

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLYWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Rubery, Rednal

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 132060

Headteacher: Mrs Frances Millett

Reporting inspector: Mrs Chris Field  
9479

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 248888

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Rubery Rednal Birmingham West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Auger
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9479	C A Field	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9428	J Butler	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?
1189	S Brown	Team Inspector	English History	
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Educational Inclusion Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
22856	K Campbell	Team Inspector	Geography Mathematics Music	
30144	E Hastings	Team Inspector	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Science Art and design Design and technology	
2818	G Warner	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school opened two years ago and is situated in Rubery, in the north of Worcestershire. It has taken about eighteen months for the school to move into its current settled position following the amalgamation of two separate schools and transfer to new buildings. Pupils who attend the school come mainly from the local area that comprises predominantly private housing. The majority of pupils are from White European backgrounds but a very small proportion has a different heritage including Asian and Russian. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. A very small number speak Russian at home. However, none requires additional assistance with English in school. There are 392 pupils on roll: 200 boys and 192 girls aged between four and eleven years and 47 children attending part-time in the nursery. Children's attainment on entry to full-time education covers a wide range but overall is average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. Some nine per cent of pupils have special educational needs that are mainly for moderate learning difficulties. Six pupils in school have a statement maintained. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average.

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

The school provides a sound education for its pupils within a high-quality learning environment. The ethos is happy and caring and relationships are very good. The headteacher provides very strong and determined leadership and is keen to improve the school still further in the pursuit for high quality. The senior managers, staff and governors are a united team who share the same goals and place pupils' best interests at the centre of their work. Pupils show very good levels of interest and application in their work and their parents are pleased with the quality of education they receive. The school has set the right priorities that will build to better effectiveness, and has good capacity to meet with success. The school is adding clear value to pupils' education by the age of eleven years, and gives sound value for money.

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

- The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff are highly effective and there is good reflection of the school's aims in its work.
- Teaching is good overall and is enabling most pupils to achieve well and reach above average standards in English, science, art and design, history and religious education by Year 6.
- Very good provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils generally behave very well, show high regard for one another and enjoy very good relationships. They show outstanding respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs.
- Very good attention is paid to promoting pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is assisting them in being very well prepared for future citizenship.
- The school gives good attention to pupils' health, welfare and safety. The procedures for promoting behaviour are very good.

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

- The school's systems to track and target the standards being attained by groups of pupils of different abilities are not sharp enough.
- Teaching, though satisfactory, is not effective enough in the infant classes, to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged in their studies, particularly higher attaining pupils.
- The role of subject and aspect managers in leading improvement is not yet fully effective.
- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology throughout the school, and geography in the infants, are hindered by weaknesses in curricular provision.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school moved into its present buildings in September 2001 as a new school and has not been inspected previously. The headteacher has managed the amalgamation of two schools exceptionally well. The school's good rate of progress in the last eighteen months indicates clear potential for improvement in the future. Senior managers are very alert to where strengths and weaknesses lie and have embarked on a well-conceived plan of improvement in advance of the findings of this inspection. The recent award by Government in recognition of the school's achievement in improving standards is a positive reflection of the corporate drive for continuing improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average                    A

above average                         B

average                                    C

below average                         D

well below average                    E

*NB Similar schools are those with up to 8 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The standards achieved in the 2002 SATs for 11 year olds as shown above were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards were well above those in similar schools in science, above average in English and below average in mathematics. The standards achieved in the 2002 SATs for 7 year olds were average in all tested subjects. When compared to similar school the standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Results suggest that higher attaining pupils are not performing as well as their peers in other schools, especially in reading. The school's rate of improvement in SATs over 2 years shows good advancement, though the picture is more positive for 11 than 7 year olds. There was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls in the SATs for 2002.

The school is not targeting the individual progress of pupils with sufficient precision and so a good rate of progress is not assured in all years. This leads to uneven progress, especially for higher attaining pupils who do not achieve to their full capabilities, especially in Years 1 and 2. Some very good teaching in Year 3 boosts pupils' achievements and lifts standards from the previous year and the generally good provision in junior classes, enables pupils to achieve appropriately in all subjects, except ICT. Well-focussed work in Year 6 is supporting pupils' positive performance in SATs. Inspection findings show that standards in the work seen are above average in art and design, below average in ICT and geography at the end of Year 2, and average in all other subjects by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, standards have risen to above average levels in English, science, religious education and history. Standards are average in design and technology, geography, mathematics, music and physical education and remain below average in ICT and above average in art and design.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are happy, interested and caring in their attitudes towards learning, and each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. There have been no exclusions made.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond extremely well to opportunities for taking initiative and responsibility, and demonstrate increasing confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good overall but varies from year to year. Teaching is more satisfactory than good in the infants because it does not always move pupils' learning forward at a good pace. There is a tendency for teaching here to focus too heavily on ensuring that all pupils gain knowledge at a similar rate and the style of teaching limits the opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. The team-work and high expectations in the Foundation Stage enables the youngest children in school to get off to a flying start in their education. Teaching in Year 3 is particularly effective in enabling pupils of different abilities to learn well because of the high expectations held for the quality, standard and amount of work completed. The school's strategies provide a good focus on developing pupils' literacy skills, and to a lesser extent numeracy, but ICT skills are not promoted consistently well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound across the school and enables these pupils to make similar progress to their peers, however, the quality of their individual education plans is very variable and some do not give clear targets to support on-going progress. The school has yet to give attention to identifying and consistently meeting the needs of higher attainers, including those with gifts and talents, and this requires review. Teachers mark work conscientiously and write supportive comments; they do not always show clearly the next steps for improvement. Homework is supporting learning well. Classrooms are happy and stimulating places of learning in which pupils show good levels of interest and concentration. Pupils are keen learners and show good levels of independence when provided with opportunities to find out things for themselves. The school is appropriately placed to extend its monitoring systems to iron out the inconsistencies so that good or very good teaching becomes the norm in all years.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall curriculum is broad and balanced, though there are weaknesses in ICT in all years and geography in the infants. The school is not yet identifying those pupils in school with gifts and talents and this is a missed opportunity to raise achievement. There is considerable enhancement of the curriculum through the programme of visits and visitors and the links with community. The programme for pupils' personal development is highly effective. Display is art-rich and very stimulating and adds considerably to pupils' cultural experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school, however some of the paperwork is not of good quality and requires attention. The work of the teaching assistant mentor is a positive feature in provision; teaching assistants support the pupils with statements very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall. The way in which the school promotes pupils' moral and social development is a strength. The emphasis placed on the creative and aesthetic elements of the curriculum enriches pupils' cultural experiences very significantly. Pupils are helped to develop a very good set of principles by which to live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school clearly places the pastoral care of its pupils at the centre of its work. Procedures for promoting behaviour are very good. Assessment procedures, and the use made of assessment to inform planning is not rigorous enough.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school makes good efforts to keep parents well informed about school life and many are active partners in support of their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a hands-on manager with high expectations of the pupils, staff, governors and parents. She gives strong educational direction to the work of the school, and together with the highly effective deputy and developing senior management group is working actively to bring improvements. Subject leaders manage their subjects well, however their leadership roles require a boost in the bid for raised standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors demonstrate wise and effective governance and are a well-led group who are very influential in the development of the school. They ensure that all legal requirements are met. There is good concern for the principles of best value in all aspects of provision and procurement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's tracking and target setting systems are being developed but are key areas for improvement. School self-evaluation systems have a number of positive aspects; for example the annual review process that highlights strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Managers are alert to what needs their urgent attention and are well underway with implementing improvement plans that show good signs of making the school more effective.
The strategic use of resources	All forms of resources are of good sufficiency and are managed well. The school is efficient in its control and management of the budget and additional grants are used as planned. The school adds clear value to pupils' education over time and provides sound value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school and are keen to attend.</li><li>• Teachers have good expectations and enable pupils to learn well.</li><li>• Behaviour is good and the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable to approach the school and say the school works closely with them.</li><li>• The school is very well led.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information about progress so that they can better support their children's education.</li><li>• The setting of homework is inconsistent.</li><li>• The range of activities outside lessons is too narrow.</li></ul>

The inspection team largely agrees with parents' views but finds homework and extra curricular provision to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- The school's rate of improvement in SATs over 2 years shows good advancement, though the picture is more positive for 11 than 7 year olds.
- Within the core subjects, standards are higher in English and science than in mathematics.
- From a broadly average baseline pupils are enabled to achieve well over their time at school in English, science, religious education and history to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress although satisfactory overall is uneven with dips in some years and peaks in others. The best rates of progress are taking place in the nursery, Years 3 and 5.
- Standards are above average in art and design in all years and this is a strength.
- Standards are below average in geography by the end of Year 2 and below average in information and communication technology (ICT) across the school and these are weaknesses. Standards are average in all other subjects.
- The standards being reached by children in the Foundation Stage are broadly average but show that most of the current nursery children are on track to exceed the standards expected by the time they complete the Foundation Stage.
- The school has only recently begun to assess how well pupils are achieving but the systems lack rigour and so target setting across the school lacks precision and the necessary element of challenge.
- The statutory targets set for SATs in 2004 for the current Year 5 pupils are much higher than previously set. They are realistic and reflect well the good standards of work that this group are reaching.

1. The standards achieved in the 2002 SATs for 11 year olds were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards were well above those in similar schools in science, above average in English and below average in mathematics. The standards achieved in the 2002 SATs for 7 year olds were average in all tested subjects. When compared to similar schools the standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Results suggest that higher attaining pupils are not performing as well as their peers in other schools, especially in reading. The school's rate of improvement in standards over two years shows good advancement, though the picture is more positive for 11 than 7 year olds and better in English and science than mathematics. There was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls in the SATs for 2002.
2. Most of the children in the Foundation Stage have the expected levels of skills and knowledge when they start school, though some are advanced for their age and a similar proportion are a little behind. All children are currently making good progress in the first two-years of school. Those in the current reception class have largely met the goals across all of the areas they experience. A significant proportion of children in the current nursery are on track to exceed the early goals set for them, by the time they enter Year 1. The provision in the nursery is very good and the well-planned and exciting experiences ensure that the youngest children in school get off to a flying start in their education. The focus on setting a theme for the week and planning intensive experiences for each of the areas that the children are required to meet has a very positive impact on their all-round development. However, the limitations in the outdoor play facilities currently available impinges on the development of children's physical outdoor experiences. Managers are aware of this factor, and are trying to improve facilities.
3. Inspection findings show that standards in the work seen are above average in art and design, below average in ICT and geography and average in all other subjects by the end of Year 2. By the end of

Year 6, standards have lifted to above average levels in English, science, religious education and history. Standards are average in design and technology, geography, mathematics, music and physical education and remain below average in ICT and above average in art and design.

4. Across Years 1 and 2, boys and girls make satisfactory progress in all of the subjects they learn with the exception of art and design where progress is good and in ICT and geography where it is unsatisfactory. In ICT and geography some sound work was observed but these are isolated examples. There is insufficient time devoted to ensuring the pupils have full opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in these subjects and this requires attention. Some high quality artwork was seen in displays in classrooms and the infant area. For example, the fabric dying and printing to create cloth with authentic African patterns and the very innovative basket weaving. Pupils were observed to learn satisfactorily in all of the lessons observed in the infant classes. In only one lesson did the impact of very good teaching enable pupils to reach above average standards and this was in physical education in Year 2. The lack of pace and consistent challenge in lessons are the two key aspects that, if improved, would add better value to pupils' education in the infants. There is potential for more pupils to improve their standards of work and attain higher levels, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. For example, in the sample of pupils' work that inspectors scrutinised there was clear indication of a significant proportion of infant pupils not reaching the standards of which they were capable because of weaknesses in their secretarial skills. In writing, ideas and vocabulary were being used well, however in some cases the lack of capital letters and full stops were limiting factors on otherwise good standards of work. The generally untidy presentation of work and weak handwriting also masks otherwise sound work. The inclusion of work from a range of subjects in topic books makes it very difficult to see how much work has been completed, for example in geography. The important job of evaluating the quality of learning and progress being made is made more difficult because of this approach. These are aspects that managers can focus more rigorous monitoring on in their *booklooks*.
5. Across Years 3 to 6, boys and girls make good progress in English, science, art and design, history and religious education. Progress is satisfactory in all other subjects except ICT where it is unsatisfactory. There is very tangible impact from consistently good or better teaching in Year 3 that is driving up standards to an above average level from those attained in the previous year in all subjects other than ICT where the issues discussed earlier in this report still remain. Evidence from lessons and the sample of pupils' work show that expectations are higher in Years 3 and 5 than in other years and work is more suitably matched to enabling pupils to learn at a brisk rate and cover a good amount. Well-focussed booster work in Year 6 is supporting pupils' positive performance in SATs. However, there is still the need to provide more focus for higher attaining pupils to ensure that they are consistently challenged, especially in mathematics in these and other years in school. The school is not identifying the very highest attainers in school in its planning or provision, nor those pupils with particular gifts or talents to make sure that they are receiving full curricular entitlement. This is an area for improvement.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make good progress largely because of the close attention being paid to supporting their individual achievements by the teaching assistants who work with them. The individual education plans present a mixed picture; some written by the specialists from the local education authority show clearly what the next steps in learning are and personal programmes of work are established to assist these pupils in making gains in literacy and numeracy skills at a good rate. Others, written by school staff, lack clear focus and have much room for improvement. The effective one-to-one support provided by the teaching assistants makes up for their deficiencies. The use of ICT to support pupils with learning difficulties is an aspect with very limited profile and this requires review.

7. Standards in the key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are good by Year 6. The school has given positive attention to improving reading, flagged up as a weaker aspect of literacy in the 2002 SATs and has put in place effective strategies that are having a beneficial impact. A useful start has been made by setting agreed times for pupils to read and for teachers to assess the quality of pupils' reading. Pupils enjoy a good range of reading materials and there is some well-chosen material to ensure that both boys' and girls' interests are captured. The very good library is an extremely positive feature in encouraging pleasure in reading. The home-school partnership greatly benefits reading skills, as the very well-maintained home-school diaries show. Pupils' numeracy skills are being promoted well, but there is a limited focus on problem-solving that restricts its permeation across the curriculum. The style of teaching is successful in enabling pupils to develop knowledge and apply their skills but is less effective in providing pupils with the time and opportunity to research and learn from first hand experiences. Writing stands out as a strength in the work of older pupils who benefit from a very good range of opportunities to write for different purposes. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 3 on the last day of inspection, it was very clear how pupils' poetry writing skills (and performance) had been built up over the four days to enable a very good standard of work. Following on from a shared reading of *What a Racket*, the pupils worked collaboratively to create exciting and interesting verse that focused on the use of onomatopoeic words to provide strong imagery. One pair of boys wrote about a *Haunted House*:

*Bats eeking*  
*Creepy crawlies rattling*  
*Frankenstein buzzing*  
*Witches cackling....*

They brought the poem to life in their performance by adding dramatic sound effects.

8. Senior managers have a very clear view of what needs to be made more effective in school to sustain a good rate of improvement in progress and standards and the inspection team judge that there is good capacity for success. Target setting in school is not well developed and rigorous systems to track the value being added to pupils' education are not yet in place, though a start has been made. With good support from the local education authority the school has set challenging targets for 2004. The capacity to reach these targets looks promising as the improvements already set in motion by senior managers take effect.

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

- Pupils have very good attitudes towards learning, and each other.
- Behaviour is very good and the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.
- Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good.
- They show outstanding respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

9. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and they are proud of their achievements and those of their colleagues. They say that *school is fun*, that *it's good to learn new thing* and that *if all children could go to a school like this, it would be brilliant*. In lessons they listen very well and try hard with all new challenges. Pupils in the Year 1 classes were entranced by the introduction of a *magic box* in literacy lessons, and were inspired to become very creative when describing the sorts of things it might contain. Older pupils have very fond memories of their years at the school and say they will be very sad to leave.

10. Behaviour is very good both in classes and at playtimes. Pupils respond very well to the discipline codes which point out the choices they can make about their own conduct. They learn to become self-controlled and considerate of others. Pupils are polite, helpful and show considerable respect for the school environment and handle learning resources with care. They are trustworthy and caring of each other. Playtimes are generally very harmonious, and the playgrounds are well used for a wide range of games and activities with very little conflict for space. Pupils understand the need for sanctions, like lunchtime exclusions, but there have been no full or fixed term exclusions in recent years.
11. Pupils show high regard for one another and enjoy very good relationships. They respond extremely well to opportunities for taking initiative and responsibility, and demonstrate increasing confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school. They have shown outstanding support, compassion and empathy in the wake of a recent bereavement, and indeed have become a closer school family as a result. There is very good racial harmony in the school, and all pupils share a sense of humour and a genuine delight in one another's successes.
12. As a result of being fully included in all of the school's activities, pupils who have special educational needs have good attitudes to their learning. They are well supported by other pupils in groups and paired learning times. They recognise that they are valued and value others in return. They develop well as mature and responsible people because they are given equal opportunities to relate and interact with one another and adults as all pupils do.
13. In their personal development, pupils demonstrate high moral values and social responsibility. In the junior classes, school council representatives take their roles seriously and bring their classmates' wishes and concerns to the meetings. They are keen to help the less fortunate, for example by fundraising for Comic Relief. As they grow older they learn life skills like emergency first aid procedures, and discuss the dangers of smoking. Some Year 5 pupils were able to produce some very good persuasive leaflets after this discussion. The prefects in Year 6 conduct their duties with considerable maturity and authority. Overall pupils develop into well-rounded, confident and responsible young citizens who are well prepared for their secondary education.
14. Attendance is good. The data shows that the school figures are above the national average for primary schools and have continued an upward trend. Punctuality is generally good and lessons begin on time.

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

- Teaching enables pupils to learn effectively over their time at school but there are inconsistencies that are holding back even better achievement, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in the infant stage and good in the junior stage.
- The best subject teaching and learning is in English and art and design across the school.
- School managers have evaluated intensively the quality of teaching and are implementing a programme that is bringing improvement.
- Classrooms are happy and stimulating places of learning in which pupils show good levels of interest and concentration.
- The team-work and high expectations in the Foundation Stage enables the youngest children in school to get off to a flying start in their education.
- High expectations and a brisk pace to learning helps pupils in Year 3 and 5 make consistently good gains.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound across the school however the quality of their individual education plans has shortcomings.

- The school is appropriately placed to extend its monitoring systems to iron out the inconsistencies so that good teaching becomes the norm in all years.

15. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in the infant stage and good in the junior stage. Teaching was never less than satisfactory in the 103 lessons observed during this inspection with around two thirds being of good or better quality. The school has come a long way in 18 months in welding two staffs together and settling into a new building. The ethos in school is positive and there is a strong team spirit. Relationships are very good at all levels and staff show a genuine commitment to putting the pupils' best interest at the heart of what they do.
16. School managers have evaluated the quality of teaching and are implementing a programme that is bringing improvement. A programme of professional development has had positive impact. The school has drawn from a wide range of advice to help make improvement. For example, there has been a very useful focus on enabling staff the opportunity to see good practice in other schools. There has been intensive support provided by the local education authority who undertook a review earlier this year of the progress made. Issues raised by the school following on from the review has provided the focus for on-going support, for example in planning and assessment, and the levels of challenge and pace within lessons. Planning is satisfactory overall, however learning objectives are often too general to drive learning forward at a good pace and there is limited evaluation that feeds forward to help teachers plan lessons that are suitably challenging for all. There is limited use of targets setting that helps show what levels pupils are working at and how they can move up a level and to review what has been learnt in the plenary session. Teachers mark work conscientiously and write supportive comments; they do not always show clearly the next steps for improvement. Managers are aware that continued emphasis is still required on all of these elements of teaching, particularly in the infant stage where the proportion of good or better quality teaching is only half that seen in other years.

Particular strengths in teaching include:

- Good subject knowledge and understanding
- Effective promotion of literacy skills
- Very good management of behaviour
- Good use of homework.

17. The school is appropriately placed to extend its monitoring systems to iron out the inconsistencies so that good teaching becomes the norm in all years.
18. Classrooms are happy and stimulating places of learning in which pupils show good levels of interest and concentration. Pupils are keen learners and show good levels of independence when provided with opportunities to find out things for themselves. Good teaching and learning was observed in all years. This shows the potential quite clearly for harnessing teaching strengths to better support pupils' achievements. The best teaching and learning in school, as seen in lessons and from the sample of pupils' work, is in English and in art and design. Some very good lessons were observed in physical education, science, mathematics and history where high standards were achieved as a result. The most consistently effective teaching and learning takes place in the nursery and in Years 3 and 5 where high expectations ensure that pupils make clear gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. An excellent lesson was observed in Year 3 where pupils of all abilities made very good gains in writing and performing poetry. Teaching is more satisfactory than good in the infant stage because it does not always move pupils' learning forward at a good pace. There is a tendency for teaching here to focus too heavily on ensuring that all pupils gain knowledge at a similar rate and the style of teaching limits the opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. During the inspection a number of lessons were observed in geography in the infant stage and ICT across the school and all were at least satisfactory. However, they present *one off* learning experiences for pupils that, though valuable, are



not linking together to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically built. The school's strategies provide a good focus on developing pupils' literacy skills, and to a lesser extent numeracy skills, however ICT skills are not promoted consistently well. There is a need for staff confidence in the use of ICT to be boosted through an effective programme of training.

19. The team-work and high expectations in the Foundation Stage enables the youngest children in school to get off to a flying start in their education. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teaching and learning in the physical area of development though satisfactory overall, is constrained by the lack of a good quality outdoor area. There is very good teamwork in the nursery that enables the youngest children in school to feel safe, secure and confident and to take full advantage of the exciting experiences they are offered. Activities are extremely well-chosen to make learning fun as well as productive. Planning, based mainly on the Early Learning Goals, is well focused on individual learning in the later part of the Foundation Stage and links well to the National Curriculum programmes of study as appropriate. This enables the children to move to the next stage of learning when they are ready. Teaching overall is confident and lessons are well structured to engage the children's interest, and make learning enjoyable.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound across the school and enables these pupils to make similar progress to their peers. However, the quality of their individual education plans is very variable and some do not give clear targets to support on-going progress. The teaching assistants are provided with professional guidance from the Teaching Assistant Mentor who is also the Foundation Stage Manager. Some very good support was observed being given to pupils with statements of special educational needs by their assigned teaching assistant who were able to play a full role in the lesson and take slow but sure steps forward in their learning in consequence. The school has yet to give attention to identifying and consistently meeting the needs of higher attainers, including those with gifts and talents and this requires review.

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

- The overall curriculum is broad and balanced, though there are weaknesses in ICT and geography.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is of very good quality.
- The school is not yet identifying those pupils in school with gifts and talents and the challenge provided for higher attaining pupils could be greater.
- There is considerable enhancement of the curriculum through the programme of visits and visitors, extra-curricular activities and the links with community.
- The programme for pupils' personal development is highly effective.
- Very good attention is paid to promoting pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is assisting them in being very well prepared for future citizenship.
- Moral and social development is a strength. Pupils are helped to develop a very good set of principles by which to live.
- The emphasis placed on the creative and aesthetic elements of the curriculum enriches pupils' cultural experiences very significantly, as shown in the art-rich displays.

21. In general, pupils work from an effective curriculum in nursery and reception classes and in the infant and junior stages. There is good commitment in school to make continued improvement to the curriculum to ensure that all pupils experience the best of what is on offer.
22. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage, is of very good quality and considerable richness. The staff work well as a team to plan appropriate learning experiences in the six areas of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. For the oldest children in reception, a good transition is made to work from the National

Curriculum when the children are ready. Overall, there is a well thought out blend of teacher led activities, practical work and tasks selected by the children themselves. Teachers and support staff each have a well-defined role in planning the activities provided and all staff know their role in promoting appropriate skills and knowledge. Children with special educational needs in nursery and reception have their particular difficulties assessed early and are well provided for, and this enables them to succeed in meeting the targets set for them.

23. In the infant and junior stages, the curriculum is generally of appropriate breadth and balance. However, there is work still to be done to ensure all pupils, regardless of age or attainment, enjoy the same opportunities to learn the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT and geography as they do in other subjects. Whilst there are strengths in provision in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education, ICT and geography have not been promoted as successfully in school. Thus, in ICT, the planned curriculum is appropriate and covers all the necessary strands, but actual coverage is restricted by the under-use of the resources. The computer suite is, on average, used for about half the available time, which affects pupils' opportunities to work with a wide enough range of software in order to make consistent progress in all strands of the subject.
24. The curriculum for geography is also planned properly, but this subject suffers in relation to others because less time is spent in its study in the infant stage. This narrows the range of work, and because all pupils, regardless of attainment, generally complete the same task, a cap is placed on the standards reached. In addition, the lower attaining pupils in infant classes miss some geography lessons because they are withdrawn for additional tuition, chiefly in literacy. The school has not monitored and evaluated the impact of the system of withdrawing pupils from lessons in this way.
25. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is good and this has a significant impact on the raising of standards in English. Literacy sessions include some good opportunities to build skills and knowledge in reading, writing, speaking and listening. There is good variety in the types of writing produced and many pupils speak with confidence and clarity. The strategy for numeracy is not quite as effective as that for literacy, although it is satisfactory overall. Numeracy skills could be promoted more rigorously, especially in infant classes and through the school, planning for the numeracy sessions focused more on the exact skills, knowledge and understanding to be learned by pupils of different attainment levels.
26. This planning issue extends outside numeracy. Curriculum planning, whether long, medium or short term, is completed conscientiously by teachers, though it is not as well focused on exact and measurable learning outcomes as it might be. This hampers the assessment of what has been learned as, often, there are no indicators in planning to gauge the progress made by different groups of pupils. These shortcomings have an impact on the work of higher attaining pupils especially. In some lessons, their work lacks sufficient challenge to enable them to do as well as they are able. Since the school has not yet identified pupils with gifts and talents, it cannot be certain that such pupils have an appropriate curriculum at all times. This is a missed opportunity to lift standards.
27. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. No pupils are disapplied from taking part in any of the National Curriculum subjects. Extra curriculum opportunities are open to them as they are to all pupils. This means that they are given opportunities to shine in sporting and musical activities outside the school such as when the choir visit people in the community. Special needs pupils also take part in the school's residential and day visits with the latter taking place in all year groups. Many teachers are beginning to pay more supportive attention to the needs of pupils in their planning. However, this is still not a consistent feature in all planning particularly in Year 1 and 2 classes. This is tied in to the lack of precision in the individual education plans that do not provide the structure required for effective lesson planning.

28. The curriculum is enhanced effectively through the programme of visits and visitors. Pupils' learning is extended by the opportunities that this programme provides to study topics in greater depth and to share the experiences of people such as the artist-in-residence, who has worked with reception children and *Lucy the Maid* who gave junior children good insights into domestic service in Victorian times. The school is building good links with the community in order to broaden pupils' experiences and the police and health services play a significant role in work to combat the misuse of drugs and to promote a healthy lifestyle.
29. There is a good programme of activities outside lessons that contributes to the standards attained and progress made. Since many pupils, of all ages participate in activities such as skipping, the benefits are spread through the school. The Skipping Club is a session when pupils work energetically together and produce some excellent sequences that are very well choreographed and performed. The children from the reception classes who join this event clearly seek to emulate the high quality performance of their older friends. Parents make a strong contribution to the extra-curricular activities programme, which enables the school to widen its scope and quality.
30. The overall programme for pupils' personal development is of very good quality. Staff know the pupils very well and are always alert to their needs as growing children. The school has a very good record for developing pupils as pleasant people who behave well, work hard and get on well with others. The pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and reflect carefully on their actions and attitudes. They are proud of initiatives such as *Sam's Garden*, which commemorates and celebrates the short life of a much-missed pupil, and is a special place for them. Year 5 and 6 pupils shared with inspectors the value they attached to this garden and their memories of the many good things they shared in school. They also expressed their hopes that all pupils, everywhere, should have the same good chances to work and thrive in a school as welcoming and effective as Holywell.
31. The school gives very good attention is to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through this work, the pupils are being very well prepared for future citizenship. Moral and social development are particular strengths and pupils are helped live by a very good set of principles. In many lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to work together and cooperate effectively. Pupils develop a good sense of taking care of each other and show very good initiative in going to the assistance of others who are troubled or sad. Pupils support each other very effectively and this contributes much to the happy, productive and supportive learning ethos in school.
32. Creative and aesthetic aspects of the work foster pupils' cultural education very effectively. The school is considerably enhanced by displays of high quality, which are also art-rich. The quilt displayed in the library is an example of a project involving every single pupil, where creativity and flair are very much in evidence. This work would do justice to pupils in secondary school and was much valued by adults when displayed at County Hall recently. Whilst work in ICT does not enhance pupils' cultural development enough, there are good opportunities for pupils in different years to participate in choir, drama, literacy and art projects. This is to the advantage of their overall cultural development and in this work the school pays good attention to the wealth of other cultures. The pupils show good empathy for the culture of minority groups, as shown in the Year 6 topic that linked geography, music and religious education in work about India and its culture and society.

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

- The school gives good attention to pupils' health, welfare and safety.
- The procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good.
- Assessment procedures, and the use made of assessment information, are unsatisfactory.

33. The school clearly places the pastoral care of its pupils at the centre of its work. Teachers know their pupils very well, and respond to their individual needs. All adults working in the school pay careful attention to matters of health, welfare and safety. Parents' concerns in this area have been recorded and are being addressed. Pupils are encouraged to be 'healthy eaters' and are taught safe practice in lessons. The procedures for first aid are good, and older pupils receive instruction in this too. The arrangements for child protection are secure and in line with local area guidance.
34. Guidance and support for personal development are strengths of the school. The way the school promotes acceptable behaviour is very good. Having identified some concerns about the behaviour of the younger pupils, the introduction of 'zone boards' has been successful in focussing on pupils' choices and on rewarding effort. Pupils know what is expected of them, and staff are consistent in their practice. The pupils who received a gold pencil for reaching the gold zone during the inspection week were clearly very proud of their achievements and enjoyed the applause of their peers. Anti-social or aggressive behaviour is extremely rare and is monitored and supported successfully.
35. Good attendance is promoted well and the headteacher is meticulous in her monitoring of absences and drive for no unauthorised absence. Parents are aware of the need to follow the attendance policy, and pupils are rewarded for outstanding attendance.
36. Since the formation of the new school, there have been significant improvements in the whole school approach to assessment. Many of the procedures are still at very early stages of being implemented by staff, particularly in the infant classes. Overall the procedures are unsatisfactory at present, because there is inconsistent practice, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The school's systems to track and target the standards being attained by groups of pupils of different abilities are not sharp enough.
37. The use of assessment information is also unsatisfactory at present, because pupils are not clear about how well they are doing, and what they must do to improve. Lesson planning does not clearly relate to pupils' prior knowledge, and marking is not sufficiently diagnostic. There is evidence that the school tracks individual pupils' progress in the areas of English and mathematics, but in other subjects targets and expectations are too vague. There are some examples of good practice by certain teachers, but this is not sufficiently widespread.
38. Children in the Foundation Stage are very thoroughly assessed in all areas of their development. However in other year groups the skills acquired in various subjects like music, geography, religious education and ICT, are not assessed sufficiently to enable teachers to plan the next learning steps, or to report attainment to parents. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is introducing a system of assessment to cover all areas of the curriculum.
39. The school takes great care of its pupils who have special educational needs, particularly thoughtful care is taken of those pupils who have statements maintained. The care is sustained through the work of the teaching assistants and class teachers. They work together effectively, paying appropriate attention to well structured planning of activities suitable to meet needs. Although care is manifested in this way there is not enough attention given to the precision of individual education plans. This aspect of care is not well managed by the school's Special educational needs coordinator (Senco). However, the Teaching Assistant Mentor gives good support to teaching assistants who feel well managed in their work as a result. The school gives particular attention to providing off-site provision for those few pupils who have particular special educational needs. For example, good relationships have been established with the Oaklands Centre that gives specifically targeted support to a small number of pupils at different times during the course of the school week. Teaching assistants as well as many teachers, thoughtfully track the progress of pupils who have learning difficulties. However, there is a

need to pay more systematic attention to the reviews of individual education plans by more careful management by the school's Senco.

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

- Parents think highly of the school, particularly its high expectations for pupils.
- The school has successfully forged good links with parents.
- Information about pupils' progress has room for improvement.
- Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is good.

40. Parents think highly of the school. They are particularly happy that their children like to attend, that staff have high expectations and that they are very approachable. However a few parents have concerns about one or two issues, particularly perceived inconsistencies in the setting of homework.
41. The school works hard to forge what is a good, effective partnership with parents. It is receptive to parents' views, which it actively seeks through questionnaires and informal conversations. The staff are available to speak to parents at the end of the school day, and they have recently introduced a fourth parents' consultation evening. This strong partnership relies on good channels of information, in which the home-school diaries play an important part.
42. The school uses many devices to keep parents of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, well informed about school life, but has not yet met the high expectations of all parents in letting them know how well their children are achieving. The school prospectus and annual report from the governors are well-produced, accessible documents. Before the start of a new school year, parents are invited to meet the new teacher and receive a booklet which covers all the forthcoming topics of study and administrative details. However, the pupils' annual progress reports, while they aim to give parents a picture of how well their child is achieving, are not always sufficiently clear about the progress made during the year. As pupils do not have ongoing personal targets for improvement which they can share with their parents, parents may not have a very clear idea of how well their children are getting on as the year progresses. Indeed, several parents have commented that they would like more opportunity to see the range of work their children do during the year.
43. Regular newsletters, diaries and letters from *Friends of Holywell* keep parents informed about school life, and seek to involve them when possible. Parents are active partners in support of their children's learning. They attend class assemblies, and several volunteer to help in school. In the Foundation Stage a special feature is the weekly Parents' Day when pupils benefit from intensive support for their communication skills thanks to the increased number of adults to chat with. The homework policy is clear, and parents support it well, enabling pupils to extend and develop their learning at home. Support for school functions, fund-raising and charitable events is good, particularly that for the popular school discos. These raise significant amounts of money which the *Friends of Holywell* donate to improve school resources.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The leadership and management of the headteacher is an asset to the school. She has high expectations and gives strong educational direction. She is ably supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher.
- Senior managers work well together and there is good reflection of the school's aims in their work. On the whole, subject leaders manage their subjects well, but their leadership roles require a boost in order to further raise standards. There is more to be done to improve the leadership of special educational needs provision.

- Governors demonstrate wise and effective governance, they ensure all legal requirements are met and are very influential in the development of the school.
- There is effective concern for the principles of best value in all aspects of provision and procurement.
- The school's systems to track and target the standards being attained by groups of pupils of different abilities are not sharp enough.
- School self-evaluation systems have a number of positive aspects; for example the annual review process that highlights strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Managers are alert to what needs their urgent attention and are well underway with implementing improvement plans that show good signs of making the school more effective.
- All forms of resources are of good sufficiency and are managed well.
- The school is very efficient in its control and management of the budget and additional grants are used as planned.
- The school adds clear value to pupils' education over time and provides sound value for money.

44. The headteacher has worked very effectively to ensure that Holywell Primary School got off to a good start and that the strengths of the individual schools assimilated into the new one were adopted and built upon. In a short time she has ensured a unity of purpose in school and very good educational direction. All this is due to the very good leadership given by the headteacher during the uncertain times following the fire in the old buildings and the rebuild of a significant part of the existing site. The headteacher has high expectations of the pupils, staff, governors and parents alike and is successful in channelling their energies into effective partnerships to improve the quality of provision, the progress made in learning and the standards attained. The headteacher has introduced good quality management systems into school that are bedding in well. Whilst she recognises there is room for improvement in some aspects of the work of the school, the groundwork has been completed successfully from which the school can now build securely.
45. The hard working, committed and highly effective deputy headteacher is very much involved in the strategic management of the school and she also gives committed leadership to staff. A very strong partnership has been developed between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and their different leadership and management skills complement each other well. The team of four senior managers, which include the headteacher, deputy headteacher and managers of the Foundation and junior stages, is to be strengthened next term by the arrival of a new infant stage manager. The current team of four is a fairly recently created group, which is settling well to its task of oversight of the school's performance on all fronts. This team is developing its understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement well and it works successfully to ensure that the school's aims are reflected very firmly in its work and that of other members of staff.
46. Subject leaders show good management skills overall and they have provided good guidance and support for colleagues in the planning and resourcing of most subjects. However, their leadership role is not as strongly developed. The main priority of ensuring that standards are as high as possible is not pronounced in their job specification and measures to ensure that subject leaders have opportunities to monitor and evaluate the strengths and aspects for development in their subjects are relatively new. Leadership and management is good all-round in English, science, art and design and physical education. They are also good for the Foundation Stage provision in the nursery and reception classes. In most other subjects, management is stronger than leadership, and is at least satisfactory in both elements. However, in geography, ICT and the provision for pupils with special educational needs, leadership and management both require considerable improvement in order to maximise the quality of education and to improve pupils' achievements.
47. The management of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and this ensures that the youngest children in school are well motivated to their learning and make good progress. The provision

for pupils with special educational needs, though satisfactory overall, has a number of shortcomings. The school Senco is clearly committed to special needs work. However, there is too much emphasis being given to the administration side of the role and the expense of monitoring and evaluation work. An appropriate amount of release time is being given by the school to allow the Senco to carry out the role effectively. When measured against the number of pupils with special needs in the school, the one half day a week and a whole extra day every term gives adequate time to complete the work load. There is a lack of consistency in the systems that are used to support pupils. Not enough attention is given to drawing up precisely targeted individual education plans even though good examples are available when drawn up by the local authority support services. Too much emphasis is being given to previous systems in place in one of the schools prior to amalgamation. These systems are no longer suitable for the current situation and it is time to move on. The need to re-establish appropriate priorities for special needs provision are clear to the head teacher but are not as clearly recognised by the Senco in order to put them into action. The work of the recently established Teaching Assistant Mentor is helping to support provision more effectively.

48. The governors are interested, supportive and involved in the work of the school. They are proud of the trends in establishing the new school and making subsequent improvements and are establishing effective procedures to keep a valued, watchful eye on what the school does. Governors are a well-led group that shows considerable talent in the wise and effective way in which they advise the school. Governors are influential in work to make things even better for the pupils and they ask challenging questions of the school managers in order to check that all statutory requirements are met and to establish the overall effectiveness of the school. Governors and school managers pay efficient attention to the principles of best value, both in what the school purchases and in what it provides.
49. The school's system to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils and to track that they are meeting these goals is based on comprehensive data from assessment. However, these procedures are not yet consistent or rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils, regardless of age, attainment, gender or background, are making the progress of which they are capable. Thus, the work for higher attaining pupils is not generally taxing enough, provision for geography in the infants and ICT is unsatisfactory and does not allow pupils to build appropriate skills and knowledge. The monitoring of lower attaining pupils withdrawn from lessons for specialist provision is too informal. In all these respects, the school cannot be sure that the pupils are making the required progress.
50. On the other hand, there have been some promising developments in checking and evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and some subject leaders, for example in English, are developing effective monitoring practice that gives full insights into the quality of education and its impact throughout the school. School self-evaluation systems have other strengths including the annual review process that highlights strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in each subject. This ensures that key managers know exactly what needs urgent attention and what is required in the school improvement plan in order to make the school even more effective.
51. All forms of resources are of good sufficiency and are managed very effectively. The finance officer has a very good understanding of the intricacies of the budget and the implications for the future that current decisions bring. She is meticulous in providing high quality information to key managers and governors so that they can make the wisest use of finance. The secretary and administration staff are diligent in the operation of the office and provide a very good first impression of the school. The school has a carry forward that is considerably in excess of the recommended amount but this is to be targeted at necessary improvements to the provision for ICT, the maintenance of stability in staffing and in specific measures to raise standards. Part is also to be spent on continuing improvements to the fabric of the school. Additional grants are used efficiently and effectively to support improvements to

progress and standards. The quality and use of the accommodation and learning resources is good overall, with the buildings being a significant asset.

52. It is evident that the school makes an effective contribution to pupils' education whilst they are in school and is working hard for improvement. At present, the school gives sound value for money, but the prospect for the future is bright and the potential to give even better value is marked. This is due to the strong lead given by key managers and the firm commitment and hard work of staff to give pupils a good education.



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

53. The school has moved forward quickly over eighteen months in making improvement to management, teaching, learning and standards. The school is poised ready to launch into the next phase of improvement and has good capacity to make provision even better. There is drive and determination to press ahead, and the promise for an even brighter future is clear. In order to quicken the pace of improvement the school needs now to focus on:

### **1) Improving the systems to enable teachers and managers to track pupils' progress over time in all subjects and target improvement by:**

- Building on the useful start made in developing a target setting and tracking system that pinpoints promptly the rate of progress, any under-achievement, learning spurts and gaps in learning in equal measure.
- Extending the use of data by senior managers and governors to track the progress of individuals and groups of boys and girls of different abilities.
- Setting challenging targets for every year group in English, mathematics and science that are regularly reviewed and adjusted upwards as necessary.
- Identifying the highest attainers, and those with gifts and talents in every year and establish rigorous systems to check up on their progress.
- Sharpening the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and ensuring timely reviews and re-setting of targets.
- Finding regular opportunities to share the features of the best teaching and learning in school.
- Extending the use of new technology to help the handling and processing of data.

Paragraphs: **4 6 8 20 26 27 36 37 39 47 49 111 117**

### **2) Improving pupils' achievements and provision in geography in the infant stage and ICT throughout the school by:**

- Ensuring full curricular entitlement and coverage of all elements of geography and ICT.
- Paying more attention to enabling pupils time and opportunity to build their research and enquiry skills in geography and ICT.
- Establishing rigorous action plans that will guide improvement in both of these subjects.
- Extending the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Making more regular use of the ICT suite.
- Establishing a programme of staff training in ICT to boost confidence.

Paragraphs: **3 4 6 18 23 24 96 106 107 111 120 121 122 124 125**

### **3) Raising the quality of teaching in infant classes to that of the best found in school and making more consistent the levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils across the school by:**

- Continuing with the good programme of professional development and support in the infants as a result of the school's own review of teaching and learning.
- Widening the range of teaching methods used in the infant classes to include time and opportunity for pupils to extend research, enquiry and problem-solving skills.
- Expecting that infant pupils present work neatly in their books and record a good amount of work.

- Ensuring that the objectives in all teachers' planning reflect exactly what it is expected that pupils of different abilities will learn.
- Insisting that all lessons should contain different and significantly challenging work for high-attaining pupils, that takes their thinking forward.
- Using pupils' targets more consistently in the planning of lessons, to inform the direction of lessons, to support group-work, to review what has been learnt in the plenary session and to guide the marking of work.
- Establishing systems for assessing pupils' progress that enables fast tracking to take place where appropriate.

Paragraphs: **4 5 15 16 46 49 69 71 75 80 82 85 92**

**4) Extending the role of leaders in driving forward improvement in the subject or aspect for which they have responsibility by:**

- Bringing tighter focus in lesson observations and when sampling pupils' work on those things that will help the school move forward in the raising achievement of boys and girls.
- Focussing evaluation on learning outcomes rather than teaching intentions.
- Involving subject leaders in regular assessments of pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels and using this information to inform target setting.
- Improving the leadership of special educational needs to ensure that provision is managed effectively and of good quality.

Paragraphs: **4 36 37 44 46 47 82 89 102 112 119 125 132**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	103
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	49	38	0	0	0
Percentage	1	14	48	37	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	392
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	34

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### **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 (Year2)*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	32	19	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	30
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	42	47	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	92 (86)	94 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	31
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	46	48	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (84)	94 (91)	96 (100)
	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	35	26	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	30	34
	Girls	22	21	26
	Total	53	51	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (83)	84 (77)	98 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	30	32
	Girls	24	23	26
	Total	54	53	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (85)	87 (78)	95 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	267	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	51	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	900,278
Total Expenditure	806,173
Expenditure per pupil	2,110
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	94,105

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	416
Number of questionnaires returned	188

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	46	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	51	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	48	13	5	3
The teaching is good.	54	44	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	44	8	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	53	9	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	46	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	41	18	1	13

NB Rows may not total 100% due to rounding



**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**

- The children have average levels of attainment overall when they start in the nursery class.
- The children are given a flying start to their education.
- They make good progress and achieve the learning goals before moving in to Year 1 classes.
- Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage with many exciting opportunities for learning.
- The children have a stimulating learning environment in which most achieve well.
- The Foundation Stage is effectively led and very well managed.

55. When the children join the nursery class their attainment is broadly average for their age. However, some have levels of skills and knowledge that are more advanced and there are similar proportions that are behind. This level. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and effective provision is made because of intensive support. All children, irrespective of their gender, needs or ability are making good progress in their first two years in the school. A significant number of the forty-seven children in the current nursery are well on track to exceed the early learning goals set for them by the time they begin their Year 1 classes. The forty-eight children in the school's two reception classes have largely met the early learning goals set for them and are well prepared for work in Year 1 classes.

Children are making good progress because:

- The provision in the nursery is very good with well-planned and exciting experiences that ensure that children get off to a flying start in their education.
- The teacher organises her time, and that of the high quality support staff, very effectively.
- There is equal access to very well focussed teaching that concentrates on the children's all round development.
- There is an attractive and stimulating learning environment with all adults contributing to this for the children's benefit.
- There is joint planning to a similar format that ensures the good practice in the nursery class continues in the reception classes.
- Parents support their children as they are welcomed into school with good induction procedures that give them a full picture of how they can best support their children's learning.
- Success is valued and all children experience this in some form so they are happy and eager to learn.
- Although there are limitations in the outdoor play facilities, the managers are aware of this and give opportunities for indoor play so that the children's physical development is still assured.
- The children's progress is systematically monitored and evaluated by all staff and this assists the good achievements all are making.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

56. The children's personal and social development is above average for their age. Most children make good progress and are well on track to reach the goals set. They begin the day whether in nursery or reception confidently, self-registering their attendance efficiently. All adults who work with the children in the nursery and reception classes are good role models for them because they show enthusiasm and

excitement in their teaching. This is returned to them in the children's learning. The children work and play co-operatively and independently. Children in the nursery glow with pleasure at the inviting seaside area that has been set up with parasols, chairs, sand, buckets and spades. This invites them to join together, which they do readily, paying good attention to one another's needs as they *swim* with safety rings. A good deal of lively discussion holds the children's concentration for extended periods with only short, perceptive questioning by the adults. The adults all set a very good example by acting as an effective team. The children emulate this in all of their activities, demonstrating mutual respect in their developing relationships with one another. They have a good awareness of the feelings of others, which are built upon by the teacher and support staff as they hold focused discussions with them. These often arise from the times spent listening to very expressively told stories that demand a thoughtful response.

57. All of these early experiences are built upon in the reception classes where the children regularly work in pairs or small groups. In their role-play they act out the familiar stories such as *The Three Bears* which also supports their language skill development. They confidently support one another, as they get ready for their physical development lesson in the hall, as awkward buttons are unfastened for one another without asking for adult help. When they are finding out about the world about them, for example in investigating the source of light and shadows they congratulate one another as they describe their findings accurately. Children are well rewarded by the praise that they receive from adults who work with them ungrudgingly.

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

58. The nursery teacher uses a mixture of formal and informal assessments to pinpoint the children's skills in spoken and written language in order to gauge accurately the experiences that need to be given to develop literacy skills effectively. The teaching of these skills is very good because all adults are deployed to give support either through direct teaching or through individual or group support. Most children have well developed speaking skills but a small number whose speech is still at an immature stage require specific help to overcome communication delay. All children make good progress because they are encouraged to talk to one another and adults engage them in purposeful discussions constantly and especially after they have listened to stories. When children are doing the latter, the love of reading is being well developed at the same time. Books such as *The Rainbow Fish* are read beautifully expressively so that children are absorbed. The children listen attentively to stories and most are very accomplished at answering the perceptive questioning of the teaching team about the way that the story sequence has unfolded. Equally well-focussed work takes place as both teacher and support staff directly teach children to form letters and words after they have talked with them about the topic of the week, for example being at the *sea-side*.
59. In the reception classes, the children are continually encouraged to focus on the sequence in a story to assist them in recounting their own. They share a book together such as *We're going on a bear hunt* predicting accurately how the story is going to develop. The teacher works systematically with small groups of four children at a time in a carousel arrangement so that all eventually take part in learning together. The children are able to label a story map with skilful intervention from the teacher that helps them to understand how a story develops logically. Other children interact confidently with one another in their role-play about the story with thoughtful help coming from the support staff in the way that their play develops. The children's good listening skills help them to identify sounds within words and they combine letters together, for example *sh* and *th* when spelling words. Books are valued and many of the children are becoming confident readers. All of these experiences are preparing the children well for their Year 1 work and many have already attained the early learning goals.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Many of the mathematics activities in the nursery class are practically based. Although children deal with numbers that could be abstract ones they are made meaningful for them because they are presented to them visually. They all deal confidently with numbers to five but many can go beyond this with numbers up to ten and a small few, twenty. Adults are continually extending learning as they pose enquiring questions to the children using the language of mathematics. The children develop a good understanding of *size*, *quantity* and *shape* as they use different shaped objects to count and accurately describe what is smaller and larger than the initial amount. Their understanding is reinforced as they sing the *Jolly fish* a number-based song and because children hold various sized cut out fish that visually makes the numbers meaningful to them. More focus is given when the children work with their teacher in small groups to count and write numbers from one to five or ten after attaching tentacles to an octopus and counting how many spots are on each one. The well-prepared activity sheets ensure that more challenging numerical problems are set for the highest attainers. All of the children are able to do the work set for them very accurately as they have built up their confidence to work with numbers due to the inter-linked experiences that the teaching team have built up over the week.
61. Children in the reception classes have many opportunities to build their mathematical skills. For example, they learn incidentally about *larger* and *smaller* numbers as they create shadows on a screen with the help of an overhead projector. In specifically planned sessions, for example when using the programmable toy known as the *pixie* (and customised to look like a bear to fit in with the theme for the week) they are helped to find its way to different parts of the forest. The children use accurate language about position and give clear instructions. They are able to move the *pixie* backwards as well as the easier forward movement and extend their understanding by moving it sideways with equal skill. The movements are recorded so that understanding can be shared with everyone. Other children position figures on a *Lego* construction or place the animals in a model ark. Invariably they are able to do this successfully with minimal adult intervention. All children record numbers accurately. The good teaching ensures that the children are well prepared for the mathematical work that they will encounter in Year 1 classes.

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

62. This area of learning is where children have the least advanced skills when they enter the nursery class. All staff pay careful attention to developing skills rapidly in this area. The good curriculum provided extends the children's knowledge beyond their personal experience. In the nursery class the children learn about a different environment to the one where they live as the seaside is created for them to enjoy the sand and *swimming* safely wearing a rubber ring. They learn about the direction and speed of a boat travelling across water safely. They move a boat accurately that they have constructed from a plastic tub, straws for a mast and sugar paper sails in the water tray in the outside area. There are ongoing discussions with the teaching assistant about the movement through well chosen, open-ended questions that begin with *Why do you?* or *What do you think will happen?* This successful intervention activates the children's natural curiosity. Computers are used skilfully and with good measures of control to create colour patterns with the paint program. All children make delicious octopus-shaped biscuits in small groups with a teaching assistant. Purposeful questions are posed to the children as they mix and learn a great deal about quantities of ingredients at the same time.
63. In the reception classes the exposure to new experiences continues to develop knowledge and understanding well. The children make successful jointed figures out of card. They are fascinated by the discoveries that they make as they cast shadows on a screen using an overhead projector. This is a typical example of the care and thought that goes into teachers' planning because this activity replaces the chance to discover outside when the sun refused to shine. Teachers and support staff constantly

thinks ahead, re-plan if necessary to ensure that the children's learning experiences are meaningful. The children continue to use computers with good measures of control and create much more creative pictures. In their assembly times together in the classroom the children learn about the life of Jesus confirming their knowledge as they join in discussions with their teacher about the story that they have heard. All of these experiences add to the children's knowledge and understanding so that they achieve the early learning goals by the time they are ready to move into Year 1 classes.

### **Physical development**

64. The children develop their physical skills effectively so that they are well prepared for work in Year 1 classes. All children manipulate small tools, writing and drawing materials and toys very well from the time they enter nursery. The wide range of activities presented to them gives them suitable opportunities to develop these skills. They are confident in their use of space as they move around the classroom showing an acute awareness of others. Staff make good use of the immediate outside area when the good weather gives them the chance to do so. The support staff act as good role models when the children move their bodies to well-chosen music that alternates between fast and slow movements. The children move in and out of a circle with speed and skill whilst using the large parachute. They are encouraged by the teacher to refine their movements by repeating movements at different levels that demand movement in a variety of ways. The children have appropriate time given to them to explore the use of larger spaces in the school hall with good levels of confidence. The use of outdoor space is less well developed to enable the children opportunities to extend their skills in using large-scale equipment for example, but this is being attended to as part of the planned improvement priorities.
65. The emphasis upon controlling movement is successfully further developed in the reception classes. In the playground children learn the skills of skipping forwards and backwards as they work hard with the help of a teaching assistant. The assistant guides them through a logical sequence of movements that the children enjoy immensely, but also ensures their physical capacity is well tested. The children effectively learn to move the ropes forwards, backwards, slowly, with more speed and as twisting shapes. In the school hall the children pay careful attention to one another's safe use of space as well as the effect movement has upon their health. They warm up by moving in different ways such as walking and hopping to develop their understanding of needing to prepare muscles carefully. These effective opportunities ensure that children have reached the learning goals that prepare them appropriately for work in Year 1 classes.

### **Creative development**

66. Children in the nursery class have a good number of opportunities to develop their creative skills effectively. The opportunities are usually carefully planned as part of their learning in other areas. An example of this is when they design and make attractive fishes with a variety of coloured papers and foils after they have listened intently to the story of *The Rainbow Fish*. The children's high interest level in the story ensures that they want to make a careful attempt at re-creating their own individual colourful fishes. Papers are chosen with an expert eye because the resources have been carefully planned. The children work well with the teaching assistant to create the images. The children are provided with good musical experiences and show their understanding of pitch as they move in the outside area to music that has been chosen well. Their skills as singers are developed well when they sing songs together at the end of the day and in their circle times together.
67. In the reception classes the children's aesthetic skills as artists are developed as both teachers and support staff help them to explore the use of a wider range of materials. They use clay effectively to sculpt a small cave for a bear after singing about going on a bear hunt. Twigs, twine and grasses are

added to the clay as natural materials are introduced subtly to add realism. The children are making very good progress in developing their creative skills and achieve the learning goals that prepare them effectively for work in Year 1 classes.

## ENGLISH

- Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching in the juniors.
- The use of literacy to support pupils' learning in different subjects is good.
- Library provision and the use of the library, particularly for independent research, are very good.
- Higher attainers are not always challenged well enough.
- Marking is inconsistent in helping pupils to know how they can improve their work.
- Untidy handwriting and presentation skills in Years 1 and 2 detract from the level of work being achieved.
- English is well led and managed and there is good capacity for further improvement.

68. Standards are average by Year 2. They are above average by Year 6. Standards in speaking and reading are above average across the school. Writing in the infant classes is not as good as it should be, but at the end of the junior years writing is above average. Writing at the higher levels at the age of seven is below average. It is average by the end of Year 6. This is borne out by the scrutiny of pupils' work and SATs results for 2002, as well as classroom observations of teaching and learning. The targeting of reading in the infants is reflected in the improving standards. Inspection evidence shows there to be no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls in English.
69. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress overall. In the junior classes progress is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because work is usually matched to their needs and ability but they are sometimes let down by poor quality individual education plans that include targets that are not precise enough to support small steps to success. Those pupils with a statement are well supported by the good input of teaching assistants who show patience and commitment in helping these pupils overcome their specific difficulties in literacy. The school has not yet identified its very highest attainers, or those with particular gifts in English. This means it is left to individual teachers to provide for such pupils in the way that they think best. Some do this better than others. As a result, this group of pupils are not always sufficiently challenged with demanding enough work in order to reach the highest standard possible.
70. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is successfully raising standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Basic skills are well taught in the junior classes. Additional strategies are used to support English and booster classes contribute effectively to the standards attained at the end of Year 6. Teachers throughout the school have good subject knowledge. They manage pupils very well in lessons and this has a significant impact on learning. Further improvements are needed to medium term planning which is not consistent across the school. A rich and relevant curriculum is provided which actively engages pupils in learning through drama and role play, strong links across other subjects and the good use of visits and visitors to school. All of these are important factors, most of which are contributing to above average standards at the end of Year 6.
71. Speaking and listening standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Speaking skills are also above average by the end of Year 2 but listening skills are not yet so secure. Most pupils listen attentively in Year 2 but a few do not listen well enough, as in a poetry lesson when the teacher read an example of work from one child to the class. A number of children were off task and noise levels rose from time to time, interrupting the flow of the lesson. Throughout the school pupils speak with a high degree of confidence and fluency. Most are keen to engage in discussions or respond to questions. Many are very articulate, drawing on an extensive vocabulary. Teachers place high emphasis on good use of Standard English and provide good role models for pupils by their own example. Pupils express themselves clearly. Their confidence with language was seen in an excellent lesson in Year 3 based on poetry writing. Pupils had written their own poems and were working

collaboratively really well to improve the structure and content in readiness for group performances. They used powerful verbs to give excitement and interest to the poems and their rendition were enthusiastic and accomplished. They performed to a very high standard and with much enjoyment.

72. Teachers and support staff provide good opportunities for pupils to speak aloud to an audience, not just in plenary sessions but through good use of role play strategies such as *hot seating* and drama. Many of these opportunities arise in other subjects, for example, in history, Year 3 pupils used drama and role play well to develop enquiry skills and increase their knowledge and understanding about Anglo-Saxon life. They draw well on their firmly established literacy skills. Pupils readily discuss their work and explain their ideas. They are confident when giving an opinion and speaking aloud to an audience. In lessons, pupils widen their understanding and use of English because teachers reinforce key vocabulary and use powerful language to describe situations, such as *plundering* when referring to the Viking way of life in a history lesson.
73. Standards in reading are above average throughout the school. Reading has been targeted in the infant classes and this has raised standards in Year 2, with more pupils than in the past reading at the higher level 3. Throughout the school pupils enjoy reading. Many read with fluency and good expression. Higher attainers make good use of higher reading skills of inference and deduction. They are confident readers, who read with meaning and understanding. Most pupils are happy to discuss their reading habits and share views on their favourite authors. Many average readers also read fluently but sometimes lack the comprehension skills. Many pupils belong to a library outside of school. The great majority of pupils who shared books with inspectors said they read widely at home, having a good selection of books including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Reading diaries are well maintained, a testament to the extensive reading undertaken and are regularly used by parents and teachers, as well as pupils, to record reading progress. The good parental support for reading contributes effectively to the progress being made. Library provision is very good. A spacious, attractive and well maintained library provides an ideal environment at the heart of the school for independent research and offers a good working environment. It is very well used and very well managed, librarians from Year 5 support the teacher in charge of the library very effectively. The school has worked hard to develop this very good resource which is well stocked with a wide range of good quality books. This is now a strength of the school and is a major factor contributing to the very good library and independent research skills of pupils by the time they reach Year 6.
74. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Year 6. They are average in Year 2, however writing is the weakest aspect of English in the infant classes. Pupils write for an increasing range of purpose as they move through the school. In Year 2 for example, they write stories, poems, instructions, news and recounts of visits and events. Higher attainers demonstrate an increasing use of descriptive language, for example one pupil when developing a story setting wrote:

*The woods were gloomy, dark and faded. They had a mushroomy smell...It was spooky, ghostly and shadowy.*

75. However, for a significant number of pupils in infant classes, writing is let down because pupils do not have the necessary handwriting skills to record fluently and at length. Presentation of work is often untidy and spellings are inaccurate. This is hampering progress in writing. Teachers' expectations are not high enough of how much work of good quality is recorded and sometimes tasks are not demanding enough, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Handwriting skills are not secure for all except the higher attainers. Some pupils in Year 2 have not yet developed a comfortable pencil grip. There is evidence of non-fiction writing and independent research skills are beginning to develop. However, the slow progress in writing skills in Year 1 and 2 is reflected in other subjects and is the main reason why standards are no better than average.

76. In the junior classes writing skills develop well. Pupils write with increasing skill and confidence often writing at great length. The majority of pupils present work neatly in the junior classes, writing in a legible cursive style and taking great pride in their presentation. They re-draft work carefully and most pupils use a wide range of punctuation accurately and average and higher attainers are confident with spellings. Higher attainers have a good command of a wide range of language. They use powerful verbs and descriptive vocabulary for example, in lesson focussing on poetry, one very talented pupil in Year 6 wrote this about a bully:

*The bully...He is someone to steer clear of,  
something to evade if you could  
like a nauseating smell from a clogged-up drain  
He is ample for his age-  
Bulky, ugly as a piranha  
One frown could sting you to the bone.  
...I shut my eyes tightly and waited inside'*

77. The majority of pupils have good comprehension skills by the end of Year 6. Independent research skills develop well across the school and are a strength for older pupils. Grammar and spelling are systematically built upon as pupils move through the junior classes. Pupils write for a good range of purpose, including play-scripts, newspaper reports, non-fiction recounts, stories and poems. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to present a balanced argument. They use persuasive language with confidence and when writing a book review they express opinions clearly, drawing on the text to support their views. Formal letters are well constructed using appropriate language. For example, in a letter to Worcester City Council one pupil began his letter:

*Dear Sir,  
I have just heard that Worcester County Council want to demolish the cathedral. I can't believe I am hearing this!*

Pupils show a good understanding of the use of personification in poetry. In a poem entitled, *Fire*, one pupil wrote:

*If you stand in my way you will not succeed.  
Unless water – my weakness – is used on me.  
And the humans will rise and perish will they.  
I then devour things in other rooms.  
I can see people on the floor, perplexed and paralysed.*

78. Poetry is used well to inspire writing in many year groups. The language and ideas contribute particularly well to pupils' spiritual environment. Pupils make good use of re-drafting skills to improve the quality of their writing. There is an enthusiasm for English lessons that often promotes this high level of response.
79. Instructional writing is clear and accurately sequenced by higher and average attainers who show good understanding of the use of *command* verbs, as do most lower attainers. Non-fiction reports and accounts are well organised. Many pupils have a good awareness of the intended audience for their writing. Writing in other subjects is developed well such as the *Horrid Henry* history book reviews and accounts of pond dipping in science in Year 4. Pupils make good use of ICT skills to produce newspaper reports using word processing skills.



80. Teaching and learning are good overall, although in Years 1 and 2 they are more often satisfactory than good. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They work well together in groups and concentrate well because they are interested and well motivated. In the best teaching, learning objectives are shared at the start of lessons so that pupils are clear about the task. Lively teaching is reflected in the quality of work produced. These lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils cover a good amount of work. Good use is made of plenary sessions to assess what has been learned and what needs further work on next time. Work is regularly marked but marking is not consistent, some being very cursory. Comments to help pupils improve their work are lacking from many books and there is little reference to pupils' targets through marking. These are aspects for improvement.
81. English is well led and managed by the subject leader who has good expertise and leads by example. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but more use could be made of the information gathered to set individual targets. English is developing well; particularly in the junior classes but work remains to be done in Years 1 and 2 to ensure skills are developed systematically and consistently, especially for the highest attaining pupils. The school has good capacity to improve further. The challenging targets set for 2004 for Year 6 will also contribute to raising standards further.

## MATHEMATICS

- The school has been successful in raising the attainment of lower attaining pupils.
- There has been insufficient focus in the past on ensuring that the standards of higher attaining pupils in the infants are in line with their capabilities.
- Planning does not focus sufficiently on ensuring work matches pupils' ability
- Teachers develop pupils' numeracy skills well but do not allow them enough opportunities to think for themselves or solve problems.
- Pupils' understanding of shape, space and measures is good
- The use of data to track and target pupils' progress is in need of more systematic use.
- Subject leadership and management are satisfactory currently but there is promise for these to improve in the future.
- Challenging targets have been set to help raise expectations for 2004.

82. Overall, standards are average at the end of both the infants and juniors. The school has succeeded in raising standards of pupils who previously were below average by targeting those in most need very effectively. However, that success is only part of the picture. The school is very aware that, despite its best efforts, the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels remains below average. It has started to rectify the problem by setting very challenging targets for Year 6 in 2004. In infant classes, much focused attention on improving the quality of teaching has started to impact positively. Ability groupings in the juniors have also gone some way towards meeting the needs of individual pupils but there is still further work to do. Inspection findings indicate that, although boys and girls achieve equally well, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is not rising enough. Indeed, in some classes, it is declining. One of the main weaknesses in provision for higher attaining pupils is low teacher expectation, particularly in the infants. In addition, all too often, teachers throughout the school give pupils too little opportunity to think for themselves. Some do not recognise the importance of assessment in raising standards and provision is not monitored with enough rigour. There has been insufficient focus in the past on whether the standards higher attaining pupils achieve are in line with their capabilities.
83. There is, however, room for optimism. On-going professional development in numeracy is having a positive impact. Infant teachers are starting to use the mental warm up session at the beginning of lessons well to develop effective numeracy skills. By the time pupils move into the juniors, numeracy skills are strong. Most pupils become increasingly secure and confident with numbers and this has a very positive impact upon their work. Understanding of shape, space and measures also develops well

from infant classes upwards, and pupils of all abilities have a good grasp of this aspect of mathematics. Evidence of data handling skills does not come across strongly in pupils' written work. There is, however, greater evidence of numeracy and data handling skills being developed well through cross-curricular links, particularly with science and geography.

84. Continuing on a positive note, the assessment co-ordinator analyses test results well in order to target specific areas more effectively. A substantial increase in the number of teaching assistants is also having a positive impact on provision. Support staff work particularly well with lower attaining pupils and make a major contribution towards their rate of learning. In addition, both junior and infant teachers manage pupils well.
85. However, this is not the full picture. The overall quality of teaching in the infants, although much improved and satisfactory overall, is not yet good enough to raise standards. In one lesson observed, the teacher wasted valuable time on organisation and higher attaining pupils had to wait while she explained work set for lower attaining pupils. They showed little interest or sense of urgency in their work. In some lessons, teachers do not make enough use of good quality support staff.
86. There is a marked improvement in the quality of provision when pupils move into the juniors. Pupils' work is better presented and there are more examples of marking being used purposefully to aid pupils' progress. During the inspection, a high proportion of teaching observed was good and occasionally very good in Years 3, 4 and 5 though only satisfactory in Year 6, because the pace was often too leisurely. In the best lessons, teaching moves at a very brisk pace, activities are exciting and teachers adapt work to meet individual needs. A very good example of this was observed in a Year 3 lesson on symmetry. Not a minute was wasted. Pupils had to be alert to answer the teacher's well-targeted questions. They enjoyed participating because they knew their ideas were valued and they were highly motivated because they wanted to use the digital camera to photograph examples of symmetrical shapes. Pupils gained a lot of new knowledge in a short space of time and the lesson was a great success. However, even in junior lessons, planning does not always pay enough attention to matching work to individual needs. Consequently, higher attaining pupils often complete the same work as others. They are given too little opportunity to apply their knowledge to problem solving. The lack of challenge and weakness in planning are key to this group's underachievement.
87. Evidence taken from examples of current and previous work gives greater insight into why the overall quality of teaching and pace of learning are not yet good enough to raise standards. There is too little opportunity for pupils to think for themselves. Consequently, older pupils do not respond well to challenge. When asked if there was another way to find the answer, two very capable pupils in Year 5 quickly gave up and were happy to respond that they did not know.
88. Homework is used effectively in the juniors to support learning. Pupils enjoy an interesting range of activities that is well linked to class work. Some teachers also make good use of the final part of each lesson to assess pupils' levels of understanding. However, others do not recognise its importance. In a few classes, pupils are encouraged to assess how much they have learned in the course of a lesson, but these are the exception rather than the rule.
89. Subject co-ordination has been difficult. Since the secondment of the subject leader, the deputy headteacher, who already has a very heavy workload, has kept a careful eye on the subject. She analyses data with great precision and has a clear sense of direction, but has not yet had enough time to drive forward brisk improvement. However, the picture is improving and the school has good capacity for advancement and has set challenging targets for 2004 to help with this. Mathematics now has a secure range of assessment procedures and external support has improved infant mathematics' teaching. Much monitoring has taken place, with some degree of success. However, there is still

further to go. The huge variations in the quality of planning, marking, volume of work produced and lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils throughout the school have not been addressed with sufficient rigour. Data analysis does not relate sufficiently well to the specific needs of individual pupils. Target setting is not yet used with any degree of purpose and, late in the day, the school has started to track individual pupils' progress in order to identify spurts to learning or underachievement earlier.

## SCIENCE

- Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall in the infants and good in the juniors.
- Pupils make increasing progress as they move through the school; progress is good in the juniors.
- High attaining pupils in all years could achieve more if the work set for them was consistently challenging.
- There is a lack of balance in the science curriculum in the infants, with only limited opportunities for pupils to participate in investigational science.
- The use of ICT is currently under developed in supporting science.
- There is good leadership and management with a clear plan for improvement.

90. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been assessed as average each year from the opening of the school in 2001, and this year it is a similar picture. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work carried out during the inspection confirm these findings. In Year 6, results in the SATs have been improving during the last two years and pupils are now attaining above average standards. Boys and girls participate fully in lessons and there is little difference between them in the standards they achieve.
91. Pupils throughout the school show a positive attitude to science, work hard and with obvious interest in lessons because of the stimulating atmosphere provided for them in the classrooms. Their behaviour is good. They are often encouraged to work co-operatively in pairs and groups to share their ideas and knowledge, and this has a positive effect upon their social development.
92. The quality of teaching in the infants is satisfactory and pupils achieve average standards in their study of materials, plants and the topic entitled *Ourselves*. Lack of sufficient pace, challenge and expectation, especially for the higher attaining pupils, are the reasons why standards overall are not higher. There is a lack of good quality recorded work. Current written work in science is hidden away in topic books, and consequently, makes it difficult to see how much work pupils of different abilities have completed and to what standard. This makes the job of monitoring to improve the quality of work and raise standards an unnecessarily difficult task. There is an overall lack of neatness and accuracy in presentation in many pupils' books, with only limited use of diagrams and tables to show scientific findings. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils in the infants to carry out any investigational science, and there is little evidence of pupils using appropriate technical vocabulary.
93. Pupils in the infants, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their development of skills, knowledge and understanding through the activities provided in lessons, from a background of at least an average level of understanding. In Year 1, pupils plants seeds and observe them regularly to watch their growth. Teachers makes interesting displays of them and pose questions to extend their thinking about what is essential to good plant growth. This work is extended in lessons to enable them to identify which plants can be eaten safely, and those that produce food.
94. It is a more positive picture in the juniors. In Year 3, pupils begin the year at a very basic level of attainment, but there is evidence of good progress in improvement in attainment as well as in the

presentation of work over time. By Year 6 pupils have made good progress and attain above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress due to quality of the support they receive. There is evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work of good coverage of all areas of the science curriculum, with many opportunities for carrying out scientific enquiry and investigations. Pupils are given the opportunity to record their findings independently, and to support them with well produced and labelled diagrams. Using their mathematical skills they present data in the form of line graphs and bar charts. Work is well presented and laid out, with a standard format used for recording investigational work. Their knowledge and understanding is developing well and most understand the principles of fair testing.

95. The overall quality of teaching is good for these junior pupils, because teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. They use effective teaching methods, manage pupils well and enjoy good relationships with them. This ensures pupils are well motivated and encouraged to want to learn. Some skilful use of questioning was seen in lessons, to assess and extend pupils' learning effectively. In Year 4, pupils develop an understanding of how invertebrates have adapted to their environment. The teacher collected together a number of woodlice, earthworms, snails and slugs for pupils to examine first hand. She asked pupils questions that really made them think carefully, and then took a selection of their answers and turned them back to the pupils for them to decide which were most appropriate to help with the experiment. She also gave pupils an opportunity to offer questions that they would like to find answers to through research. In Year 3 pupils apply their knowledge of fair testing through discussion groups to develop ways of ensuring healthy growth in a plant. They produce sensible answers about what features they need to change and those that they will keep the same in their investigation. The teacher used his carefully phrased questions to challenge their thinking and to ensure pupils learned effectively. Teachers' mark work regularly and provide useful comments to help pupils make improvement, but the next steps in learning are not always clearly identified. Although teachers often provide work to match the abilities of different groups of pupils there is often insufficient challenge at times for the higher attaining pupils throughout the school.
96. The subject is well led and managed by a conscientious subject leader who has ensured that through her clear plan for improvement standards have risen and set fair to sustain this level. She also has clear targets for the future and the capacity to achieve them. The use of ICT does not yet figure strongly in the science curriculum in the classroom to build learning, and is an area requiring more focus.

#### ART AND DESIGN

- Art and design is a strength of the school.
- The use of artists in residence has a very good impact on learning.
- Pupils achieve above average standards across the school.
- The high level of pupil achievement is evident in the high quality displays of work around the school.
- The good progress made is attributable to the good quality of the teaching.
- The curriculum is well organised and balanced and makes effective links with other areas of the curriculum and promotes strongly the positive ethos of the school.
- Assessment is an area for more work as part of the improvement plan.
- There is good leadership and management of the subject to continue advancement.

97. The school has ensured that art and design has been given a high profile in school, and that it very strongly underpins the spirit of the school. The centrepiece of this focus is the *Holywell Quilt*, which represents the four seasons and celebrates the new school. Every child in the school as well as adults contributed to its creation, and it is a testament to the shared ethos and corporate endeavour of the entire school community.

98. Standards are above average across the school as a result of the well-planned opportunities and the skilled teaching. The very youngest pupils get off to a good start through the school's involvement with a visual arts project that provides them with valuable experiences on the topic of *Light*. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their development of skills, knowledge and understanding as they are given good opportunities to investigate and work with a range of different materials in both two and three dimensions.
99. In Year 2, pupils develop their own landscape composition using sketches they have made previously from observation, using shape, tone and texture. They have benefited from the visit of a parent with considerable talent and ability as an artist, who showed them the processes he uses in his work. Pupils know the primary colours and use them to make the variety of shades and tones of colours to make their composition. They experiment with brush strokes to create texture in their work quite effectively. The work of other artists including *David Hockney* is studied and also used as a model for pupils to base their paintings on. Year 3 pupils study closely, looking for similarities and differences, *The Bedroom* by *Van Gogh*, and *Bedroom in Pendlebury* by *L S Lowry*. They produce pictures of their own bedrooms in the style of these artists restricting themselves to the same range of colours used originally. Pupils experiment with the development of symmetrical Tudor style designs in Year 5, drawing on their experience of studies in history. This theme is taken up in Year 4 where pupils use their sketchbooks to create their own designs for a figurehead on a Viking ship.
100. The scrutiny of art and design displays showed the breadth of experiences pupils receive, and the high level of achievement of their work. For example, Year 2 create an authentic African cloth using printing techniques; string and straw tiles are designed for printing colourful pictures; and papier-mâché is used to make hot air balloons. Year 6 use ICT with imagination and flair to design a four seasons calendar. The close study of seashells by Year 5 shows the considerable detail of their pencil sketches, and the transfer of these patterns to fabric appliqué designs are of high quality. Individual pupils have used some well-described phrases in assessment of this work and have suggested ways of making improvement. Group weaving of paper and materials in Year 1 produces some most effective and colourful baskets, whilst Year 4 produce beautifully detailed patterns (Hindu) style focused on a slice of mango fruit. The work and standards achieved in art and design in school is quite clearly a strength, and contributes well to pupil's social, spiritual and cultural development.
101. The skills of the teaching staff are instrumental in enabling pupils to achieve so well. They deliver lessons that effectively teach skills to a good level, provide a good balance of opportunities and experiences to develop these skills in a wide range of media, and make imaginative links for pupils to use their art skills across the curriculum. Resources are used most effectively to support this work. The quality of relationships is instrumental in ensuring that pupils are motivated and inspired in their learning.
102. The subject leader works conscientiously to ensure that the curriculum is well balanced and provides a good balance of opportunities for all pupils, and keeps it constantly under review. Good support is provided for her colleagues and has some time to monitor standards of teaching and learning. Currently, the assessment of pupil's standards is at the informal stage, and is identified as an area for development. The subject has the scope and capacity to improve even further.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Standards are average at all stages in design and technology.
- There is sound teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in both infants and junior.
- Effective links are made with other subjects.

- Effective management has ensured the subject is established throughout the school.
- ICT is a priority for further development.

103. Pupils in the infants and the juniors achieve average standards in design and technology. They enjoy the opportunities provided and approach their studies with interest, work well collaboratively, and show good personal flair, for example in the design of shoes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.
104. The standards in the infants result from sound teaching. Teachers encourage pupils in the design process and this ensures they all make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, pupils design attractive stick and glove puppets from felt stitched together to create assorted faces including cats and owls. They use prepared design sheets to guide them through the planning stages, to record the processes and materials they use, and to make their own evaluations. In their environmental project Year 1 visited a recreation ground at Waseley Hills near to the school, and used this as the inspiration focused practical activity for their own designs of playground equipment. They carefully selected appropriate materials including wooden dowelling, lollipop sticks, straws, plasticene and construction kits to build their own swings and slides. Pupils in the juniors also make satisfactory progress from the appropriate range of activities provided for them in lessons. Teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject and make useful links with other areas of the curriculum, as seen in a Year 4 lesson. As part of their work on making a torch for a specific purpose, pupils used their knowledge of electrical circuits gained in science to investigate the most effective type of switch to fit their purpose, and evaluate their effectiveness. From the scrutiny of work it is evident that pupils are provided with a suitable range of experiences to develop their design and make skills. All the relevant processes are gone through to create photograph frames and money containers. Pupils use their art and design skills to decorate their work to a good standard. In Year 6 pupils spend time and effort on design, self-assessment and evaluation of their work including pencil cases, greetings cards, bread, biscuits and biscuit packaging.
105. Teachers have an appropriate knowledge of the design and technology processes, and ensure pupils have suitable grounding in these throughout the school. Good management and relationships are a positive feature in lessons, and ensure pupils are interested and motivated in their learning. Basic skills are taught effectively ensuring pupils are mindful of health and safety when handling tools and equipment. The curriculum delivered provides a good balance of activities and includes food technology.
106. The subject leader has been effective in establishing the subject throughout the school. The curriculum has been well organised and is well resourced, and the school is fortunate to have a purpose built and designated design and technology room which is well used. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are in place, but their use is variable. The further development of the use of ICT to support all stages of the design, making and evaluation parts of the subject is a priority for further development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6.
- Infant pupils do not make sufficient progress because they do not do enough geography.
- Junior pupils make at least satisfactory progress and use literacy and numeracy skills well in their geography work and have good opportunity to develop research and enquiry skills
- The school is currently without a subject leader and no one has a clear view of whether standards are high enough.

107. Junior pupils achieve average standards by Year 6 because teachers present geography in a lively and interesting way. In contrast, infant pupils do not study topics in enough depth to achieve well. By the time pupils reach Year 2 they have made insufficient progress and standards are below average.
108. Infant pupils have a simple understanding of the local area. Even at this early stage, they show an awareness of environmental issues. One boy's map included carefully drawn traffic calming detail and controlled parking areas. Wall displays illustrate knowledge of world geography, through journeys with *Barnaby Bear* but pupils' understanding is on a very superficial level. Currently, in the infants, it is very difficult to assess how much work pupils have covered, when topic books contain a range of subjects. Some books scrutinised by inspectors contained very little geography and wall displays contained only a small amount of pupils' work.
109. By contrast, in the juniors, there is a marked difference in the volume of work produced, the depth of coverage and the quality of presentation. Junior pupils enjoy geography. Throughout the juniors, pupils of all abilities use their literacy skills well as they consider issues such as why wildlife needs protection. Numeracy skills are also much in evidence. Pupils link work on temperature graphs to world cities and create their own train journey timetables of the local area. Although there are some good individual examples of computer skills being used well in research work, in general, ICT does not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' learning.
110. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress and catch up on missed earlier opportunities. They display good understanding of world geography. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate sound research and enquiry skills in their work on villages. This work is developed further in Year 5 and many of these pupils are on course to achieve above average standards by the time they leave. They have a secure grasp of issues such as *pollution* and *water erosion* and have a mature approach towards the subject. Progress slows from good to satisfactory in Year 6, because there are missed opportunities for pupils to broaden their knowledge and not enough attention is given to world geography. Residential visits to places, such as the Malvern Hills, enhance provision well and have a strong impact on pupils' personal development. However, there is a fundamental weakness in geography provision throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities complete the same work at the same level. Higher attaining pupils suffer most, because they do not always receive sufficiently challenging work to enable them to achieve standards in line with their capability.
111. In the small number of lessons seen, the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory, and frequently good in the juniors. However, evidence taken from samples of previous work emphasises the weakness in teaching at the infant stage. Teachers' expectations are too low, productivity is slow and there is very little to challenge or inspire. By contrast, many junior teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the subject well. In a good Year 3 lesson on Ordnance Survey maps, there was a sense of fun as pupils competed to find locations of various towns and villages. Learning was swift because pupils were highly motivated. In lessons where pupils make satisfactory, rather than good progress, teachers' planning is often the root cause. It does not give enough insight into what is expected of different groups and the whole lesson drifts along at too casual a pace. Consequently, pupils do not have enough sense of urgency and higher attaining pupils sometimes become bored.
112. Geography has been without a subject leader for some time. No one monitors the quality of teaching or learning to check for quality and progress and assessment is not yet firmly established as a tool in moving the subject forwards. There is no specific action plan for geography and no clear priorities for development. The school has started to remedy the problem by appointing a new teacher with considerable expertise, so there is room for optimism. Currently, in the infants, it is very difficult to assess how much work pupils have covered, when topic books contain a range of subjects. Some

books scrutinised by inspectors contained very little geography and wall displays contained only a small amount of pupils' work.

## HISTORY

- Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good use of research skills to find things out for themselves.
- Cross-curricular links with other subjects such as art and design, drama and literacy are good.
- Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum in history.
- Not enough attention is paid for presentation of work in Years 1 and 2 and this has a negative impact on the quality of work recorded.
- The school has good capacity to improve further because of secure management and developing leadership.

113. Standards in history are average at the end of Year 2. They are above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils in the infant classes make satisfactory gains in their learning. In the junior classes progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and have a good interest in the subject because they are actively involved in practical tasks. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic. It is clear that they find history enjoyable. They work together well to learn about the past. Teachers plan experiences where pupils have good opportunities to investigate and find out things for themselves.
114. In the infant classes pupils in Year 1 compare shops long ago with the present day for example, looking at ration books and how the availability of some food was limited. They explore a simple time line of shops, developing an awareness of the passage of time. Pupils build steadily on these skills as they compare toys from past and present times. A good range of artefacts enables them to experience how children played in Victorian times and to explore how toys have changed today. In Year 2 pupils find out about seaside holidays fifty years ago, with a local visitor sharing her experiences of such seaside holidays. Year 2 pupils use books and pictures to find out about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. They look at the differences in nursing in the Crimean War with present day nursing. They know about the Great Fire of London, where it happened and why it spread so quickly. They know that Samuel Pepys recorded these events in a diary and use their literacy skills to write a diary entry themselves. Art work supports this work in history well although weaknesses in handwriting and presentation skills limits the amount of work recorded for a significant number of pupils in the infants.
115. Junior pupils build well on these early skills and begin to widen their insights, evaluating evidence, examining source material carefully and identifying and dating features of the past. Pupils learn about Victorian Britain, knowing facts about Queen Victoria and having a good insight into Victorian school life. They use their literacy skills well to write an inspector's report on a school having used secondary sources of information to support their knowledge and understanding. They know how to construct a Victorian timeline accurately showing an increasing sense of chronology. Literature is used effectively to enhance their learning, for example through stories such as *Tom the Chimney Sweep's Boy* and the works of Dickens, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of aspects of Victorian life. In a study on the Aztecs good links are made to geography, using maps and tracing the route to Mexico. Pupils study the Celts, extending their historical language well with terms such as *invaders*, *settlers* and *conquerors*. They give accurate reasons for the Romans invading Britain and learn much about Roman life aided by an imaginative use of resources available such as videos and books. They study the Vikings, Ancient Egypt, the Tudors, Ancient Greeks and Great Britain since 1930 with great interest and enthusiasm. Throughout the junior classes pupils absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period being studied and the people associated with it. Independent research skills are well promoted in most classes. Pupils use the Internet to seek information with



confidence. Pupils develop good enquiry skills as a result of the rich, meaningful experiences and opportunities provided.

116. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In most junior classes teaching is good, although for the oldest pupils expectations are not always demanding enough, particularly for the highest attainers. Planning is not always followed carefully enough to ensure clear understanding in all lessons. In most lessons however, teachers explain the purpose of the task and build successfully on what pupils have learnt. Good attention is given to resourcing learning thoughtfully and ICT is used by some teachers to enhance learning, though this could be more consistent. Question and answer techniques are used very effectively and drama and role play skills are well developed through history. Pupils are very well managed. This has a significant impact on the quality of learning. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use imaginative strategies which motivate pupils well and make history meaningful. In a very good lesson on the Saxons, the teacher encouraged empathy through the use of drama and hot seating. Pupils and the teacher took turns to dress as a Saxon. Her use of quality vocabulary such as 'plundered' contributed very well to pupils' literacy skills. They posed sensible enquiry skills well. Pupils were well challenged, and actively involved in their learning. This very good teaching ensured that all pupils achieved well during the course of the lesson.
117. Teachers do not always support pupils in their marking of work so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. There are differences in the pace of lessons. Pupils enjoy working together as well as independently on the interesting topics provided. This makes a positive contribution to their social development. Pupils in the junior classes present their work neatly in most cases taking pride in their efforts. The same is not true for the infant classes where some work is untidy and the amount of written work is limited.
118. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through their studies of other cultures from the past. They begin to understand how the past has affected the present, as well as considering the beliefs and values of others. Visits of interest such as to Worcester Cathedral, Coventry Museum and Harvington Hall enrich the curriculum, as do visitors such as Annie, the Victorian housemaid and *Ravenswing* Vikings. Displays also make a positive contribution to learning. As well as providing for good cultural development, the subject does much to enhance pupils' spiritual development. There is good capacity to improve even further in history.
119. The subject is managed soundly, although the subject leader has little opportunity thus far to monitor teaching and standards. These are areas for improvement. Attention has been given to ensuring that the scheme of work is adapted to the needs of the school and there is clear focus on the priorities that will bring advancement to the subject.

#### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- The curriculum for ICT is too fragmented and the resources are not used intensively enough.
- Staff are not confident enough and subject knowledge is weak.
- Pupils do not make enough progress and standards are below average through the school.
- Pupils are interested and work hard in lessons but their positive response is not tapped consistently well enough.
- Teaching and learning are both unsatisfactory overall.
- Leadership and management of ICT are ineffective, though changes in personnel are to be made next year.
- Assessment of skills and knowledge and the setting of targets for attainment have weaknesses.
- The technical reliability of the resources amplifies the difficulties in providing appropriate learning experiences for pupils.

120. Along with geography, overall provision in ICT is unsatisfactory and this impacts strongly on the progress that pupils make and the standards attained. The school has invested considerable amounts of money in equipping a new computer suite and there are stand-alone machines in many classrooms. However, staff training has not kept pace with the enhancing of resources and although the minimum level of training has been provided, as required by national initiatives, this was not as well focused on the needs of staff as it might have been. There is now a clear need for staff training to be enhanced to assist teachers and support staff make more effective use of ICT across the school.
121. The computer suite is timetabled so that each class has a 45-minute session weekly. This leaves over half of the available time vacant. No ICT sessions are allocated for all day on Tuesday and during the whole of the other four mornings each week. The gaps are to allow individual teachers to book time, as and when required. During the inspection week this amounted to two extra lessons for Year 4 pupils and one lesson for Year 3. There were no booked opportunities for children in nursery or reception to use the suite during the inspection. Key managers indicated to inspectors that this pattern is typical of the use of the computer suite in other weeks. This frequency of use amounts to an inefficient deployment of the resource and something that the subject leader has not worked effectively enough to improve.
122. Because pupils do not use the resources intensively enough, they do not build the necessary skills and knowledge in good time. Overall standards are below average and progress is unsatisfactory. During the observation of lessons, teaching and learning quality were both satisfactory and a small proportion of lessons showed good quality. However, the development of skills and knowledge is sporadic. There is some evidence, in the form of hard copies of pupils' past work from one Year 3 class, Year 5 and 6 files stored on the network, a limited amount of display about the school and other isolated examples of pupils' output to show that the curriculum is too fragmented to allow the efficient building of skills and knowledge. During the inspection, the Year 4 and Year 5 classes worked on the same topic, about branching data bases, at the same level. Whilst the work was actually appropriate, given the existing skills and knowledge, of pupils in both years, such duplication is clear evidence of the lack of continuity and progression in the curriculum in the past.
123. In the lessons observed, pupils responded well to the opportunities for learning. They worked hard, co-operated well and were well behaved. Many pupils have substantial experience of using computers at home, so they bring keen knowledge to lessons. So far, these good conditions for learning have not been built upon enough. Independence, responsibility and initiative in learning are not promoted consistently and whilst there is some good use made of ICT to support and extend learning in other subjects, other opportunities are lost or technical problems limit the development of skills. Good cross-curricular themes include Year 6 work to research the Greek Parthenon in history and the linking of art and design and religious education to produce Christmas Cards in Year 3. However, when inspectors spoke to a group of Year 6 pupils, only one knew how to log on to the Internet and even then, such access was made at home. In the computer suite, the network often freezes the display on the pupils' screens and this provides a bar to further progress. Teachers overcome such hitches effectively enough, but the repeated unreliability of the technology puts unnecessary pressure on them to find quick fixes or remedies and affects pupils' opportunities to do well.
124. The curriculum is planned properly for ICT and covers all the necessary strands. As shown above, it is, however, delivered differently, which affects all pupils' entitlement to a systematic programme to enable skills, knowledge and understanding to be built consistently. The system of assessment is piecemeal, in that each teacher selects what will be assessed, how this will be done and the frequency of the assessment. There is a clear need to put in place a rigorous system of assessment that will allow the setting of specific targets for different pupils and the tracking of progress to ensure they are

reaching their potential. At present, higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged by their tasks. Finally, resourcing of some strands, such as computer-based control and monitoring work, is not yet complete.

125. Key managers are making major changes to the leadership and management of ICT. Next year, for example, two members of staff will take over the responsibility for ICT. The monitoring of the subject has so far proved ineffective in making the necessary improvements, but key managers are adamant that this will change, though they will have to keep a watchful eye on ICT to ensure that, under new management, it forges ahead in the ways required to ensure provision, progress and standards match the best that is found in school. The potential for the necessary improvement is positive, but future practice has to be *good* to succeed.

## MUSIC

- Music is an exciting subject that captures pupils' interest and standards throughout the school are average overall.
- Infant and junior pupils achieve above average standards in singing.
- Pupils who receive instrumental tuition often achieve above average standards, however, since amalgamation, there has been no school orchestra and pupils with instrumental talents miss the opportunity to extend their skills still further.
- Holywell choir is a strong, positive feature of provision.
- Class assemblies, concerts and productions are of high quality.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in class lessons, though always at least satisfactory, is not as high as it is in performances, extra curricular provision and instrumental tuition.
- Subject leadership is going through a period of transition. Two subject leaders, who are new to the post, share responsibility and provide sound leadership and management.

126. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress and achieve average standards. The standard in singing is above average because it is taught well. Music is an exciting subject that captures pupils' interest. It is an important part of school life and there are many positive features of provision. Holywell choir participates in high profile performances and justly deserves its good reputation. Not only is choir practice a good learning experience, it is also an enjoyable social occasion where staff give willingly of their time. Music makes a very strong contribution towards pupils' personal and cultural development.
127. Pupils of all abilities throughout the school have opportunities to participate in high quality productions, assemblies and concerts. During the week of the inspection, a Year 6 class provided staff, pupils and parents with an impressively polished performance of *Charlie Brown*. Boys and girls sang with total commitment, they acted with great confidence and enjoyed the sense of occasion. Their teacher successfully transmitted his own enthusiasm for a particular period in musical history. A small proportion of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition on a range of string, wind and brass instruments. Many of these pupils achieve well.
128. There are numerous examples of literacy, and to a lesser extent, numeracy skills being developed through music. School concerts and productions, such as *Snow White*; develop speaking and listening skills particularly well. Music is well resourced. However, although teachers use keyboards, compact discs and other technology regularly in their lessons, computer programs are not yet a strong feature of provision. ICT does not currently make enough contribution to pupils' learning.
129. Infant pupils know an interesting range of songs. Their singing in lessons and assemblies is lively and enthusiastic. They listen to and appreciate music from a wide cultural spectrum. A good example of

this occurred in a lesson where pupils showed genuine appreciation of extracts ranging from the *Clock Symphony* to African drumming. On another occasion, pupils demonstrated confidence when using musical instruments, as they developed simple compositions on the cultural theme of a *Journey*. They fitted chime bars, xylophones and finally bongo drums to a basic Indian rhythm.

130. When pupils move into the juniors, both boys and girls retain their enthusiasm for music. Pupils in Year 6 understand the language of music well. When listening, they know how mood is conveyed. Work is often linked well to other subjects. In one lesson, pupils created incidental music to fit with Greek plays they had written, as part of both their literacy and history work. Pupils collaborated well and results were effective. However, work was not always of a quality that matched ability and pupils showed their inexperience with using musical instruments. They did not know the names of familiar instruments and lacked maturity in their work because they do not use instruments very often in their music lessons.
131. Four teachers who have secure subject knowledge teach music. The school is very fortunate and uses its expertise well, but misses the opportunity to develop skills of less confident teachers when they are not involved in observing or participating in lessons. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory, and good in half of lessons observed. Activities are well balanced and successfully stimulate pupils' interest. Music is very much a fun learning time. Teachers attempt ambitious activities because they are confident with the subject. In a good Year 1 lesson on pitch, the teacher encouraged pupils to arrange eight bottles in order, by using them like panpipes. It took a very good musical ear to distinguish high and low sounds, but pupils rose to the challenge well because they knew they had secure teacher support. However, in some lessons, the pace is too leisurely, organisation is sloppy and pupils who have musical ability are not encouraged to play instruments correctly or use the correct musical names or terminology. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve standards in line with their musical ability. Higher attaining pupils suffer most when tasks are undemanding. The school has yet to identify its musically gifted and talented pupils
132. Subject leadership is going through a period of transition. Two subject leaders who are new to the post, share responsibility. They have not yet been given time to observe classroom practice across the school and there is no cohesive approach towards tracking progress. A simple but effective assessment sheets for pupils in Years 4 and 5 has been devised and this signals a step in the right direction. However, the lack of monitoring means that, currently, no one has a clear overview of whether pupils are making enough progress and reaching standards they can and should achieve, particularly in class lessons.
133. The school is well placed to succeed in the future. It is highly successful in giving many pupils an enjoyment and love of music that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

#### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- Standards are average through the school, and in some aspects, performance is of good quality.
- Pupils are interested in their tasks; they work energetically, and behave well.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
- Not enough emphasis is given to pupils' self-evaluation of their work and this slows the progress made, especially by higher attaining pupils.
- The curriculum for physical education is sound and is well enhanced by extra curricular activities and the programme of visits.
- Physical education is led and managed well.
- Assessment procedures are not rigorous enough.
- There are good links with parents and the community.

- There are good prospects for continuing improvement to physical education.

134. Throughout the school, there is consistent and firm focus on the development of physical skills, which results in pupils making satisfactory progress. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are average in the different aspects of physical education. When pupils leave school at the age of eleven, they attain comparatively well in swimming. The school's records show that less than ten per cent of pupils do not develop the necessary skills in water safety and basic swimming. Performance in some activities is very strong and results in skipping activities are very good, with some impressive sequences demonstrated by Year 6 pupils during the inspection.
135. Pupils are well motivated by their tasks. They are interested, work energetically and behaviour is good. This means that the conditions for learning in lessons are well established and skills and knowledge can be built well. There is good collaboration in learning and the work in the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural education.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge and confidence, they use good methods to teach practical skills, the management of pupils is very good and expectations are high on the whole. However, planning does not focus enough on the specific skills and knowledge to be learned by pupils of different attainment and teachers usually do all the evaluation of skills and their improvement themselves. Very rarely were pupils asked for their own opinions on their learning in any of the lessons observed throughout the school. In particular, this slows the progress made by higher attaining pupils, who are unable to take full advantage of such opportunities to assess, evaluate and accelerate their own learning. In general, performing skills are promoted more successfully than those of pupil self-evaluation.
137. The curriculum for physical education is satisfactory, with the above proviso about opportunities to self-evaluate the work. Planning and assessment systems are, to unnecessary degree, left to teachers' own discretion, which results in inconsistency and a lack of rigour. The programme of extra curricular activities makes a significant contribution to the quality of education and standards. Skipping prowess is something that the school is rightly proud of, and in observation, the Skipping Club was seen to be a very effective means of sharing the skills of the oldest pupils with children as young as five. The school has an impressive record of achievement in skipping at a national competition level.
138. The school makes good use of its links with the community and other school to advance the work in physical education. Results in competitive sports are good and the involvement of agencies such as the Bromsgrove Sport Development team has brought considerable benefit to pupils in the form of resources, expertise and enthusiasm. The annual visit to a residential base in the Malvern Hills is focused squarely on the development of the skills of outdoor pursuits and, as such, gives pupils good opportunities to succeed.
139. The subject leader gives a good steer to physical education, which is led and managed well. She has recently started the process of monitoring and evaluating subject performance in lessons across the school and she has good insights in to the strengths and areas for improvement. She is knowledgeable, influential and hardworking, and shows good expectations of staff and pupils alike. The support and guidance provided for staff is good and there is good potential to continue to increase the progress made by pupils and the standards attained.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- Standards are average at seven and above average at eleven years of age.
- Progress is satisfactory in infant classes and good in junior classes.

- Pupils show a deepening understanding of a wide range of religions as they move through the school.
- Teaching is satisfactory in infant classes and good in junior classes.
- Artefacts are used effectively to support pupils learning meaningfully.
- The joint subject leaders have not carried out any monitoring nor set up rigorous assessment systems that meet fully local syllabus requirements.

140. Pupils show a deepening understanding of complex issues and ideas in religious education as they move through the school. They reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and above average standards by Year 6 when measured against the requirements of the local syllabus. There is growing encouragement to respond to religious ideas and beliefs so they can be applied to their own way of life. The pupils concentrate upon the Christian and Jewish religions to develop their ideas effectively in infant classes. In junior classes the number of religions studied appropriately increases to include Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. As a result of this widening of knowledge of different religions pupils produce thoughtful written work in junior classes that shows their knowledge and understanding to a mature level. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, in both infant and junior classes achieve well in religious education. They participate fully in discussions and respond positively because teachers show that they value their contributions and they are given good support by teaching assistants.
141. In infant classes, the pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the best work observed, learning meant more to the pupils who acted out the story of *Joseph and his amazing coat*. The pupils not only played out specific roles but they listened to one another's views about the characters' feelings as their teacher drew learning together skilfully. The sample of work over the year confirms that the contents of the local syllabus are being given thoughtful attention in planning. Artefacts are being used effectively to support the development of the pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences in the Christian and Jewish faiths. However, the sample of work clearly shows that, in Year 2 classes particularly, not enough attention and time is being given to recording new knowledge and learning gains. When learning is recorded not enough attention is being given to the careful presentation of the work.
142. In junior classes, all pupils learn *from* the religions that they study as well as *about* those religions. Pupils use their skills of debate and argument as well as narrative writing to produce work that demonstrates the maturity of their thinking. The subject contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development as they are taught to value the diverse cultures, beliefs and languages present in Britain today. They work as partners and in small groups to explore their thoughts and feelings. By the end of Year 6, they express themselves with deeply felt emotions for example, as they become an *Israelite* walking to the *Promised Land* when extending their study of the Jewish religion. Relationships between the teachers and their pupils and between pupils are good and everyone is confident in expressing their thoughts.
143. Teaching is satisfactory in infant classes because teachers plan lessons that initiate their pupils' learning *from*, as well as *about* religion. However, not enough recording of knowledge and understanding is completed in these classes, particularly in Year 2. There is a big increase in the amount of recording in junior classes, from Year 3 onwards. Teachers continue to plan with thought and care. They use artefacts from different religions with good effect. Pupils treat them with interest and respect. The extra dimension that is added to make the quality of teaching good in junior classes is the imaginative task setting and care given to recording knowledge and understanding. Teachers' mark work more thoroughly in junior classes than infants, but do not always add comments to help the pupils to improve their work even further.

144. The subject is being led jointly by an infants and junior teacher. The leadership has only recently taken effect and there has been insufficient time given to evaluating the quality in provision and the standards being achieved in religious education. Procedures for assessment are being introduced but so far there is no assessment criteria in use to match the attainment targets to the local syllabus. These factors are recognised in the subject leaders' action plans. The subject leaders are clear about where improvement lies and there is good capacity for standards to rise.