

ERRATUM

The Unique reference number should read: 132240

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INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124230

Headteacher: Mr R T Woollacott

Reporting inspector: Mrs C A Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 24th to 27th February 2002

Inspection number: 248961

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 3-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Jubilee Road
Trentham
Stoke on Trent

Postcode: ST4 8EF

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. N di Castiglione

Date of previous inspection: None previous

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9479	C A Field	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1189	S Brown	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology	
22856	K Campbell	Team inspector	Music Geography Provision for children in the Foundation Stage	
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Provision for pupils with special educational needs Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
30144	E Hastings	Team inspector	Science History Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
10978	M Sullivan	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Trentham area, south west of Stoke city centre. It opened two years ago following the closure of separate infant and junior schools. It is located in the previous schools' buildings and is undergoing a major re-building programme that includes new classrooms, a new Information Communication Technology (ICT) suite, new sports hall and improved external environment. Pupils who attend the school live locally and come from a mix of private and social housing. Most pupils are from White European backgrounds, but a few have a different heritage, for example Pakistani, Indian, Chinese and Black Caribbean. Some six per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the home language, two pupils receive specific help in school to learn to speak English. There are 263 pupils on roll; 147 boys and 116 girls, aged between four and 11 years. The school currently provides for 34 children part-time in its nursery. Children's attainment on entry into nursery is average overall, but is showing an improving trend. About 21 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average when compared to other primary schools. Some 13 per cent of pupils have special educational needs mostly for moderate learning difficulties, four have a statement. The proportion of pupils in school with special educational needs is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Priory Church of England Primary School is an effective and improving school in which pupils are helped to grow as responsible future citizens within a calm, positive and happy environment. Standards are rising and challenging targets have been set that show the school's aspirations to continue this trend. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and is supported by a united staff team who are committed to doing their best for the pupils. Teaching is sound overall with some good features that lead to the majority of pupils achieving well from their different starting points. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching that need ironing out and the highest attaining pupils are not being challenged enough. A useful start has been made in setting up systems to enable pupils' progress to be monitored and evaluated but these now need sharper focus. Parents speak highly of the significant progress made over the last two years and flag up the good standards of behaviour and improving accommodation as two areas of which they are particularly proud. The school is well on track to achieve the priorities set out in its improvement plan. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design by the end of Year 6.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special education needs and those learning to speak English and these pupils learn successfully because of the close attention paid to their needs.
- Very good attention is paid to supporting pupils' personal and social development and good provision made for ensuring their welfare, including spiritual, moral and cultural growth.
- There are highly effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and social skills are all good; the school is free from tension and is a racially harmonious community.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has built a good team of managers who are well prepared for the next phase of the school's improvement and for developing personal leadership roles.
- Parents hold very positive views about the education being provided, and the school is forging an effective partnership to the benefit of pupils' education.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of teaching are not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils, and especially higher attainers, learn to their full capabilities in all lessons.
- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation systems lack precision and are not used consistently to assist pupils make the best rates of progress across subjects and year groups.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not been inspected previously. Since it opened as a new school in September 2000, there has been good progress made in uniting the staff from two different schools, setting up shared systems and procedures and establishing clear aims and expectations for the quality of education. There is a tangible sense of unity in the school, with staff committed to providing a good education for pupils. The school is well placed to tackle the areas for improvement raised by this inspection.

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	B	A
Mathematics	N/A	C	B	B
Science	N/A	C	A	A

Key

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

The above table shows that results in the 2002 SATs taken by Year 6 pupils were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science when compared with schools nationally. Results overall were well above those found in similar schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. There is insufficient data to indicate a trend, but over two years the results have risen and this augers well, for the future. The school's targets for the 2003 SATs are challenging and reflect its ambition to sustain improvement.

Results in the SATs taken by Year 2 pupils were above average in writing and mathematics, but in reading they were average when compared with schools nationally. The results overall were lower in reading than in the other two subjects because the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was average, whereas in the other tested subjects it was well above average.

The profile of the attainment of children in the nursery and reception classes (known as the Foundation Stage) has been broadly average in the past but is becoming more advantaged. The majority of children are making steady progress and are already on track to develop the expected skills and knowledge by the time they start in Year 1. Around a third are likely to reach beyond this in literacy and numeracy.

Inspection findings show that standards are above average in English, mathematics and art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are average in science at the end of Year 2, but above average by Year 6. Standards are average in design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music, physical education (PE) and religious education by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has rightly focused its attention on literacy and numeracy and it has effective strategies for promoting these prime skills. However, there is room for improvement in ensuring that the needs of the highest attainers are consistently well met and for listening skills to be sharpened in some year groups. Reading, writing, oracy and numeracy skills are above average. Spellings

and presentation of work are two areas that would stand improvement across a number of subjects. The majority of pupils achieve well during their time at school, but progress is inconsistent with dips in some years and peaks in others. Progress is better overall in the juniors than infant classes. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are making good progress because of detailed individual education plans. These include specific targets for improvement that are well supported by teaching and support staff and are regularly reviewed. There is clear acceleration in progress for a significant proportion of pupils of all abilities in Years 2 and 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. They are given opportunities to develop self-discipline that make a positive difference to school life. The one temporary exclusion last year was fully justified.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships underpin the good learning environment which encourages pupils' good personal development. There is very good respect for one another's views and beliefs and the quality of relationships is very positive. The school council is a good example of pupils' willingness to take on roles of responsibility.
Attendance	The level of attendance is average and punctuality is good. There is some concern about unauthorised attendance that the school is monitoring carefully.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall across the school with some positive features: the good attention given to basic skills; a good range of teaching methods that result in pupils being interested and generally showing good application in lessons; generally very positive behaviour management that enables classrooms to be purposeful and productive places of learning and the effective use of support staff who work particularly effectively with those pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English is good. There were a small number of unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection where pupils failed to make sufficient progress. Pupils in Year 1, the mixed Year1/2 class and Year 3 are not making the same rate of progress as in other years largely because pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. There are shortcomings across the school in the way work is planned to meet different pupils' needs, especially high attainers; the use made of assessment to help guide lesson planning; the pace at which some lessons proceed and the use of marking to aid improvement and pupils' knowledge of their own learning. Teaching is generally good in English, mathematics and art and design and in these subjects pupils reach good standards. The most effective teaching and learning are in the nursery, Years 2 and 6. Here lessons move on at a brisk rate that result in a good amount of work of good quality being completed. This is also evident in the sample of pupils' work that inspectors looked at carefully. The school's monitoring and evaluation now needs to look more keenly at who is learning best in school and why, so that the very best features can be promoted more consistently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality and meets statutory requirements. There are strengths in the provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective. In some subjects, for example geography, personal enquiry is not encouraged sufficiently. Planning is not consistently enabling high attaining pupils to make the best rates of progress they can. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not fully cohesive between nursery and reception years.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural needs is good and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good support is given to the two pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are spread across the ability range and are making similar progress to other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and social development very good. The school pays good attention to widening pupils' awareness about different beliefs and lifestyles. The pupils become sensible and mature learners who work together well and develop a good set of principles by which to live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. There are highly effective procedures for monitoring and supporting good behaviour and pupils' personal development. The procedures for monitoring their academic development are not as well advanced and insufficient use is made of assessment to inform the planning of future lessons.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents have very good views of the school and applaud its new initiatives. The effectiveness of links with parents is good, resulting in a good level of support by parents for school policies, including homework, and this enables them to support their children's learning. Voluntary help and fund-raising generosity add to the pupils' learning experiences and demonstrate the strength of the partnership.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads from the front and has his finger firmly on the pulse of the school. He has built respectful relationships and instilled confidence in the staff to press ahead with improvement. The core management team forms an effective group with the necessary skills between them to fulfil both leadership and management roles. Subject leaders have made a good start in taking stock of the strengths and weaknesses in provision but some are not looking critically enough at standards and quality of the subjects for which they have responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and proud of the school. They fulfil all legal responsibilities. The chair is very much a <i>critical friend</i> of the school and is playing a pivotal role in its development. Collectively governors are applying the principles of Best Value soundly but with more confidence to budgetary matters than to curricular ones.

The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a useful annual audit undertaken by the head and governors in conjunction with the local education authority that assesses the effectiveness of the school. The school improvement plan helpfully ties into this by focusing on priority areas. The next step is to refine the systems in place for tracking pupils' progress during their time in school and to set targets aimed at maximising their potential.
The strategic use of resources	There is a good level of staffing and adequate accommodation and resources. The school has made better than expected progress in the two years since it opened and has moved to a level of effectiveness that reflects sound value for the higher than average money spent on educating its pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child likes school. • Teaching is good. • I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. • I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant areas flagged for improvement.

Inspectors largely agree with parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Standards in SATs are rising and compare well against similar schools.
 - Standards are above average in English, mathematics and art and design and average in all other subjects. Standards are average in science at the end of Year 2, but above average by Year 6.
 - The school sets challenging targets for Year 6 but is not underpinning these with targets in other year groups that will assist pupils in making good progress over time.
 - Most boys and girls of all backgrounds achieve well from their different starting points but progress is inconsistent for higher attainers who are not getting the same good deal as those with special educational needs.
 - Pupils' reading, writing, oracy and numeracy skills are above average. Listening skills are average. Spellings and presentation of work are two areas that would stand improvement across a number of subjects.
 - The school has good capacity to continue to improve standards.
1. The results in the 2002 SATs taken by Year 6 pupils were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Results overall were well above those found in similar schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. There is no data to use to show the past trend, but over two years the results have risen and this augurs well for the future. The school's targets for the 2003 SATs are challenging and reflect well its ambition to sustain improvement. The results in the SATs taken by Year 2 pupils were above average in writing and mathematics but in reading they were average. The results overall were lower in reading than in the other two subjects because the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was average, whereas in the other tested subjects it was well above average.
 2. Inspection findings show that standards are above average in English, mathematics and art and design by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are average in science at the end of Year 2 but above average by Year 6. Standards are average in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music, physical education (PE) and religious education by the end of Years 2 and 6.
 3. The profile of the attainment of children on entry into the nursery has been broadly average in the past, but this is rising. They get off to a good start in the nursery where effective teaching by two nursery nurses assists most to make good gains across all six areas of learning for children under five as set out in the published curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Most children enter the nursery with sound early literacy and numeracy skills. They are well informed about the world in which they live and have strongly developed personal and social skills. They make good progress because they are taught well. Most enter the reception classes with secure basic early language, literacy and numeracy skills. Personal and social skills remain strong. Children in the current reception class are making steady progress. The vast majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals set for this age group by the time they reach Year 1; just under half are on course to reach higher levels. The children are making better progress in the nursery than the reception. This is because the curriculum between the two years is not dovetailing and there is repetition of work. The school is aware of the shortcoming and has agreed plans for making its Foundation Stage a more cohesive unit.
 4. The majority of boys and girls from Years 1 to 6, are making good progress over their time in school. There is accelerated learning in the single age Year 2 class and in Year 6 classes

with a dip in Year 3. Consistently good or better teaching is at the heart of the good achievement in these classes. There has been around a 25 per cent turnover of pupils in the Year 3 class since they were in Year 2 and their abilities cover a very wide range. The lack of sharp focus on setting clear objectives for learning is having the worst impact on this group; progress at best is satisfactory but too often falls below this level. The sample of work from these pupils reveals that too many pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Around a quarter of the class receives additional support to improve their reading skills and this is a positive feature. However, there is a downside in that when these pupils are withdrawn from the class for the additional input they miss out on what their classmates are doing. The school is not monitoring with sufficient precision the impact of this overall.

5. The school has a comprehensive system of assessing children's attainment that begins in the nursery. It does not, however, use the information it gathers to provide a baseline from which the youngest pupils' likely future attainments can be targeted. This is a missed opportunity that would enable managers to review how well different pupils are making progress and adjust targets to take account of any under-achievement, learning spurts and gaps in learning in equal measure. This is a key issue for the school to address.
6. Inspection evidence shows that strengths in teaching basic skills ensure that most pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy during their time at school. Throughout the school there has been a positive impact on the pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Reading, writing, oracy and numeracy skills are above average. However, listening skills are not always sharp enough. For example, in a few lessons, many pupils were observed to call out in response to the teacher's questions, instead of waiting to be asked to answer. Pupils are naturally exuberant and keen to put forward their views and opinions, but they do not listen to one another with the same level of skill. Spellings and presentation of work are two areas that would also stand improvement across a number of subjects. Work was untidy and poorly presented in a significant number of pupils' books that inspectors looked at and spellings, sometimes ticked as accurate, were not. Many pupils are confident to have a go at using complex words in creative writing and this is to their credit, but more attention is now required to ensure that they know how to spell the words they want to write. In some handwriting books, the teacher's examples were not good models for the pupils to copy. Writing was overlarge and joins were not well made. The large size of some books that are also unlined is leading to pupils filling the pages with over large writing that slants across the page. Pupils generally develop good reading habits; the increased involvement of parents, through the well supported home reading initiative for example, is proving beneficial to pupils' achievements. The school has spent much time and effort in supporting slow readers, but has not yet given the same regular attention to monitoring how well the very capable readers are developing higher-level skills. The use of specific reading time in classes is in need of a sharper focus on promoting reading skills and not just a time for sharing books.
7. Pupils' number skills are becoming sharp and most work with speed and accuracy during the numeracy sessions. Pupils are becoming more adept at problem solving and applying their growing mastery of number skills due to the broadening range of learning experiences. There is some good use of numeracy across subjects, for example in design and technology where exact measurements were required in the design stage of making picture frames. There is however, room for improvement in investigative work and practical aspects that would enable pupils to reach still higher standards. The school is aware of this. In junior classes, well-chosen work is enabling pupils to catch up on aspects of mathematics not learnt securely in the past and, from this firmer foundation, to take the next step forward with confidence. For example, the current Year 4 are being taught mathematics in two groups that set pupils according to their ability. The school's rationale for this is because this group of pupils have had the most impact from the changing school status and because their needs as a group

are very diverse. The setting arrangements were observed to work effectively and the top set in particular is working at a good pace with many pupils making very good progress.

8. Pupils' ICT skills are being appropriately used to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, in an English lesson in Year 3, two boys were very keen to use the headteacher's lap top to help plan the outline for a *Just So* story they were working on. In most classes the computers have been used effectively to support pupils' artwork, for example in creating paintings in the style of Mondrian.
9. The school has only a small proportion of pupils from homes where languages other than English are spoken. The majority speak English when they start school and make the same rate of progress as other pupils. They represent a range of differing abilities, and by the age of 11, they attain similar standards in all strands of English, as the other pupils. Only a very small number are at an early stage of learning to speak English. These pupils read English very skilfully for their age and have sound comprehension; they are well supported and are making rapid progress in their acquisition of spoken English.
10. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are making good progress because of detailed individual education plans that include specific targets for improvement that are well supported by teaching and support staff and are regularly reviewed. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are sometimes set challenging work to do, though this depends to some degree on individual class teachers. The next task for the school to tackle in its bid to improve standards is to set challenging targets for pupils in all years, especially high attainers. The school does not currently identify in its monitoring the progress made by higher attaining pupils and they do not consistently make the progress they could. There is good practice already in existence in setting targets that are reviewed and revised regularly for those pupils with learning difficulties. This practice could inform the work required to ensure that pupils at the other end of the ability spectrum are given a good deal in school too. The school is aware that it is too reliant on late boosts to enable pupils to perform well in the SATs and is keen to refine its system so that pupils, and especially potentially higher attainers, can make the maximum rates of progress each year.
11. The targets set with the local education authority for the school's performance reflect its ambitions to continue to improve at a brisk rate. The school is targeting a higher proportion of pupils than in 2002 to attain the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science in 2003 SATs. However, target setting is not yet used well enough as part of regular assessment in all classes or to support systematically the achievements of higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 to 5. Managers have the drive and determination to continue to make the raising of academic standards their *number one* priority and are ready to take the necessary action to iron out the inconsistencies that this inspection has flagged up. The school has good capacity to continue to improve standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- Pupils have good attitudes to school and are keen to learn.
 - Behaviour is good in lessons, at lunch and at playtimes.
 - There are no problems with bullying.
 - Relationships are very good throughout the school.
 - Pupils' personal development is good, and they become sensible, confident young citizens.
 - Attendance is satisfactory although the level of unauthorised absences is too high.
12. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Parents agree that their children like school and that they are keen to learn. Pupils show good levels of interest and enthusiasm in

lessons and concentrate well. They try hard, are keen to answer questions and want to succeed. For example, in a Year 2 literacy session, pupils thought very hard to come up with an impressive list of words containing the letters ir in a short space of time. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the merit system, and are proud of their successes. They value the improvements made in school in the last two years, and have been involved in the decisions about improving the playground equipment.

13. The personal and social development of children in the Foundation Stage is good. The nursery and reception classes provide secure learning environments that encourage children to grow in confidence. Relationships between adults and children are very strong and children enjoy coming to school. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly realise that they are an important part of the school community.
14. Behaviour across the school is generally good in lessons, at lunch and at playtimes. This does vary according to the quality of teaching, however, and at times can be exemplary. Conversely, in a very few lessons during the inspection, the teacher's failure to engage the pupils and stimulate their interest led to an excessive amount of fidgeting and fussiness. Overall, pupils are trustworthy, polite and self-controlled. They respond quickly to the occasional verbal warnings, and they use resources with care. Playtimes are relaxed and friendly, with pupils playing harmoniously and respecting the space of others. The school takes a very strong stand against aggressive or violent behaviour, and will use exclusion effectively in extreme circumstances, to underline its position. Parents and pupils agree that there is no problem with anti-social or bullying behaviour, and they are confident in the school's ability to address incidents immediately. They both acknowledge considerable improvements in behaviour in the last two years. The one exclusion made last year for violent behaviour resulted in the pupil concerned being excluded for one day and records show that this was fully justified.
15. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils of all backgrounds, race and gender work and play happily together, respecting each others' differences and offering help willingly. The school has a friendly atmosphere, in which pupils confidently greet and offer to help visitors, as well as showing concern for one another. They demonstrate the values of consideration, kindness and respect which they learn about in assemblies and in class discussions. In circle times, they trust one another enough to be able to express some very personal thoughts and emotions without fear of ridicule. The school is racially harmonious.
16. Pupils' personal development is good overall, and results in young citizens who are sensible, confident and aware of their own needs, as well as those of society. The very youngest pupils quickly learn to become independent and how to make choices. This is emphasised through the merit system, where teachers remind pupils when they have made inappropriate choices of behaviour, which they fully accept. As they grow older, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and homework, as well as for little duties in class and around school. The school council and class councils are valued by pupils, who say they feel they can make a difference to daily life, and cite the more harmonious playtimes as an example of their input. Older pupils are also involved in the eco-council, and have introduced ideas to improve the school environment.
17. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are good overall and are sometimes very good. They behave well in lessons and when withdrawn for additional tuition and show growing maturity in their work. Because the work is made interesting, these pupils apply themselves well to their tasks, work hard and concentrate well. The

support staff ensure that, wherever possible, their pupils work independently and responsibly, although there are, inevitably, times when the pupils are very dependent on staff. However, relationships are very good between pupils and staff. The positive response of the pupils is a strong factor in the good progress that they make.

18. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. Absence is monitored very closely, and a few pupils who together account for a large proportion of missed sessions, are supported in their social problems by the education welfare service. The school is very strict in its interpretation of unauthorised absence, which is currently more than double the national average. It is not yet successful in persuading all parents and carers of the need to ensure that all absences are notified formally and come within the range of acceptable excuses. Punctuality is generally good and the school day begins on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school for both boys and girls and those from all ethnic groups.
 - Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and art and design and this leads to pupils making good progress.
 - The best teaching and learning in school is in the nursery, the single age Year 2 class and in Year 6 classes.
 - There are strengths in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to supporting learning and are pivotal to these pupils making such good progress.
 - The teaching of the highest attainers is not consistently good and some of these pupils could potentially achieve more.
 - Monitoring and evaluation systems need now to focus on identifying those features of teaching that result in the most effective learning, being promoted widely.
19. There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching over the last two years. The school's monitoring highlights a much-improved picture from the one that shows significant shortcomings in teaching when the school first opened. This is down to a good programme of staff training, the positive approach by managers to value staff expertise and the very good team spirit that shows itself in the very good relationships so evident around the school. There are many strengths amongst the staff team. These strengths can be harnessed still more as the school presses ahead with raising standards for all pupils. The focus in monitoring and evaluation activities now needs to shift from its focus on what teachers are doing to how well, different groups of pupils are learning.
 20. Of the 81 lessons observed during this inspection, 95 per cent were of satisfactory or better quality and 64 per cent were good or very good. There are strengths in teaching in the good attention given to basic skills and the good range of teaching methods used that result in boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds being interested and generally showing good application in lessons. Good behaviour management enables most classrooms to be purposeful and productive places of learning. The effective use of support staff who work particularly effectively with those pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, is a positive feature in enabling these pupils to make good progress. There is good use of homework to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 5 pupils are currently finding out information about World War II to support their studies in history. Parents are positive about the school's stance on homework and give their assistance willingly. Teaching in English, mathematics and art and design is good overall with some very good and occasional excellent lessons. An

excellent art and design lesson was observed in the single age Year 2 class, for example, where pupils made some very high quality pieces that reflected well their work in looking at the American Indian culture. Very occasionally, teaching is less than satisfactory in other classes in the infants and in lower junior classes because the lesson content and teaching methods fail to engage pupils and they become restless and distracted. In Year 3, the work recorded in pupils' books shows clearly a lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils who do not always reach the level of which they are capable. Additionally, in this class the management of behaviour does not always promote the positive ethos found elsewhere in school.

21. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. There are many good features, but there are also shortcomings across the school too. For example, the school is currently focusing on the use of assessment to guide planning and has made a useful start in seeking support from a literacy consultant to aid teachers' better understanding of National Curriculum levels and their consistent use across all years. A tracker sheet is in use that requires teachers to identify how well individuals are making progress in English, mathematics and science at regular intervals against the criteria set out in the national guidance. However, there is very little use made of this information when planning lessons to ensure that different pupils are given the work they need to make improvement at a good pace. Lesson planning in all subjects more typically conforms to national guidance that identifies what pupils of different ages should be covering and sets this at an average point of advancement. Thus there is a mismatch between what some pupils are doing and expected to be doing that is working against some pupils making the best rates of progress they can, especially higher attainers who could be stretched more to reach higher standards. The school has a well-written teaching and learning policy that has been implemented to good effect in raising the quality of teaching. However, it is not yet used to rigorously monitor teaching and learning to ensure that the aspects it covers are consistently of good quality. It is also the case, that school managers' prime target, has been in building a cohesive and successfully performing staff team over the last two years and so some of the guidance seen in many schools has not yet been produced that could support better effectiveness, for example policies to aid marking and presentation of work.
22. The overall good progress made by pupils who speak languages other than English at home is due to sound quality of the teaching they receive from both teaching and support staff. Their progress is carefully monitored on a regular basis. There is an effective level of regular support for a small number of pupils in Reception and Year 1 who arrived in school recently unable to speak any English. Work is well planned to meet their specific needs, and this enables them to have full access to the curriculum and make rapid progress in spoken English.
23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are alert to the needs of these pupils and planning is carefully tailored to the skills and knowledge to be developed. Individual education plans are the result of a very careful process of consultation between staff, parents and external agencies and are broken down into the small steps that the pupils need to take next. This is a strength that could be shared in planning for other groups of pupils, especially the higher attainers. The activities provided for the pupils are well related to these small steps and the programme of constant review ensures that teachers and support staff always provide effectively for the needs of the pupils. Indeed, the work of support staff is of good quality in general. There is good teaching of basic skills, as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on the reflection of two-dimensional shapes. In this session, the support assistant had been provided with the lesson plan well in advance of the day and she provided sensitive support where necessary to ensure that the pupils worked independently to reflect

shapes at a given point and identify how it is transformed in this way. Pupils with special educational needs learn well, they work with sustained concentration and effort and their productivity is good.

24. Teaching is consistently good or better in the nursery, the single age Year 2 class and in Year 6 classes. Here teaching both inspires and challenges the pupils to do their very best. In the nursery, teaching is enabling the children to get off to a good start. The quality of planning sets out good learning opportunities and both members of staff use time very efficiently. Work adheres well to the six areas of learning for children of this age. For example, in an art lesson planned to promote the children's creative talents the nursery nurse very skilfully built up the children's knowledge about colour, texture and shape as she showed paintings of sheep done by different artists and then painted a sheep that set the standard for them to draw from as artists themselves. She capitalised fully on the situation to promote numeracy skills as legs, eyes, ears and tail were counted and paid close attention to widening the children's use of descriptive language. There was a lovely moment in the discussion about the sheep when one girl said that its *fleece might feel like a soft furry settee*! The children's paintings were of very good quality because of the very good attention paid to widening their experiences so effectively. Lessons in these classes move on at a brisk pace and pupils are engaged in learning right from the start of sessions and this channels their efforts into good productivity.
25. In a religious education lesson in Year 2, this was well demonstrated as the pupils listened very attentively to a nun's experiences in helping others and then showed high levels of confidence in asking her questions. The teacher facilitated the lesson successfully to enable all pupils to fully participate and without overtly taking the lead. This resulted in pupils developing deeper thinking skills as their probing questioning showed and, in consequence, gained wider knowledge and understanding. In Year 6, the teaching is securing good achievement from pupils who, previous to the two schools becoming one, had not always received a good quality of education. The strong focus on enabling the pupils to *learn by doing* is paying dividends. In a mathematics lesson about square numbers, the teacher began with a *follow me* game that involved pupils following on from one another in finding the answers to quite challenging sums. They recognised that the activity had stretched them, but were very proud to note that once the game had been completed in 3 minutes 35 seconds this was 20 seconds faster than the previous day and so they had not only worked accurately but also speedily. Teachers in Year 6, frequently set time targets for pupils to complete work and this is a very good tool for sharing expectations about how much work should be completed.
26. There is good teaching of basic skills in all years that enables most pupils to make good progress. Teachers are very alert to taking full opportunity to promote literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects. For example, there is good use of a range of graphs produced on the computer to represent findings in science. However, there is not enough evidence of pupils selecting information themselves or developing independent research skills in some subjects, for example in geography and history, and this is an aspect for more improvement. The school's push on reading and writing is having a good impact on standards. For example, all pupils have their own personal *Can Do* targets set for writing that identify what is the next step for improvement. Pupils know their targets well and are keen to aim higher. Teachers undertake on-going reviews to check progress and revise targets as appropriate. However, they do not use the targets in marking or in looking at presentation and these are areas for improvement. Parents are on board in supporting both reading and writing targets through homework. Writing is given high prominence in wall displays that shows the

range and quality that can be achieved. However, in some of the pupils' books scrutinised by inspectors, for example in geography and history, although work demonstrated good knowledge and understanding and was written in a lively and imaginative way, pupils forgot their writing targets. Handwriting was untidy, work was poorly presented, they mis-spelled key words and used incorrect grammar. All of which impeded them achieving a higher level of work. The school's monitoring has not yet picked up on this area and this requires attention. The use of targets to support learning in mathematics is not yet as well embedded as target setting in English; there is no target setting in science and this is a missed opportunity. Teachers are not making enough use of targets to inform the planning of lessons so that work is more consistently set at the right level of challenge for all pupils. Only, very occasionally do teachers refer to personal targets in the plenary sessions as a way of reviewing how well pupils have learned and what the next step will be.

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

- The curriculum is of good quality and meets statutory requirements.
 - The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective. In some subjects, for example geography and history, more focus is required to give pupils wider opportunities for research and enquiry
 - The curriculum is rich and exciting
 - Higher attainers are not receiving a consistent level of challenge in their studies to make the best rates of progress they can.
 - The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not yet fully developed.
 - Good provision is made for pupils with special education needs and those learning to speak English and these pupils learn successfully because of the close attention paid to their needs.
 - Very good attention is paid to supporting pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' moral and spiritual development is successfully fostered and their cultural development well provided for. The school pays good attention to widening pupils' awareness about different beliefs and lifestyles.
27. There are secure, whole-school long and medium-term planning systems in place which ensure proper coverage of the National Curriculum, requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies and the Foundation Stage curriculum. All statutory requirements are met. There is a well-planned systematic approach to personal, social and health education. ICT skills are planned for and taught discretely and the contribution of technology and computer work to improve learning across the curriculum is satisfactory though ripe for still more improvement. The school has taken steps to ensure that its provision for all pupils with special educational needs complies fully with the revised Code of Practice. The school places great emphasis on early intervention and makes a graduated response to meeting pupils' needs from nursery onwards. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, and they are gaining from good in-class support and when withdrawn to work on tailor-made programmes of study. However, sometimes these pupils miss out on the lessons taking place back in their classrooms and no one is currently monitoring what impact this may be having on these pupils' overall education. Higher attainers are not provided with a consistent level of challenge in their studies to make the best rates of progress they can and this requires attention, especially in Year 3. The use of 'brain gym' has been introduced to help accelerate pupils' learning. The initiative is very new and in lessons is not always effective. Sometimes this interrupts the lesson flow and there is little evidence of it having a positive impact on the learning.
28. There are only a very small number of pupils who are learning to speak English and the school is catering for their specific needs well. During assembly times, when parents have withdrawn their children, these pupils practise their spoken English with the class teacher and this was observed to work very effectively.
29. The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall in the infant and junior phases. The Foundation Stage is not yet firmly established as a separate key stage with its own identity and curriculum. No one currently has a clear overview of standards or provision. Lengthy literacy and numeracy lessons in reception are not always appropriate to the needs of those children who lack maturity and concentration. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective from Years 1- 6. Staff plan together in year groups and this ensures that pupils in parallel classes cover the same material. The school has

established a two-year rolling programme in most non-core subjects to cater for mixed-age classes. There are teething problems with this. In some subjects, for example geography and history, more focus is required to give pupils wider opportunities for research and enquiry. One of the strengths of curriculum planning is the good arrangement for the support staff to be involved in the process, and they are deployed well to enhance pupils' learning.

30. The curriculum is rich and exciting. This is a creditable achievement by school managers since their focus quite rightly has been on promoting literacy and numeracy in the first two years of the school's amalgamation to ensure that pupils' receive a good basis for their education. The school has a strong commitment towards ensuring equal opportunity for all and provides musical tuition free of charge. The curriculum is particularly good for art and design and this is reflected in some good display about school that shows off the pupils' good achievements in all years. Interesting activities are provided for pupils and this helps them to learn successfully. For example, there is some high quality work on display that reflects the richness of art experiences. Pupils' work demonstrates many different styles including Pollock, Monet, Dahli and a wonderous lizard, in the style of Gaudi, that flanks one wall in the school hall. The school has paid good attention to pupils' personal and social skills development and all classes have an hour slot each week to further this aspect of education to good impact. The curriculum is enhanced by sound provision for extracurricular clubs, for example orchestra, chess, art and computer. Some parents would like to see more sporting opportunities provided but school managers are of the view that the very good range of lettings that include a wide range of opportunities are available for any pupils to choose to support. The transfer arrangements between the local family of schools are good and have been developed very thoughtfully to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well met. There are strong links with the community that widen pupils' horizons. For example, children in the nursery and reception classes visit the local florist and travel agents to see at first hand how these real life shops compare to their role-play areas. Older pupils work with Dave the paramedic who teaches them first aid skills and hear the experiences of a local resident about her experiences in the second, world war. The city council re-cycling team have visited to support the *Priory Planet Protectors* in their work to become a bronze standard *Eco School*.
31. The school pays very good attention to supporting the personal, social and health education of its pupils. This is of great relevance to pupils who begin school with immature behaviour but grow in confidence and self-assurance because of the school's good approach. A well-conceived programme that includes aspects of keeping safe and healthy is covered and, through *circle times* and assemblies, for example, pupils consider a range of issues that provides them with a very good set of values and principles by which to live. There is the required attention to drugs and sex education which is sensitively geared to the ages of the pupils. There are class councils and a school council which result in pupils' views being fully taken account of in the school's life and development.
32. Good provision overall is made for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school promotes aspects of citizenship very effectively. Literally scattered on every wall are messages that the school encourages pupils to take on board. For example, they are encouraged to *Always remember that your own resolution to succeed is more important than anything else*. Social provision is very good. In all classes there is a strong focus on social skills development through the good attention paid to rules and responsibilities; social awareness and personal managements aspects of PSHE in particular. In one wall display pupils have created

family coats of arms that include personal mottos, for example, to *Be a good person, not a bad person* and *Always care and share*. The school has consistent expectations about how pupils will behave and relate to each other. Rules are very prominently displayed in every classroom, and teachers generally make their expectations clear. The school's merit system is working well and pupils view the award of certificates very positively. The quality of relationships at all levels, are mutually respectful and tolerant. There is good attention paid to moral education through the work on anti-bullying for example and in Year 6 when arguments are given both for and against cars being banned from towns.

33. The school has a very positive ethos with regard to celebrating the uniqueness of individuals and in this way promotes highly effective educational inclusion. Multi-cultural provision is good. There is good attention paid to race awareness. An Indian dancer worked with Year 4 pupils during the inspection to learn a southern Indian dance that involved using hand, feet and facial gestures to communicate a Hindu story. Pupils study Kenya as a contrasting locality and are currently learning about nomadic lifestyles. In Year 4, pupils have been considering what is important to Muslims both in their faith and at home. In Year 2, there is a lots of work about north American Indian culture that is represented through art-work and written work. However, the multi-cultural dimension in music needs further development. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to spiritual development and there is some good emphasis on poetry in literacy and through art in particular. Religious education places a useful emphasis on a range of major world faiths that enable pupils to consider the beliefs of Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. Personal prayers are on display in the foyer that show pupils' reflections on the importance of love. Work on display in Year 6, includes pupils' letters to politicians to complain about the conditions for Victorian children and these show clear empathy for the plight of those less fortunate than themselves.
34. All of this is assisting pupils to become confident, caring and tolerant young people who are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Pupils are happy, feel secure and enjoy coming to school.
 - Relevant policies for pupil welfare are in place and health and safety procedures are in order.
 - The school is now ready to move forward in more effective use of assessments to guide teaching and planning.
35. The actions taken by the school to ensure that it cares for its pupils are good. Pupils are happy, feel secure and enjoy coming to school. The pupils form good relationships, and teachers provide good support and guidance when necessary.
 36. The head teacher is the child protection officer and has a clear understanding of the obligations of the role. The deputy is also well informed of the obligations and has access to appropriate information when needed. The school has in place relevant policies relating to pupil welfare. The school's office staff are properly briefed on issues relating to access to pupils and communication with parents and outside agencies. The school properly initiates police checks on new staff and volunteer helpers before they commence work at the school.
 37. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and procedures, such as the testing of electrical appliances for safety and the inspection of fire fighting equipment,

are in order. The school secretaries are trained first-aiders and deal with any situations that arise. At present work is taking place on the construction of a new sports hall and adequate precautions are taken to ensure that pupils are kept away from potentially risky situations. There are areas of the school site that are a little untidy and areas of corridor that are dusty, but this is mainly a result of the building work taking place.

38. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and the school does much to promote regular attendance including contacting parents, the involvement of the education welfare service and other agencies where appropriate and rewarding the class with the highest level of attendance. Registration provides a calm and efficient start to the day. The school is doing all it can to address the issue of unauthorised attendance.
39. There is a very good feel to the relationships at the school. Pupils are treated fairly and with respect and this is reciprocated. There are high expectations of good behaviour and these are met. Rules are clear and well understood by pupils. The school has a behaviour management policy and the actions taken to promote good behaviour are clearly very effective. There are no indications of bullying or repressive behaviour. The provision of play materials such as balls, hoops and stilts at playtimes with good levels of supervision helps to keep pupils happily occupied. There are designated areas for specific activities, but minor playground accidents caused by children bumping into each other inevitably occur. The way in which pupils showed sensitive care and concern for a slightly tearful child following one of these incidents was very telling. The school upholds its race equality policy.
40. Good behaviour is appropriately rewarded and reinforced through the merit system, school assemblies and certificates. The school's focus is on recognising and celebrating success and the behaviour management systems employed by the school are well thought out and effective. Instances of poor behaviour are not neglected and dealt with appropriately. There are secure systems for tracking and correcting any patterns of unacceptable behaviour; any concerns are shared with parents in line with the Home School Agreement. Parents strongly approve of the standards of behaviour expected and achieved at Priory and the inspectors share this view too.
41. The nursery uses information gained from initial assessments effectively to track progress and thus provide an interesting range of purposeful activities. Reception staff also use information well to set targets for future development but their day-to-day assessment is not quite so effective. Although staff keep thorough records of work covered, they do not measure progress against the standards set for children this age and, consequently, do not always provide activities appropriate to needs, maturity or ability.
42. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment are in place. The next step is to ensure they are used consistently to assess pupils' progress in every year. The recording of pupils' performance scores in SATs and other tests in English, mathematics and science is done effectively and from these results projections of future performance are made. The school is now ready to move forward in making more effective use of information to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning so that standards can be improved. There is a need to further develop assessment systems in non-core subjects, for example music.
43. The local education authority is providing useful additional support in establishing common agreement on levels of performance achieved by pupils. The school is also ready to move forward in the area of teachers' self-assessment of their lessons from the stage of recording to that of analysis. Questions relating to what pupils have or have

not mastered and what needs to be done to deal with shortcomings or move them on more quickly are not fully addressed.

44. The school provides good quality educational support for pupils who do not speak English at home, and enlists the expertise of the local Ethnic Minority Advisory Service (EMAS). Pupils' needs are assessed by EMAS who give the school guidance and advice in meeting their specific language needs. The school staff working with these pupils follow their recommendations, and this ensures pupils work successfully in English and make good progress
45. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is a thorough process that is well related to the small steps that these pupils have to take in order to succeed. There is timely identification of needs and the information gained from assessment is used well in writing the pupils' individual education plans. The resulting work is well tailored to particular needs and progress is constantly reviewed to ensure the pupils make good progress. Pupils with statements are well supported in school. The requirements of their statements are met with conspicuous success because staff are fully aware of their needs and work effectively to provide the necessary support. Pupils are moved up, down and off the register of special educational needs at appropriate times because the system of assessment is tight. This is a model for other aspects of the school's work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
 - They feel it is much improved since the school merger over the last two years and are now very involved in their children's education.
 - Information provided for parents is good.
 - Parents make a good impact on the life of the school and support their children well.
46. Parents are very pleased with the school and applaud the new initiatives which they think have improved its reputation. They particularly value the school's high expectations for their children, and feel that the head teacher and staff are very approachable. Parents believe the school is 'on the move' and much improved since the merger. Parents say they feel very involved as partners in their children's education.
 47. This strength of parental approval is a mark of the good, effective links with parents and carers which the school has forged and developed. The headteacher has ensured that parents are kept well informed about school life, as well as formally seeking their views every year on what the school does well, and where they feel improvements could be made. In response to this, the school is about to restructure the programme of parents' information evenings, making the second one earlier in the year. Overall, the information provided for parents is good, comprising a wide range of letters, notices on parents' notice boards, formal documents and informal meetings. The pupils' annual written reports give detailed information of achievements, and targets for improvement, but do not give parents any idea of how well their child is doing for their age. Parents are generally pleased with the school's stance on homework though some at the meeting with inspectors flagged up concerns. Inspectors judge homework to be satisfactory. The home reading diary system is viewed very positively.
 48. Partnership with parents and carers throughout the Foundation Stage is very good. Formal and informal meetings, together with a programme of visits prior to admission, establish very strong relationships between home and school. Parents are also invited to share in many other aspects of school life, and take the opportunity to make a good

impact. They attend the weekly celebration assemblies when their children are directly involved, and several parents are on the list of regular classroom volunteers. The parents of pupils learning to speak English work in support of the school in assisting their children to practise their speaking skills. Generous support for fund-raising, particularly through FOPS (Friends of Priory School) has resulted in the purchase of learning and playing resources to improve pupils' educational experience in lessons and at break. The homework and reading diaries reveal good support for regular reading at home in the infant classes, and give parents a useful reminder of the school's expectations for homework each week. Parents are also invited to a family numeracy course where they can learn new strategies for supporting their children's learning at home. Those parents on the course very much appreciate the new opportunities it offers.

49. The strong partnership is also illustrated by good parental support for school policies and expectations in the main. It is therefore remarkable that so many parents do not fully understand or support the school in its drive for very low unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The headteacher leads the school very well and ensures all staff work successfully for school improvement.
 - The school has made good progress in the two years since it opened.
 - Governors are supportive and proud of the school and fulfil all legal responsibilities.
 - The systematic revision of policies to ensure that all are fully up-to-date is not in place.
 - Monitoring and evaluation is not as rigorous as it could be though the principles of Best Value are applied soundly.
 - The procedures to track pupils' progress and set targets for improved attainment are bedding in well but require further work.
 - The school gives sound value for money.
50. The school is very well led by the headteacher. He has worked hard and successfully to weld the two constituent schools into one united institution. In the last two years, he has introduced many new systems and procedures to ensure that the school operates smoothly and that pupils get a good deal. Whilst there are still some gaps in the review of school policies to ensure they are up to date, the groundwork has largely been completed to ensure that there is good consistency across the year groups in the education of the pupils. Communication works very well in school and there is a tangible unity in everyone's determination to strive for further effectiveness. The school's aims and values are securely reflected in its daily life. The school is now at the point at which it can work for refinement and enhancement, rather than major innovation as it has made better than expected progress over the last two years.
51. The headteacher has focussed on the right priorities set out in the well-conceived school improvement plan. This is the driving force behind the school's good advancement. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in its formulation with senior staff and governors becoming involved at the final consultation stage. Subject leaders are an effective group with good management skills. The next step is for them to develop more fully their leadership role in looking critically at the quality of provision and the standards being reached in the subject for which they have responsibility. The deputy headteacher forms a strong partnership with the headteacher and complements his strengths well. She has good working knowledge of school performance and is doing a good job in developing other core managers as a force for school improvement. The core management team have good insights into the strengths and weaknesses of educational provision, standards and progress. They are aware of the need to find regular opportunities to share the features of the best teaching and learning in school and are ready for the challenge of making sure that monitoring and evaluation is focused on the sharing and building of strengths.
52. Governors are involved actively, soundly informed, very supportive and immensely proud of the school. Led by the Chair, they are taking on the mantle of critical friend appropriately. They are starting to ask crucial questions to establish that the school is providing good quality education and that standards and progress are at optimum levels. Currently, their quizzing of financial matters is more rigorous than that of curriculum and standards related issues, though there are emerging strengths in these fields. The Chair is committed to school improvement, and whilst the school is following the principles of best value soundly, he is committed to ensuring that this is done even more successfully in the future. Governors fulfil all legal responsibilities and their constitution and committee structure ensures that their full role as custodians of school performance is evolving well.

53. The headteacher has introduced a helpful annual audit to assess the effectiveness of the school. This involves core managers, subject leaders, governors and members of the local education authority and is becoming increasingly comprehensive in coverage. The outcome of this review is tied into school improvement planning. Thus, everyone in school is aware of the priorities for improvement, has a personal stake in the process and works hard for success. To bring added refinement to an already adequate system, the next stage is to enhance the procedures in place to set individual targets to maximise the standards achieved and to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Additionally, useful improvement to standards should accrue from the setting of challenging targets for every year-group in English, mathematics and science that are regularly reviewed and adjusted upwards as necessary. More refinement in systems should also enable the inconsistencies between year groups and the levels of challenge for the highest attainers to be eradicated.
54. In general, the school ensures that most pupils make sound progress, but in some aspects, pupils' progress is good. Thus, for example, pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. The special educational needs coordinator has worked successfully in a short time to develop good provision for the pupils involved. Together with key members of the support staff, she has worked hard to merge the two, widely different, systems of support found in the separate infant and junior schools into a single, well focused service. The school has developed good links with external agencies and with parents, which results in a detailed consultation and evaluation process when planning appropriate work for the pupils. The support staff are a key group in the provision for pupils with special educational needs; they are well managed and know their roles and responsibilities well. They generally provide effective support, which enables their pupils to make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator has devolved appropriate responsibilities to teachers for the provision for these pupils. She has considerable call on her time as she has a full class commitment, though she has been given appropriate class release to manage the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Gradually, teachers have taken on the management mantle well and the system is increasingly well balanced in apportioning specific duties amongst staff.
55. Provision for pupils who do not speak English at home is good. It is well managed, and teachers and support staff ensure that good quality service is provided for this group of pupils.
56. Currently there is no Foundation Stage manager. The school recognises the need to rectify this situation, in order to ensure there is a clear overview of the quality and appropriateness of provision in the Foundation Stage. Accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is spacious and attractive. The nursery outdoor play area has ample room for wheeled vehicles and other activities. Currently, reception children do not make sufficient use of this good quality facility.
57. There is a good level of staffing. The headteacher is the performance management leader and he sets targets for all staff. This approach is proving effective in supporting school improvement but does work against drawing more people into the appraisal of school performance. Some subject leaders have received more opportunities than others to see at first hand the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Others are more reliant on sampling work and checking planning. The level of evaluation undertaken by subject leaders currently is not well enough focused and this is an area where more measurable targets could aid their monitoring activities. Nevertheless, teaching is much improved in school and teachers are increasingly successful in meeting the many needs of their pupils. The strengths of provision for pupils with

special educational needs could be usefully extended to other groups of pupils to maximise their potential as effective learners. There is a need for the extension of the rigorous use of data to track the progress of different groups of pupils in school and to identify the highest attainers, and those with gifts and talents. To this end, the next step is the sharpening of the focus of lesson observation to establish how well different pupils are learning. The headteacher and core managers accept that this is necessary and are committed to making the required improvements.

58. The school has adequate accommodation, which is being overhauled and improved at present. In some parts of the school there is need for further refurbishment as some windows, wall panels and doors are in poor external condition. There are no shortages of learning resources, and in some subjects such as art and design and religious education, resources are good.
59. Finance is well managed and accounted for. The budget is tied well to priorities in the school improvement plan and the office staff maintain a sharp eye on day-to-day financial management that ensures efficient and effective practice. Additional grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, are used well and the school is increasingly gaining additional funding through grants, awards and donations. Overall, the school has settled well in the two years since it opened and is providing an effective education for its pupils. The cost of this provision is above average, but it represents money soundly spent on the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school has moved quickly in the past two years 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. In order to quicken the pace of improvement and to smooth out the dips in learning, the school needs now to move forward with the clear priorities set out in the school's improvement plan and pay particular attention to the following:

Improve aspects of teaching so that all pupils reach their full capabilities in all lessons.
By:

- 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.
- Evaluating how well different pupils achieve in their lessons against precise learning objectives and using this information to set suitably challenging work, especially for potentially high attainers
- Insisting that all lessons should set different and significantly challenging work for high-attaining pupils, that takes their thinking forward
- Ensuring that work is dated and headed with close attention paid to neat presentation and good quality handwriting in all recorded work
- Setting clear expectations for accurate spellings
- Extending opportunities for personal research and enquiry
- Widening the use of target setting to involve pupils more in assessing how well they are doing and in knowing how to improve their work
- Raising the level of expectation and challenge in Year3 in particular
- Placing emphasis on developing listening skills and promoting personal enquiry

Paragraphs **6, 7, 20, 21, 26, 27, 43, 91, 93, 95, 98, 102, 105, 111, 120, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137, 138, 139, 143, 152, 163, 164**

Make more rigorous assessment, monitoring and evaluation. By:

- Setting challenging targets for every year-group in English, mathematics and science that are regularly reviewed by senior managers and adjusted upwards as necessary
- 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 to track the progress of different groups of pupils in school
- Identifying the highest attainers, and those with gifts and talents in every year, and establishing rigorous systems to check up on their progress
- Checking on the impact that withdrawal has to the overall education of pupils who are withdrawn from classes for additional support.
- Involving curriculum managers in regular assessments of pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels in the subject on which they lead
- Sharpening the focus of lesson observation to check up on how well different pupils are learning so that the best features can be more widely promoted and shortcomings eradicated

- Bringing tighter focus in lesson observations and when sampling pupils' work on those things that will help the school move forward
- Finding regular opportunities to share the features of the best teaching and learning in school
- Continuing to develop the Foundation Stage as a separate key stage with its own identity and a curriculum that matches the needs and abilities of individual children

Paragraphs **4, 5, 6, 11, 19, 26, 29, 42, 51, 53, 56, 57, 67, 112, 114, 120, 121, 126, 138, 144, 148, 154, 156, 159, 165**

Although not identified as a separate issue, in preparing their action plan the Governing Body should also pay attention to the following:

- Reviewing job descriptions to state clearly the leadership roles expected of subject leaders as part of performance management.
- Pressing ahead with the development of practice guidance and the revision of policies to ensure that all are fully up-to-date.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
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	7	44	25	4	0	0
Percentage	1	9	54	31	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	264
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (95)	90 (90)	100 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	100 (97)	100 (95)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	27	23	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	21	27
	Girls	22	23	23
	Total	45	44	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (77)	88 (67)	100 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	24
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	43	46	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (80)	92 (75)	94 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
245	1	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	69,5526
Total expenditure	73,455
Expenditure per pupil	2,2249
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,100
Balance carried forward to next year	12,436

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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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	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

300

Number of questionnaires returned

136

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	30	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	43	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	62	8	1	3
The teaching is good.	61	35	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	8	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	39	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	34	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	39	5	2	8

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

- Provision for children's personal and social development is good and children behave very well
 - All staff have a strong commitment towards providing the best for the children in their care
 - The quality of teaching in the nursery is good
 - Reading skills are effectively promoted across the whole Foundation Stage and reach a good level in reception.
 - The Foundation Stage is not yet firmly established as a separate key stage with its own identity and curriculum. No one has a clear overview of standards or provision
 - Assessment is not used effectively to provide children with work that matches their needs and ability as they move through the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining children suffer most.
 - Lengthy literacy and numeracy lessons in reception are not always appropriate to the needs of those children who lack maturity and concentration.
61. The profile of the attainment of children in the nursery and reception (known as the Foundation Stage) has been broadly average in the past but this is rising. Overall, provision is satisfactory, with some good and very good features. Children's personal and social development is good. Nursery and reception staff's commitment towards providing the best for each child permeates every aspect of their work. All adults provide good role models and support staff are of high calibre. Children know they are part of a caring community. Very strong relationships between adults, older pupils and reception children make a significant contribution towards children's love of school. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. Links with parents are very positive. Parents and carers rightly hold all staff in high regard.
62. Most children enter the nursery with sound early literacy and numeracy skills. They are well informed about the world in which they live and have strongly developed personal and social skills. They make good progress because they are taught well. Most enter the reception classes with secure basic early language, literacy and numeracy skills. Personal and social skills remain strong. Children in the current reception class make steady progress. The vast majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals set for this age group by the time they reach Year 1; just under half are on course to reach higher levels.
63. The nursery uses information gained from initial assessments well to provide an interesting range of activities appropriate to the needs of individual children. It sets effective targets for development, tracks progress well and accurately identifies children who may have learning difficulties. Reception staff also use information well to set targets for children's development. However, their use of day-to-day assessment is not quite so effective. Although staff keep thorough records of work covered, they do not use information well enough to plan an appropriate range of activities at the right level for each child. Some independent activities lack purpose. This lack of rigour in assessing progress has a detrimental effect on provision. Higher attaining children suffer most and do not always make as much progress as they should when work is too easy.

64. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the nursery, teaching is good, with some very good teaching. In the reception classes all teaching is at least satisfactory, with just over half of lessons judged good. The quality of planning is better in the nursery and both members of staff use time more efficiently. Work adheres well to the six areas of learning for children this age. The school recognises that further work remains to be done to ensure planning for children in the reception class links more consistently to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Evidence taken from samples of previous work gives greater insight into why the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good. There is too heavy reliance on worksheet based activities and little indication of how much progress individual children have made towards the Early Learning Goals.
65. Both nursery and reception staff manage children very well, develop independence and use praise and encouragement very successfully to build confidence. However, there is still some way to go towards establishing the Foundation Stage as a key stage with its own identity. Sometimes, teaching in the reception classes focuses more on the National Curriculum and not on the suggested curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. There is also an occasional lack of understanding about how young children learn best. These factors have a detrimental effect on the quality of provision. Consequently, some children, and more typically higher attainers, do not always make progress in line with their ability. The exception is in reading, where these skills are taught consistently well.
66. Staff have worked hard to provide an attractive learning environment. Classrooms are bright and displays are lively and relevant. The quality and quantity of learning resources are adequate and improving. The nursery outdoor play area is spacious, with attractive fixed structures and ample room for wheeled vehicles. It contributes well towards the development of children's physical skills. However, there is potential for improvement through the introduction of a purposeful, structured outdoor play programme for all Foundation Stage children.
67. In the last two years, the school has had to target areas in most need in order to raise standards as a matter of urgency. The Foundation Stage has not been the focus of attention. Currently, there is no Foundation Stage manager and little reference to the Foundation Stage in documentation. The school recognises the need to raise the profile of the Foundation Stage in order to ensure there is a clear overview of the quality and appropriateness of provision and has firm plans to move to this position by September. In the meantime one of the reception teachers is care-taking the situation.

Personal and Social Development

68. The teaching of personal development is good throughout the Foundation Stage. Children in both nursery and reception classes make good progress and most will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.
69. Nursery children feel safe and secure. They display high levels of trust in the way that they arrive each day, confidently leaving their parents and carers. They enjoy being looked after by older children during the dinner hour and they display great confidence. They welcome visitors and are totally at ease.
70. Reception staff build on secure foundations and successfully create an atmosphere of mutual respect. Children of all abilities contribute in class lessons because they know their ideas are valued. A good example of this was observed during a lesson on pets. Even the most reticent child asked a pertinent question. Children's behaviour was

faultless as they stroked the rabbit, and handled the pigeon. The whole occasion cemented already strong relationships. There was a delightful blend of discussion, respect, fascination and appreciation.

71. Children behave very well at all times and are keen to be involved. They work and play together amicably and value the success of others. There is a clear commitment towards developing independence. Children respond with impressive speed when asked to tidy up or finish their work.

Communication, Language and Literacy

72. Children enter the nursery with at least average early reading and writing skills. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning throughout the Foundation Stage and children make steady progress. Approximately half of the current reception children are on course to achieve above average standards by the time they go into Year 1.
73. Children in the nursery have numerous opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and staff promote this aspect well. When working in small groups, they encourage children to talk and discuss. Whilst taking a 'Spring Walk', children of all abilities asked questions and chatted excitedly as they looked for signs of spring. Some lacked confidence, but all contributed as they identified the sprouting shoots and tried to remember the word for 'buds'.
74. By the time children reach the reception classes, most want to give detailed answers. They are inquisitive and express themselves with real maturity. In discussion about reading, higher attainers are well informed and articulate.
75. Nursery staff promote early reading skills satisfactorily, although they miss opportunities to promote the development of reading more strongly. Children make steady progress and parents provide a good level of support. Nursery children enjoy books. In discussion, they are inquisitive about print and make up their own version of 'The Three Little Pigs' with much humour and enthusiasm. Although staff provide opportunities for children to develop skills well through sharing books, they do not always identify children who need greater challenge. During the inspection, a higher attaining child, who was almost ready to read, had difficulty in turning pages and occasionally held the book the wrong way. She did not have the benefit of a more structured programme to meet her needs.
76. Reading is taught well in the reception classes and children make good progress. They love books and have access to good quality reading material in the classroom and the library. Reading routines are firmly established and reading diaries contain helpful comments, but do not always contain enough information about how to improve. Parents continue to make a good contribution towards the standards achieved. In discussion, one confident early reader expressed very clear preferences. He enjoyed books about animals most and talked at great length about his favourite otter story. Children of all abilities act as if they can read. They make up acceptable alternatives, talk enthusiastically about stories and predict with confidence. Most develop secure simple strategies for working out unfamiliar words.
77. Nursery children develop early writing skills appropriately. They have access to an interesting range of adult supported and independent activities. They excitedly write their messages for the vet as they work in the Priory Surgery. By the time they reach reception, even children with special educational needs can sequence stories such as The Giant Sandwich correctly. Most write their names unaided and make recognisable

attempts at spelling simple words. Some children acquire confidence to write sentences independently. All abilities make sound progress through satisfactory teaching. However, there are not always enough opportunities for children to write by themselves. For some children, who lack concentration due to their immaturity lengthy sessions of literacy activities are not appropriate.

Mathematical development

78. Most children enter the nursery with secure mathematical understanding. They are familiar with shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. Most count to five and sequence patterns with confidence. Staff promote the language of mathematics well. Through good teaching children make good progress and enter the reception classes with above average early numeracy skills.
79. In the reception classes, the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and children make steady progress. The vast majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals and just under half are on course to reach higher levels of attainment at end of reception. In one lesson, children displayed their knowledge well when they counted beyond 20 and knew one more and one less. They looked forward to trying the interesting range of activities that had been prepared for them. More able children enjoyed struggling with a challenging number jigsaw. All made steady progress. However, the teaching of numeracy for whole morning sessions is inappropriate for some who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. Although teachers provide opportunities for learning in a less formal way, they do not always provide work that matches ability. Children with special educational needs make most progress because they receive a good level of high quality support. High attaining children make least progress because they do not receive enough work to extend their knowledge. Children play in the sand, but the activities make little contribution towards their mathematical development, because activities lack purpose and structure.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children enter the nursery with a good basic knowledge of the world around them. Nursery staff successfully build on this understanding through good teaching and children learn well. In one lesson, the teacher questioned children repeatedly to find out their knowledge of plant growth. One boy excitedly identified shoots at every opportunity and most were confident the shoots would grow into flowers. Children tried to use the correct vocabulary appropriately in their conversations. On another occasion, the teacher asked children to guess which animal they were going to paint. Several children quickly identified a sheep and provided some delightful descriptions. They learnt well because they were highly motivated. Lessons often involve opportunities for children to experiment with construction toys and develop secure computer skills. Children clicked on the mouse confidently and laughed excitedly as they selected the right musical instrument.
81. Children enter the reception class with good knowledge. They continue to make good progress because they are taught well. Activities are effectively linked to topic themes. During the inspection week, children developed their knowledge of pets. They were confident handling animals and displayed good basic knowledge. Work was linked well to numeracy activities, such as making graphs of favourite pets. Previous work on display showed good knowledge of plant growth through computer generated ' Bean Diaries'. Children of all abilities also have a clear understanding of the progression from being a baby.

82. A significant proportion of children is well on track to reach their goals and will leave their reception year with a very secure knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

Physical development

83. Teaching of this area of learning is good throughout the Foundation Stage and children of all abilities make good progress. All the current reception children will achieve the Early Learning Goals when they enter Year 1, with about half reaching the higher levels.
84. Most children enter the nursery with physical development similar to other children of the same age. Most demonstrate good control and dexterity when using paintbrushes and have good pencil control. Children are at various stages of development when using scissors. Some are very skilled, others need one-to-one support. They balance beanbags reasonably successfully during their physical education lessons. Children make swift progress because activities are exciting and purposeful.
85. Physical skills continue to be developed well in the reception classes. The day-to-day routines of dressing and undressing are firmly established. Children know the importance of exercise and move with good control and co-ordination. They showed much enjoyment as they jumped forwards and backwards and travelled round the hall at varying speeds in one lesson. Everyone was responsive and excited.
86. Reception children handle pencils, glue spreaders and scissors competently. They cut out shapes with reasonable accuracy and display varying levels of skill when completing jigsaw puzzles. All persevere and make good progress.
87. The outdoor play area is not yet used by all the children in the Foundation Stage as an important part of their overall physical development. Although nursery children use it regularly, reception children do not have sufficient opportunity to explore and develop through structured play activities. This does not appear to have a negative impact on their physical development however.

Creative development

88. Creative development is similar to other children this age on entry to the nursery. Children make rapid progress because they are taught well. There are many opportunities for children to develop creative skills through painting animals from their imagination, visiting the Priory Vet Surgery and dressing up as Cinderella. Children also experiment and explore with a variety of materials and activities that encourage them to be creative and imaginative. They use the computer very effectively to click on different musical instruments and listen to the sound or sing along with songs such as 'Frère Jacques'. They create very realistic interpretations of artists' work such as Jackson Pollock.
89. By the time children move into the reception classes, they know a good range of songs. They remember words well and sing with great vitality when they join infant pupils in the hall for assemblies. Artwork is often linked effectively to topics and there is a good balance of free choice and adult supported activities. Paintings in the style of Mondrian display great maturity and attention to detail. By the time children reach Year 1, their creative skills are well developed and many exceed the Early Learning Goals.

ENGLISH

- Standards in English are above average at ages seven and 11 in reading and writing.
 - Attitudes to learning are good.
 - The good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to learn well against their targets.
 - The management of English is good.
 - English makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - There is some poorly presented work in books. Too often marking does not address weaknesses in spelling and handwriting.
90. Standards by the age of seven and eleven are above average in reading and writing and average for speaking and listening.
91. In the two years since the school was formed, it has come along way in establishing good standards, and setting up a rigorous assessment system. There is a whole school commitment to hard work and raising standards. Basic skills are well taught. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks. They enjoy learning. The good standards are borne out by the test results in Year 6 and in Year 2 for writing. The recent focus on reading has helped to raise standards in Year 2. However, inspection findings and test results indicate that they higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged as well as they could be.
92. Pupils achieve well during their time at school, although progress dips in Year 3, reflecting weaker teaching. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that support is well targeted. As a result, they also make good progress towards their targets in their individual education plans. The few pupils with English as an additional language have a good command of English in most cases and do at least as well as others in their class because of the close attention paid to their needs.
93. Speaking standards are above average throughout the school and listening skills average. Most pupils listen attentively, but a minority in many classes do not listen well enough, talking while the teacher is talking and interrupting the progress of the lesson. This is most apparent when teaching is weaker. A good proportion of pupils express themselves clearly and have a reasonable range of vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils are articulate and readily engage in extended conversations about their work and interests. Most pupils are happy to engage in discussions and keen to answer questions. Although some use is made of drama and role play, this depends on individual teacher's confidence and skill. English would benefit from a more conscious targeting of spoken language and attention to listening skills. A strength in planning is the identification of key vocabulary in lessons, which is helping to widen pupils' understanding and use of English but this is promoted better in some lessons than others. In the most successful lessons, this is reinforced throughout and used by pupils when responding to questions. For example, when reading aloud a shared poetry text in a Year 5/6 lesson pupils used vocabulary such as 'pitch', 'tone', 'expression' and 'dynamics' to describe important features of reading aloud. One pupil commented on the good impact on 'jaws than bite the claws that catch' in the poem. Pupils could recall terms as 'synonym' and 'onomatopoeia' well.
94. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils enjoy reading. Higher attainers read with fluency and good expression. In Year 2, most pupils recall terms such as 'author' and 'illustrator' and know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. They are developing dictionary skills well. Many read accurately and self correct when reading. Higher attainers identify favourite authors such as Roald Dahl and Dick King Smith. In Year 6 higher attainers read challenging

books. For example, 'Das Reich' by Max Hastings and Terry Pratchett 'The Rince Trilogy'. These pupils make use of higher reading skills of inference and deduction. They read silently at speed and are able to use skills such as 'skimming' and 'scanning' well. They are confident, discussing their reading habits and favourite authors at length and giving opinions about characters and plot. Many average readers also read fluently but some lack the expression and depth of understanding of the better readers. Lower attainers are more hesitant, being less confident in their phonic skills, but nevertheless attempts to build unknown words. In Year 6 lower attainers have a limited comprehension of what they read and occasionally struggle to make meaningful sense of their reading. A number of pupils belong to the public library and know how to access the books. By the end of Year 6 most pupils can use reference books to locate information but few know how books are classified because the school library is not yet organised in this way. This is about to change when the library is relocated.

95. The use of silent reading time – E R I C is not well planned. It is used mainly to hear readers, change books and copy down spellings. The time could be more purposefully used if a clear learning objective was set and a wider range of strategies was used for reading practice. Similarly, with spellings, pupils are not systematically taught to put spellings into context; therefore they do not securely develop a meaningful understanding of spelling vocabulary. This results in limited strategies for spellings and too many pupils lacking the knowledge and understanding of spelling strings to help them build unknown words. Reading diaries list pages read with comments from parents and teachers to encourage pupils in Year 2. By Year 6, pupils maintain their own reading diary, but it is merely a record of pages read rather than extending pupils' response to reading through book reviews, writing blurbs, responding to questions and other tasks which check for understanding. Pupils would benefit from diagnostic comments from teachers to help them improve their skills.
96. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils write for an increasing range of purposes as they move through the school. In Year 2, for example, they write stories, instructions, news, recounts of visits and personal writing such as 'sad and happy memories'. They know how to pose questions and have some knowledge of alphabetical order and early dictionary skills. Basic punctuation is used accurately in most cases and higher attainers are beginning to use speech marks to show dialogue. Work shows a developing understanding of instructional text and poetry form. For example, following the reading the poem 'Night time, Flight time' One pupil wrote:-

'Outside, after dark,
Dogs howl, cats moan
After dark, after dark,
cymbles bang, brass bang down
After dark, after dark.'
97. Handwriting and presentation is inconsistent and often untidy. This is not helped by the method for teaching handwriting and the large books used. Pupils are expected to write far too much as practice and this is often copied out three times. Lower attainers sometimes reverse letters and there are grammatical errors such as 'I am eat chocolate'. Tenses are confused on occasions, for example, 'the children was playing...'. Opportunities for more extended writing are limited and higher attainers in particular could be better challenged to write at length. Across the school, writing in other subjects such as religious education is not extensive.
98. In the junior classes writing progresses well, except in Year 3 where standards dip. Work is often careless and untidy and the purposes for writing more limited. Marking

here is not effective in providing guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Overtime, insufficient work is covered and teaching is unsatisfactory overall in Year 3, though some good teaching was observed during the inspection. There is a good improvement in Year 4 which is maintained in the rest of the junior classes. Note-taking skills, diaries and non-fiction writing, such as 'Recycling Aluminium' are evident. Pupils are encouraged to use adjectives to improve their descriptive writing, for example, writing about 'Serparitartus' one pupil wrote:-

'Bugling, orange eyes, and pointing sharp spikes.
Scales shining in the damp, underground light,
Waiting for the day it can break
Free and spread its golden yellow wings'...

99. Pupils show an increasing awareness of the audience for their writing. There is very good attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through writing. For example, a Year 4 pupil describes the street musician as having 'lots of wrinkles on his face. He has cracked lips and old wrinkly withered hands which hold his rusty, bent, old flute'.
100. While a Year 6 pupil wrote in a poem to show personification:

'I call names and relish in death and misery,
I leave people out – my sister is loneliness,
My daughters are famine and war.
I lie, I cheat, I laugh in cruelty...I am sadness'.
101. Letters to a politician from Year 6 pupils to inform and complain about conditions for Victorian children show empathy and good understanding of moral issues such as poverty and cruelty.
102. Although a few pupils write more extensively, there is limited evidence of pupils writing at length. A good proportion of pupils in Year 6 write confidently and with a good understanding of different forms of writing. Pupils know how to redraft their work to improve the quality of their writing. There is a much enthusiasm in English lessons that stimulate a lively response from pupils. Although handwriting improves in Year 6 because these teachers focus well on presentation skills, in other year groups skills are not systemically developed. Handwriting is too often untidy as a result with careless errors and sloppy letter formation.
103. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils enjoy their lessons as a result. Teaching and learning is accelerated in Year 6 and for pupils in the single age Year 2 class. Pupils work together well in groups and concentrate well in most cases because they are well motivated. In the best practice teachers share learning objectives at the start of lessons so that pupils know what is expected of them. These lessons proceed at a brisk pace and plenary sessions are used well to assess what has been learned. Where teaching is less effective, low expectations, a slow pace and undemanding tasks affect the progress pupils make. .
104. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is good. Well-planned activities and well-targeted use of additional support ensures good inclusion and results in many of these pupils achieving well. Two pupils who are learning to speak English are well supported and are making good gains. Additional literacy strategies make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

105. English is well led and managed. The subject leader role has recently been taken over by the headteacher who is clear about the strengths and areas for development. Extensive assessment procedures have been put in place and information from these is used soundly to set targets. Target setting is a more recent development, which is still becoming established. Teachers are not all confident in their assessment of pupils' achievement but this is an improving area. The recent involvement of pupils in self-assessment against the learning objectives is a positive attempt by staff to involve pupils more in knowing how well they are doing. Good procedures are in place for maintaining pupils' achievements and challenging targets have been set for the future, including higher level attainment.
106. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning in English.

MATHEMATICS

- Standards are above average by 11 years because of the thoroughness and good pace of numeracy teaching in nearly all classes.
 - The vast majority of pupils work hard, enjoy mathematics and take a great deal of pride in their work and achievements.
 - The quality of teaching is generally good but with some variations.
 - Support for children with special needs is good.
 - The management of the subject is good but the evaluation of the quality of learning lacks rigour.
 - Practical work and problem solving is under developed
107. Inspection findings show that standards are above average for pupils aged seven and 11. The standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2002 SATs were good with 88 per cent attaining the national expectation or better. This is an improvement on the previous year. A broad range of work seen and other pieces of evidence supports the school's projections for sustaining advancement in this summer's tests. The performance in SATs by Year 2 pupils in 2002 paints a similar picture of success. Standards were higher than those seen nationally with 40 per cent of the pupils attaining levels above those expected for age. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work undertaken across year groups provides no evidence of any differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
108. The vast majority of pupils work hard, enjoy mathematics and, in almost all classes, exercise books and folders are neat and well cared for reflecting pride in achievement. The key to the school's success in improving standards in mathematics is the mastery of the basic skills of number through the effective teaching of numeracy and this is now well embedded. A good lesson seen in Year 1 on subtraction demonstrated that the basics are taught with thoroughness and imagination.
109. The school is taking positive steps to widen the range of work on problem solving and the application of mathematics. There were some examples of investigative work taking place during the inspection in a number of classes. In one lesson the higher ability Year 4 pupils were investigating the properties of odd and even numbers to see if they could detect patterns and create general rules, such as the sum of two even numbers is always an even number. Through the sensible use of calculators they tested whether the rules held true for negative and very large numbers. The pupils worked hard and all "discovered" the expected patterns. Some of the pupils took their exploration even further and the ablest pupils were doing well. One of the girls described a rule that she had discovered and tested as "If you add any odd number

of odd numbers together then the answer is always an odd number". This is an example of surprisingly good mathematical thinking for someone so young.

110. In science, pupils produce bar charts to illustrate their findings and apply other skills they have learned in mathematics, this is a good feature. However, scrutiny of work in pupils' books and around the school shows that investigative work problem solving and practical work on measures is under developed. In Years 2 and 6, there were mathematical investigation and puzzle corners in classrooms to capture imagination but not elsewhere. There were number lines on display in infant classes, but these were placed at a height out of reach of the children so their use as an aid in counting was limited. There were computers in classrooms, but there was little evidence to show that they were used to support understanding of mathematics.
111. The observation of lessons and the scrutiny of other evidence show that teaching and learning in the infants is at least satisfactory and mainly good. At Year 3 the quantity and quality of pupils' work in books shows up less effective teaching and learning. In classes for older pupils the standards of teaching is good or better. Two effective lessons on rotational geometry seen in Year 6 illustrate many of the good features seen in teaching. The lessons were well linked and showed a good rate of progression in deepening the pupils' knowledge and experience of the translation of shape into the four quadrants with co-ordinates plotted. The pace of teaching and learning was brisk. The use of questioning was skilful in ensuring that pupils of all ability were keeping up with learning and on their toes. Pupils were set time targets to complete short well-chosen tasks within the lesson. This strategy enabled the teacher to quickly spot and sort out any misunderstands or confusion in pupils' learning and, through their active engagement in their learning, enhanced pupils' enjoyment of their lessons. This effective style of teaching was seen in almost all mathematics lessons throughout the school. Initiatives taken by the school in the organisation and support of family numeracy classes are also a positive step in supporting improvement standards.
112. The organisation of teaching is successful. Pupils are taught mathematics in their usual mixed ability class groups except for Year 4 where they are set into two ability groups for lessons. Both forms of organisation are effective within the school as the structure of teaching in all classes follow a similar pattern. Clear and challenging learning targets for lessons are set based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers keep good records of pupil progress, they also make evaluations of lessons. This is a worthwhile feature, but as yet the lesson evaluations are not fully developed as a tool to guide future teaching and learning. Pupils have their own personal targets and monitor their progress against these. Target setting plays a major contribution in bringing about high standards of achievement in mathematics within the school.
113. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make steady progress in mathematics because of the effective support they get that assists them in reaching their personal targets. The children with special educational needs are generally taught alongside their classmates and take full part in lessons. Some withdrawal work does take place and a small group of Year 3 children withdrawn for extra assistance in mathematics were seen in a lesson on shopping and giving change. This work was well matched to the children's skills and knowledge; not only were they using coins correctly but they were using calculators to check the accuracy of their work. The pupils were absorbed in their work and keen to learn.
114. The management of the subject is good. The subject leader has a sound knowledge of mathematics and expertise in teaching the subject and has made a major impact in raising standards. She has her finger on the pulse of teaching and learning through

scrutinising teachers' planning, checking on pupil progress and monitoring teaching to ensure that all is as it should be. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the use of assessment needs fine-tuning to bring all teaching up to the quality of the best.

SCIENCE

- By the age of seven, pupils achieve average standards and, by the age of 11, standards are above average.
 - Although the standard of teaching is satisfactory overall, some good quality teaching was seen in lessons.
 - Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The rate at which they learn accelerates by the time they reach the age of 11.
 - Not enough attention is given to extending the higher attaining pupils in lessons.
 - The school does not enable pupils to become sufficiently independent in their learning.
 - Standards have risen steadily under the effective management of the subject leader.
115. Since the school opened as a primary school in 2000, standards in science have risen steadily, reflecting the effective management of the subject and the new ethos of the school. By the age of seven, pupils are now achieving standards in line with the national average, and by 11, pupils are achieving above average standards.
116. Pupils show a keen interest in science, concentrate well and work hard in activities. Their behaviour is good. They are often required to work collaboratively and to co-operate with others during lessons. It is established practise across the school and they do it willingly and well. For example, they discuss ideas and work together sharing their equipment when carrying out investigations. Consequently, they enjoy good relationships with each other, and with the teaching and support staff, and this has a positive effect upon their learning as well as their social development.
117. The quality of teaching science across the school is satisfactory overall with some good features. These are characterised by the employment of a variety of effective teaching methods including demonstrations. In order to clarify their understanding of previously learned concepts at the beginning of lessons pupils are asked to discuss with a partner their understanding of, for example, the difference between shadows and reflections. This ensures all pupils begin the lesson at a similar starting point. The successful lessons are conducted at a good pace, are well planned and sustain pupil interest. This ensures that most pupils progress at a steady rate, acquiring science skills, knowledge and understanding well. This rate accelerates as they move through the school so that by the time they reach the age of 11, good progress is being made. Pupils whose first language is not English make similar progress to their peers. Teachers manage pupils well and the support staff is used effectively to assist in pupils' learning. The good quality of support they provide to pupils with special educational needs ensures that this group of pupils make good progress. Missed learning opportunities and poor organisation are the significant factors when lessons are less than satisfactory.
118. In Years 1 and 2, pupils know that plants are living things and know their characteristics. They see plants growing in the classroom, and when they go for observational walks around the school grounds. In order to learn more about seeds they set up investigations in their classrooms to watch and record the growth rate of a variety of different seeds daily. The examination of pupils' books shows that their work is generally well presented and they are developing a useful format for recording their investigations.

119. Teachers provide some interesting activities to stimulate learning by allowing pupils to become involved in practical activities and investigation. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use marbles as weights to calibrate homemade force meters by measuring and marking the amount of stretch in the rubber band. This work is extended to use manufactured force meters for measuring and recording the amount of force needed during the lifting of a variety of everyday objects and some standard weights. This leads to the discovery that, *100grams equals one Newton*. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use their knowledge of the principles of fair testing to set up investigations into identifying the factors that affect the size and position of the shadow of an object. They are equipped with appropriate materials and a light source with which to experiment. Working in small groups they identify those factors that will remain unaltered and those that will be variable. Once their plans are established they make sensible predictions.
120. The curriculum is planned well with due attention given to ensuring coverage of all the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is good emphasis on the provision of opportunities to carry out scientific enquiry. Teaching staff make useful evaluations on the effectiveness of the curriculum, but there is now a need to focus more on assessing how successful the pupils have been in achieving against the learning objectives. Science supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills as pupils record their work in written form, and support their findings through the use of diagrams, tables, charts and graphs. The use of ICT is not in regular use in this aspect of their work. Not enough opportunities are planned, to extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils, or to ensure that all pupils have the chance to develop as independent learners. However, the school makes good use of visits to support learning in science. Pupils benefit from experiences gained at the Forestry Commission Environmental Centre, and Rugeley Power Station. Visitors to school including the Quantum Theatre Group, Life Van and Groundwork, plus the sensory garden project; all of which, suitably enrich, the curriculum.
121. There is effective leadership and management by the subject leader. She has a good overview of standards and under her guidance she has ensured that they have risen steadily during the last two years. It is she who has been instrumental in supporting staff in the improvements in science teaching and in the development of confidence through formal and informal support. There has been an effective programme of monitoring teaching and learning that has supported this improvement and had a positive effect upon standards. She is aware that ICT needs to be developed as a tool to support pupils' learning in science, and that the setting of short term individual targets will help to raise standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

- Art and design is a subject strength in school.
 - Good teaching leads to good progress.
 - Pupils enjoy a wide variety of experiences and build systemically on their skills in art and design.
 - The subject is led enthusiastically and by good example. It is well managed by the subject leader.
 - There is a very good focus on art and design from a wide range of cultures.
122. Standards in art and design are above average by the ages of seven and 11. In two years, the school has come a long way to develop art and design skills systemically through a range of interesting activities. Pupils have good opportunities to practise these skills and techniques and to study the work of a wide range of famous artists. The learning is good in most classes because of the imaginative tasks that are the

focus of lessons, enabling pupils to explore, experiment and develop their individual creativity. All pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their home language.

123. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build successfully on the positive experiences gained in the early years. They use paint and collage material skilfully and with imagination, for example, to create scenes of 'The Great Fire of London'. Using a variety of fabric, sewing and gluing skills, pupils create glove, stick and sock puppets, many to a good standard. Skills in observational drawing develop effectively as pupils increase their understanding of the use of pencil for developing line and tone, for example in their drawings of shells. Careful follow up to a study of the work of Cezanne shows an increasing understanding of 'still life' using pastels and crayons. There is a very good focus on art in other cultures such as in Africa and North America. Particularly exciting were the results of work on Native Americans in a Year 2 class, where pupils constructed delicate dream catchers, boldly painted totem poles using modelling materials and created a range of body ornaments such as headbands, armbands and vest tops using beads, feathers and a wide range of well chosen materials to embellish their work. Good use is made of ICT in this class as pupils use the camera to photograph the results of their efforts. Computers are used confidently to develop design techniques. For example, pupils use the 'flood fill' tool to create different shades of one colour. These experiences combine to produce young pupils with acute artistic vision in many cases. The work produced reflects the enjoyment gained.
124. In the junior classes, pupils continue to develop and enrich their artistic experiences. In Years 3 and 4 pupils explore the work of artists such as Degas and Van Gogh. They create sculptures using clay, develop designs in the style of Clarice Cliff and create patterns reflecting the style of Kandinsky. For example, they make string prints for Christmas present tags. The very good attention to other cultures is sustained. Brightly coloured drawings of Hindu Gods such as Ganesh link art work effectively with other subjects such as history and religious education. These cross-curricular links are a strong feature of art work in the school. The use of computers in art is good throughout the school, seen in patterns based on Mondrian, Islamic patterns and geometric patterns. In Years 5 and 6 pupils develop their skills with clay, making coil and slap pots. The use of clay is linked meaningfully to other areas of learning such as Greek art and Moroccan pottery designs when exploring African art. Pupils examine the work of William Morris, creating repeated and rotated patterns with string prints. Collage skills are extended as pupils explore the work of David Hockney. Pupils produce effective work in pastels and chalk in the style of Monet. Felt pen work on illuminated letters reflects work on the Anglo-Saxons, whilst three-dimensional collages of Queen Victoria link effectively to Victorian history. Pupils enjoy art lessons because tasks are interesting and enable them to develop individual expression in their work. Personal development is greatly enhanced as pupils work together, help each other and share the available resources. Pupils with special educational needs often enjoy much success in their art work.
125. Teaching is good overall with particular strengths in the single age Year 2 class and in Year 6, although it is not as strong in Year 3. During the inspection, excellent teaching was observed in a Year 2 class. Here the teacher was very well prepared and had very high expectations of the quality and standard of work required from all pupils. Her approach was stimulating and her own enjoyment in the lesson highly infectious. Lessons are well resourced and basic skills are carefully taught. Sensitive intervention helps pupils to improve their skills. Well-deployed support staff ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons. The best teaching ensures that tasks are challenging and exciting, inspiring pupils to learn. The good attention to subject vocabulary in lessons ensures

pupils acquire a good understanding of artistic vocabulary. Excellent use is made of sketchbooks in a Year 2 class to practise and refine skills and techniques. Elsewhere, the use of sketchbooks is inconsistent.

126. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic subject leader with good expertise. She leads by very good example. The display of work is good, enriching many areas of the learning environment. Visiting artists make a valuable contribution to artwork in school, with skills such as wood carving, clay, patchwork quilting, wood sculpture and water colours among the many skills brought into school. The next steps include developing further the use of sketchbooks across the school and making more consistent use of assessment information to raise standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Standards are average across the school.
 - Lessons are well prepared with good attention to safety.
 - Pupils show positive attitudes to learning.
 - Staff confidence is growing.
 - Pupils' ability to evaluate and modify their work is the weaker aspect of design and technology.
127. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards of attainment in design and technology are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory gains in their learning with some pupils in a Year 2 class making very good progress in some lessons. Over the last two years the school has made good strides forward.
128. Every class displays pupils' work in design and technology. A feature of much of this work is the good development of the process of designing and making, although the process of evaluating is not as well developed in most classes. In Years 1 and 2 there is a good emphasis on hygiene as pupils design and make a fruit cocktail. Not all pupils in Year 1 are sure about the difference between fruits and vegetables. The good attention to subject specific vocabulary contributes effectively to literacy skills. Pupils enjoy designing and making a range of puppets including sock, stick and glove puppets. Pupils in a Year 2 class make very good progress in this lesson, having used sketch books well to design their puppet they generate lots of ideas, labelling their designs and using glue, sewing needles and papier mâché confidently. The very good teaching in this class helps pupils to evaluate and modify their work. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in this lesson, because they are well motivated and well supported. Where pupils are given the opportunity to take the lead in creating designs and making objects, personal development is enhanced.
129. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 investigate packaging. In Year 4, there is a good focus on key vocabulary, such as 'recyclable' and 're-usable'. In a Year 3 lesson pupils were introduced to pneumatic systems, designing a moving monster. They drew and labelled diagrams, but their evaluation skills were weak. Poor presentation skills by some pupils when completing investigation charts also hampered progress.
130. By the end of Year 6, pupils can generate and develop their own ideas and are able to work from plans well. They use a selection of tools and materials with some accuracy and are beginning to develop more purposeful evaluation of their own products. For example, they could comment on the impact of an offset hole cam as a toy vehicle. 'This really affected the movement. Its movement became more bumpy'. In designing fairground rides they discuss the way the movement works and make diagrams of their

models. They use construction kits effectively to test their ideas. Pupils show understanding of how a pulley works. Their skills in evaluating show improvement in Year 6.

131. Teaching is satisfactory overall with very good teaching observed in a Year 2 class. The pace in Year 3 is pedestrian. Tasks are usually carefully planned and appropriately resourced, although sometimes resources are limited and this affects the quality of learning. Most teachers have a secure understanding of the subject but the weakness for many is in developing skills in evaluation. The use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.
132. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by the subject leader whose confidence is growing as her own knowledge of the subject increases. The next step identified is the organisation of resources to ensure a more even distribution and access. In addition, sharper marking of work and better use of assessment information to inform planning, together with a greater focus on the evaluation process in design and technology will help to raise standards further.

GEOGRAPHY

- Both infant and junior pupils achieve average standards
 - All pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they receive targeted support.
 - Pupils enjoy geography because teachers present topics in an interesting and informative way
 - The quality of teaching and learning is not rigorously monitored and assessed. Consequently, no one has a sufficiently clear overview of standards achieved or progress made.
 - When pupils of different ages and abilities complete the same work, higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should because the work is too easy
 - Research and enquiry skills are not well enough developed
133. Standards are similar to those found in other schools at the end of the infants and the juniors. Pupils make satisfactory progress. In lessons where pupils with special educational needs receive targeted support, their progress is good. Pupils receive a worthwhile learning experience and enjoy the subject because teachers present topics in an interesting and informative way. There is sound use of ICT to support learning in geography.
 134. Guidelines for teaching geography provide a secure basis for a two-yearly cycle of work. Well structured topics ensure balanced coverage of the geography curriculum. However, pupils of different ages and abilities often complete exactly the same work. This means that older pupils do not receive work at a mature enough level and higher attaining pupils do not make progress in line with their ability, because the work is too easy. Although there are many good examples of individual teachers promoting enquiry and research well, the current scheme does not ensure that skills develop in a cohesive, systematic way.
 135. By the end of the infants, pupils show sound basic knowledge of the local area. They produce good quality plans of the infant school layout. They develop ICT skills well as they construct computer generated routes to school and use numeracy skills effectively to produce graphs of their journeys. Work is often appropriately linked to other subjects. Year 2 pupils demonstrated a sound understanding of locations in their 'World in a Shopping basket' topic, because the link with design and technology work on food

consolidated learning well. Pupils identified continents correctly and demonstrated a simple basic knowledge of countries such as Sri Lanka. Although written work does not contain the same richness of vocabulary as that of older pupils, infant classes develop literacy skills adequately in their work. However, there is not enough evidence of pupils selecting information themselves or developing independent research skills.

136. Pupils sustain an enjoyment of the subject throughout the junior school. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were disappointed at the end of their lesson, because they were so engrossed in learning about Kenya and wanted to continue. By Year 6, pupils have made sound progress in the development of map-work skills. They are motivated by practical activities and want to contribute in discussion. They use precise vocabulary in their answers and are well informed about topics such as mountain ranges. They have a good understanding of contours, for example. It is obvious that the recent visit from a mountaineer who had climbed Mount Everest had stimulated great interest and resulted in a good standard of work.
137. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Although no lessons were observed in the infants, examples of previous work show that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is consistent and teachers' evaluations of topics provide valuable insight into the progress of individual pupils and the strengths and weaknesses of lessons. In the juniors, most of the lessons observed were good and one was unsatisfactory due to class control problems. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher promoted literacy skills well during discussion about housing in Kenya. The well-chosen activity made a good contribution to their cultural awareness too. Pupils worked co-operatively in pairs and there was a feeling of mutual respect. In an equally good Year 5 lesson on the same topic, questioning was searching, and pupils responded with very mature answers. In the sample of books presented by the school it was clear that there are inconsistent expectations held between teachers about the quality of recorded work and the amount done. This is particularly the case in Year 3.
138. The subject leader is clear about the future development of the subject and provides effective leadership. Resources are improving, although many still need supplementing and updating. The school has recently developed a sensory garden and is focusing more on environmental issues in preparation for obtaining Eco School accreditation. Priorities for development relate accurately to areas in most need. The subject leader is aware of the need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to gain better insight into standards achieved and simple but effective assessment sheets to measure rates of progress are in hand.

HISTORY

- Pupils achieve average standards by the ages of seven and eleven.
 - Overuse of worksheets limits the progress of pupils in some classes.
 - Pupils' do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their enquiry skills.
 - The curriculum is supported by a good programme of visits to place of interest to provide valuable first hand experiences for pupils.
 - ICT could be used more to develop pupils' research skills.
139. By the age of seven and 11, pupils achieve standards in line with the national average. Pupils across the school make sound progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of history, but in some junior year groups the reliance on worksheets diminishes the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills and to communicate their ideas.
140. Pupils enjoy history and listen with keen interest during lessons. Most pupils apply themselves well to their tasks, and help each when working in pairs or small groups. The sound standard of teaching is characterised by good management of pupils and effective use of the support staff that enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress in their learning of history. Questions are used well to ascertain the level of pupils' learning. Teachers make lessons stimulating through the use of interesting teaching methods and activities. In the infants, for example, as part of their study of Mother Teresa, the teacher invited into school a nun from the Dominican Order to tell the pupils about her role. The older junior pupils visit Shugborough Hall and dress in Victorian servants' costumes and carry out their duties through role-play in the scullery and kitchen. Visits feature well during the school year and contribute well to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other periods of history, as well as to their cultural development.
141. In the infants, pupils learn about famous people. They enjoy drawing a portrait of Guy Fawkes, and use colours effectively to show a bonfire and firework celebration of 5th November. The higher attainers write brief descriptions about the event. Florence Nightingale's life is recorded in a range of written activities and pictures, with links to geography showing a map and the route she took from London to Scutari in the Crimea. They make comparisons with nurses then and now, describing their dress. The life of Mary Seacole is told in pictures. The experiences they have ensure they gain an understanding of some of the prominent people in the past who made a significant contribution to society at that time.
142. In the lower junior classes, pupils study different periods of British history, including early invaders and settlers, such as the Vikings and the Romans. Pupils learn about Roman civilisation, through the study of mosaics, and writing about life in Britain from the Roman point of view. In some classes, there is an over emphasis on the use of worksheets that often require only brief answers from pupils. In other classes, pupils are provided with greater opportunities to express their own ideas and to demonstrate their greater understanding of historical events. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study life in Victorian times, and the Second World War. Some particularly enthusiastic pupils talk to their grandparents to get first hand information. The quality of their written work is generally of a reasonable standard with work set out neatly. Much of pupils' written work is obtained from secondary sources, whilst occasionally pupils use their own creativity to write empathetically about life in those times. This demonstrates that their knowledge and understanding of the period is developing well. Further opportunities to use literacy skills occur through the writing of letters to the prime minister of the day to protest about

the employment of young children in factories, and to ask for social reform. Such opportunities make a very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

143. The curriculum is well planned and provides a rich diet of experiences. There is an adequate supply of appropriate and well-organised resources that support learning well. The two-year programme ensures that all pupils have equal access to the history curriculum. ICT is beginning to be used to support learning, but more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to enable them to develop their research and enquiry skills further still. Curriculum planning does not take full account of the needs of the higher attaining pupils so that their skills knowledge and understanding can be extended further.
144. The experienced subject leader leads and manages the subject soundly. Her monitoring activities have given her a clear overview of the standards of teaching and learning, and she is aware of the next steps to be taken to make improvements in standards. Assessment is in need of more enhancement. She provides good support for her colleagues and her aim is to raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- ICT is improving well.
 - Standards are average across the school and progress is satisfactory.
 - Teaching and learning are sound.
 - Assessment requires enhancement so that the work is matched appropriately to needs, especially for the higher attaining pupils.
 - ICT is led and managed well.
145. Much work has been devoted to strengthening the provision for ICT over the last two years and the subject has clearly improved well in this time. Standards are average across all strands of the subject. This is because pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about aspects such as computer control and monitoring, data handling and word processing. Improved resources for control and monitoring have led to improved standards in this strand and the school anticipates, and inspectors agree, that enhanced Internet access has the clear potential to result in even better standards in the communications aspect in the future. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' past work show that sound progress is made in building skills and knowledge across the school, though the use of ICT to enhance standards in other subjects is inconsistent. In art and design and geography, for example, there is good evidence of such use of ICT, but there is less evidence of this in literacy and history than in many schools.
146. Pupils have good attitudes towards ICT and their behaviour is good too. Unlike some subjects, the work in ICT is helping to build pupils' independence and responsibility well. This is because the work is frequently collaborative and investigational in nature. Because pupils have ample opportunity to work together, their social and moral education is promoted well.
147. The teaching of ICT, as demonstrated by the school's monitoring, has improved steadily over the past two years. It is now satisfactory overall with some strengths emerging. This is especially due to a good programme of staff development, including an effective programme of training. Teachers have increasing confidence in the subject and are keen to master new elements, as improved resources become available. This

was particularly noticeable in a Year 5 lesson on data logging. In this lesson, despite some technical hitches, the teacher made effective use of a temperature sensor and monitoring software. This stimulated the pupils to think deeply about changes in room temperature after the windows were opened and about the effect that the ambient temperature in the room had on a beaker of cooling water. Some quite sophisticated scientific reasoning was promoted in this lesson and the pupils left the session enthusiastic to monitor other processes over longer time intervals in succeeding lessons.

148. Most teaching is brisk, confident and shows a well-balanced mix of methods. The management of pupils is good and support staff give valuable support to the pupils they work with. All this leads to sound learning, and in turn, to satisfactory progress through the school. The focus on skills and knowledge development is good in lessons, though sometimes the higher attaining pupils do not complete work that is much in advance of that produced by other pupils. In addition, pupils do not have as much time to evaluate their own work, though a good example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson. This is practice that could be usefully shared.
149. The subject is well led. The subject leader has good insights into what needs improvement and pursues these determinedly. She is also influential in supporting, advising and monitoring the work of her colleagues. She has introduced changes to the curriculum and teaching that well reflect the rapidly changing nature of ICT. She has worked to improve assessment and knows that this is a continuing priority for the subject to ensure that the work is aimed carefully at the needs of individual pupils, whatever their capability or background. The subject leader anticipates the opening of a much bigger ICT suite with enhanced resources with relish and is fully ready to broaden the curriculum in terms of the communication strand once this is achieved. The subject is in very capable hands and the prospects for future improvement are bright.

MUSIC

- Infant and junior pupils achieve average standards
 - Instrumental tuition is of high quality and pupils who play musical instruments reach above average, and sometimes well above average, standards
 - All pupils have the opportunity to participate in school concerts and productions
 - Lengthy lessons in the subject where some teachers have least expertise do not ensure the best provision for pupils or the most effective use of time
 - Class lessons do not always provide enough challenge for higher attaining pupils
 - Multi-cultural provision needs further development
150. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. Music is an important part of school life for many pupils. The uptake of instrumental tuition is good and pupils who learn musical instruments receive tuition of high quality, enabling them to reach high standards. Some older pupils learn an impressive range between them of instruments, including recorder, guitar, cello, double bass, oboe, clarinet, flute, trombone, French horn and cornet. The school has a strong commitment towards ensuring equal opportunity for all and provides tuition free of charge. The orchestra develops pupils' ability to work as a group very effectively. Orchestra practice is an important social occasion that provides a good quality learning experience. Singing in acts of collective worship is an enjoyable occasion when pupils display a strong sense of community.
 151. All pupils have many opportunities to participate in productions and school concerts. These occasions develop pupils' performing skills well. Pupils also have experience of

a good range of visitors, such as Key Strings and a recent visit from a member of the Hallé orchestra, that have tangible positive impact on learning.

152. By Year 2, pupils know an adequate range of songs. They sing 'The Grand Old Duke of York' with great enthusiasm and develop an understanding of 'tempo'. They handle instruments with respect and choose appropriate combinations when trying to create a particular musical effect in their composition work. However, listening skills are not as strongly developed, because pupils have not had much experience of listening to music in a focused way. Whilst listening to an extract from 'Romeo and Juliet' many younger pupils were embarrassed and talked rather than listened. By contrast, pupils listen well to music as they enter the hall for collective worship.
153. By the time pupils reach Year 6, many have a mature approach. Both boys and girls retain their enthusiasm for the subject. They refine and improve their work, and develop an appropriate level of understanding of harmony. In one lesson, older pupils used good musical terminology in their answers. Instrumentalists talked about 'octaves' and 'pitch', as they tried to find discordant sounds. Even less musically able pupils were clear in their preferences, as they accurately described the sounds they heard. However, pupils' progress relates very closely to the quality of teaching. In the last two years, class teachers have become responsible for teaching music previously class taught by a specialist. Some teachers have good musical expertise, whilst others struggle to provide a worthwhile experience. Consequently the rate of progress is inconsistent and pupils do not develop skills in any systematic way.
154. Lesson plans, provided by the subject leader, give effective support for non-specialist class teachers in ensuring a balanced coverage of the music curriculum. However, not all teachers know the standards pupils can and should achieve. In the small number of lessons observed, the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors, where there is more expertise. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was also observed. In a good Year 6 lesson, activities were impressively well organised. Every pupil had a glockenspiel. The teacher was an accomplished practitioner who was able to answer the most demanding questions as pupils attempted to play first a scale and then a group of notes. The room was a hive of animated activity and pupils made good progress with a difficult topic. By contrast, in less successful lessons, teachers do not have enough security with the subject to provide pupils with a sustained level of work that matches their ability. Pupils are expected to listen to extracts of music for excessively long periods and behaviour management starts to become a problem when pupils are bored. There is often considerable difference between the quality of teaching in extra curricular activities and class lessons.
155. The school has a small range of computer programs to support composition work. Tape recorders, compact disc players and keyboards are used regularly to enhance learning. The school is aware that more work remains to be done to ensure ICT makes a stronger contribution to pupils' learning. Literacy skills are developed well through performances, but there is a recognised need to develop numeracy skills further. Music provides a good input to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
156. The school is fortunate to have its own music room. It has a good range of easily accessible instruments, although there are not enough instruments from other cultures. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. She gives good informal support to colleagues. She has not been allocated time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and music does not yet have a formal assessment structure.

Consequently, no one has a sufficiently clear overview of the standards pupils achieve or the differences in quality between class teaching and other provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Standards of attainment in PE are average at ages seven and 11.
 - Swimming a strength of the school.
 - Pupils experience an appropriate range of activities.
 - Teachers' planning and record keeping is effective.
 - The use of outside agencies to support teaching is a good feature.
157. On the basis of the few lessons observed, discussion with staff and scrutiny of records, standards for seven and 11 year olds in physical education are average. Swimming is a strength of the school. Records show that all last year's Year 6 pupils were able to swim at least a width of the swimming pool at the local secondary school and, in the current year, sixty children have gained swimming awards for succeeding in swimming at least the expected standards for their age. In a Year 2 lesson observed at the pool children were working with great confidence and making good progress. More than a third of the class swam a length unaided. This is a good level of achievement. Systems to ensure pupils' safety were good. Parents and other helpers who had accompanied the pupils to the pool were usefully sited to provide additional sets of eyes. Behaviour at the pool is very good and teaching is good. The work of the swimming instructress in particular is of a high standard.
158. There is no evidence of any pupils missing out on the broad range of physical activities that the school offers. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, have good opportunities to gain success and achieve well. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
159. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities based on national guidelines. Scrutiny of planning documents and other materials show that the full range of activities including dance and games receive appropriate attention and teaching time. Through successful planning teaching ensures that each lesson builds on the skills learned in previous lessons. Planning identifies learning objectives, teaching activities, assessment opportunities and resources. This is good practice. Evaluation of individual lessons is useful and is an aspect ready for further development.
160. The quality of gymnastics lessons is satisfactory. Teaching and learning at Year 1 is building on the good start established in the Foundation Stage. However, in the limited amount of work seen, teacher challenge and pupil response would benefit from moving up a gear particularly for the more able pupils. Pupils respond well in activities involving mirroring the work of a partner. Effective use is made of demonstration and encouragement with positive management and control of pupils. Standards of performance in tasks involving balancing, changing pace and direction are in line with those expected for age.
161. Good use is made of visitors to enhance teaching and generate interest in physical education. Currently members of Stoke City Football Club provide coaching during games lessons to Year 4 boys and girls and have previously worked with Year 5 and Year 6. Rugby development officers are at present working with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils for a four-week block of time. The school also employs a dance tutor who works

with different year groups throughout the school. This specialist expertise enriches the provision that the school offers.

162. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has good subject knowledge, and ensures that resources are adequate to support the curriculum. The opening of the new sports centre will provide even greater opportunities for development of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Standards are average through the school and pupils make sound progress.
 - Written work is not as well developed as it might be.
 - Pupils like religious education and respond well in lessons.
 - Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
 - The curriculum is good and promotes learning *from* religion as much as learning *about* religion.
 - Religious education is managed successfully.
163. Standards in religious education are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils learn as much *from* religion as they do *about* religion because the curriculum is well balanced and this is a strength. In general, pupils develop good knowledge of religious education topics, though written work does not always show the same good standards. In some of the work in Year 6, for example, spelling mistakes, weak grammar and untidy presentation were evident. Additionally, written work is not always of great length and this does not enable pupils to record their knowledge and thoughts effectively enough. Despite this, pupils make sound progress in religious education through the school.
164. Pupils respond well to religious education. Behaviour is good and relationships are very well developed. Pupils are interested in their tasks, concentrate well and work productively. The development of the skills of independence and responsibility when working could be promoted more. Many of the tasks completed are exactly the same for all pupils and written work depends on the outline provided by the teacher. There is not a great deal of evidence that pupils research topics for themselves and the use of ICT is inconsistent.
165. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory in all years. Planning could show more consistently the learning outcomes expected of the higher attainers and marking could be more informative as to what the pupil needs to do next to improve. This means that pupils are not always as well informed about how their learning is progressing as they might be. However, the management of pupils is good and support staff work effectively to help their pupils make steady progress.
166. The curriculum is of the required breadth and balanced and is carefully matched to the locally agreed syllabus. There is appropriate focus on other major religions and there are some good resources to help pupils in their studies of Judaism and Islam. The school is looking to develop its programme of visits to different places of worship and to invite visiting speakers from other faiths to share their experiences with the pupils in school. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education and its satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development will be enhanced as the anticipated programme of visits and visitors is implemented.
167. The subject leader manages religious education with conviction. She has a growing awareness of standards and progress throughout the school, though the programme of

monitoring and evaluation is not as focused as sharply on standards and progress as it might be. Assessment is being developed soundly. The subject leader has firm plans to make assessment an even more successful tool in promoting progress. She has worked hard to build a good resource bank for the subject and is working successfully to prepare the way for the introduction of the new syllabus in a year's time.