

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stafford

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124362

Headteacher: Mr F C Russell

Reporting inspector: Mr J A Sangster  
20010

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 248594

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marston Road Stafford
Postcode:	ST16 3BT
Telephone number:	01785 356685
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Cyples
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20010	John Sangster	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation
20404	John Evans	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	
11901	Pat Lowe	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Assessment

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's is a voluntary aided Catholic infant and junior school. There are 205 pupils on roll, which is broadly average for primary schools; 189 of these pupils (92 per cent) are of white UK origin, and of the others, 10 are of dual heritage, four are from black families and two are Chinese. All of the pupils speak English as their first language. Thirty-three pupils (16 per cent) have been identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly average, and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. The pupils' special educational needs include a range of learning difficulties. Although the number of pupils recognised as eligible for free school meals is below the national average at five per cent, this is not a true reflection of the socio-economic background of the pupils, which is broadly average, as is their attainment on entry to the school.

The school has close links with the local community, particularly the church, which is on an adjoining site.

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

St Patrick's Catholic Primary is a good school. The oldest pupils in the school achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and in other subjects they reach the expected levels for their age. All pupils, of whatever ability or ethnic background, make good progress from the time they enter the school. The quality of teaching in all parts of the school is good, with some examples of very good and excellent practice. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The headteacher and other senior staff lead the school very well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and other senior managers.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, with examples of very good and excellent practice, and good use of skilled support staff.
- The school offers its pupils a good range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- The school uses computer-based technology very well.
- The school has good links with its parents, who ensure that pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

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

- The monitoring of teaching and learning, so that the very best practice in the school can be shared more widely.
- Pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity within British society.
- The carrying out of a full health and safety risk assessment.

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then the improvement it has made has been good. It has addressed the key issues identified at the last inspection. Provision in the reception class is now good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have been raised to the levels expected, and the library facilities have been improved. Although there has been progress in the monitoring of teaching and learning, there is room for further improvement here, and there has been satisfactory progress in developing pupils' independent learning skills.

Standards in mathematics and science have improved, and teaching, satisfactory at the last inspection, is now consistently good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, satisfactory at the last inspection, are now very good, and pupils' attendance has also improved. These improvements have been brought about by the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and the establishment of a committed team of teachers and support staff.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils achieved well above average results until 2002, when they dropped to a level which was broadly average. This was because the number of pupils with special educational needs in that group was higher than usual, and also because there had been a greater than usual degree of mobility in that class, with seven new pupils joining and three leaving since the assessments in Year 2. As a result, the school did not meet the targets which had been set. The comparison with similar schools is based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is not in this case a true representation of the socio-economic background from which the pupils come. Standards seen in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, and these pupils are on course to meet the targets set for them. Standards in other subjects are as expected for pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do pupils of potentially higher attainment. The trend in the school's results over the last five years has been broadly in line with the national trend.

In the tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 pupils achieved above average results in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly what would be expected for pupils' ages, and this is due to the normal variation between year groups when they contain relatively small numbers. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are above average. Attainment on entry to the school is average, and children make good progress in the reception class, where most will reach, and some exceed, the early learning goals set for them by the time they move into Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve well as they move through the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils put a great deal of effort into their work; they concentrate and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – pupils behave very well because they know it is the right thing to do. They are polite and friendly and work and play together very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils work very effectively in groups and with partners. They respond quickly to adults, share equipment sensibly and respect the views of others.
Attendance	Very good – the attendance level puts the school in the top 10 per cent of schools in the country.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with some very good and excellent teaching. In the reception class, teachers and support staff plan together well activities which enable children to meet the early learning goals. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Teachers use the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy well.

Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well, using a shared format, matching activities well to the previous learning of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, as well as pupils of average ability. Teachers manage pupils well; as a result, pupils work hard, are interested and concentrate well. Pupils are also given opportunities to learn independently, either from books or using computers. Teachers make particularly good use of their support staff, who themselves are well qualified and skilled.

Where teaching has a weakness, it is when activities are not explained clearly enough to pupils to enable them to work independently, or they are not given sufficient opportunity to participate fully in lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – the school offers pupils a wide range of learning opportunities, both in lessons and in other activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good, enabling these pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good, though the pupils' awareness of multi-cultural British society is not sufficiently developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff show great concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. The use of procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress is good.

The school has good links with its parents and provides them with good information about the curriculum. The school has good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides a good range of extra-curricular activities

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by other staff with management responsibilities. They have been quick to identify weaknesses and put them right.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and share a common vision. They have not met the requirement to carry out a health and safety risk assessment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is carrying out a process of self-review and is beginning to evaluate its own performance. This is already having a positive effect on the standards achieved.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the funding available to it well to support its educational aims.

The school is very well staffed with suitably qualified teachers and classroom assistants. The accommodation is good, and resources for learning very good. The school applies the principles of best value well; it compares its performance with that of other schools and consults parents on matters of concern.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, their children get the right amount of work to do at home and they make good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them and they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is very well led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Parents are happy with the quality of education that the school provides for their children. Inspectors endorse the parents' positive views. They found that the school provides good opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress, but the end of year reports could have more information on how well their children are doing. The different types of club at lunchtime and after school and the trips out into town and elsewhere result in a good range of activities outside lessons, and inspectors do not agree with the views of some parents that there are not enough of them. There is a very active parent-teacher association.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 in 2002 pupils achieved above average results in reading and well above average results in writing and mathematics. The results in mathematics were an improvement on the previous year, when they were broadly average. Last year's very good results are largely due to the high number of pupils achieving above the expected level, but they are also consistent with the high levels achieved in previous years, apart from a dip in mathematics in 2001. In the teacher assessments in science in 2002, although the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was well below average, the number achieving the higher Level 3 was well above. However, it should be borne in mind that with only 31 pupils in the year group, comparisons between different year groups should be treated with care, as each pupil represents more than three per cent of the total.
2. In the tests in Year 6 in 2002, results were average in English, mathematics and science. This represents a drop on previous years, as results had been well above average overall in the preceding three years. In comparison with schools where there was a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, results were below average. However, this is not a fair comparison, as the low number of pupils recognised as eligible for free school meals, five per cent, does not truly reflect the social setting of the school, which is broadly typical of that found across the country. In addition, when compared with the attainment of this year group in Year 2, results were well below average. However, seven new pupils had joined that year group and three had left the school since Year 2. The number of pupils with special educational needs in that class in Year 6 was higher than in previous years for the school, and close to the national average. Some of these pupils' needs presented behavioural difficulties, which the school recognises had an effect on the learning of other pupils in the year group. As a consequence, the school did not meet its targets in 2002. Despite the drop in last year's results, the overall trend in results is broadly in line with that seen nationally, and with year groups of this relatively small size variations from year to year are likely. The school received a national School Improvement Award for the improvement in its results from 1997 to 2000.
3. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly average. They make good progress in the reception class and the great majority are on course to achieve the early learning goals, the national targets set for them, by the time they enter Year 1, with some exceeding these goals and already working on the National Curriculum. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when they were not achieving the goals in creative and physical development.
4. The standards in the current Year 2 are broadly as expected for pupils' ages in English, mathematics and science. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are above average for pupils' ages; writing is average, because pupils' imaginative writing is not yet well developed. However, pupils make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive. The school has already put in place a system of tracking and target-setting designed to avoid a repetition of last year's drop in test results at the end of Year 6, and the evidence of the inspection indicates that pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils listen and speak well, and their reading is fluent. They write well in a range of subjects, organising their ideas clearly. In mathematics they develop their own strategies for solving number problems, where they are encouraged to identify patterns. In science pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well, but the school recognises the need to develop their enquiry skills further. Pupils are on course to meet the school's current targets, which are higher than last year's and quite challenging. In addition the school is expecting a greater than average number of pupils, about one in three, to achieve the higher Level 5. This is due to the consistently good teaching now evident in the school, and particularly in Years 5 and 6.

5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection, when they were below what was expected both in Year 2 and in Year 6. They are now broadly in line in both Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection standards in music were above what are expected; because of recent staff changes it is proving difficult to maintain that standard, although the school is actively seeking ways of doing so, particularly in the extra-curricular choir and orchestra. Standards in all other subjects are as would be expected for pupils' ages in both Years 2 and 6.
6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils of all levels of ability make good progress because of the skilful teaching and support they receive. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Although in the past five years there has been some variation in the performance of boys and girls in the tests at the end of Year 6, this has not been sufficient to be significant in year groups of this size, and there was no evidence in the inspection to suggest that this is an issue. Teachers are careful to involve both boys and girls fully in all lessons. There is also no recognisable difference in the achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and with adults in the school are strengths of the school and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection and also reflects the widespread views of parents. The attendance of pupils is also very good, having improved since the last inspection.
8. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. They concentrate well, are eager to answer questions and show interest in what they are doing. This includes even the youngest; for example, reception class children were fully engaged when constructing simple sentences because the teacher made sure that they all understood what was expected of them. Year 3 pupils were seen to be highly motivated to do well during a science lesson investigating the absorbency of different papers. They settle to work quickly, as when the well-established work habits resulted in the pupils moving rapidly into groups when using adjectives in a Year 2 English lesson. Pupils maintain their interest, even when they are not being supported directly by adults in the classroom.
9. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and at lunchtimes. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, and courteous and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way, even when they are not supervised. They show respect for property, for example when using the computers, and they take care collecting and putting away instruments during music lessons. Pupils say that there are occasional examples of bad behaviour but that these are dealt with well and quickly by the staff. Both pupils and parents confirmed that behaviour has improved significantly over the past year or so. There was one fixed period exclusion in the last school year, of a pupil showing extremely poor behaviour.
10. Relationships with other pupils and with adults are also very good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunchtimes. In the classroom, the youngest respect each other's space when sitting close together on the carpet and follow the rules of circle time (when pupils sit in a circle to talk about matters of concern to them). Year 4 pupils co-operated well in groups during a history lesson discussing Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Year 1 pupils who had finished their work early during an ICT lesson instinctively went to help their classmates adding captions to pictures. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together very well when doing group work in the classroom and when playing at break and lunchtimes.

11. The pupils' personal development is very good. Their very good spiritual development was demonstrated when Year 5 pupils were visibly moved listening to a poem during a literacy lesson. Throughout the school pupils listen carefully to the contributions of others and the non-Catholic pupils show respect for the traditions of the school. During lessons the pupils show initiative, as when Year 6 pupils went unaccompanied to the computer suite to research information on Greek gods during a history lesson, or when, in a science lesson in Year 4, pupils were given the choice of how to record their work. Nevertheless, lower down the school there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning. The pupils respond well to the range of responsibilities they undertake, both as monitors around the school and with various jobs in the classroom.
12. Attendance is very good and puts the school in the top 10 per cent of schools across the country. Over the past year it was nearly 96 per cent and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. Absences are usually due to the inevitable childhood illnesses, though a number of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absence is nil, reflecting the efforts put in by the school to obtain explanations from parents. Pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good. Few pupils arrive late in the morning and, even then, usually only by a few minutes.

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

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when it was satisfactory, with just under half the teaching judged good. Now five out of six lessons are good or better, and teaching in every part of the school is good. There are also examples of very good teaching in every part of the school, and some excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6.
14. Teaching in the reception class is now good. At the time of the last inspection it was judged to be 'sound' but with weaknesses in planning. This is no longer the case. The teacher plans activities well with the other adults who work with the children. Activities are linked well to the early learning goals for these children laid down in national guidance. Teachers and support staff manage the children well. Children respond well to this and, as a consequence, learn well.
15. Teachers throughout the school have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They understand the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and implement them well. The teaching of ICT, unsatisfactory at the last inspection, is now good. This is because teachers have developed their confidence in the subject both through training and through the very good support of the subject co-ordinator. At the time of the last inspection the teaching of music was good, and a significant factor in this was the expertise of the music co-ordinator, who taught all classes. He left the school at the end of the term before the inspection, and the school has been unable to find a permanent replacement; there was insufficient evidence at the time of the inspection to make a judgement on current provision.
16. Teachers now plan to a common format, and this has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching. A range of activities is usually planned to match the previous learning of different groups of pupils in the class, and this contributes to their good progress. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson a range of problem-solving tasks were set which extended all groups of pupils, including the higher attainers, who had to work their way through a maze, using a series of calculations to arrive at a total of 100.
17. Teachers manage pupils very well. The school has a clear behaviour policy and this is applied effectively in lessons, with positive encouragement given to pupils whenever possible. This keeps them focused on the task in hand and they concentrate well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and this leads to a very good response, as, for example, in a Year 2 science lesson, where nearly all pupils succeeded in making an electrical circuit.
18. Since the last inspection the school has more than doubled the number of educational support staff. They work very well with teachers, particularly in the reception class and in literacy and numeracy

lessons throughout the school, where their expertise is used well by teachers. While the classroom assistant supports one group, often but not always the lower attainers, the teacher can support another, which often includes the highest attainers in the class, thus extending their learning. This helps teachers to ensure that the higher attaining pupils are challenged fully. Teachers also use the very good resources well, often supplementing them themselves.

19. As a result of the good teaching pupils try very hard and learn well. For instance, in an excellent physical education lesson, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in their learning because of the good pace that was maintained through the excellent management by the teacher. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5 the strong emphasis by the teacher on basic skills, speed and accuracy in pupils' work meant that they learned very well. The teacher included all pupils fully in his questioning, and he created and sustained interest by encouraging pupils when they succeeded.
20. At the last inspection it was a key issue to provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for some aspects of their learning. The school has been successful in this, and teachers give pupils very good opportunities to develop enquiry and problem-solving skills, particularly in science and mathematics. Pupils are also able to work independently using the computers or the reference books in the school library. Sometimes, however, in English lessons not all pupils are confident enough to take part in discussion, and teachers could do more by their questioning to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. In contrast, in a drama lesson with Year 5, the teacher encouraged all pupils to speak clearly, loudly and with expression, as they performed a variety of roles in a Victorian street or classroom.
21. Teaching is good in all the subjects of the curriculum where there was sufficient evidence to make a judgement. Because of the way the school organises its timetable, and because some subjects are taught in blocks and there was not an opportunity to see enough aspects during the inspection, it was not possible to make judgements on teaching in art and design, music or physical education.
22. Where teaching has a weakness, it is when activities are not explained clearly enough to pupils to enable them to work independently, as for instance in a mathematics lesson when the teacher and classroom assistant were supporting other groups. Occasionally in lessons in the ICT suite, where pupils work in pairs, it is not possible for the teacher to assess all pupils in the time available, which slows the progress of some. Sometimes, also, the pupils are not involved sufficiently in lessons, for instance in handling instruments when composing a piece of music, which restricts the progress they make.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are included fully in lessons and work is modified suitably for them, enabling these pupils to progress well. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs, encouraging them and helping them achieve greater independence. Teachers and non-teaching staff plan closely together so that each pupil's learning, personal and social needs are quickly identified and met. The teaching of pupils in withdrawal groups is very good. Pupils make very good progress because the teacher responds sensitively to pupils' individual requirements, combining purposeful learning with a secure, encouraging ethos. Teachers use ICT well to enhance the learning of some pupils with special educational needs, particularly in aspects of their English and mathematics.

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

24. The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when the curriculum in the reception class was not sufficiently well planned in creative and physical development. This issue has been addressed. Planning is good throughout the school and all pupils receive a broad, balanced, varied and enriched curriculum. Inspectors also agree with parents that pupils receive an adequate amount of homework.

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and they are complemented by a range of other interesting activities. Sufficient time is generally given to each area of the curriculum, although the allocation of time for English would benefit from a review, in order to include more opportunities for pupils to engage in imaginative writing. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan suitable work for pupils of differing ability in each class.
26. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good, and appropriate targets are set for pupils. These are shared with parents and are reviewed regularly. There are clear objectives for learning, and pupils are given the opportunity at the end of each lesson to assess what they have learned.
27. Opportunities for pupils' learning outside lesson time are good, and there is a range of interesting activities. Staff give generously of their time to provide these extra activities. There is a school orchestra, recorder ensemble and two choirs. Children participate in the County Music Centre choirs and orchestras. The orchestra and choir have performed at the Staffordshire Schools Music Proms and the choir has sung at the Royal Albert Hall. Sporting activities include football, netball, skittle ball, athletics, cricket, rounders and cross-country running. The school teams are coached to a high standard and achieve notable success. There are clubs for French, dance and drama, mathematics and ICT. The art club is soon to be reinstated. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have the opportunity to participate in residential visits to Alton Castle, the Diocesan Education Centre, and Standard Bowers Outdoor Education Centre. Year 5 pupils enjoy the 'Victorian experience' at Shugborough Hall and reception class children visit the farm there. The local area is used well to further pupils' learning in history, geography, art and design, and design and technology. Pupils learn to swim at the local leisure centre.
28. Equality of access to the curriculum is good. Suitable work is provided for pupils of all abilities in lessons and there is good provision for the various age groups in extra-curricular activities. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are fully included in all activities, tasks are closely matched to pupils' identified needs and they are provided with good support. This enables pupils with special educational needs to progress well.
29. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Religious education lessons, circle time and class discussions promote self-esteem and address significant issues for pupils and wider society. Pupils are given time to reflect on their contribution to the school and the wider community and to consider the impact of their actions on others. During the inspection, children in the reception class talked about feeling angry and how they should deal with such feelings. A discussion in Year 1 focused on feeling happy. Sex education for pupils in Year 6 is taught within the Catholic Family Life Education Programme. There is teaching about drug awareness. Pupils consider their responsibilities in the community. The school pays due attention to healthy food and encourages healthy eating. There are many opportunities for pupils' social development in the groupings of pupils, through visits and visitors to the school, and fund-raising and community activities. Pupils' successes are celebrated in each class and at weekly assemblies.
30. The school has good links with the local community. The two-way links are mutually beneficial and support the social and learning development of pupils. The Staffordshire Symphonia meets weekly in the school hall; pupils from the school sang with them in a performance of a cantata *The Gentle Giant*. Other organisations also meet at the school from time to time. Funding for library provision and travelling costs for visits is provided partly through local business sponsorship. The school participates in sporting fixtures with other schools. There are very strong links with St Patrick's Church. The parent teacher association holds fund-raising events, which are supported by people in the community. The school gives generously to local charities and contributes to the development of schools in the Cameroon, through 'Mission Together'. Pupils distribute harvest gifts to people in the community.

31. There are good relationships with other schools. The school shares its expertise with them and benefits from their experience and knowledge. There are good links with the Blessed William Howard High School to discuss pupils' attainment and progress, and familiarisation visits for pupils prior to their transfer to the high school. Music students from the high school give concerts for St Patrick's pupils. These initiatives help to ensure an easy transition for pupils and continuity in their learning. There are good links with the main pre-school provider, Sandiford Nursery, from which many children transfer to the reception class. The school welcomes students from Keele University for an annual teaching practice.
32. The school's provision for pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is very good, and it makes good provision for their cultural development. This is an improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection.
33. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are very good. As well as providing time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to gain a sense of belonging to the whole school community and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. They are underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos and heritage, and the school's commitment to prayer is obvious in the classroom and at lunchtime. Pupils are introduced to other faiths in religious education lessons, but there are few opportunities to visit places of worship, apart from the church, or to receive visitors from other faiths. Circle time helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. The curriculum subjects provide a variety of opportunities to experience a sense of mystery or wonder. For example, during a numeracy lesson, pupils were very impressed to discover that the rows and columns in a magic square resulted in the same sum.
34. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for positive values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct, to which the pupils respond very well. These standards are expressed in the school and class rules which lead to pupils having a good awareness of the difference between right and wrong. The great majority of pupils are self-disciplined and this makes for an orderly school. The staff provide good role models. The overall positive approach of the school to encouraging pupils' moral development is evident in the way all adults show tolerance and patience when dealing with pupils who need support. Opportunities are taken consistently in assemblies, circle time and lessons to deal with problems and concerns.
35. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is also very good. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. This approach results in very positive relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. In the classroom there are many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or groups, and even the youngest children in the reception class work together well with their classmates. Pupils were seen to be aware of social conventions, politely saying "Please" and "Thank you". Pupils are encouraged, and are willing, to undertake various tasks appropriate for their age such as getting out resources and tidying up at the end of the lessons. Older pupils have monitor duties around the school, such as supervising younger pupils during wet breaks and overseeing movement in corridors and into and out of the building. The school and class councils provide opportunities to discuss concerns with adults and other pupils, and also give pupils a 'voice' in the daily running of the school. Circle time effectively reinforces good social values. Pupils also have opportunities to mix socially outside school with sports matches against other schools and with residential visits.
36. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are starting to appreciate western cultural background from nursery rhymes and stories and work on, for example, the Romans and Tudors in history. Reproductions of paintings displayed along the corridors and the study of artists in art and design lessons stimulate pupils' ideas. Music lessons also develop aesthetic awareness. In geography, pupils learn how other people, such as the St Lucians, live. The study of world faiths in religious

education helps pupils to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. Pupils from different cultures integrate well in the school. Nevertheless, opportunities to help pupils to be more aware of the many different social and cultural, as well as faith, aspects of British society are limited.

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

37. Staff show great concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are good.
38. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is good. There are clearly defined procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress in all areas of the curriculum. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics and reviewed on a regular basis. As pupils progress through the school, the results of national and other formal tests in reading, writing and mathematics are collated on the computer, and a profile is built up for each child. Attainment is recorded in terms of National Curriculum levels. This provides the basis for reporting to parents, the governing body and the child's next teacher. Targets are not yet set in science, and the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is less formalised. There are regular, less formal assessments, including end of unit assessments, in all other subject areas.
39. National and other formal tests are analysed to indicate strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment, assess future performance and take effective action, including the setting of appropriate work for different groups of pupils. Most pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. The marking policy is used to help them to recognise what they do well and how they can improve their performance. They are encouraged to assess and review their own progress and are beginning to develop more independence in their learning.
40. The school has good procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs and providing them with specific support. It recognises the need to identify difficulties early. Pupils' individual education plans show clear targets that are useful in guiding pupils' learning. However, these are not always concise enough for progress towards them to be accurately assessed. As a result, the plans do not always show how well teaching strategies have worked or clarify the progress that pupils have made. They are thus not as informative for teachers as they should be and this reduces their effectiveness.
41. The school is beginning to build more effectively on its records and assessment procedures in providing appropriate work for more able pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well through extra-curricular music and sport. The school recognises the need to identify gifted and talented children in other areas of the curriculum and provide them with challenging and more open-ended activities.
42. The monitoring and promotion of pupils' personal development is good. Though it is not formalised and relies mainly on the teachers' knowledge of individual pupils, it is effective and shows an improvement since the last inspection. The targets for pupils are appropriate to their development. Their personal qualities are enhanced by the various tasks they have around the school. The school encourages pupils to recognise the value of good work during celebration assemblies. Circle time helps pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of other points of view.
43. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy recognises the needs of the pupils and reflects the philosophy of the school. It clearly sets out the expectations of good behaviour, emphasising praise and encouragement. At the start of each school year the pupils help to produce class rules. The staff adopt this positive approach

consistently. Overall, the high quality of the teaching provides pupils with work at the right level, so that they are fully engaged and behaviour is rarely an issue. The school would take rapid and appropriate action if any bullying or name-calling were to occur.

44. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are very good. The newsletters and an easily-read leaflet remind parents of the need for regular attendance and the importance of their children arriving on time. These are supplemented with details of the pupil's attendance during the year. The headteacher and education welfare officer monitor attendance regularly and contact parents as necessary. Any unexplained absence results in a letter home to seek a reason. Pupils with very good attendance receive certificates.
45. The school has designated a teacher for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The provision for first aid is very good with several trained staff, records kept of any treatment and letters home to parents as appropriate. A health and safety policy is in place. The governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. Outside contractors are used to check regularly the fire extinguishers, electrical items and physical education equipment. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. Nevertheless, the school has not met its statutory duty to carry out a whole school health and safety risk assessment, and so the procedures for ensuring the welfare of the pupils are unsatisfactory.

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

46. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all their positive comments. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make good progress because of the level of support they receive. The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents consider that their children receive the right amount of work to do at home. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. These reactions are similar to the comments made at the time of the previous inspection. Some parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons, but inspection findings are that the provision of clubs and activities after school and at other times is good. A few parents also feel they are not well informed about the progress of their children, though the great majority are satisfied with the amount of information provided. The inspectors generally support this latter view, though the reports at the end of year are inadequate.
47. The school has established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends newsletters home every one or two weeks outlining the various activities that the pupils are involved in as well providing general administrative information. They also encourage good attendance and outline the school's approach to maintaining good behaviour. Every half term class teachers send details of what they will be teaching their pupils. Other letters refer to more specific matters. The formal meetings with teachers each term provide a very good opportunity for parents to discuss targets for improvement and they are given a written summary of the meeting. The annual report on progress is sent home in the summer term. These reports show inconsistency between classes and they do not always provide clear information in all subjects on what the pupils know and can do.
48. The school encourages the parents of pupils with special educational needs to be fully involved in planning and provision for their children, including the setting and review of their individual education plans. The school makes very good arrangements for the parents of some pupils with special educational needs to work with their children before and after school in the computer suite. This is very valuable in promoting a constructive partnership between home and school and in improving pupils' skills and confidence in learning.

49. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Discussion with pupils showed that their parents actively support and help them at home. Pupils are happy in school, work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and the education process. The school regularly consults parents about school facilities both at meetings with teachers and with questionnaires on, for example, uniform and after-school care. The parent teacher association is very supportive, arranging both fund-raising and social events, including ones for the benefit of the pupils. Few parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis, though many more are willing to help with swimming and other trips out.

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

50. The headteacher provides the school with very good leadership. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team. They share the school's aims to meet the needs of its pupils within the parish community, to develop for them a broad-based, balanced curriculum and to develop a Christian ethos. The school plays an important role in the local community, and parents and pupils value its caring outlook.
51. Since the last inspection the management team have brought about good improvement in the school, for instance in the provision for pupils in the early years and in the quality of teaching throughout the school. They addressed the issue of the drop in results in national tests at the end of Year 6 effectively, by introducing much better tracking and targeting of the progress of individual pupils. This appears to have been successful. They have initiated a process of self-review, which enables all staff to be involved, and all teachers have been given areas of responsibility in the school. Two relatively inexperienced teachers are sharing the management of English, and this has proved to be a very effective decision. The headteacher and governors have gathered a committed team of teachers, who all share the school's vision and are dedicated to improvement, without losing sight of the care for the individual within the school community.
52. Subject co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are managing their subjects well and have contributed to the overall improvement in the school. Other co-ordinators are also beginning to be involved through the self-review process, and opportunities are planned for them to monitor teaching and learning directly, but this has not yet been fully implemented.
53. The school's arrangements for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The school special educational needs co-ordinator is knowledgeable and carries out her responsibilities well.
54. The governing body has established an effective committee system, which reports back to the full governing body, and individual governors have taken responsibility for different areas of the curriculum. However, they have not carried out a full health and safety risk assessment, and the school has not yet drawn up a separate racial equality policy. They meet all their other statutory requirements. They are regular visitors to the school. They have a clear view of its strengths and are also beginning to identify areas of weakness. They also show a good awareness of their own training needs.
55. Although the headteacher and governors share a common vision for the school, this is not set out well in the school's development plan. The plan does not clearly identify the priorities, how success will be judged and who will monitor progress towards its targets. This is something the school intends to address when a new plan is drawn up, but it has not hindered the progress and improvement the school has made, because of the strong personal leadership and direction the headteacher has given.

56. The school manages its finances well, and special grants, such as that for special educational needs, are used well for the purposes for which they were intended. Over recent years the school had built up a considerable surplus, but this is now being used well to maintain the good level of staffing, particularly of classroom support assistants, where some judicious appointments have been made. The school has planned its reduction in pupil numbers so that no class should exceed 30 pupils, and this is now the case except for the oldest class. Day-to-day financial administration is carried out very efficiently by the school secretary, and a recent audit showed only minor deficiencies, which the school is already acting upon. Spending is monitored well by the governing body, which also shows a good awareness of the principles of best value, for example in its decision to increase the number of support staff. It consults parents, for instance over changes in school uniform, and has started to compare the school's performance in national tests with that of other schools.
57. The school makes very good use of new technology, in the classroom, with interactive whiteboards in Years 3 to 6, in a computer suite which links to individual computers in classrooms, in the tracking of individual pupils' progress through a computer program, and in the office administration.
58. There is a very good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. All staff have clear job descriptions and the system of performance management is well established. Staff are deployed appropriately and the match of staff to their roles as subject co-ordinators makes very good use of their experience and expertise, although the co-ordinator for music and geography has recently left the school and these positions have not yet been filled. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and for the other groups with which they work. Staff who have been appointed recently have received appropriate support with good induction arrangements. Staff development is linked to the school development plan but also takes account of the individuals' needs. It is effective in improving both teaching and learning.
59. The accommodation is good and enhances the learning of the pupils. The classrooms have sufficient space and have attractive displays of pupils' work and information. The computer suite, library and special needs room make a significant contribution to the teaching in those areas. Pupils and staff make efficient and effective use of the facilities available, and there is good support from the janitor in maintaining an attractive and welcoming environment.
60. The school has very good resources for learning and uses them very well. It has a higher than average ratio of computers to pupils and the library is very well stocked. This has been achieved partly with the support of the parents' association, who are active in raising funds.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

61. In order to build upon the good standards already being achieved, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- 1) extend the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior management and subject co-ordinators, so that the very best practice in the school can be shared more widely (paragraphs 52,90,99,136,146);
  - 2) raise pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society by identifying and providing opportunities for this in lessons and other activities (paragraphs 36,111,140);
  - 3) ensure that a whole school health and safety risk assessment is carried out as soon as possible (paragraphs 45, 54).

In addition to these key issues, the school should also consider in its action plan how it might:

- 1) improve the school development plan by establishing clear priorities and success criteria, and identifying who is responsible for monitoring progress on each target (paragraph 55);
- 2) ensure that all annual reports to parents on children's progress provide clear information on what their child knows and can do (paragraph 47).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	21	6	1	0	0
Percentage	5	30	49	14	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	33

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	87 (97)	90 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	12
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	87 (93)	84 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	14	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	17
	Girls	11	9	14
	Total	24	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (88)	76 (94)	94 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	15
	Girls	12	11	11
	Total	27	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (88)	82 (91)	79 (91)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	189	1	
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7		
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
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	2		
Black or Black British – African	2		
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.73
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	166.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	475152
Total expenditure	478881
Expenditure per pupil	2119
Balance brought forward from previous year	86510
Balance carried forward to next year	82781

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

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	205
Number of questionnaires returned	49

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	71	6	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	10	0	2
The teaching is good.	51	49	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	49	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	43	0	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	47	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	55	6	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	33	57	6	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	51	8	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	24	22	6	6

## **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**

62. Provision in the reception class (Foundation Stage) is good, under the leadership of an experienced co-ordinator, who has a clear sense of educational direction and a good understanding of the needs of young children. All children have had nursery experience. They enter the reception class with standards that match those expected nationally for their age and make a good start to their learning in an enriched and supportive learning environment. All children, including children with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well, as a result of good teaching and support. By the time that they leave the reception class, virtually every child has attained the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. A significant number of children are working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.
63. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The new curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has been implemented well. Adults work together in planning a rich curriculum, which is detailed for each area of learning and is linked to the early learning goals. It is based on specific topics, such as the seasons, weather, festivals, growth, light, travel and fairy tales. All activities have a clear focus. Independence and some freedom of choice are encouraged within well-established routines. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when a key issue was to plan more closely to the desirable learning outcomes, paying particular attention to creative and physical development and making more effective use of indoor and outdoor equipment to develop children's physical capabilities.
64. Preliminary visits to the school, followed by written guidance, help parents to prepare their children for school. Formal assessment takes place on entry to the reception class. Good records are kept of children's personal and academic progress and are used to guide the planning of future work. They are shared with parents and the teachers of the classes to which children progress. Equality of access to the curriculum is good. Boys and girls, and children of all abilities, are given equal attention and encouragement, and additional support where necessary.
65. The quality of teaching is good in all the areas of learning. The management of children is very good. Time, support staff and resources are used very well. All adults make a valuable contribution to children's learning. They have high expectations and children respond with enthusiasm which, together with their very good behaviour and relationships, leads to good learning.

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

66. Personal, social and emotional development is an important feature of all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children settle quickly into the routines of school, as they participate in carefully planned indoor and outdoor activities. They learn to show care and concern for others. Those who experience difficulties are carefully monitored and given good support. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves. Good relationships gradually develop with adults and other children. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce appropriate language and behaviour. Children are expected to listen to what others have to say and to take part in small group activities, taking turns with others. A healthy respect for their own cultures, religions and beliefs, and those of others, is encouraged. They visit the church and learn the significance of the furnishings. All children are encouraged to carry out small tasks, such as taking the register to the office and handing out fruit. They begin to show some understanding of the need for hygiene. In circle time, they learn to control their feelings, and begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. During the inspection, they discussed why they

sometimes feel angry and how best to cope with their feelings. They are taught to respect living things, through the study of plants and stories about animals. A recognition that everyone is different develops and they start to form friendships. In talking about school and class rules, they begin to understand the need for a common code of behaviour and agreed values.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

67. The strategies for teaching literacy are effective. There are well-planned formal and informal opportunities to develop language skills in every area of the curriculum. The early emphasis on phonics and word-building skills is crucial to children's language development. There is a good balance between direct teaching and practical activities to introduce and consolidate knowledge of letter sounds and other early reading and writing skills. Children are encouraged to ask simple questions, initiate conversation, express ideas and recount significant events in sequence. They plan activities with others, taking turns in conversation and using language to imagine and create roles and experiences. Most children recognise and know letter sounds and names. They develop the ability to hear and say initial and final sounds, and sounds within words, using their knowledge to write their names, captions and simple words. The majority of children are beginning to write simple sentences. They practise writing place settings, menus, greeting cards and stories in the home corner. Together, they learn to write poems and to sequence and continue stories. They use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in the 'doctor's surgery', and develop their writing skills, as they complete a 'medical record'. Handwriting skills are practised regularly.
68. Most children make good progress in reading. They read a range of familiar words and begin to show some understanding of the elements of stories. Adults hear children read frequently. Children also take their reading scheme books and library books home. The majority of them benefit from being given support in their reading at home. Through the recitation of rhymes and simple songs, children learn the days of the week and the months of the year.

### **Mathematical development**

69. All children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their potential. The National Numeracy Strategy is introduced well. Children learn to count up to 20 and their understanding is developed through number songs, rhymes and stories, such as *The Three Little Pigs*. The majority of children say and use number names in order, in familiar contexts, and are able to put in order a given set of numbers. They recognise, count, read, write and order the numerals from one to 10. Most children recognise that certain numbers may be missing from a sequence and write them in correctly. They work out, by counting, how many more are needed to make a larger number. In sorting and matching objects, shapes and pictures, they begin to reason and justify the decisions made. They develop their understanding of money, as they use coins in role-play and pay and give change. Some children are beginning to make simple estimates and predictions. Most children use simple words to describe position, and develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. They use words such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers, and 'greater', 'smaller', 'heavier' or 'lighter' to compare quantities. During the inspection, they developed their understanding of non-standard measurement of length, as they used cut-outs of their own hands to measure objects.
70. Adults plan opportunities for practical activities well, and as a result children are able to describe shape, size and colour. They name shapes, such as a square, rectangle, triangle and circle. Their understanding is supported through related displays and creative activities. They gain some knowledge of capacity and weight through practical experience with sand and water. Mathematical concepts are reinforced by classroom resources, such as books and puzzles related to shape, weighing activities, and computer programs. Teachers match work well to children's prior learning and adults encourage children to explain what they have learned.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

71. Children become familiar with the school environment as they move around the school and explore the grounds at different seasons. They learn about people in the community who help them. All children enjoy growing plants and monitoring their progress, noting similarities, differences, pattern and change. They begin to understand the importance of healthy living, good food and the need for hygiene. When considering the need for warmth in winter, they learn how to make vegetable soup and winter bird cake. They learn about light and colour. When making models, they select materials, cut, bend and fold them as necessary, and join them together. They use a range of recycled materials and a variety of methods to join items together.
72. Children gradually develop an understanding of the immediate past, as they talk about their families and examine a range of toys, the materials they are made from and how they move. They examine old photographs and learn about the past from their grandmas who are invited into school. They investigate materials and their properties, forces, how things happen and how things work. Their scientific knowledge increases as they study habitats. They predict which objects will float or sink. A range of activities increases their understanding and the use of their senses. They learn about life in other countries. Computer skills are developed progressively and children use a range of software to support the development of reading, phonics, number, sorting, matching and sequencing. They develop word-processing skills through the writing of their names and simple words and sentences. All children successfully produce firework pictures and create a simple scene related to a theme. Mouse control is developed, through interactive games and dictionary exploration. Children construct with a purpose in mind, using a range of materials and trying out a range of tools and techniques safely.

### **Physical development**

73. Children progressively develop their ability to move with confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination, in safety, with an awareness of others. As they ride their pedal bikes, play road games and use the outdoor climbing frame, they learn to show respect for other children's personal space. Regular daily use is made of the outdoor area or the school hall. Social skills are developed, as they practise their throwing and catching skills and learn to work together. Children progressively develop their skills in using a range of small and large equipment. Gradually, they learn to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. They climb on to apparatus, balance and jump off safely and use large apparatus to perfect the skills taught. Most children apply a very good level of physical and creative effort to their work. They match movements to music. They learn about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and recognise changes that happen to their bodies, when they are active during the 'warm up' and 'warm down' sessions. They are taught to take out apparatus and put it away. All children develop water confidence and swimming skills at the local leisure centre.
74. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well. Adults ensure that equipment and tools are used safely. Children demonstrate increasing skill and control in handling tools, objects and malleable materials safely. They engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination, such as learning to use a pencil to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Gradually, they develop their cutting skills and use paint brushes more confidently.

### **Creative development**

75. Children's creativity is developed within stimulating learning areas which are well organised and resourced. Good displays focus on the topics that children are exploring and children's own work. They are encouraged to use their imagination and a variety of media, such as pastels, chalks, charcoal, paint and crayons. They print leaves, snow patterns and footprints and explore colour, shape and texture. Gradually, they learn to work collaboratively on a task, negotiating plans and ideas and selecting appropriate resources. As adults work alongside children, they talk to them about their work and

introduce appropriate vocabulary. Children are encouraged to choose their own resources and try out their own ideas, using their developing skills.

76. All children learn to sing with increasing control, tap out repeated rhythms and make up their own. They explore and learn how sounds can be changed and use instruments to provide rhythmic accompaniment to the singing of familiar songs, such as transport and travelling songs, collaborating with others to make musical experiences together. They listen to music from other cultures, recognise specific tunes and rhythmic patterns and explore long and short sounds. Adults encourage them to use their imagination and communicate their ideas through music. Children identify a number of musical instruments by name, and hidden instruments by sound. They explore different sound effects and describe how they are played. Their imagination develops as they dramatise stories and participate in role-play.

## **ENGLISH**

77. Standards in English are higher than at the last inspection. At that time, the attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 was average. It remains average for Year 2 pupils but is now above average by the end of Year 6. In 2002, the attainment of the Year 6 pupils was average and had fallen for two years in succession. This was due mainly to differences in the groups of pupils. Standards have since risen.
78. Several factors have contributed to the recent improvement. Teachers are now more effective in identifying and targeting the weaknesses in pupils' work, for example in writing. The quality of teaching is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The management of the subject is now good and there are more systematic arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning. These features, and, in particular, the improvement in teaching, enable pupils to make good progress through the school and to achieve well.
79. Standards in speaking and listening are above average for infant and junior pupils. Most Year 2 pupils listen accurately and speak confidently and clearly. In conversation, they take turns and show good consideration for the listener. Pupils understand and use a suitable range of words and expressions.
80. Year 6 pupils listen well. Their conversation is often lively and thoughtful. When explaining their work, they answer fully and accurately. In discussion, they respond thoughtfully to each other's ideas. Pupils are unselfish in conversation, respect points of view different from their own and support each other very well. The range and precision of Year 6 pupils' spoken language are good. Most pupils adjust their language well to suit the requirements of, for example, conversation and explanation.
81. Some infant and junior pupils listen attentively but contribute only reluctantly to class discussions. Teachers need to do more to draw these pupils in. In a very good junior lesson, the teacher was very effective in involving most pupils in discussion. The keys to this were brisk, good-humoured questioning and prompt recognition and praise. This enthused pupils, made them want to answer and gave them the confidence and security to do so.
82. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most Year 2 pupils read accurately, using their knowledge of letter sounds confidently to read words that are new to them. Pupils grasp the main elements of plot and character well. Average and above average readers inject some apt expression, reflecting their good understanding of detail and the turn of event in narrative.
83. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read fluently for their age. They recall detail well and can explain the important ideas and aspects of character in a story or the main themes in factual writing. Average and above average pupils support their explanations by referring accurately to the text. Pupils of all abilities name and justify their preferences in reading and identify some favourite authors. Most are adept in retrieving information from books and other sources and organising it for a particular purpose. Many

infant and junior pupils read widely and gain obvious pleasure from books. This reflects the teachers' care in providing books that challenge pupils at the right level and engage their interests.

84. Standards in writing are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Year 2 pupils write with suitable clarity, sequencing their ideas in sentences and often using capitals and full stops correctly. Most pupils' spelling is sufficiently accurate for their age, reflecting pupils' secure knowledge of word-shapes and letter sounds. Pupils' handwriting is satisfactory but some pupils, including some of average ability and above, show inconsistency in the shaping and positioning of letters. Some pupils are not progressing quickly enough towards writing a joined-up script. Many pupils are beginning to develop a sense of how stories begin and continue towards a conclusion. Above average pupils use a vocabulary that is good for their age. However, pupils' capacity for imaginative writing is limited in its variety and range of expression. This is because lessons focus mainly on practice activities and teachers do not give enough time or emphasis to improving the imaginative and expressive aspects of pupils' writing.
85. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing is usually grammatical and accurate. Pupils' spelling and punctuation are increasingly secure and developing well. For example, most pupils understand the purpose of paragraphs and use them correctly. Pupils write effectively in different subjects, for example history and science, using apt vocabulary, sustaining their ideas well, organising facts and arguments and presenting them clearly. Pupils work hard and produce a good amount of writing without loss of quality. They also use ICT word-processing programs to improve the accuracy and presentation of their work.
86. Teachers enable pupils to use their writing effectively for different purposes, for example to produce letters, posters and play scripts. They encourage pupils to use words concisely. This improves pupils' vocabulary and range of expression. However, most pupils' imaginative writing is not as good as their writing about factual matters. This reflects the emphasis in teaching. The most able pupils write very well. Their factual writing is concise and logical and their narrative writing has pace, drama and impact.
87. The teaching of English is good throughout the school and is often very good. Teachers manage pupils well, combining purposeful learning with excellent relationships. Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to the learning of the less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. This enables pupils with special educational needs to progress well.
88. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils almost always behave well and work hard. They are polite, responsible and show suitable independence. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and take care to present it neatly. When working together, pupils are good humoured and co-operate sensibly.
89. The management of the subject is good. The subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and work very effectively together. They have a well-informed view of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and good plans for further improvement. Teachers respond purposefully to any identified shortcomings. For example, they have introduced a systematic teaching programme to counter the inconsistencies in pupils' handwriting and this is beginning to bring improvement.
90. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' progress carefully and set individual targets that usefully involve pupils in their own learning. There is an informative, up-to-date portfolio of pupils' writing. This clarifies the standards that are to be expected for each year group and helps teachers plan more effectively. These arrangements are secure and broadly effective. However, at present, teachers do not all use the same format for recording pupils' attainment and do not track some elements of pupils' English work, for example speaking and listening, accurately enough. The school's assessment arrangements could be improved by introducing a more comprehensive, shared system for tracking pupils' individual attainments.

91. The previous inspection found that the school library was uninviting, ill-equipped and difficult for pupils to access. Teachers have responded very well to this issue. The library is now attractively presented with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. These are carefully chosen to match pupils' abilities and interests. A simplified Dewey system enables pupils to locate the books they need and develop their research skills. Pupils now enjoy using the library and use it well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. In the National Curriculum tests in 2002 the standards achieved by pupils were well above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Results in Year 6 showed a marked drop on previous years, when they had been consistently well above average, but this is because of the make-up of the particular year group and difficulties within it. Current pupils are achieving the expected level for their age in Year 2, and above what would be expected in Year 6. All pupils make good progress. This includes those who are potentially high attainers, who are fully extended in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support during lessons, usually from a skilled classroom assistant, and so make good progress.
93. In Year 2 pupils are able to deal with money problems, adding two prices and then subtracting to work out how much change they would get from a given sum, although some of them find it difficult to set these problems out mathematically. Their previous work shows that they understand the place value of numbers. Higher attaining pupils apply multiplication tables to money problems, and most pupils understand that multiplication is repeated addition. All pupils show a knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as a pentagon, hexagon or cuboid. They have collected information about their different journeys to school, and higher attaining pupils have used bar graphs to show the distribution of eye colour in their class group. The majority of pupils are achieving at the level expected for their age, and work is suitably matched to their previous attainment.
94. In Year 6 pupils are achieving above the levels expected for their age, partly as a consequence of the particularly challenging teaching they receive in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are developing their own strategies for solving number problems, as was demonstrated in a very good lesson where they were set a number of challenging tasks in which they had to identify the numbers which were missing in a calculation or series. They were encouraged to see patterns, and most were successful in doing so. Higher attaining pupils are able to order numbers to three decimal places, and all pupils understand lines of symmetry as well as the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils have also used computers to help them in the handling of data, producing different types of graphs.
95. The quality of teaching is good, and there are also examples of very good and excellent practice. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and use this to set pupils tasks which challenge them at an appropriate level. For instance, in a lesson with Year 1, the teacher allowed higher attaining pupils to work independently, placing number cards in the appropriate place on a 100-number square, while other pupils worked either with the teacher or the classroom assistant, putting groups of numbers between 1 and 28 or numbers between 1 and 20 in order. In Year 2 the teacher worked with the higher attaining pupils, adding two amounts of money together and working out the change from 50p, while other pupils worked either independently or with the classroom assistant. In Year 6 the teacher set pupils a challenge to devise a route on a maze which would bring them to 100 using different number operations, while the teacher and the classroom assistant worked with the other groups. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always explain the activity clearly enough, particularly to those groups who are working independently, which means that their progress is slower.
96. Classroom assistants work very well with the teacher and provide good support, for instance in the mental work at the beginning of a lesson as well as when working with a particular group. In an excellent lesson in Year 5 the teacher enthused pupils by the introduction of a 'magic' number square, where rows and diagonals all added up to the same total, and encouraged pupils to see if it worked with

other numbers. This generated a real sense of amazement. In all lessons teachers use electronic aids well, whether the overhead projector in the infants or the interactive whiteboard, linked to a computer, in the juniors. These aids help to focus pupils' attention, whether on the learning objectives displayed at the beginning of a lesson or on a demonstration of strategies for calculation.

97. Because of the good quality of teaching, pupils learn well. They work at a good pace, helped by clear time limits set by the teacher. Pupils with special needs receive good support from both classroom assistants and teachers, and so make good progress, but teachers also give good support to higher attaining pupils, and extension tasks are planned for each group at their own level. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Teachers also set homework which challenges and extends pupils.
98. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines well, and opportunities are also taken in other subjects, such as design and technology or ICT, to reinforce pupils' learning about number, for example producing graphs with a computer to show their favourite sandwich or bread. A good emphasis is also placed by teachers on appropriate mathematical vocabulary, which helps to develop pupils' use of the correct terms in explaining what they have done. Teachers track pupils' progress well and are thus able to set realistic targets for them.
99. The co-ordinator has observed some lessons and has also monitored teaching and learning in the subject by analysing teachers' plans and looking at work in pupils' books. However, there is more scope for sharing some of the very good practice in the school, particularly in the area of problem solving. The school now has very good resources for the subject, which is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. It has also made good progress since then in improving the quality of teaching, particularly in the challenge to higher attaining pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

100. Standards observed in science in Year 2 match those expected nationally. The attainment of pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum teacher assessments for Year 2 was well below the national average in the numbers achieving the expected Level 2. Attainment at the higher Level 3 was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. There was no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls. At the time of the last inspection, the majority of pupils were expected to reach national expectations by the end of Year 2, but a significant minority were unlikely to do so. The school has worked hard to improve standards. All pupils now make good progress and achieve well.
101. Standards observed in science in Year 6 are above those seen nationally, due to the effective emphasis on improving standards. The attainment of pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 matched the national average, thus maintaining the position at the last inspection. Attainment at the higher Level 5 also matched the national average. All pupils now make good progress and achieve well.
102. Teachers' planning for science lessons is good, with clearly defined learning objectives and opportunities for pupils to observe, predict, test and draw conclusions. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were very interested and keen to learn. The teacher harnessed their enthusiasm by drawing on their prior knowledge of electricity. They had previously made a simple circuit, researched electrical appliances and considered safety issues. The objective of the lesson was to extend pupils' understanding of the fact that a circuit needs to be complete for a bulb to light up. Higher attaining pupils were challenged as they identified circuits that would not work, gave explanations for this and carried out independent research from topic books. Average attaining pupils successfully made a simple circuit and lit up the bulb, gaining understanding of the fact that the circuit must be complete. Lower attaining pupils carried out a similar task with adult support. Scientific skills were taught well and there was appropriate emphasis on the use of scientific vocabulary.

103. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils developed their key skills and understanding of the properties of materials as they carried out an investigation to discover whether the absorbency of paper is affected by the temperature of the water, predicted outcomes and recorded the results. They demonstrated good reasoning and questioning skills. The school's emphasis on these skills is proving effective in raising levels of attainment. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrated similar skills, as they carried out an experiment to discover which materials are good thermal insulators and which are not. They made predictions, for example, that polystyrene would prove to be the best insulator, then carried out a scientific test, drew conclusions and recorded the results in the form of a line graph or bar chart. Year 5 pupils developed their thinking and reasoning skills as they explored the best materials for soundproofing a recording studio for a pop group, by wrapping melody buzzers in four different textiles and recording the results in a table with an annotated diagram. Pupils in Year 6 consolidated their understanding of electricity, as they investigated how to change the brightness of a bulb, recorded their circuit diagrams accurately and explained their results in scientific terms. The strong focus on high standards led to very good learning.
104. Teaching is good, leading to good learning. It is sometimes very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is very good. They plan effectively, enabling all pupils to make good progress through carefully planned work which develops their understanding, scientific knowledge and skills. They use a range of effective teaching methods that meet the needs of all pupils, building on pupils' prior knowledge and linking what is new to what they already know. Pupils are encouraged to think and reason in scientific terms, to plan and carry out scientific experiments and to draw conclusions from the evidence. Class management is very good and pupils' interest and concentration are fostered in a supportive learning environment, where high standards are expected and achieved. Independence is encouraged, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Very good use of time and resources and the valuable support given by teaching assistants enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well.
105. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Literacy skills are developed through discussion, research, recording and the use of scientific vocabulary. Mathematical and ICT skills are developed through the use of measurements, diagrams, pictograms and graphs. Science contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, personal and social development in the opportunities it gives them to reflect on the natural world and to work together on investigations.
106. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has a very clear vision for the development of science and a commitment to raising standards. Resources are very good and are organised well to support work in science. The school plans to further raise pupils' attainment by developing their enquiry and investigative skills. It should also consider involving pupils more in their own learning, through the setting of individual targets in science and the tracking of pupils' progress more formally.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Because of the way the school organises its timetable, it was possible to see only one art and design lesson during the inspection. However, from the evidence of pupils' work, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection.
108. There was not sufficient evidence to make a judgement on the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2. So far in this school year they have completed a unit on buildings, in which they have made collages, with different coloured paper or felt, of buildings such as a house or a church. This work is effective and shows a satisfactory level of skill. Teachers' planning shows that the full range of work is covered, and art work is used well to support literacy, for instance when pupils illustrate the story of Little Red Riding Hood. In Year 1 pupils have completed self-portraits and also portraits based on the work of Picasso and Van Gogh, showing a good use of line and colour. They have also used art to enhance their

work in other subjects, such as science, where they portray things which give light, or in religious education, where they have depicted some of Jesus' miracles.

109. In Year 6 pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. They represent movement well, using a range of techniques, including charcoal and crayon to sketch. They also use computers to produce repeated images, for instance of a skier, to give the effect of movement. In a lesson in Year 5 pupils worked with clay to produce a range of coil pots, showing a sound understanding of the technique, having first sketched their designs. Earlier work in the junior classes has included the portrayal of relationships in Year 3 and a closer study of human features in Year 4. Pupils have worked on the different textures that can be produced by line, and shown a good sense of shading in their drawings of chairs. They have looked at the way colour can be used to reflect emotion. They have also produced effective work in three dimensions, such as their fish mobiles in Year 3. Pupils develop their skills satisfactorily as they move through the juniors, and also use them in other subjects, such as history, where they draw portraits of Henry VIII based on those of Holbein.
110. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching in art. In the one lesson observed, the teacher and classroom assistant provided good support for pupils as they worked on their technique, after a good demonstration by the teacher. Pupils were also encouraged to decorate their pots with a linear design, again with good instruction and support. Pupils of all ranges of ability are able to make good progress. Teachers follow national guidelines in their planning, and this helps to ensure that pupils develop skills progressively; these guidelines are also used effectively to assess the progress pupils make.
111. Pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate the work of western artists, such as Modigliani and Miro. They use the work of the Japanese artist Hiroshige in their study of movement in Year 6, but there are too few other opportunities to appreciate art from non-European cultures. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject, and it has just become a focus for development in the school. Resources for the subject are very good, particularly in the range of books available to pupils in the library, which give them opportunities to find out more about famous artists.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are as expected for their age. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection.
113. In Year 2 pupils have designed a wheeled vehicle. They have investigated the purpose of the vehicle and are now making a vehicle which matches their design intention. Where necessary they modify the design, for instance by shortening the axles. Previous work on puppets involved working with fabrics and choosing the colour, as well as what items they might add.
114. In Year 6, pupils design slippers. They consider who the user will be and modify their design accordingly. They decide what would be the most appropriate materials. In Year 5 they have designed and made a musical instrument, linking to their work on sound in science, and in Year 4 story books, which link well with their work in literacy. All pupils make good progress in developing their designing and making skills, and older pupils also evaluate their work. This is helped by the carefully designed work book which they use, which also provides scope for assessment by the teacher. Pupils' use of their mathematical skills is promoted when they produce graphs, for instance of their favourite sandwich or bread in Year 3. They also have the opportunities to use computers for this purpose.
115. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well and make very good use of their support staff and the resources that are available. In a lesson observed in Year 4 the teacher made good use of an interactive whiteboard to collect pupils' ideas about the purses they were going to design, and made them into a 'thought shower'. Pupils are given good opportunities to record their ideas, either on

worksheets which are matched to their ability or in the booklets specially designed for them. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 1 were keen to start their unit on homes with a walk round the locality to look at different kinds of houses, following their reading of a 'big book' about 'Homes', thus reinforcing their literacy skills as well. From this they would proceed to construct their own model houses.

116. The school follows national guidelines for design and technology, and teachers' planning ensures that pupils develop progressively the skills of designing, making and evaluating. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and provides good support to other teachers. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved, and there is good potential for further improvement in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe only one geography lesson during the inspection. Other evidence shows that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 match those expected nationally, as at the last inspection. Progress for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. The achievement of all pupils is good.
118. There is a well-established emphasis on fieldwork and enquiry skills. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in studies at a local level, as they explore the school environment and the local area. They study maps and photographs and produce plans and maps of the local area. Their awareness of places beyond their own locality develops, as they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear to places around the world, tracing his route on maps and globes, discussing his mode of travel and ascertaining the physical features, climate and way of life of the places that he visits. They read about the life of Katie Morag on the Isle of Struay in Scotland and compare and contrast life on Struay with life in Stafford.
119. Pupils in Year 3 investigate the local area and analyse how it has been changed by people. Year 4 pupils develop their understanding of places further afield, as they study the village of Chembakoli in India. They research the physical and human features and compare and contrast them with those of Stafford. Pupils in Year 5 study water, increasing their knowledge and understanding of its importance to life. They learn about irrigation and water treatment and research the use of water in their own homes, presenting their results graphically, using ICT. A study of the local traffic enables them to use their mathematical skills in producing tally charts. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 investigated the main rivers of the world, using the Internet to access information. All pupils are encouraged to use geographical vocabulary, as they respond to questions about places and environments.
120. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good. There is a strong emphasis on geographical enquiry skills and first-hand observation where possible. Mapping skills are taught well. Teachers plan effectively and set challenging tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils and opportunities are provided for them to assess what they have learned, thus helping them to gain a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers have high expectations and most pupils apply considerable effort to their work. The management of pupils is very good and leads to very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships, which promote good learning. Ongoing assessment is used to facilitate learning in lessons. Time and resources are used very well and teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils show a developing sense of responsibility for their own learning and respect for the contribution of others in discussion, for example when they are working together on rivers.
121. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. Strengths of the curriculum are the use of questioning skills, fieldwork and the breadth of study. Pupils' social development is enhanced as they explore the local area, meet with people and ask questions about the area. Their literacy skills are

developed through discussion and writing. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss moral issues in relation to environmental factors, such as pollution. Pupils gain some understanding of other cultures as they study life in India.

122. Leadership and management are good and ensure clear educational direction. Standards are improving, through the emphasis on geographical enquiry skills and fieldwork. Good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress help to ensure progression in learning. Resources, including computers, are very good and are used well to promote learning, for instance giving pupils access to maps or enabling them to create graphs.

## **HISTORY**

123. Standards in history match the standards expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6, as at the last inspection. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was satisfactory.
124. Pupils are encouraged to pose historical questions and research the answers, thus developing their historical enquiry skills. In a lesson observed in Year 3, the teacher engaged pupils' interest through role-play in which pupils imagined that they were Roman soldiers living in Britain around 59 AD. They asked their partners questions, such as, "Can you imagine why we Romans ever came to this part of the Empire?" and "What do you think of these Celts?". Pupils took on the role of historical detectives as they investigated what Boudicca was like and why she led a revolt against the Romans. They expressed strong moral views about the Romans' betrayal of their agreement with her. Year 4 demonstrated good reasoning skills as they investigated the reasons for Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn, and the result. They expressed strong views as they discussed the morality of his decision to execute her, and awe and wonder at her forgiveness of his actions. In a lesson in Year 6, 12 pupils worked independently in the computer suite, researching the beliefs and practices of the ancient Greeks; they were monitored by the teacher from the classroom. All teachers make very good use of interactive white boards to promote learning.
125. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and in some cases, very good. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge, and they teach historical enquiry skills well. Lesson planning is good and opportunities are provided for pupils to assess what they have learned, thus helping them to gain a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers have high expectations; this encourages pupils to apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. The teaching methods used help all pupils to gain an understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory and they begin to identify some of the ways in which the past is represented. Pupils are encouraged to use terms connected with the passage of time and they are developing the ability to place some events in chronological order. The management of pupils is very good and, together with pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships, promotes learning. Time and resources are used very well and teaching assistants give valuable support to small groups of pupils.
126. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and an enriched curriculum is in place. Strengths of the curriculum are the depth and breadth of study, the emphasis on investigative skills, and the use of visits to extend pupils' learning. Pupils' work and their enthusiastic references to their residential visits, exploration of the local area and a 'Victorian experience' at Shugborough Hall demonstrate the value of these occasions to pupils' learning. Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is good. Their social development is enhanced through visits, discussions with adults about the recent past and work in groups and pairs. They develop their literacy skills through discussion, writing accounts of events and carrying out research.
127. Leadership and management of history are good and ensure clear educational direction. The school's aims and values are reflected very well in the work of the subject. Standards are rising, through the

encouragement of the use of historical enquiry skills and visits to places of historical interest. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, and assessment is used well to guide curricular planning. Resources are very good and support pupils' work in history.

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

128. Attainment in ICT has improved since the last inspection. At that time, standards were below the expected level for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. They now match the expected levels and are continuing to improve. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
129. There are several reasons for this. The subject management is very good. The subject leader has excellent subject knowledge and supports his colleagues very well. Several other members of staff are also knowledgeable about ICT and use it well in their own teaching. All staff have received training in ICT and this has increased their knowledge and confidence. The school is now making better use of its very good ICT resources, including the computer suite and new teaching technology. This has helped to raise standards by improving the teaching of ICT skills and increasing the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their work.
130. By the end of Year 2, most pupils enter and save their work and are suitably confident in using the keyboard and mouse. They work with text and simple images, correcting their work as it progresses and making changes to improve it. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils used a database to present information about their journeys to school, sharing it in the form of a block graph or pie chart. The more able pupils interpreted this well and explained clearly what the presentations showed. Pupils enjoy their work in ICT. In lessons and when talking about their work, pupils behave well, co-operate, support each other well and show soundly increasing independence.
131. By the end of Year 6, most pupils work fluently and use computers in a good range of different applications. For example, they use word-processing programs to improve the accuracy and presentation of their work. They make presentations using text, sound and images, paying attention to quality and the needs of the reader. They use ICT well to support their work in other subjects, for example, to explore the relationship between perimeter and area in mathematics. With suitable guidance, pupils use the Internet to extend their work in history and geography. Pupils have a clear idea of some of the benefits and applications of ICT in the wider world, in businesses and offices. So far, pupils have little experience of controlling events using ICT.
132. Pupils in Year 6 have very good attitudes to learning in ICT. They are enthusiastic and very well behaved. They concentrate hard, work carefully and accurately and co-operate very effectively in group work and discussion. Pupils' secure skills and confidence in using ICT enable them to work with good independence. When working independently in the ICT suite, pupils are very responsible and trustworthy.
133. The teaching of ICT is good throughout the school. Teachers use the ICT suite effectively to develop pupils' skills. They provide an interesting range of work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Systematic planning clearly shows how skills are to be taught and applied in different subjects. This promotes good progress and helps pupils to understand the variety of ways in which ICT can be used.
134. Teachers manage pupils very well, balancing purposeful learning with enjoyment and interest. In many lessons, teachers pair the most able and experienced pupils with the least able. This is valuable in sharing knowledge and in providing opportunities for pupils to learn to co-operate effectively. However, this arrangement makes it difficult for the teacher to judge pupils' individual progress and challenge all pupils at the right level. This slows progress for some pupils.

135. Teachers use ICT very effectively in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. There are planned sessions for pupils to work in the computer suite before and after school. These help pupils to develop aspects of their reading and writing as well as their computer skills. Parents often attend these sessions and this is very valuable in encouraging pupils and improving their progress.
136. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress in ICT. As yet, there are no systematic arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning or sharing the very good practice seen in some lessons.

## **MUSIC**

137. Too few music lessons were seen to allow secure, overall judgements to be made on standards or the quality of teaching. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average. However, the school has recently lost the long-standing services of two expert music teachers and is having some difficulty, at present, in upholding its previously high standard of provision.
138. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher managed pupils securely and her subject knowledge was very good but she did not involve pupils sufficiently. Pupils made satisfactory progress in listening and performing but their patience was tested because some activities went on too long and very few pupils were allowed to handle instruments. In a Year 6 lesson, progress was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not engage pupils effectively or set high enough standards. The teacher was not sufficiently encouraging and pupils found the lesson unrewarding.
139. Observations during the lesson show that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory sense of the shape of a melody and sing with suitable control of pitch and pulse. They respond well to the rhythms of music and some are sensitive to the timbres of different instruments. Most understand and respond accurately to simple forms of notation, show satisfactory recall and learn quickly.
140. Observation during the Year 6 lesson, scrutiny of planning and pupils' written work and discussion with pupils confirm that most pupils gain a wide musical experience. They study and listen to the music of some well-known composers, such as Bach, Beethoven and Saint-Saens. They explore some compositions, for example, Haydn's *Hen Symphony*, in greater depth and investigate the qualities of music from different times. They transcribe music using conventional notation and learn to evaluate and comment on each other's performances. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to perform, including lower and upper school choirs and an orchestra. A high proportion of pupils learn stringed or woodwind instruments. The school has a strong tradition of musical achievement and has performed successfully at many local and county events. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to appreciate the music of non-European cultures.
141. Pupils' attitudes to learning in the lessons observed were satisfactory overall. In discussion, Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic about music and enjoyed explaining work they had done and talking about their musical preferences. In this context, their attitudes to learning were very good.
142. At present, there is no subject manager and the headteacher is overseeing provision. He is knowledgeable and strongly committed to high standards. The school has been able to secure voluntary help from an experienced teacher with excellent subject knowledge and this is proving very valuable in preserving the range of musical opportunities open to pupils. Resources for music are good but the room used for music teaching is ill-suited for the purpose. It is uninviting, its size and layout are barriers to effective practice and performance and the furniture is the wrong size for many pupils. This reduces the quality and effectiveness of learning in some lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

143. Only one lesson could be observed during the inspection and only limited judgements on standards and the quality of teaching can be made. Teachers' planning shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, cover a full and interesting curriculum. This includes individual and team games, gymnastics, dance and swimming. There are satisfactory arrangements for junior pupils to take part in local competitions, for example in netball and football. The curriculum is extended by a satisfactory range of after-school activities. Residential visits for Years 5 and 6 pupils provide valuable opportunities for pupils to engage in outdoor activities and make gains in personal confidence and social experience.
144. The Year 6 gymnastics lesson observed during the inspection was of excellent quality. The teacher's skilled management ensured high quality learning from start to finish. Pupils performed precisely and fluently. They practised very effectively, sharing ideas and striving for improvement. The teacher used praise to encourage and guide. He improved the quality of pupils' performances by drawing attention to points of detail and instances of quality in pupils' own work. By setting the lesson in the context of what pupils had learned previously and would move on to in the next lesson, the teacher increased pupils' understanding of what they were seeking to achieve.
145. Teacher and pupils shared a commitment to high quality practice and performance. This produced very good progress and helped to promote excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils worked safely and thoughtfully. They took pleasure in each other's performances and often learned from them. Their behaviour was excellent. In this lesson, standards were above average. Pupils chose and combined shapes and balances accurately and sequenced them well. They modified and improved their work by refining the detail of their actions and increasing overall fluency.
146. The management of physical education is satisfactory. The headteacher, as subject manager, has a very clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and well-informed plans for improvement. There is a good range of resources, particularly for gymnastics. Systematic monitoring and assessment arrangements are not yet in place. However, demonstration lessons given by some classes are informative for teachers and valuable in helping to raise standards through the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

147. Religious education will be the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.