to 50 pence. They correctly use words such as "heavier" and "lighter" when comparing the weights of different objects. By the end of Year 2, the pupils understand the place value of digits, and can sequence numbers to 100 and above. Many add and subtract one and two digit numbers and know the patterns in the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. They begin to double and halve whole numbers accurately. They estimate and weigh items that are more or less than a kilogram and read weights on scales using grams. They solve simple money problems accurately using amounts up to £2. They tell the time in hours and half-hours using both analogue and digital clocks. They have very well developed data handling skills, communicating findings of collected information both in tables and block graphs, such as about their favourite pets. They find the lines of symmetry of a variety of regular shapes. By the end of Year 4, the pupils work confidently with larger numbers using thousands. They add numbers to two decimal places and higher-achieving pupils multiply decimals by two digit numbers correctly. They tell the time using minutes and have good skills in calculating perimeters and areas of simple shapes. The pupils use co-ordinates in the first quartile, display data in bar charts and can draw accurate conclusions from their findings. The pupils do not know their times-tables sufficiently well to use them effectively in their mental calculations and problem solving.
80. Overall, the standard of teaching is good and generally the basic skills are taught well. The consistent valuing of the pupils' contributions leads to good levels of motivation amongst all pupils and as a consequence the pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and confidently offer answers to the teachers' questions. The teachers place satisfactory emphasis on investigative and practical work, to help pupils develop an understanding of the relevance of mathematics and plan carefully for pupils to use appropriate ICT programs to reinforce their learning in lessons. On a few occasions the pupils' learning is not as good as it should be because the

work is not matched carefully enough to pupils' needs at the planning. The over use of worksheets limits the pupils' independence in learning in some contexts. However, the teachers give pupils opportunities to work together effectively, which makes a good contribution to their personal development as well as their learning. Marking is done regularly and celebrates pupils' efforts, but it does not consistently help them to develop their understanding further. Although squared paper is provided for the pupils to record their work very little attention is paid to the use of the squares to aid the pupils in understanding place value and the importance of keeping figures in the correct columns.

81. The co-ordinator for mathematics is the headteacher; she is enthusiastic about teaching and learning in mathematics and works hard to promote the subject. She has led the development of the policy and scheme of work for mathematics and she offers advice and help to her colleagues ensuring that there is a good range of resources available to support teaching and learning. However, there are too few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and the standards of work in classes, which would be helpful in identifying future and focussed priorities for the further development of pupils' learning in mathematics.

## SCIENCE

82. Attainment in science has improved significantly since the last inspection. At the end of Year 2 it is well above average, with a significant proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels; at the end of Year 4 it is above average. Much of this improvement is due to the improved learning opportunities for the pupils, the much greater emphasis on learning through practical investigations and the use of the skills of the co-ordinator who teaches the majority of classes. The difference between the attainment of the present Year 2 and Year 4 groups is explained by the variation in ability on entry to the school. All pupils, whatever their ability, make good progress because the work is challenging and pupils receive good support in lessons.
83. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 undertake a good range of practical investigations that ensures they have a secure knowledge and understanding of basic scientific principles. They have a good understanding of a fair test and know that some variables need to be kept constant. For example, in their investigation into how different materials block out sound, pupils realised that the source of the sound had to be constant for the test to be fair. Pupils' understanding of the living processes is above average. They understand the chronology in the life cycle of a frog and in their study of the senses of smell and hearing, they know that nerves carry information to the brain. Pupils enjoy the subject because they have a real input into what they are going to learn. This was clearly shown in their investigation into whether the pupils with the largest feet were also the tallest in the class. Pupils write up their findings carefully but the teacher misses opportunities to assess pupils' understanding because they are not asked to use their scientific knowledge to explain their findings. Pupils are building a solid scientific vocabulary using words such as 'opaque' and 'transparent' accurately. They know that materials have different properties and that the properties determine the use for the materials. For example, they know that the fabric for a sail has to be both strong and flexible. Pupils make very good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in their science work and pupils' plant diary has given very good opportunities for them to use their good observation skills and write accurately about their findings.
84. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4, with the main emphasis continuing to be learning through investigations. There was real 'awe and wonder' and whispers of "wicked" in a lesson for Year 3 pupils when, in a blacked-out hall, they discovered that light travels in straight lines. Well focused questioning by the teacher led children to understand that a shadow is blocked light. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a good understanding of living processes. They know that the skeleton protects vital organs in the body and understand

the relationship between tendons, joints and muscles in physical movement. Particularly good use is made of ICT to record the results of their findings. For example, in pupils' investigation into the cooling of water, they used a data-handling program to produce a graph to show their findings. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between solids and liquids and know how a sieve can be used to separate different materials. Pupils are developing a good scientific vocabulary, which they use well in predictions before they begin their investigations. At present not enough use is made of pupils' hypotheses, which would give a valuable insight for the teacher into their thinking.

85. There is consistently good teaching in the subject and, together with good planning, this is leading to the clear development of skills for pupils of all abilities. Pupils have worked hard this year and there is a good volume of work from pupils in all classes. Pupils do not yet have their own science books and all investigations and other science work are recorded on work sheets. The amount of space does restrict pupils' ability to record in their own way, particularly for the higher-achieving pupils who have a greater scientific knowledge. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 would benefit from recording the results of their investigations in a science book, rather than on a work sheet. Both teachers who teach science have very good scientific knowledge and use this particularly well in their questioning of pupils. Because of the strong relationships in the classes, pupils respond enthusiastically and the skilful way in which teachers reinterpret pupils' answers benefits all pupils in the class. Marking is thorough but does not consistently tell pupils what they need to improve their work. Teachers' expectations, particularly about the standard of presentation, are not always high enough and some older pupils present untidy work as a result. The ability gap is very wide in the Year 1 / 2 group who are taught together and it is important for the teacher to continue to plan her work carefully to ensure that her expectations of the different abilities and ages are appropriate for the task.
86. The science co-ordinator gives good leadership to the subject. She has personally overcome the challenge of teaching the Year 1 / 2 pupils together for the first time and has achieved high standards for the older pupils. Her subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly in the way in which pupils work together and also in the raising of their awareness of protecting their environment. Good use is made of the school's pond and greenhouse in science work. A flourishing gardening club meets weekly and introduces pupils to growing and looking after plants, which are later planted out around the school. Although the co-ordinator has release time from her class, this does not coincide with the time that science is being taught in Year 3 by the other teacher. Planning between the co-ordinator and the Year 3 teacher is carefully discussed but, at present, monitoring is too informal for the co-ordinator to have a real understanding of the progression for the different ability groups in this class. A portfolio of assessed work gives teachers a good basis for judging the quality of work. The identification of investigation as an area that needs to be developed in this year's development plan has been a very successful initiative and has led to improved standards in this aspect. The co-ordinator's plan to set assessments for all pupils at the end of each unit of work is a good initiative and will help her to track pupils' progress through each year to ensure that it is appropriate. The school has built good links with the middle school to which the great majority of pupils transfer at the end of Year 4. Equipment such as sensors are borrowed, and the two schools work closely together to ensure that pupils transfer with minimum disruption to the way they learn. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

87. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. All the pupils have access to the curriculum and make good progress in knowledge and understanding, and in developing skills.

There are significant strengths in the teaching and the learning experiences. In particular, the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils and extends and enriches their personal development. The teacher gives the pupils good opportunities to experience and use a range of media and materials and this helps the pupils create good quality work throughout the school. The pupils enjoy art activities, work with enthusiasm and concentration and try hard to achieve the effect they want. Good use is made of ICT skills to support work and effective use is made of sketchbooks to try different techniques and media before pupils start on a piece of work. The pupils have opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work, and make mature and perceptive comments. The adults in the school value pupils' efforts and help them to develop confidence and self-esteem in working on artistic projects.

88. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils paint portraits of their teachers in the style of Beryl Cook, mixing the paint to produce good skin tones and painting facial features carefully. They make good quality pencil drawings of their friends with different expressions on their faces. Using black and white photographs showing half of a picture the pupils show good technique when completing the second half shading and smudging to gain the effect they want. Year 3 pupils use their observation skills well such as in their work on poppies, which were painted a vivid colour showing the clear detail of the stamens. They successfully explore the effect of shapes in bright colours or shiny surfaces when placed on a sponged pale background and effectively reproduce spiral pictures in the style of Kandinsky's work and 'The Snail' by Matisse. In Year 4, the pupils print abstract patterns onto fabric and use chalk and charcoal to good effect to depict winter scenes. They investigate the work of Andy Goldsworthy and have created striking sculptures from stones, sticks and leaves. The teacher carefully nurtures pupils' interest in the subject. For example, when looking at the work of a contrasting artist, Ken Done, the pupils were invited to give their initial impressions and ideas about some of his work. As a result, a range of interesting comments demonstrated pupils' insights into ways in which different artists approach the portrayal of land, sea and cityscapes. Remarks such as "it looks cartoony", "bright, warm and cheerful", "its quite busy and got everything in it" led into an animated discussion about how the artist has used colours, shape and pattern to achieve his desired effect.
89. The quality of teaching is consistently good in art. The school is using the national guidelines for planning and the teacher plans and organises the lessons well. The lessons are lively and engage the pupils' interest. Their confidence is enhanced and they enjoy trying out new techniques using a range of media. A good example of this was seen when the teacher introduced a three-dimensional topic by reading the story 'Not Now Bernard' without showing the pupils the illustrations. The pupils collaboratively produced their plans for a monster with lively felt-pen drawings before building their own models using junk materials. In another lesson, Year 3 pupils learned the importance of design when sketching a variety of flowers to provide the design for their individual tiles for a clay wall plaque.
90. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator teaches art throughout the school and she is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She ensures that the curriculum is interesting and challenging and that pupils' work is well displayed around the school. Areas for development are to provide some opportunities for pupils to work independently and choose their own media to extend their creativity. The subject would also benefit from a simple assessment system to record pupils' progress in gaining artistic skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

91. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4 and have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of

Year 2, pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of planning, with particular reference to the effectiveness of the materials they are using. Pupils are developing satisfactory cutting and joining skills, clearly shown in their work on *Joseph's Coat of Many Colours*. Focused tasks that lead to pupils making good progress in work, for example, on sliding mechanisms, enhance pupils' skills and techniques. In these pupils show a good understanding of using different size straws to create a mechanism that enables a monster's head to move up and down.

92. In Years 3 and 4, pupils understand the importance of planning, clearly seen, for example, in their work on sandwich making. In this, pupils sampled a wide range of different sandwiches. After evaluating, pupils created their own sandwich using a mixture of ingredients. Pupils then tasted and chose their own favourites. Similarly, a very good analysis of different purses and wallets enabled Year 4 pupils to study different designs and the different types of joining and stitching. Pupils were then in an informed position to create their own purses and wallets, choosing from a wide range of materials and showing a satisfactory range of stitching and fastening techniques. Although pupils do not make formal written evaluations, pupils show their finished products to the class and explain the difficulties they had in the various stages of development. For example, in regard to the making of purses, pupils found that whilst velcro was easy to use, it was difficult to fasten securely to the fabric of the purse.
93. Pupils benefit from the experience of the co-ordinator who teaches all classes. Planning is based on the national guidelines but the time given to the subject is lower than average to enable pupils to have longer periods for extended writing. At present, pupils in different years have just enough time to cover the expected programme of study but it is important for the school to evaluate pupils' learning at the end of the year to see whether all aspects have been appropriately covered.
94. No direct teaching was seen during the inspection but scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that clear objectives are planned for each lesson and the work builds purposefully on pupils' previously developed skills and understanding. However, planning does not clearly identify how the set tasks will challenge the different ages and abilities of pupils, particularly in lessons where Years 1 and 2 are taught together. At present, as at the time of the last inspection, there is no formal assessment and recording of pupils' skills. However, the co-ordinator teaches all classes and has a clear understanding of individual pupils' development of skills and knowledge. Through encouraging pupils to work regularly together the subject makes a good contribution to their moral and social development.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

95. Attainment in geography and history at the end of Years 2 and 4 are in line with national expectations and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. All the pupils have equal access to both areas of the curriculum and they enjoy history and geography lessons. In recording their work, good use is made of basic literacy skills although the overuse of teacher-designed worksheets means that tasks are often not open-ended. This limits opportunities for the pupils decide how they could best record the work and for them to develop and use skills of questioning and investigation. At present, ways to check the pupils' understanding in both subjects are underdeveloped and information is not available to be used in the teachers' planning. As a result, the work provided for the pupils is often at the same level and does not consistently challenge the full range of ability in the classes.
96. There are some significant strengths in the pupils' learning experiences for history and geography. There is good coverage of a range of topics in both subjects and often good links

are made between them. Good use is made of visits to support work being done and these enhance the understanding of pupils of the present and past and of society in which they live. In this way history and geography make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The teachers appreciate and make good use of the support given by members of the community when they share their 'living memories' with pupils. Good use is made of the Internet, such as when pupils investigate the weather in different parts of the world. However, the overall use of ICT skills is only satisfactory and is an area for further development in both subjects.

97. In history, the younger pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the past, through topics such as making comparisons of Victorian schools and those of today. They compare new and old toys and understand the changes in seaside holidays over time. They know about some famous people of the past, such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. In Year 3, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the invasion of Britain by the Romans and the resistance mounted by Boudicca. They understand that events can be recorded in different ways, such as when they compare a contemporary description of events to one written by a modern writer. Teachers plan good links between the two subjects. For example, pupils make a study of Checkley to identify changes in land use over the past 150 years whilst considering the future needs of the community. There are good opportunities for older pupils to develop study skills, such as when Year 4 pupils undertake their own projects on aspects of Greek history such as chariot and horse racing. They have also developed a sound understanding of the differences in the societies and governments of Athens and Sparta. By the time they leave the school, the pupils know that there are many different sources of historical information such as living memory, books, pictures and historical documents such as censuses and local directories. They have developed a good sense of chronology and have a satisfactory basic knowledge and understanding of a range of historical events and personalities. They have used these skills appropriately in their extensive study of Uttoxeter by fieldwork. The results of this work are presented as a good range of data displays, maps and pictures.
98. In their geography lessons, the younger pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding of a contrasting location by learning about life for a child living on an island off the coast of Scotland. They use their knowledge effectively to draw and label maps showing important features and learn about transport and work available on a small island. By studying holidays, pupils are developing their understanding of the differences between country, seaside and city locations. This is clearly shown when they work out what to put in their suitcase if they are going to the seaside. The pupils understand the symbols used on weather maps and know how weather affects some activities. Year 3 pupils' local historical study of Checkley is extended to include geographical features such as present day occupations and land use. The pupils are developing good map reading skills and use grid references. They understand some basic features of rivers and that pollution sometimes affects riverbanks with implications for the whole of the natural environment in those areas. By the time the pupils leave the school, they have learnt to identify how climatic conditions relate to differences in crops produced. They use an atlas to find countries and capitals and mark them accurately on a map. They learn about farming and life in rural Kenya and have a good understanding of the way of life of the Kenyan child who is sponsored by the school.
99. Overall, the teaching of history and geography is satisfactory. Teachers' planning, the work in the pupils' books and conversations with pupils show that the pupils have good opportunities to address the basic requirements of the National Curriculum and make satisfactory progress overall in learning geographical and historical skills and knowledge. Two good lessons were observed during the inspection. Strong features of both of these lessons were careful planning, imaginative use of relevant resources and good questioning to develop pupils' understanding.

For example, in the Year 4 lesson, the teacher had taken entries from a 19<sup>th</sup> century Local Directory and the pupils were asked to discuss and decide whether the person named would be helped or adversely affected by the coming of the railway to Uttoxeter. This enabled the pupils to make good progress in identifying reasons for social changes in society.

100. The management of history and geography is shared between two teachers. They monitor the medium term plans for history but have few opportunities to monitor the work done in all of the classes. They are aware of the need to evaluate the scheme of work to ensure that it matches the future needs of the school and to develop a relevant system for assessment and recording of skills in the two subjects.

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

101. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment was unsatisfactory. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils' attainment is now in line with national expectations and all pupils make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge. Much of this is due to the expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator who teaches all classes. The use of ICT by pupils to support their learning in other subjects has improved well. All teachers have benefited from national training and this is reflected in the confidence with which they support pupils who are using computers.
102. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident and competent in the use of computers. They use the mouse and keyboard knowledgeably for a range of purposes, such as changing font and colour when writing stories or making pictures. They are developing the capability to work with a range of different programs, for example, pupils use a data handling program to produce bar charts about the eye and hair colour of pupils in their class. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of presenting their work in an appropriate way and their poems, based on the poem *Ten Sizzling Sausages*, showed a good awareness of audience. Pupils have satisfactory skills in controlling the floor roamer, although higher-achieving pupils show good skills when programming a series of commands. Pupils are making increasing use of the Internet, such as when they find information about weather in different parts of the world. By the end of Year 4 pupils have above average data handling skills. These have been used extremely well to represent their findings about the local town of Uttoxeter. The results of information from a questionnaire sent out to 30 families are reflected in a range of graphs showing the families' use of different doctors, vets, banks and leisure facilities. Pupils show good skills in interpreting the data that these graphs illustrate. Pupils are also developing good skills in a 'branching' database program that enables them to identify different types of musical instruments. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills and use CD-ROMs confidently, for example, when finding information to support their work on Ancient Greece. Pupils are developing good control skills. Because they have time to practise their skills during lessons, they are able to program a series of commands to make squares and equilateral triangles. Older pupils have good monitoring skills and use external sensors confidently to track changes in cooling liquids.
103. Pupils are enthusiastic about computers because they enjoy lessons and understand how computers can help their learning in other subjects. They work well collaboratively, support each other sensitively and, as such, the subject makes a strong contribution to their personal development. For example, pupils in Year 1 worked sensitively together to write sentences about the information they had found out about caves. Lessons are exciting because pupils have opportunities to find out things for themselves. The perceptive interventions of the teacher and classroom assistant ensure that the pace of pupils' learning is good and that their new learning builds appropriately on previous work. The creation of the computer suite has been a very good addition to the school's resources and, because of its position, it is in

constant use through the school day. The computers are not networked and, as a result, there are some shortages in certain aspects of the subject because the school has not yet bought the same program for all computers. This is a priority for the school to ensure that maximum use is made of the teachers' skills and knowledge during computer lessons. The school has a good scheme of work based on national guidelines. Pupils with special educational needs make good use of computers with the specialist teacher in the development of their phonic skills. At present the school has no documents to track pupils' progress through a year. However, the teacher makes good use of regular ongoing assessment during lessons to ensure that pupils' subsequent work is appropriate to the needs of the group.

## **MUSIC**

104. Music and singing are positive features of the school and are enjoyed by all of the pupils. The standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are in line those expected nationally and the pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. The pupils often sing together and good singing is a feature of the school. The pupils sing sweetly, enthusiastically and tunefully and know a good number of songs and hymns. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The pupils' learning is supported by a number of features. The pupils have access to an interesting range of musical activities. For example, all the pupils learn to play the recorder, two music clubs meet after school and the choir sings at special events in the school and in the community. Instrumental lessons, for which the parents pay, are available for the pupils.
105. The pupils' respond well to music, they handle the instruments knowledgeably and treat them with care and respect. Throughout school, the pupils have opportunities to play percussion instruments and to listen to a variety of music. These are often linked to the themes being explored in assemblies, for example. The pupils know, understand and correctly use a range of musical vocabulary, for example, they understand high and low pitch and fast and slow tempo. They understand that music can create moods, clearly illustrated when they composed music to depict the sounds of waves crashing over rocks.
106. One lesson was seen during the inspection and it was of good quality with the pupils making good progress in learning to sing in a round and in creating and developing musical ideas for themselves. The teacher has good subject knowledge and uses her voice well to lead the singing and to encourage the pupils in improving their performance. This teacher, who works part-time in the school, is responsible for teaching all the music lessons throughout the school. The scheme of work gives her clear guidelines of what she is to teach and she has access to a satisfactory range of resources to support her work. A full-time teacher ensures that the learning opportunities for pupils are very well extended in the 'hymn practice assembly', and also takes responsibility for the music clubs and the choir. An area for development in music is to devise a way of assessing the progress of the pupils in gaining musical knowledge, understanding and skills. The hymnbooks used by the pupils in assemblies are in poor condition and in need of replacement.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

107. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and one lesson was observed in Years 3 and 4. Based on this observation, and records kept by the specialist physical education teacher, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4, with the exception of swimming, where standards are already higher than is expected nationally for Year 6 pupils. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained, apart from swimming where there has been a good improvement.

108. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of elements of orienteering. Higher-achieving pupils are developing good tactics to reduce the time for completing the course. Pupils work well together in groups and have good stamina. They understand the importance of warming up and cooling down. Pupils make very good progress in swimming because they swim regularly from Year 1 and benefit from the expertise of the specialist swimming teachers. A very high proportion of Year 4 pupils have already achieved the national standard for Year 6 pupils, with a significant majority exceeding this.
109. Pupils work hard in lessons, listen carefully to instructions and show a strong competitive spirit. Pupils collaborate well and show a good understanding of the importance of teamwork. They like to be challenged but sometimes, when there is a lull in activities, pupils lose concentration.
110. The subject is taught by a specialist teacher, who carefully plans her work that is based on the national guidelines. Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in swimming. Lessons have satisfactory balance between instruction and activity. Occasionally higher-achieving pupils finish the planned activity quickly and do not always have an extension activity to move on to straight away. Good support is given in lessons by an experienced helper who has good relationships with the pupils. Recording of pupils' progress in physical education lessons is informal but careful records are kept of pupils' progress in swimming. A priority for the school now is to continue the development of a record keeping system for pupils' skills in the different years, so that progress can be measured through each year and extra support given where appropriate.
111. Pupils benefit from a very good range of popular out of school clubs which give good opportunities for pupils of different ages and genders to work and play together, whilst developing their individual skills. Pupils also benefit from football and cricket tournaments. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development.