

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED)
FIRST SCHOOL**

Uttoxeter

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124344

Headteacher: Mr D H Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr C Smith
25211

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th February 2003

Inspection number: 248591

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Holly Road Uttoxeter Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Toyn
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

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25211	Colin Smith	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Key issues for action
9952	Lillian Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
15551	Pat Mitchell	Team inspector	English Art and design Special educational needs Educational inclusion	
23887	Peter Nettleship	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History	Leadership and management

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Church of England (Aided) First School is situated on the northern edge of Uttoxeter in Staffordshire and takes children mainly from the nearby council estates and a smaller number from private houses. Movement of families into and out of the area is higher than usually found. There are 199 pupils between the ages of four and nine; 111 boys and 88 girls. Almost all of the pupils are white and all are English speaking. Forty children (20 per cent) have free school meals, which is broadly average. Twenty-nine children have special educational needs (15 per cent), mainly language and learning difficulties and two have statements. Some children spend time in a pre-reception group before moving into full time reception. They enter school with below average levels of attainment for their age. Almost half of the teachers have changed since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. From a below average starting point, pupils make steady progress and they achieve well in mathematics and science to reach the standards expected by the age of nine. However, standards in writing are too low. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils have good attitudes to learning. The headteacher, key staff and governors together provide sound leadership and management. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT);
- Pupils are well behaved and keen to learn and find out for themselves;
- Children get off to a good start in the reception class and make very good progress in Year 2;
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness;
- Children benefit from the good home-school partnership;
- Both the financial and day-to-day management of the school are good.

What could be improved

- The teaching in one of the Year 1/2 classes is weak and holds pupils back;
- Standards in writing are too low;
- Although Year 3 pupils achieve well, more needs to be done to increase the rate of progress made by Year 4 pupils in subjects such as history and geography in the mixed age classes;
- Standards in music are slipping.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory progress has been made since the school was last inspected in January 1998. Results in reading and writing, although well below average have followed national trends and are higher this year. Mathematics is now improving at a good rate. The school has benefited from intensive support for English and mathematics from the local education authority (LEA), and this is making a difference. The issues from the last inspection have been satisfactorily acted upon. Standards in ICT have risen impressively. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is better, largely through the good work of support staff. Pupils' learning is more carefully assessed, although the information could be better used to provide targets for pupils to aim for. Subject leaders play a greater part in checking and trying to improve standards in their subjects, however, standards in art and design and music are not as high as they were mainly because of changes of staff. The school, in league with the LEA, has implemented procedures to keep track of standards and the quality of teaching and has acted upon what has been learnt to make improvements. This is helping the school to move forward.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D well below average E
Writing	E	E	E	E	
Mathematics	E	E	D	C	

When children start school their attainment is below that expected for their age and their language skills and background knowledge are well below average. They make good progress in the reception class and reach the levels expected in their personal, mathematical, creative and physical development, although when they enter Year 1, a sizeable minority of children still experience some difficulties with language and have limited understanding of the world.

Results show that standards have remained well below average and lower than in similar schools in reading and writing over the last three years. This is because of weak teaching in one of the infant classes. However, very good teaching in Year 2 is helping pupils to recover and their attainment in reading and writing has moved up from well below average to below average levels this year. Results in mathematics had already begun to improve last year and these improvements are continuing. The good advice from the LEA has been acted upon. In Year 2, in particular, and in most other classes, teachers now expect more and are setting higher year group targets. Pupils make satisfactory, and more consistent progress, in the junior classes. They achieve well in reading and mathematics to reach the levels expected by the age of nine. However, improvements in writing are only just beginning to bear fruit and standards are well below the levels expected and still too low. Pupils achieve well in science and ICT throughout the school to reach at least the standards expected and higher in some elements. Pupils also achieve well in history and geography in the infant classes to reach the levels expected but progress in the junior classes is not as good because they spend too much time filling in worksheets rather than expressing their own ideas. This also restricts opportunities for pupils to improve their writing. Pupils achieve steadily to reach the levels expected in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Standards in music are just about being held at satisfactory levels, however, lack of extra curricular music is eroding pupils' former good achievement.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in junior lessons. However, more could be done to provide specific programmes to improve their reading and writing skills further. More able pupils largely fulfil their potential and reach the higher levels, however, Year 3 pupils generally achieve at a quicker rate than Year 4 pupils. Boys are not achieving as well as girls. This has been recognised and adjustments to teaching are beginning to narrow the gap.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy learning and concentrate on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils behave well and try to help each other.

Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils respond well to encouragement to work together and take some responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory; pupils arrive on time, ready to learn.

New opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative, in projects such as the school council, are important factors in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and often very good in the reception class. The activities provided are stimulating and well matched to children's different learning needs. Every opportunity is taken to improve their skills of speaking, reading, writing and number. Children respond positively and achieve well. Teaching is unsatisfactory in one of the Year 1/2 classes. In this class, pupils' learning suffers because the work given to them is too easy or too difficult and the pace of lessons is too slow. Consequently, they become confused or lose interest. Teaching is satisfactory in the other Year 1/2 class and very good in Year 2 where lessons are challenging, interesting and well paced. In this class, pupils' learning recovers and the success rate is high. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and half of the teaching here is good.

Mathematics is taught well, particularly in Year 2 and in the junior classes. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills improve significantly and they gain confidence in using their numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems. Reading is taught well in junior classes. However, writing has not been well taught in the past and is only just improving, with the help of the LEA. Teaching is often good in literacy lessons, although writing skills, in particular, are not developed through other subjects as well as they should be. Teachers have a good grasp of most of the subjects they teach and good teaching of science and ICT ensures that pupils' learning is successful. Almost all teachers manage pupils well, plan their lessons carefully and provide work at suitable levels in the key subjects of English and mathematics. This ensures that more able pupils reach higher levels and those with special educational needs receive good support from classroom assistants. In history and geography, junior pupils are given the same worksheets irrespective of their different learning needs. This restricts the learning of the Year 4 pupils particularly in mixed age classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the curriculum is well planned and pupils have good opportunities to learn about different subjects and healthy lifestyles. However, pupils' writing skills are not developed as well as they could be.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; they benefit from good support from classroom assistants but there is scope to provide specific programmes to improve their reading and writing skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good; pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is well catered for. Provision for their cultural development is satisfactory. Racial harmony is promoted well and pupils learn about other faiths, but more could be done to increase their awareness of cultural diversity in Britain.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the school is caring and mindful of pupils' safety and well being. Pupils' learning and personal development are carefully assessed but the pupils themselves do not have individual targets to aim for.
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The school continues to benefit from good relationships with parents and close links with the community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; The head and deputy headteacher work well together to provide a caring Christian ethos in which children can grow. Although it has taken some time, quite determined efforts are currently being made to raise standards. The school has taken advice and is acting upon it.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; governors are committed to the school's best interests and use their good knowledge of the needs of the school well to make successful appointments of teaching and support staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; assessment results are carefully analysed and teaching is observed regularly to check how well the school is performing. However, pupils' work in their books is not used enough to identify inconsistencies and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good; valuable information is gathered by consulting pupils, parents and the LEA and comparing outcomes with other schools. The information is used well to provide the best possible value within the resources available.

School accommodation is satisfactory and the levels of resources are good. The school has well trained support staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school, they make good progress and behave well. Children are expected to work hard and helped to become mature and responsible. Parents see the teaching and the leadership of the school as effective and feel happy to approach the school to seek help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all parents agree that they are kept well informed about their children's progress A quarter of the respondents do not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team largely agrees with the parents' positive views. Leadership and management and the quality of teaching are at least sound with some good features and pupils are mature and well behaved. Parents are right about the limited range of out of school activities. There is some justification for parents requesting more information. Parents who have time to visit are made welcome and their opinions matter. However, there is only one formal parents' evening where parents can find out how well their children are progressing and targets are not written into the reports to help parents to know what their children need to do to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 When children enter school their attainment in most areas of learning is below average for their age. Their language skills and background knowledge have been noticeably declining over the last three years and are well below the levels expected. The school regards the early years as vitally important and puts much effort into the children's education. For example, a nursery nurse has been employed specifically to provide early learning experiences for children who are just four years of age. As a result of the good provision and good teaching in the reception class, children achieve well in all areas of learning. By the end of the reception year most children reach the levels expected in their personal, social, mathematical, creative and physical development. However, despite the good progress they make in acquiring language skills and a greater knowledge and understanding of the world, their attainment in these areas of learning is still below average by the time they enter Year 1.

- 2 National test results in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven were well below average in 2000 and 2001. This is because the teaching in one of the Year 1/2 classes was, and still is, unsatisfactory. In this class, pupils lose momentum and slip back, despite the headteacher's best efforts to bring about improvements. In 2001, a new teacher was appointed in Year 2. This has had a dramatic effect on pupils' achievements. Although some pupils entering Year 2 had a lot of catching up to do, the very good teaching began to take effect. More challenging targets were set and in 2002 standards in mathematics rose sharply. This year, standards in English are also on the increase. Standards in Year 2 are now below average, rather than well below, in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching in the junior classes is more consistent. In these classes, pupils achieve steadily in most subjects, and well in some.

- 3 The school is currently receiving intensive support in English from the Local Education Authority (LEA). This has already improved the teaching and pupils' achievements in reading. More appealing books have been provided and a greater amount of reading at home has been encouraged. There has also been an increased focus on the teaching of reading skills. As a result of these measures, pupils' attainment by the age of seven, although still below average, is better than it was. Pupils' reading improves at a good rate in the junior classes, largely because the reading skills are taught well and pupils have good opportunities to improve their reading in other subjects, such as finding information from books and ICT sources in science. By the age of nine, reading standards are at the levels expected. Attention is now being turned to writing. Very good teaching in Year 2 is already raising standards. By the age of seven, standards in writing are below average but this is an improvement on the past. Junior pupils are now taught how to plan and organise a piece of writing. This is paving the way for improvement but is too recent to have had a full impact on standards yet. For example, many pupils still have lingering weaknesses in spelling and punctuation. Improvements are very gradual, consequently standards in writing by the age of nine are well below average and more needs to be done before standards are high enough. Pupils' spoken language is nurtured carefully and teachers provide many good opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas and collaborate in groups. As a result, their spoken language improves significantly and is typical for their age by the end of Year 4. Pupils' listening skills

improve steadily but, in one or two classes, they do not listen carefully enough and need reminders to ensure that they know what to do.

- 4 Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in mathematics in the infant classes, although they underachieve in one class and achieve very well in another. A combination of intensive support from the LEA and teachers' strenuous efforts has raised standards in mathematics. Regular opportunities for pupils to sharpen up their speed of calculation, practise numeracy skills and apply them to solve mathematical problems are contributory factors in the school's improvements. Junior pupils achieve well in mathematics. They gain confidence in their quick and accurate handling of numbers and reinforce their numeracy skills well in other subjects, such as science.
- 5 In relation to children's limited background knowledge when they enter school, they achieve well to reach the standards expected in all of the knowledge and understanding aspects of science at the ages of seven and nine. The subject leader has been very persuasive in encouraging all teachers to concentrate on pupils' skills of investigation. As a result, pupils' understanding of how to plan and carry out a scientific test is good throughout the school.
- 6 Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection. The provision of a computer suite, valuable staff training and strong support from classroom assistants has contributed to pupils' good achievements. Standards are now at the levels expected in Year 4 and above the levels expected in Year 2.
- 7 Pupils achieve steadily in design and technology and physical education to reach the levels expected at the ages of seven and nine, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils also all reach the standards expected in history and geography. In these subjects, they achieve well in most of the infant classes, where they are encouraged to express their ideas in writing. However, history and geography in junior classes dwells more on imparting facts and less on developing pupils' skills. Standards in art and design are satisfactory but not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. This is mainly because considerably less time is now devoted to the subject to make way for a greater concentration of time on literacy and numeracy. Standards in music are satisfactory but weaker in comparison to the high standards noted out of the time of the last inspection. The school has lost its specialist music teacher. The alternative approaches being tried are insufficient as yet to stem the decline.
- 8 Over recent years, girls have performed much better than boys. This has been recognised and changes in materials and methods have been made to create a greater appeal to boys. Girls still settle more quickly to their work and concentrate for longer periods. However, the learning gap is gradually closing. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They receive good support from classroom assistants and often achieve well in lessons. However, there is scope to provide more individual programmes to help them to overcome their reading and writing difficulties. More able pupils largely fulfil their potential and reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Junior pupils are taught in mixed age classes or sets. Within this arrangement, Year 3 pupils prosper and achieve well to emulate their older classmates. However, Year 4 pupils could achieve more if they were given clear individual and higher targets to aim for, particularly in science, history and geography.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Relationships with each other and with all adults who work in the school are good and this has a positive impact on their personal development. These good features, present at the time of the last inspection, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and help to create a calm atmosphere within the school.
- 10 The welcoming and pleasant atmosphere in the Foundation classes helps less confident children to overcome their reticence and they are soon involved in the activities prepared for them. They learn to share equipment, take their turn and are developing good relationships with other children and adults. This raising of self-confidence and self-esteem is evident in the way that children accept responsibility. For example, one child led her class in prayers during an assembly. 'Hands together, eyes closed' she instructed and then made up her own simple prayer.
- 11 From the youngest upwards, pupils like attending school and arrive happily each day. They are keen to chat to adults about events that are important to them and are enthusiastic about any responsibilities they have around school. They proudly show off any work on display and are pleased to receive rewards for effort and achievement. Most pupils settle well to lessons but some find it difficult to pay attention during the early part of a lesson. They set to work with a will and this good attitude ensures that independent learning is a strong feature of most lessons. For example, in science, pupils themselves decide on what to investigate and how to set about it. Pupils with special educational needs relate well to each other and to all adults who work in the school.
- 12 There is a civilised and orderly environment in the school and this reflects the good standards of behaviour expected. Pupils behave well and respond positively to the school's high expectations. They move around the building in an orderly manner and behave well in assemblies, entering the hall quietly and waiting patiently for others to arrive. In the playground, pupils play well together. The very rare incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour are dealt with instantly and there have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Pupils are polite and helpful to adults as confirmed when they go on visits out of school. The orderly behaviour makes an important contribution to learning in the classroom. Years 3 and 4 pupils behaved very well during an ICT lesson. They had listened well to instructions and were able to enter text and manipulate it to create an attractive display of pictures and information on world rivers.
- 13 Relationships are good throughout the school, between pupils of different ages and ability and also between pupils and staff. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and to recognise that their actions affect others. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for duties within the school community for example, pupils help in the dining hall and all pupils have an awareness of how to take care of the environment. The 'ECO' group ensures that environmental issues have a high profile in school, such as recycling materials in the classroom. There has been an improvement in the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and this is now a strong feature of lessons.
- 14 Attendance has improved from well below the national average and is now satisfactory. The absences are mainly due to parents taking children on holiday in term time and to the poor attendance of a few pupils. During the autumn term of the current academic year, attendance is well above the national average and almost one third of pupils have achieved 100 per cent attendance. Most pupils arrive at school on

time and lessons get off to a prompt start. Parents confirm that their children like school and attend willingly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 15 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Since the last inspection teaching has improved in the reception class, stayed much the same in the infant classes but is not at the very high level in the junior classes that it once was. Teaching in the junior classes is never less than satisfactory and approximately half of the teaching is good. However, since the last inspection, two very effective teachers have moved on. The quality of teaching, as seen through pupils' work in their books, is not quite as good as the teaching observed during the inspection.
- 16 Teaching in the reception class is good. The space available is plentiful and used creatively to provide a wide range of interesting and exciting experiences. Children are encouraged to select activities and take some responsibility for themselves, which helps them to become more self-confident and self-reliant. Teachers and nursery assistants continually engage the children in conversation, which helps them to express their ideas and improve their spoken language. Children's interests and creativity are nurtured well. For example, the home corner becomes a doctor's surgery to stimulate pupils' imagination and their powers of observation are sharpened by using magnifying glasses to look at objects more closely. Children's different stages of learning are well catered for. The tasks provided are carefully matched to their specific learning needs and this helps them to acquire letter, word and number skills successfully.
- 17 Teaching in one of the Year 1/2 classes is unsatisfactory. What pupils already know and understand is not taken sufficient account of when lessons are planned and the activities provided are often either too difficult or too easy for the pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were introduced to symmetry before they had a secure grasp of different shapes. Consequently, by the end of the lesson they still had little understanding of the new topic. Lessons move along too slowly. Pupils become restless, some lose interest and others call out. As a result, little learning takes place through class discussions. The headteacher and senior staff are well aware of the problem and specific targets have been set to bring about improvements.
- 18 In all of the other classes, pupils are well managed and relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Class discussions are well controlled and sensitively prompted by teachers encouraging all pupils to express their ideas. The activities provided are clearly explained. This ensures that pupils know what they are expected to do. Group activities are well supervised. Teachers move between the groups to check their understanding and prompt further thought. As a result of these good strategies, the atmosphere for learning, in almost all classes, is calm and purposeful and pupils concentrate well on their tasks.
- 19 Teachers have good expertise in most subjects. Their knowledge of how to teach science, ICT, mathematics and physical education is particularly good. In these subjects, and most of the others, teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn and know what interests them. Teachers explain new ideas well, use demonstrations to good effect and move pupils' learning on through skilful questioning to probe their understanding. For example, in two parallel Year 3/4 science lessons, the teachers' effective demonstrations of how solids dissolve in water, was accompanied by shrewd questioning. This encouraged pupils to predict what would happen next and put the responsibility on the pupils to instruct the teachers of what

they should do next. This proved very successful in teaching pupils how to plan and carry out a fair scientific test. Teachers' imaginative use of resources, such as computers and white boards to write on, makes learning visual, which, in turn, helps pupils to understand. Such lively and stimulating methods are only just being introduced to the teaching of writing. Teachers have limited expertise in music. Consequently, lessons sometimes lack a sufficient range of fast flowing activities to hold and extend pupils' interests.

- 20 In mathematics, methods of calculation are taught well, consequently pupils have a good grasp of number. Regular practice in comparing different ways to calculate and solve mathematical problems reinforces their understanding well. The teaching of the key skills of reading and writing is currently receiving much attention. Word and letter skills are satisfactorily taught in the infant classes and reading for understanding is taught well in junior classes. Writing skills have not been taught well enough in the past, although this is now a strong feature in Year 2. Junior pupils are just learning how to organise their ideas and sequence them when writing accounts and stories. This is helping to ensure that spelling and punctuation skills are not taught in isolation but are developed as part of the writing process. However, there is more to do, particularly in teaching pupils how to redraft and improve their writing and capitalise on the potential of developing writing in other subjects, such as history and geography. Homework arrangements ensure that pupils have suitable opportunities to practise and extend their learning of reading, writing and mathematics.
- 21 The level of challenge in the work provided is satisfactory overall but variable. Teachers suitably assess pupils' learning and mark their work accurately. This helps teachers to measure pupils' understanding and enables them to plan future work more accurately. Where teaching is at its best, the level of challenge in the work provided exactly matches pupils' different learning needs. This is very noticeable in reception and in Year 2, where children are working at just the right level to move their learning on quickly. Setting pupils according to ability is effective in narrowing the range of ability and therefore helping teachers to meet pupils' learning needs more successfully. The more able pupils have benefited from this and usually fulfil their potential in reaching higher levels. On most occasions, teachers provide work to match the learning needs of pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs. Classroom assistants offer good support and help these pupils to understand and complete their tasks. However, individual programmes to improve their reading and writing skills are not consistently provided. As a result, these pupils make satisfactory, rather than good progress. Year 3 and 4 pupils are taught together, even when pupils are grouped according to ability. Year 3 pupils thrive on this and raise their performance to be as good as their Year 4 classmates. This is why Year 3 pupils achieve well. Year 4 pupils do not have the same incentive; therefore their learning takes a more leisurely pace. Although teachers have all the assessment information they need, this is not explicitly shared with pupils so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve. There is potential to make greater use of this information by setting challenging individual targets, particularly for Year 4 pupils.

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

- 22 The learning opportunities provided are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection, although teachers now have better guidance to enable them to work in unison. The activities planned are relevant and worthwhile, enabling most pupils to achieve as well as expected. There is sufficient breadth to the curriculum with a

strong focus currently on literacy skills, especially writing. The numeracy strategy is well planned and well established in the school and this is leading to higher standards. Opportunities for pupils to learn in ICT have improved significantly and this is now a strength of the school. However, opportunities for pupils to explore music and art are more limited than at the time of the last inspection because less time is allocated and teachers' expertise is not as high.

- 23 The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It is very well planned to meet the needs of young children. The school has thoughtfully adapted the national guidelines for this area. Consequently children are given exciting opportunities to develop their skills in all of the recommended areas of learning.
- 24 There is satisfactory provision for pupils who are in the school's register for special educational needs. They receive good levels of support to enable them to learn and plans and targets are devised to keep their learning under review. However, the school does not make enough use of specific programmes to help them to overcome their reading and writing difficulties. Pupils are taught in sets for literacy and numeracy. To an extent, this ensures that more able pupils are suitably catered for. However, whereas Year 3 pupils respond well to the challenges given to pupils in mixed age classes and sets, Year 4 pupils are not quite as productive without clear targets to aim for.
- 25 Pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE) are well catered for. A well-established programme is followed to help teachers plan discussions and teach about personal and social issues. These are sensitively woven into other subjects such as science and physical education (PE). For example in a PE lesson Year 3/4 pupils talked about the effects of exercise and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils learn effectively about growth and human development during science lessons. In addition, pupils benefit from a specific sex education programme and visiting specialists provide clear education about the harmful effects of drugs.
- 26 Effective strategies for teaching numeracy enable pupils to acquire good skills of mental calculation and problem solving. Adequate opportunities are provided for pupils to apply number skills in other subjects. For example during a PE lesson a teacher asked 'How many pairs can we make from the 19 pupils in the class? ICT makes a significant contribution to the learning of mathematics. For example, some good computer work with repeated patterns helped pupils in a Year 3/4 class to understand symmetry. Strategies for teaching literacy skills are satisfactory. This is a current priority in the school. Recent initiatives have already raised standards in reading and are just beginning to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' writing. Pupils make too little progress because writing opportunities are not well enough planned across the curriculum and too little has been expected of pupils in the past with regard to quality and presentation of work.
- 27 The school's provision for activities and clubs outside of lesson time is not as good as that typically seen in similar schools. With the exception of soccer coaching and the regular meetings of the 'ECO' club, which encourages a good interest in environmental issues, there are very limited opportunities for pupils to develop their personal interests. There are well-established links with the community and other local schools and colleges which enrich pupils' learning. Strong links with the local churches add richness to school worship and provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about religious and historical aspects of the locality.

- 28 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Whilst the provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, there is room for improvement in ensuring that pupils have an understanding of the cultural diversity of today's society. The school's mission statement along with high expectations of behaviour is fully reflected in its daily life. A high level of respect for others is a natural part of the atmosphere of the school.
- 29 Provision for spiritual development is good. The school successfully provides opportunities for personal prayer and reflection, for example in the school worship. Collective worship is planned thoughtfully. Assemblies are carefully linked to a series of topics such as 'colours'. For example, during a whole school assembly on the colour red, the teacher made the link with bravery and how artists portrayed the martyrs from the past in red because they shed their blood for their beliefs. A quiet period of reflection followed as pupils considered how they too could be brave. Displays around the school show that teachers are determined to raise the self worth and self esteem of pupils. Pupils have reflected on the beauty of nature as they imagine the sounds and sights when standing on a seashore. A classroom display on 'Repentance' contains cards that pupils have written to their friends to say 'sorry'. There is a special box in the school foyer in which pupils and adults can request a special prayer.
- 30 The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. This confirms the views of most parents that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There is a well-understood whole school approach to behaviour management and a unity of purpose in everything the school stands for. Class rules are negotiated and displayed in classrooms. Effective incentive rewards are in place and success is recognised and celebrated in assemblies. The skills and knowledge gained in personal and social education are raising pupils' awareness of what it is to be a good citizen. For example, pupils have grown and sold plants in their local community, they have recycled materials and also co-opted parents on to their 'ECO' Group. Good teamwork is evident in physical education, for example, when Years 3 and 4 pupils got out the apparatus for a lesson on 'Balance'. The way they organised the equipment meant that the lesson got off to a flying start. Pupils have a social conscience and collect for charities in the local and wider community.
- 31 The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory, but the multi-cultural aspect could be improved. Pupils have studied the work of artists as seen in their evaluations of Van Gogh's painting of 'A Starry Night' and they have considered the impact that David Hockney's work has on their thoughts and feelings. Pupils explore their own locality in geography and history and have studied the different types of buildings locally. Visits out of school extend pupils' horizons, for example the residential visit to Edale. There are some opportunities in the curriculum to look at other cultures. For example Years 1 and 2 pupils learned an Afro-Caribbean song and children in the foundation year have looked at clothes and food from other cultures. Whilst there are opportunities in religious education to discuss other faiths, there are insufficient planned opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to understand cultural diversity in Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 32 The provision for child protection and for the welfare of pupils is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. The staff and governing body contribute well to the provision of a caring school where the personal needs of pupils are well met. There is a positive atmosphere in school and the teachers know their pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants.
- 33 Whilst the school does not have its own policy for child protection, it follows local authority guidelines rigorously. The designated teacher is well trained and staff have received training from the local authority. There is close liaison with a range of external agencies on behalf of the children. Adults working in school are alert to the medical needs of pupils and in addition to the fully qualified first aider, there are three members of staff with emergency first aid qualifications. This good provision results in a high level of care for pupils. Risk assessments of the premises and equipment are undertaken by the headteacher and the site manager, with good support from the governing body. The local authority conducts an annual health and safety audit of the premises and any concerns are dealt with according to urgency or available finance. The site manager and the cleaning staff keep the building very clean and with the support of pupils, the site is kept free from debris and graffiti.
- 34 The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting behaviour are good and their success can be seen in the good behaviour of pupils. The school has been concerned to involve pupils in setting their own rules of conduct and this has successfully fostered a good atmosphere in most lessons. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and parents are involved at an early stage if there are problems. Good behaviour is rewarded and there are special assemblies when pupils celebrate each other's achievements. The behaviour and discipline policy provides a framework for staff to follow and Year 4 pupils confirm that any instances of unkind behaviour would be dealt with well by the school.
- 35 The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are good and have resulted in an improvement in attendance over the last three years. Computerised records ensure that the school can keep track of absence and alert them to any emerging patterns of poor attendance. The school receives good support from the educational welfare service when absence is a real cause for concern. Rewards for good attendance are motivating pupils to attend regularly as seen in the good attendance of many pupils. The headteacher and staff are actively discouraging parents from taking holidays in term because of the negative effects on their children's learning and the attendance figures overall. Punctuality is well-monitored and records kept of persistent latecomers. Teachers ensure that registration periods are calm and orderly and that lessons get off to a prompt start.
- 36 The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Whilst the school provides a range of experiences which help pupils to mature into responsible and caring adults, these do not include extra-curricular activities. There is a Breakfast Club and after school childcare but this is run by a private organisation to help working parents. Year 4 pupils confirm that they would like after school clubs so that they can extend their interests. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings with others through the Personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Sex education is taught sensitively through the curriculum in order to prepare pupils for the next stage of education. There is a personal profile that follows pupils throughout their time in school and records progress from one year to the next. This helps the next teacher to identify the starting points for learning. Year 4

pupils confirm that whilst they will be sad to leave the school, they feel well prepared for their transfer to middle school.

- 37 The school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. The use of assessment in the Foundation stage is now rigorous and is used well to plan the next learning steps. There are now good systems, consistent throughout the school, to enable teachers to chart pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Satisfactory systems are developing in other subjects. The school uses data from national tests well to analyse strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. This results in a stronger emphasis being placed on some areas such as developing comprehension skills in reading and problem solving in mathematics. Data is also used to group pupils by ability and set common targets for each group. However, information about pupils' individual achievements are not identified clearly enough, resulting in some pupils not achieving as well as they might. This is particularly noticeable amongst Year 4 pupils, when the work provided does not take full account of what they already know.
- 38 Pupils' personal development is monitored well. Teachers and assistants know the pupils well and are sensitive to their additional needs. Pupils keep records of their achievements and end of year reports in files, which provide good information about personal and academic development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 39 Parents regard the school as effective in encouraging their children to work hard and achieve their best. This was the picture at the time of the last inspection. The school recognises that the support of parents is vital in continuing to raise standards. Whilst most parents are happy with all that the school provides for their children, they are less happy with the information they receive on the progress their children are making. They would also appreciate it if the school could provide an interesting range of extra curricular activities.
- 40 The quantity of information that parents receive is satisfactory. The prospectus is a bright, attractive document and apart from the lack of information on the attendance of pupils, provides a useful range of information for new parents. The annual report of the governing body fulfils all legal requirements. There is a regular newsletter and many letters home which provide parents with news on events in the school. At the autumn meeting for parents, they are introduced to teachers and given information on what their children will be learning over the year. The parents' evening in the spring is a formal consultation evening at which teachers and parents share information on the progress that children have made and what they need to do to improve. Following the issue of the annual report in the summer, parents can contact the school if they wish to discuss anything further. As a result of these arrangements, parents feel that there is only one real opportunity to consult teachers on a formal basis. Reports to parents contain useful information on what pupils can do in subjects but little information on what they need to do to improve. During the inspection, parents often talked with teachers informally, before and after school, and most parents confirm that the school values their interest and welcomes them in at any time.
- 41 Parental involvement in the life of the school is good. The headteacher sends out questionnaires to parents to seek their views on various aspects of the school and parents at the meeting prior to the inspection confirmed that their views are acted upon. For example, the format of the written reports was changed after parents expressed their concerns about them. A small number of parents help regularly in

school and some are pursuing qualifications with support from the school. The partnership with parents begins with a home visit before children start school and this helps children to settle down more quickly. The school has helped interested parents to understand the literacy and numeracy strategies by offering workshops on helping their children with homework. Parents sign the reading and homework diaries which are a good means of communication between teachers and parents. Parents are currently involved in planning the 'Walking Bus' initiative. The Parents' and Friends Association has supported the school well with raising funds to enhance the experience of pupils. All these initiatives are having a good impact on pupils' learning and on their lives.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 42 The headteacher and key staff provide sound leadership and manage the day-to-day running of the school well. The head and deputy headteacher work effectively together to provide a caring Christian ethos in which all members of the school community are valued. The headteacher has created a positive atmosphere in which pupils behave well and are able to learn successfully. An open and honest approach is taken to examining the work of the school and in deciding how to best improve the quality of learning to raise standards. The LEA has been asked to help and their advice has been acted upon. This has enabled standards in mathematics to be raised. Standards are also rising in reading. A much-needed impetus is now being given to improving standards in writing. There are signs that the teaching of writing is improving and that standards will rise as a consequence. However, standards have been too low in recent years. The school has not acted as quickly as it should have. The LEA is now providing support and this is improving the education of pupils presently in school, although those who moved through in recent years were not able to benefit. More attention is now paid to checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Weaknesses in the teaching are known. The headteacher, with support from the LEA, is taking strong and determined action to remedy the weaknesses in teaching and learning in the Year 1/2 class. That said, more could be done to check on how well pupils are learning, in all classes, by analysing the work in their books. There are noticeable inconsistencies, which if identified and remedied have the potential to influence standards further. At the moment, for example, Year 4 pupils are not achieving as well as Year 3 pupils in mixed age classes, largely because they receive much the same levels of work in science, history and geography.
- 43 Despite these weaknesses, the headteacher and staff have acted purposefully to make some important improvements since the last inspection. The provision for ICT and the standards achieved have vastly improved. Another major improvement has been in the provision for the younger children in the Early Years' Unit. The deputy head has remodelled the teaching in the Foundation Stage to match the six nationally agreed areas of learning. There is now a much stronger emphasis on extending skills and language through practical activities. She has also been successful in promoting this same style of teaching through the infant classes, where it has proved equally effective. Plans are now at an advanced stage to remodel the teaching methods in the junior classes by promoting pupils' 'thinking skills' and giving them greater opportunities to express their own ideas.
- 44 The quality of the subject leadership is satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is effective in helping the school to identify aspects that need to be improved. Over the last year, the role of the subject leaders has been strengthened. They now examine teachers' planning, check on what is needed prior to being allocated a financial allowance, and write an annual action plan

identifying strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Devolving the role in this way has been a positive step. However, the school tends to operate at three distinct levels, the Foundation Stage, the infants and the juniors. Each one plans separately and operates somewhat independently of the others. As a consequence, most subject leaders have a much clearer grasp of what is happening within the level they teach, than in the other two and do not gain a clear enough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. They feel much more confident trying to improve standards in their own department than in the others. The leadership provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The special needs policy has been updated and the staff have been prepared well for the new national Code of Practice.

- 45 The governing body has a very strong commitment to the school. Governors have a good understanding of how it operates. They are aware of where the school has reached in its development and have a clear vision for the future. They are equally aware of the potential problems it may face in the coming years. They have used this knowledge well in their search for effective staff to replace some excellent teachers who have been promoted. The appointments of the deputy headteacher, a very skilled Year 2 teacher and a nursery nurse have proved to be highly effective. Governors maintain a rigorous analysis of the school's finances. This enables them to oversee the allocation of the school's annual budget and to monitor the spending decisions with care. The budget surplus arose through losing experienced staff and gaining younger teachers in their place. It has been used to maintain the ratio of teachers to pupils and to prepare for the impact of the coming drop in the school roll. Together with the headteacher, the governors have made a series of good appointments over recent years. They are very committed to driving up standards still further.
- 46 There are sound procedures to ensure that teachers' performance is managed. They help the staff to identify targets for self-improvement. The school also sets targets for the teachers. These are based upon identified weaknesses established in the school improvement plan. For example, raising standards in numeracy, through the local education authority's intensive support, became a target for every teacher (and standards were raised). This year the school's emphasis is rightly focussed on English. Teachers arriving at the school, including those just entering the profession, are given good support from colleagues. This enables them to settle quickly and to be accepted as full members of the school.
- 47 Control and day-to-day management of finances is good. The efficient school secretary supports the headteacher and staff with financial issues. She is a member of the Finance Committee of the school's governing body and keeps them very well informed. Subject leaders are also provided with regular updates on the spending of their budgets. Modern technology is used very well to support administration. No major weaknesses were found in the most recent audit of the school's finances and minor issues have been rectified. The specific grant to support pupils with special educational needs is used effectively to employ extra support staff. Since the last inspection, finances have been well directed towards improving the provision for ICT and for developing the facilities of the Early Years Unit for children of reception age. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48 The headteacher, governors and staff should now:

- a) Improve the quality of teaching in one of the Year 1/2 classes by:
 - ensuring that the work provided takes account of pupils' different learning needs;
 - increasing the pace of lessons to keep pupils interested;
 - controlling class discussions more effectively to ensure that all pupils are able to participate.
(paragraphs 2, 17, 71, 73 and 75)
- b) Improve standards in writing by:
 - teaching pupils how to redraft and improve their work;
 - relying less on worksheets and encouraging pupils to express their own ideas;
 - making much better use of opportunities to develop pupils' writing styles in other subjects.
(paragraphs 3, 20, 26, 64, 70, 78, 86, 89 and 92)
- c) Help Year 4 pupils to achieve as well as their Year 3 classmates by:
 - teachers raising their expectations of the standards Year 4 pupils should be achieving;
 - using the information gathered from assessing their learning to set individual targets to help them to know how they can improve;
 - checking the work in all pupils' books to identify and remedy any weaknesses in learning.
(paragraphs 8, 21, 22, 24, 37, 42, 66, 76, 79 and 87)
- d) Halt the decline in standards in music by:
 - providing training and support for those teaching the subject;
 - seeking expertise to boost pupils' learning through additional activities;
 - monitoring the teaching and learning to ensure that standards begin to rise.
(paragraphs 7, 19, 96 and 99)

When drawing up their action plan governors will have to take account of three minor issues by:

- i) Providing specific programmes for pupils with special educational needs to improve their reading and writing skills.
(paragraphs 8, 21, 96 and 99)
- ii) Increasing the opportunities parents have to consult teachers about their children's learning and providing information about what children are expected to learn and the targets set to achieve this.
(paragraph 40)
- iii) Developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
(paragraph 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	14	16	2	0	0
Percentage	0	20	35	40	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		199
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	18	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	26
	Girls	13	13	16
	Total	30	31	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (75)	66 (75)	89 (78)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	27	28
	Girls	13	15	16
	Total	31	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (64)	89 (78)	94 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
192	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

0
0
0
3

0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Average class size	24.9

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	340,100
Total expenditure	406,954
Expenditure per pupil	1,966
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,460
Balance carried forward to next year	67,892

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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	199
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	35	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	49	0	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	42	5	0	2
The teaching is good.	73	25	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	36	24	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	25	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	18	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	49	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	20	2	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	38	18	0	11

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

- 49 Children are admitted into the reception class in September each year. In addition, a nursery assistant has been employed to provide early learning experiences for children who are in a pre-reception class. Together, these classes are referred to as the 'early year's unit'. There are three spacious rooms specially prepared to cater for children's social, physical and academic development and staffed by two teachers and a nursery assistant.
- 50 When children enter school their attainment is lower than expected for their age and their language skills and background knowledge are well below typical levels. Children achieve well in all the six areas of learning and most reach the levels expected in their personal, social and emotional, mathematical, physical and creative development. However, a fair proportion of children do not reach the levels expected in communication, language and literacy or in their knowledge and understanding of the world, despite the good provision. There are no reception children with special educational needs.
- 51 Teaching is good, with some very good features, particularly in mathematics. Work in the six areas of learning is often well linked together by themes. This helps the children to make sense of their learning in relevant, practical situations. Good teamwork ensures that all staff have the same high expectations of the children and this helps to create a secure and rich learning environment. Careful records are maintained on every child and targets are set for them to raise their achievement in writing, reading and mathematics. Standards of teaching and learning in reception have risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection. Much of this is due to the strong commitment of the deputy headteacher who leads the reception team with enthusiasm and dedication. Typifying this are the home visits arranged to establish close working links from the outset.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 52 Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. When they enter school, much time in the autumn term is profitably spent encouraging them to share equipment and to play together. This has proved to be highly effective. Children now co-operate well in their group activities and have developed good independent skills to choose their own tasks. For example, routines are firmly established enabling them to dress, paint, clear away and stack their finished paintings, before washing brushes and preparing the table for the next group. All this is done automatically, without any adult support or encouragement. This frees teachers to teach small groups. The school's very caring ethos leads to very good behaviour. Children gradually develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. There is a strong emphasis on giving children responsibilities and expecting them to help others. For example, after constructing model figures, one child explained to others in the group, 'No that doesn't go there, I'll show you'. The theme for this half term is 'I'm Special', and this is just how the children are made to feel.
- 53 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in all classes. Children enjoy learning. The nursery nurse introduces them warmly and sensitively to the school. Reception teachers further develop the children's confidence so that they become well integrated into school life. All staff in

reception have a clear understanding of the particular needs of each child. A strong emphasis is given to raising their self-esteem. Every success is openly celebrated. Any act of misbehaviour is dealt with very discretely and resolved. Children are helped to understand their own feelings and those of others. Gradually, this helps them to develop good relationships.

Communication, language and literacy

- 54 Confident, more able children discuss stories and draw inferences from them, such as, 'She might be hurt because she slipped on that banana!' However, increasing numbers of children are starting school each year with limited vocabularies and with very little ability to speak with confidence. Although no children are on the register for special educational needs, some do receive speech therapy training whilst others are given extra help to communicate more easily. The school recognises that speaking and listening skills are key areas to be improved. Children are encouraged to extend these vital skills through interesting experiences, interactions and discussions. They speak to one another in role-play, for example, when they visit 'The Doctor's Surgery'; they build models and discuss how they work; they are helped to contribute to small group discussions. All children's language skills develop well and they listen with much interest. However, almost a quarter of them still lack confidence to express their ideas verbally to the class. Children handle books confidently, turn pages carefully and enjoy reading. Much written work is completed. Most learn to recognise letters by their names and by their sounds and develop their skills at writing them. Most can write their names, but many find it hard to make rapid progress in their literacy work as they have such limited vocabularies.
- 55 Teaching is good. Much time is spent talking to children to develop their thinking and to extend their vocabularies. Teachers use sophisticated language well. Before a creative art session, for example, one teacher asked, 'Are you going to sketch or draw? What technique are you going to use? What media have you chosen?' Staff are skilled in aiming their questions at the right level for individual children. However, they have a tendency to remain at the one table during lessons, whilst a succession of groups visit them to undertake their tasks. Adult support is not always available and opportunities are missed to circulate, praise, assess and extend children's language skills still further. Books are studied well, for example, to carry out research to find out the exact colours of different animals before painting a jungle scene. ICT is used well to extend children's learning. Hearing audiotapes through headphones develops listening skills well. However, this tends to be a passive activity with children listening to recorded stories. Opportunities are missed for them to hear tapes containing instructions that require some kind of active response on their part.

Mathematical Development

- 56 There are large variations of ability in the children's levels of mathematical development. In free choice, a boy sorted 26 hexagonal blocks into a circle. He counted them out loud, then sang the 'Alphabet Song' to them. As he explained, 'Each block stands for a letter!' Other children work hard to sort objects into small groups of two or three. Children learn well through a rich variety of practical activities by experimenting with handling, sorting, assembling, matching and building. Work develops naturally from other subjects. In a science experiment, children used magnifying glasses and mirrors to study, then draw their eye colour. In the numeracy lesson next day, more able children suggested this information could be represented on a graph, having done a similar study on hair colour. By the end of the reception year, almost all children reach the levels expected. Effective teaching in small groups

helps them to learn at a very good rate. They become confident at doing mental calculations because encouragement and praise is given for thinking and trying, not merely for being correct. They also use mathematical language precisely (with words such as bigger, more, square etc) in other subjects.

- 57 The teaching of mathematics is very good, enabling children of all abilities to achieve well. There is an appropriate mix of direct teaching, questioning in small groups and stimulating independent activities to promote children's learning. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced sensitively so the children are well prepared for their work in Year 1. Teachers assess the children's levels of understanding in every lesson and note those who require extra help to develop their skills. ICT is regularly included in the mathematics lessons but it tends to be a choice activity. Lower attaining children do not use it enough to refine their numeracy skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 58 Many children begin the Foundation Stage with very limited experiences of life. Staff work extremely hard to broaden their horizons and children achieve well. For example, last term they ate fruits from all around the world; they dressed in costumes of different cultures; they entered their 'Jungle Corner' to learn about the creatures of the rainforest; they even 'swam' down into the depths of the ocean to produce their underwater collage. Such varied experiences arouse high interest levels and stimulate rich creative responses from the children. They are used imaginatively to extend the children's vocabulary as well as their general knowledge. For example, when studying eye colours, children were introduced to words such as 'iris', 'pupil', 'eyeball' and 'hazel'. This 'learning-by-doing' approach permeates every facet of reception life. The nursery assistant encourages children to build models using construction kits. This helps them to develop their manipulation skills. Older children construct vehicles and discuss them, comparing their sizes and number of wheels. They are pleased with their efforts and they want to talk about them. Visits are made in the local area and the children consider what they like and dislike about what they see. They learn how to program a machine so that it delivers letters to different 'addresses' on the carpet. However, even with such good provision, a quarter of the pupils entering Year 1 do so with standards lower than those expected for their age in this area of learning.

- 59 The quality of the teaching in this area is good. Lessons are very thoroughly planned and learning is based firmly on the children's own experiences. The staff's subject knowledge is good and activities are well designed for children to progress systematically along the 'stepping stones' of the curriculum. The school grounds provide limited opportunities for the children to explore their immediate environment.

Physical development

- 60 Children in reception have appropriate control of their movements. They show good co-ordination as they negotiate the different elements of their 'mini-gym' or as they pursue and stop the large ball that they rolled across the hall. In their movements around the hall, they also show good awareness of space and of safety. In the classroom, children develop increasing control of pencils, brushes and scissors as they create pictures, models and collages. They are even taught to grip pencils in various ways, for example, to use 'floppy' hands when they are sketching. Children manipulate playdough skilfully to make faces on their boards. They are encouraged to use simple tools, such as hole-punches, to fasten together different materials. They

follow programs on the computer to refine their skill at using the mouse to move the cursor or objects on the monitor.

- 61 Teaching in this area is again good. Some form of physical development is included in the planning for almost every lesson. Often these activities prove to be the most popular when children are given the choice to select what they want to do. Staff try to ensure that children have regular outdoor play, though, as they were exposed to the elements, snow prevented this on the week of the inspection. The plan to provide a covered area outdoors would partly overcome this problem. Physical education lessons are carefully organised to ensure that children benefit from well-structured activities, including dance, ball skills and gymnastics. Good resources enhance all these three elements.

Creative development

- 62 Children benefit from a rich diet of artistic experiences. They use a wide range of media, including natural and man-made materials, paint, crayons and pastels, to make pictures on a variety of scales, with a range of textures. Children illustrate their written work with lively drawings; they create their friend's face using a computer drawing package; they sketch old and new toys and explore their materials and textures. In music most children name and play simple instruments and sing lively songs with spirited actions. Role-play is regularly encouraged, such as visiting 'The Doctor's Surgery' (after a bad road accident).
- 63 Teaching is good. Planning is of a high quality and the work always has a purpose. Sometimes it stimulates discussions; sometimes it develops into a display; invariably it is linked to some broader theme and adds breadth to the learning. The teachers show much creativity themselves in the challenges they set. Having studied portraits by Pablo Picasso, the children painted portraits themselves, then cut them into four squares and reassembled them in a different order – the result, instant cubism!

ENGLISH

- 64 Standards in English are below the levels expected at the ages of seven and nine. This is an improvement in the test results achieved both at the time of the last inspection and in 2002. Pupils' literacy skills are below the levels expected when they enter Year 1. They make satisfactory progress but the picture is complex because there are differences between the standards achieved in reading, writing and speaking and listening and the progress made in infant and junior classes. The school has recognised that standards in English have been too low for a number of years and is now receiving intensive support from LEA. This has resulted in the successful implementation of a range of strategies to help teach reading. For example, teachers have all been observed and helped to improve their teaching. The input from LEA advisory staff to help improve writing is only just beginning. Although this is resulting in some improvements in the teaching of writing, it has not yet had time to have an impact on standards. Pupils' progress in tests is now tracked throughout school and the results are analysed to find out where there are weaknesses. Although these are used as targets for class groups to achieve, pupils do not have individual targets to aim for and this is limiting their progress.
- 65 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Recognising that boys do not achieve as well as girls, the subject leader has improved the resources available, especially the quality and range of the books to appeal to boys and encourage them to read. Sets of books that are read with the teacher in small groups

now include non-fiction books about war and science fiction books. During a reading session the boys were enthusiastic about the books and said they were the 'best yet'. However, the subject leader does not check pupils' written work and therefore does not have a clear idea of why standards in writing have been so low throughout the school or what can be done to improve them.

- 66 More able pupils are identified and placed in classes according to ability in the infants. They receive very good teaching in Year 2 where they are given more challenging work to do, and are achieving well. In this class, standards of reading, writing and speaking and listening are rising sharply. The grouping of pupils by ability in the juniors is helping teachers to target their work more accurately and provide challenging work for the more able pupils. This is helping them to reach the higher levels. In the mixed age junior classes, Year 3 pupils raise their performance to match their older classmates. However, Year 4 pupils cannot use older pupils as a marker for their aspirations and their progress, although satisfactory, is not accelerating as quickly as that of Year 3 pupils.
- 67 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the infants where they are all in a lower achieving Year 1/2 class. They receive good quality support from classroom assistants who help them to learn by discussing work with them, questioning them to ensure they understand and helping them to sustain concentration. However the work planned is not always well adapted to their needs and there are no additional programmes or strategies used to help develop basic literacy skills. This results in pupils relying on adults to complete work and not developing into independent learners. In the juniors, they make good progress in a smaller class for lower achieving pupils. Here work is planned at the correct level of difficulty and they get good quality support. For example during the whole class lesson the teacher asked pupils to write, on individual whiteboards, some verbs from the text. Learning support assistants worked with small groups to help them to identify and record these correctly providing good practice in reading and writing.
- 68 In reading, infant pupils achieve steadily and junior pupils achieve well to reach the standards expected by the end of Year 4. Intensive support from the LEA has boosted the teaching of reading and there are now a number of successful strategies in use. Reading books now go home and parents listen to pupils reading regularly. All classes have a weekly lesson in the library where they learn how to find the books they need, enjoy looking at a range of different books and talk about them. The daily reading sessions include discussions about the books read with adults, writing book reviews, a free choice of books and the use of some non-fiction texts. Pupils enjoy reading and discuss a range of favourite authors knowledgeably. Reading is well supported in other subjects, such as reading instructions in ICT lessons and researching information in science lessons.
- 69 In speaking and listening, pupils achieve satisfactorily in the infants and well in the juniors to reach the levels expected by the end of Year 4. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work and teachers use strategies such as 'talking partners' well. Pupils have good opportunities for short discussions with a partner before reporting back to the class. This encourages all the pupils to participate and contribute. Speaking skills are also developed well in other subjects. New terms are introduced carefully and pupils are encouraged to talk about their work. For example, they explain their observations and make predictions in science and evaluate their own and others' work in art. However listening is not as well developed. Occasionally, pupils do not always listen carefully enough to the teachers or to each other.

- 70 Pupils' have been underachieving in writing, which is why standards are well below expected levels by the end of Year 4. In recent years, the teaching of writing has been unsatisfactory, consisting of filling in worksheets and too little extended writing. This is improving in literacy lessons and pupils are now engaged in a wider variety of writing tasks. However, opportunities are still missed to develop pupils' writing skills in other subjects, such as writing from different points of view in history and writing evaluatively in geography and design and technology. In addition, there is not enough insistence on clear, accurate, joined writing. Pupils are often reluctant to write and lack confidence. In Year 2, pupils respond well to greater challenges and write with imagination. For example, one Year 2 pupil wrote 'Autumn is leaves, playing tig, Autumn is lonely, leaves on a skeleton tree, Autumn is storm, whirling around.' However, in other classes, all but the most able experience problems with handwriting, grammar and spelling and there is limited use of interesting vocabulary. Very little re-drafting and improvement of writing has been encouraged in the past to enable pupils to feel proud of the finished results. Recent changes are slowly taking effect. For example, the more able set of Year 3/4 pupils were given white boards to jot down their words and ideas for a rhyming poem. This proved very successful and helped pupils to write fluently.
- 71 Teaching is satisfactory overall but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. In the lower achieving Year 1/2 class the teaching of fundamental reading and writing skills is weak and pupils underachieve. In this class, the pace of learning is slow and the more able pupils become restless, shout out answers and dominate the discussions. Other pupils do not get enough opportunities to contribute. Pupils are taught letter sounds but this is not related to whole words making it difficult for pupils to see where their learning is going. Teaching is very good in Year 2 and pupils make up some of the ground lost previously. Language skills are very well taught. The teacher asks probing questions to make pupils think. Lessons are presented in a lively and enthusiastic style, which motivates pupils to work hard and learn rapidly. Pupils enjoy reading the shared book with expression and use different voices for Red Riding Hood and the Wolf. They are able to suggest an interesting range of words to describe the Wolf, for example, sneaky, snide, quick and cunning. They read their work out confidently and proudly to the rest of the class.
- 72 Teaching in junior classes is satisfactory and a fair amount of the teaching is good. Pupils are well managed and behave well. Lessons take place in an atmosphere that encourages pupils to speak out confidently and to try out new ideas. The extra coaching provided in additional literacy lessons is helping to boost confidence as well as improving standards. ICT is well used in English lessons and all pupils have good opportunities to develop the skills of word processing.

MATHEMATICS

- 73 Standards are below average and similar to those indicated in the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds. Results have improved since the last inspection. Junior pupils achieve well to reach the levels expected by the age of nine. Most pupils in Year 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is better in the class containing only pupils in Year 2 because of stronger teaching. However a significant number of pupils in one of the mixed Year 1/2 class do not make the progress they should because teaching is weak. Junior pupils make good progress. They are grouped by ability so work is usually well matched to their specific needs. However, there are occasions when the more able ones in Year 4 could be further challenged and assessment used more effectively to plan for quicker progress. The school has recognised that girls'

performance is better than boys'. As a consequence, more emphasis is now placed on practical approaches and problem solving, which appeal equally to boys and girls.

- 74 Number skills are given a high priority. As a result, pupils are confident with numbers and understand that a range of methods can be used in problem solving. Pupils in Years 3/4, for example, used their knowledge of 'doubling' to calculate perimeters of squares and rectangles more quickly. They have a sound understanding of the value of numbers up to 1000, multiply and divide numbers by 10 or 100 accurately and understand simple fractions and their equivalents. Year 2 pupils learn at a good rate and quickly grasp the value of tens and units, the multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and how to use number patterns to solve mathematical problems. More able pupils understand how to check their answers using the reverse process. Although pupils' investigation of shape and measure and data handling is adequate, opportunities to apply those skills across the curriculum do not yet feature strongly in teachers' planning and tend only to be seen occasionally in the teaching of science investigations. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning, for example for pupils to practise and consolidate their number skills.
- 75 Good teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4, accounts for pupils' good achievement. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is more varied. Although teaching is good in Year 2, the teaching in one of the Year 1/2 classes is unsatisfactory. In this class, lessons are planned without enough consideration of pupils' existing knowledge. This leads to lack of challenge in some cases and confusion in others, with resultant difficulties in learning. The stronger lessons in Year 2 and the Year 3/4 classes are characterised by their brisk and challenging pace, especially during the mental 'starter' sessions. These teachers are good at placing number work within the context of a problem and encouraging quick and accurate calculation before inviting pupils to explain the processes they used. At other times pupils use white boards effectively to draft out their calculation and teachers allow discussion time so pupils can check and compare their answers. Most lessons are planned well, with clear objectives focusing on what pupils will learn. These are shared with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Learning resources, such as overhead projectors, are used effectively to give visual support for pupils. Good use is made of small practical apparatus, such as counters and coins, to help those who find learning more difficult, including pupils with special educational needs, to make good progress. Relationships in classes are good and this promotes mutual respect and a good working atmosphere. Pupils are co-operative and mostly well behaved, motivated by the pace and interest of the lessons. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use the numeracy strategy well. In some lessons teachers do not expect enough of higher attaining pupils, who sometimes revisit topics unnecessarily.
- 76 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has implemented recent initiatives well. This has enabled a clearer focus on planning and assessment, whilst retaining the confident approach to teaching overall. The impact of the extra support is beginning to show in the rising trend in standards. Monitoring of teaching quality is satisfactory but overseeing the quality of pupils' work lacks rigour as well as the use of assessment to set targets for individual progress and attainment. For example, teachers' marking is inconsistent, and too seldom includes pointers to help pupils to improve.

SCIENCE

- 77 From a below average starting point, pupils achieve well to reach the levels expected at the ages of seven and 9. Pupils' good achievements were recognised at the time of

the last inspection. However, since then pupils' skills of investigation have been extended further. As a result, their understanding of how to plan and carry out a fair scientific test is good for their age. Pupils' work in science makes a valuable contribution to their personal, social and health education. For example, pupils are encouraged to consider the application of science to help them to choose healthy lifestyles and understand issues such as famine and conserving the world's resources. Pupils find the practical nature of the subject interesting and intriguing. This helps them to acquire positive attitudes to learning. Those who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, are well catered for. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, one of these pupils, with sensitive support from a classroom assistant, made a very telling comment. When asked by the teacher how the waterproof tests could be made fair, he replied, 'I would keep the size of the pot and the fabric the same and keep the same amount of water'. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject leader has had a strong influence on the teaching of scientific skills and has helped other staff to teach science to a good standard by planning lessons for them. However, there are differences in the amount of work recorded and the quality of work done in different classes. Teaching, as seen through the work produced in pupils' books, is not as good in some classes as in others, or as in the lessons seen during the inspection. Although pupils' work is examined, these weaknesses have not yet been remedied.

- 78 Much of the work done in science is through practical experiments. This has many benefits, particularly in improving pupils' thinking and speaking skills. A lot of predicting is done and pupils have good opportunities to share their ideas. This is done particularly well in Year 2 where the teacher gives pupils one or two minutes to discuss and formulate their ideas before sharing them with the whole class. Pupils are encouraged to give reasons for their opinions and to explain how they will carry out an experiment and measure the results. Their knowledge of science improves well, along with their mathematical and ICT skills, as they discuss the units of measurement and feed the data into computers to produce tables and graphs to show their results. Despite the good gains made in speaking, mathematics and ICT, there is scope to make more use of the subject to improve pupils' weaknesses in writing. In about half of the classes, pupils are encouraged to write extensively to explain their observations and findings. In these classes, pupils' understanding of how to follow the scientific method and record their findings clearly and accurately develops well. However, in the other classes, worksheets are used too often and this limits opportunities pupils have to express their findings in their own words.
- 79 Teaching is good, particularly of the skills of scientific investigation. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to channel pupils' learning successfully. Lessons are carefully planned and pupils are invariably made aware of the purpose in their learning. In particular, teachers constantly remind pupils to refer back to the problem that they are trying to solve. This is reinforced throughout the lesson to help pupils to think logically and work systematically. Demonstrations are used to good effect. During these sessions, teachers ask probing questions to ensure that it is the pupils' ideas that determine what happens next. For example, when Year 3 and 4 pupils investigated dissolving, the teacher asked, 'What remains constant and what should I change?' In response, one pupil suggested, 'The solid material changes and the amount of water remains the same'. During these collective discussions, pupils become well acquainted with new scientific language, such as solution and evaporation. When the task has been made clear, pupils have good opportunities to explore and learn for themselves. These sessions are very carefully guided. For example, teachers provide pupils with large sheets of paper, divided into sections, to help them to record their predictions and agree on what factors remain constant and

which are the variables. Pupils collaborate well and teachers circulate effectively to check their learning and to prompt new ideas. At the end of the lesson, pupils' learning and discoveries are shared. This enables the teacher to assess how successfully they are learning. This approach to science enables most pupils to achieve well. However, pupils are almost always taught in mixed ability and mixed age groups. Within these arrangements more able pupils are catered for to some extent, for example, by explaining to others or as acting as the scribe for the group. Year 3 pupils achieve particularly well because they strive to keep up with their older classmates. However, Year 4 pupils are not similarly inspired to raise their performance accordingly. More could be expected of the Year 4 pupils by providing additional challenges and setting specific individual targets to encourage them to aim higher.

ART AND DESIGN

- 80 Standards are at the levels expected at the age of seven and nine and pupils of all abilities achieve soundly. Standards are not as good as at the last inspection because less time is now allocated to the teaching of art. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of art to be able to teach the skills needed, for example, how to use pastel crayons and mix colours. However, because art is taught in one hour lessons, most work is completed in pencil, pastel or crayon with limited opportunities to use paint, clay, textiles or ICT. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject leader has provided teachers with suitable guidance to ensure that pupils are able to build on what they have learnt previously.
- 81 Junior pupils use sketchbooks to good effect to explore ideas, practice designs and add detail to their drawings. Occasional sessions, taken by visiting artists, extend pupils' experiences well. Pupils study the work of other artists, including art from other cultures, as a stimulus for their own work but there are no visits to galleries to see original works of art. Artwork is well displayed throughout the school. This motivates pupils and adds enjoyment to their learning.
- 82 Year 1 and 2 pupils explore different ideas using a variety of materials. They learn how to mix colours with paint and to work with pencils and pastels. They work carefully and in some detail. For example, Year 2 pupils illustrated animals from around the world as part of a class topic. They use paint and pastels to create pictures with character. Year 3 to 4 pupils improve their observational skills and use materials effectively to achieve the effect they want. For example, they use watercolour pencils to produce quiet thoughtful pictures showing the reflection of trees on water based on 'Still Water' by Gustav Klimt. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the class and make satisfactory progress.
- 83 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' provide suitable visual stimuli to motivate the pupils and clear explanations and demonstrations help pupils to learn different techniques. Interesting activities are chosen and, as a result, pupils work with enthusiasm and behave very well. However they tend to copy the pictures used as a stimulus rather than working in the artist's style and are given a limited choice of materials to work with, these being chosen by the teacher. Pupils are starting to evaluate theirs and others' work at a basic level. They are helped to improve their work and are proud of their finished work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 84 Pupils, including the more able ones and those with special educational needs, achieve steadily. Most pupils reach the standards expected by the ages of seven and nine, as they did at the time of the last inspection. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject leader has only recently taken responsibility for design and technology but has made a bright start in identifying the right area for improvement, namely that pupil's design skills are not developing as quickly as their making skills in junior classes.
- 85 Infant pupils' skills of designing, making and evaluating their work receive sufficient attention. Pupils are encouraged to plan ahead by talking about their work, drawing diagrams and writing simple instructions to help them to work methodically. For example, one pupil wrote, 'I will stick my container together with staples and sellotape'. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect on their work and consider how they could improve it. For example another pupil wrote, 'My favourite part of making a container for a Christmas biscuit was the decorating. I could improve it by using tinsel on the basket' Planning beforehand and evaluating afterwards improve the quality of their work and also enhances their thinking and speaking skills. Junior pupils make steady progress in learning to cut and join materials together. This is evident in their model catamarans, which have neatly trimmed sails and stable bows. However, the models are all alike. Individuality is not valued as much as in infant classes.
- 86 Teaching is satisfactory. Activities are interesting, pupils can see the purpose in their work and often become engrossed in the practical activity. The projects enhance pupils' learning of other subjects. For example, by constructing model 'shadufs', Year 3/4 pupils were much better equipped to understand the importance of irrigation in Egypt. Good opportunities to use computers enable pupils to find out more about the technologies of other cultures. However, junior pupils are usually given instructions to follow when making models. Although their reading skills improve, not enough attention is paid to creativity in the designing. Lessons are well organised and safely managed. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together. Infant teachers make good use of structured worksheets to help pupils to think about their designs and later explain what they have done and what they like about their work. However, during the lessons, teachers do not always intervene at just the right moment to draw pupils' attention to the more successful techniques. For example, when Year 1 pupils made bangles, some pupils stuck little pieces of foil on the papier-mache ring but the edges would not fasten down. However, other pupils overlapped their foil strips to produce a very effective decoration but this was not shared. Pupils do not have books in which to record their work. Opportunities are therefore missed to use design and technology to improve pupils' evaluative writing and it is harder for the subject leader to review pupils' learning in different classes.

GEOGRAPHY

- 87 Pupils enter Year 1 with limited knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve well in the infants and, by the age of seven, standards are in line with those normally seen. Junior pupils achieve steadily to reach the levels expected by the age of nine. Most of the strengths in the subject are found in the infant classes, and particularly in Year 2. Here the work is lively, relevant and varied. In Years 3 and 4 the work seen in pupils' books is less challenging, less engaging and less focussed on developing skills. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. However, more able pupils, and especially those in Year 4, are not sufficiently stretched because they undertake the same work as Year 3 pupils.

Leadership in the subject is good. Although standards are similar to the time of the last inspection, planning is now more thorough and work is well assessed. The good management impacts strongly in Years 1 and 2 but has yet to influence the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4.

- 88 Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because they are expected to think for themselves and to express their own ideas. When studying different modes of transport, a Year 1 pupil wrote, 'Last time I went on holiday I went on an aeroplane ... when I was in the sky I saw a sunset ... the best thing about the sunset was its colours'. By Year 2, levels of intellectual challenge are profound. Pupils discuss 'Energy' – what it is, where it comes from, how it can be renewed. More able pupils use terms such as 'environmentally friendly' and consider how energy can be conserved. Members of the 'Energy Squad' even circulate the school each breaktime to ensure that lights have been switched off. Slogans are designed, such as, 'Please try to save oil because you're saving natural resources'. Displays show, 'Where to recycle in Uttoxeter'. Learning is now at the higher level of influencing attitudes and establishing moral rules about how we should treat our school, our town, our world. This level of involvement is rarely seen in the work of the junior classes. Achievement here is restricted, because the emphasis is more focussed on learning facts than on developing geographical skills.
- 89 Teaching is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the juniors. Good links are made with other subject areas. For example, computers are used in most lessons for writing, research or mapping skills; themes being studied, such as 'Rivers', are further developed in the literacy lessons; surveys of litter extend graph work in numeracy. Learning in all these subjects becomes more relevant and stimulating as a result. In Years 3 and 4, there is a good emphasis on developing the subject's vocabulary with words such as 'source', 'estuary' and 'irrigation'. However, pupils of different abilities are given very similar worksheets to complete. They enjoy undertaking research, such as on Arctic animals, but too much of this is copied directly from books. This does not help pupils to improve their skills in writing.

HISTORY

- 90 Although no history lessons were seen, pupils' completed work indicates that they reach standards at the levels expected by the ages of seven and nine. Taking into account pupils' low starting point when they enter Year 1, infant pupils achieve well and junior pupils achieve steadily. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress in both the infants and the juniors. Strengths in the subject are the rich curriculum provided for pupils in the infant classes; the development of the history topics in a range of different subjects; and, the expertise of the subject leader. These factors indicate that the quality of learning is rising in the infant classes but is not as high in the junior classes as it was at the time of the previous inspection. This is largely because two highly skilled teachers have moved on.
- 91 Infant pupils are encouraged to step back in time and enter the world of famous people in the past. Drama is used well to ask questions and seek opinions. Interviews are then printed. For example, a Year 1 pupil, in the role of Florence Nightingale, wrote, 'The hospitals are very dirty because they are never cleaned. I am going to clean them up and make them better.' By Year 2, more able pupils even form opinions about the personalities that they have studied. For example, one girl wrote astutely that 'Florence Nightingale stood up for herself and did what she thought was right.' Study skills are developed well and computers are used frequently. In Years 3 and 4,

pupils learn about historical events well enough. For example they study Roman armour, weapons, roads, baths and houses. However, they are not given the same opportunities to place themselves in those times and to imagine what life would be like. There are no diaries, newspaper interviews, descriptions or stories and because of this, pupils' work lacks vibrancy. However, pupils enjoy their work and most reach the levels expected, though few exceed them.

- 92 The quality of teaching is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. In the Year 2 class, teaching is particularly strong and pupils make very good progress. In the infant classes, work is very closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. This is attributable to the teachers' accurate use of assessment to identify the levels at which pupils are working. As a result, some pupils reach standards higher than expected for their age. Work is planned to enable elements of history to be woven into literacy lessons, to stimulate opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking, reading and writing. By contrast, the work set in junior classes is largely based on worksheets. These provide information but do not sufficiently develop pupils' writing skills. There is a lack of challenge for Year 4 pupils because all pupils complete similar tasks. More able pupils produce extra work and find additional information, but rarely develop their ideas in their own words.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 93 Standards in ICT are above the levels expected at the age of seven and at the levels expected at the age of nine. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were too low throughout the school. The installation of a well-equipped ICT suite and the training of staff to use it have been influential factors. ICT skills are taught regularly and pupils have greater access to computers in the suite and in the classroom than before. ICT is now used effectively to support learning across a range of subjects, including numeracy, literacy and science as well as for researching geography and history topics. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support, which helps them to grasp the processes.
- 94 Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. The most rapid progress is seen in Years 1 and 2 where pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations of their capacity to handle difficult procedures. For example, Year 1 pupils were able to log on to a programme and retrieve work about a litter survey, which they had done earlier. Under the careful direction of the teacher, pupils learned how to select and interpret questions about their survey and record the information. Pupils' skills with the mouse and keyboard and their literacy skills improve at a good rate by reading instructions on screen and carrying out tricky procedures. Learning for Year 3 and 4 pupils is equally successful. For example, in a word processing lesson the teacher and pupils worked well together to identify how to enter text and how to edit text already entered. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to 'cut and paste' between two files which were open at the same time. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn independently because they are expected to complete the task on their own once the teacher has guided them through the process.
- 95 A very highly skilled and well-qualified teaching assistant provides much of the teaching in the ICT suite. There is a brisk and business like approach to lessons. Time in the suite is used to maximum effect because of the challenging activities planned into lessons. The class teacher's expertise enables them to support pupils very effectively. The combination of very good teaching of ICT skills and the added quality of support during lessons result in the pupils' good achievement. Teachers' confidence is evident throughout the school in the way they use ICT in lessons and to

enhance display. This provides a good model for pupils. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader oversees planning and by working alongside the teaching assistant gains an overview of standards.

MUSIC

- 96 The picture in music has changed significantly since the last inspection. The very good music specialist, who formerly taught all classes, has left. Consequently, standards are not as high as they were and the richness of the extracurricular activities, such as playing the recorder and singing in the school choir, has ceased. Unable to find skilled replacement, a person with musical knowledge (but not a trained teacher) has been employed to work with the pupils. This is a stopgap measure that is holding standards at acceptable levels but there is evidence to suggest that the pupils' love of music is declining. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons but apart from nine, who learn to play the violin, music does not play an important part in most pupils' school lives. ICT is not used in this subject.
- 97 In infant classes pupils make satisfactory progress. The musician and teachers work suitably together to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to sing, play instruments and begin some simple composing. Interesting selections of music are played and, after listening, pupils are able to capture the mood by describing the marching music as 'cold' or 'stiff.' One pupil, for example, vividly described an image of knights on horseback. Pupils learn to tap, shake and scrape contrasting rhythms in response to symbol cards. This helps pupils to understand how music is written down so that it can be played later.
- 98 In junior classes, the combined effect of the class teacher and the music tutor is more variable. In the more successful lessons, pupils have opportunities to play instruments to accompany their singing or compose short rhythmic patterns. As a result, pupils' singing is tuneful and enthusiastic. However, there are occasions when the music selected for listening is not stimulating or when the purpose behind the activities is not clearly explained. On these occasions, pupils do not respond enthusiastically.
- 99 The teaching in the two lessons seen was satisfactory. However, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. For example, they are not conversant with the work of different composers and are unfamiliar with composing their own pieces. This indicates that there have been weaknesses in teaching and learning over recent weeks and months. The hall is used for most music lessons. This offers plenty of space for pupils to explore movement to different rhythms. A good range of percussion instruments is made available and any unfamiliar ones are carefully explained, for example they are shown how to play a snare drum. The teacher and the music tutor both question the pupils, however this sometimes slows the pace of learning down because pupils spend more time answering questions than exploring music. However, having two adults in lessons does ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive support to help them understand more difficult ideas, such as notation. The subject leader is neither confident nor experienced and feels that she is on a steep learning curve herself. Consequently, she is not able to play an influential part in the school's development. More needs to be done if the school is to maintain satisfactory standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 100 Standards seen in PE are at the levels expected at the ages of seven and nine. There have been improvements since the last inspection in the way the curriculum is planned. The subject is soundly led and managed. Since being appointed the subject leader has provided a programme of work to help teachers to ensure that pupils' learning builds smoothly from one lesson to the next. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning by evaluating their own performance. This is working well. Pupils make steady progress in gymnastics, games and swimming. By the age of seven, pupils balance and move fluently and with good co-ordination. They throw and catch a ball confidently and work at different heights on apparatus, combining movements and balances in a sequence. They progress well in swimming and most are competent in water skills by the age of nine.
- 101 Teaching is satisfactory overall, very good in Year 2 and sometimes good in Years 3 and 4. Very effective teaching in a Year 2 lesson resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' skills of throwing and catching balls. Pupils were challenged by the activities that called on their personal as well as physical skills when they had to work in groups to devise their own version of a ball game. The teacher kept up a brisk pace throughout the lesson and questioned pupils well, for example to bring out the importance of the effect of exercise on heart rate. Pupils' speaking skills were also developed well when they evaluated each other's performance. Teachers' have good knowledge of the subject. This enables them to coach skills and techniques effectively, often through a combination of demonstration and explanation. These approaches were a major factor in pupils learning how to jump and land correctly and pass a ball accurately. All lessons focus clearly on improving skills and sufficient time is given for pupils to practise. Occasionally pupils spend too long on the same activity, such as skipping. When this happens the pace and challenge of the lesson, particularly for some boys, is not sustained. Teachers are sensitive to the additional needs of some pupils and ensure that they are supported through close supervision or by working in groups alongside their peers.