

INSPECTION REPORT

MATCHBOROUGH FIRST SCHOOL

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 132821

Headteacher: Mr W Ivory

Reporting inspector: Sheelagh Barnes
16249

Dates of inspection: 31 March - 3 April 2003

Inspection number: 249013

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	East Site Dilwyn Close Matchborough Redditch
Postcode:	B96 0BU
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Wright
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	Sheelagh Barnes	Registered inspector	Mathematics Foundation stage Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18201	Margaret Danby	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Music	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21910	Gordon Longton	Team inspector	English Geography History	
22821	Linda Wolstencroft	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Matchborough First School was formed in 2001 by the amalgamation of Icknield and Claybrook first schools. It is situated in the Matchborough area of Redditch and currently occupies the two sites of the original two schools, which are approximately three miles apart by road. This situation has remained the same for the best part of two years as the school awaits completion of a new building. This is a longer time than originally predicted and has caused some difficulties to forging one whole school ethos as temporary measures have had to be maintained for a longer period than anticipated. There are reception aged children and classes for pupils from Year 1 to Year 4 on both sites and a nursery on one site. Three hundred and twenty-six boys and girls of predominantly white ethnic backgrounds from homes around the two schools attend until they are ready to start in the local middle school in Year 5. Most children have attended one of a number of pre school facilities, including the on-site nursery. Children transfer to one of the three reception classes in the September of the year following their fourth birthday. The school has a specialist Speech and Language Unit for pupils with these particular needs. Attainment on entry to school currently covers the full range, but overall is slightly below that expected nationally. However, the attainment of a significant majority of older pupils who joined the school when it opened in 2001, was significantly below average in all three core areas of the curriculum of English, mathematics and science. Evidence points to considerable previous under achievement by a large proportion of pupils of all levels of prior attainment. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than in most schools at just over two per cent. Just over a fifth of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average at just over fourteen per cent. However the proportion of pupils with statements of special needs is above the average at over two per cent. These needs are for speech and language difficulties in the majority of cases.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Due to the good quality of leadership and management by the head teacher and his deputy, appropriate areas for improvement have been identified in the school development plan and standards, which are too low in some subjects, are already beginning to rise. This is particularly the case in English which has been the focus of improvement. The difficulties of forming one whole school ethos in all aspects of school life and developing co-ordinators' roles have been compounded by delays in moving to one site. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in the Foundation Stage it is good. This is as a result of the good leadership of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator and the hard work of her team who all work to common goals. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher and deputy provide clear vision for the raising of standards and the forging of one whole school ethos. Their leadership is good and they work together well as a team.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good, due to the good leadership and management of that area of the school and the hard work of all members of the early year's team.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and the links between home and school are good.
- Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the Language Unit and in the mainstream classes and, as a result, these pupils make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are good. Teachers manage pupils well and pupils behave well as a result.

What could be improved

- Standards in speaking and writing throughout the school and information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 to 4 are too low. Standards in mathematics and science are too low at the end of Year 2.
- The roles of key stage co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators are not all sufficiently well defined and developed to raise standards in their areas of responsibility.
- While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, there is significant and unacceptable variation between classes in each year group.
- There is no whole school system for assessing and tracking the progress pupils make in the non-core subjects of the curriculum. This prevents co-ordinators from having accurate knowledge of standards throughout the school in their subject.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Some of these have already been identified in the school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There is no previous report to refer to as this is a new school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	N/A	N/A	E	D
Writing	N/A	N/A	E	D
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	D

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

As can be seen from the table above, the standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national end of key stage tests in 2002 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were below the average for similar schools based upon eligibility for free school meals. The attainment of many of the older pupils on entry to the school when it was formed in 2001, was well below average in all three core areas of English, science and mathematics. Currently standards are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in speaking and writing and ICT and below average in mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. Standards are in line with expected standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 4. In listening, reading, design and technology, art and design, music, geography, physical education and religious education standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Girls often achieve better than boys in reading, in line with national trends, and the school plans to develop the range of reading materials to appeal more to boys in order to try to improve their achievements. In history, standards are above those normally found at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The progress pupils make overall throughout the infant and junior classes is satisfactory. However, there is overall variation of achievement between classes in the different year groups; in some classes the pupils' achievements are good due to the consistently good teaching they receive. Progress in mathematics and English is currently good overall. It is good in the junior classes in particular. This is largely due to the focus the school has placed on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards in these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, both in the unit and in the main stream school, due to the good quality of the support they receive. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress and achieve in line with their peers. Foundation Stage children in the nursery and three reception classes make good progress overall in all six areas of the curriculum for young children and their achievements are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They are interested in lessons and join enthusiastically in all activities in and out of the classroom.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and only fail to do so when teaching is not good enough.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils are given suitable opportunities for their personal development and to understand the impact their actions may have on others.
Attendance	Attendance is below average and this is unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	good	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in the infant and junior classes overall and good in the Foundation Stage. However there is significant variation in the quality of teaching in the infant and junior classes within year groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall for Years 1 to 4, although there is greater consistency in the quality and slightly higher overall standards in Years 3 and 4. The school has recently developed a policy for teaching and learning, but this is not yet being consistently applied in all classes. In the reception classes and in the nursery, teachers and support staff work together to one shared set of aims for the development of young children. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. During the week of inspection the quality of teaching in the school ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory, but it was mainly satisfactory. However, in some classes the quality was consistently good. In the main, the quality of teaching of mathematics and English is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the junior classes. As a result boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups are making good gains in literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 4. A particular strength of teaching throughout the school is in the teachers' management of pupils. As a result pupils generally pay attention and behave well in lessons. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, both in the unit and in the mainstream classes. Teachers and support assistants ensure that these pupils make good progress towards their learning targets. Teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall and these pupils achieve in line with their peers in the various areas of the curriculum. The teaching of history is good and pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good gains in their learning in the subject to attain standards above those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Teaching in information and communication technology is a weakness, and although on occasion lessons are of extremely high quality, this is rare, and overall standards are unsatisfactory in the subject in the infant and junior classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall in the infant and junior classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good in the unit and in the mainstream classes. As a result these pupils make good progress towards their learning goals.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall and they make progress in line with their peers in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and a strength of the school. The provision for their cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. There are very good systems for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. However, while systems for monitoring academic progress in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics in the infant and junior classes are good, they are not yet sufficiently well developed and used in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, the monitoring of overall standards throughout the school is difficult in some subjects.

The school has effective links with parents who, in the main, have very positive views of the school and its work. The quality of information provided for parents is good and they are given suitable opportunities to support their children in homework and at other times.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management by the head teacher and deputy are good. The leadership of the Foundation Stage by the co-ordinator is good and has led to good quality provision for young children and a consistent approach to teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes. The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. While the leadership of some other subjects, such as history and music is good, in many more it is only satisfactory. The leadership of information communication technology is unsatisfactory and standards in the subject are too low as a result.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects and governors play an appropriate part in school development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The evaluation of the school by the head teacher and deputy is clear-sighted and accurate. As a result, the areas highlighted for improvement in the school development plan are very appropriate.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is good and the principles of Best Value are effectively applied.

There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. Overall resources are satisfactory but there are differences in resources in some subjects between the two sites. Resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. While the two buildings are spacious, attractive and maintained to a high standard, they are inappropriate for the formation of one school and have had an inhibiting factor in the development of some aspects of management.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents say their children like school. • They feel that the quality of teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. • Parents say they are comfortable approaching the school with a query or a complaint. • The school expects pupils to work hard. • It helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority did not think that their child was given enough work to do at home.

Whilst the inspection agrees with the majority of the positive comments, the quality of teaching and learning and the provision of homework is satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of many of the older pupils on entry to the school, when it was formed in 2001, was well below average in all three core areas of English, science and mathematics. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national end of key stage tests in 2002 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were below the average for similar schools based upon eligibility for free school meals. Currently standards are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in speaking and writing and ICT and below average in mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. They are in line with expected standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 4. Progress in mathematics and English is good overall. It is good in the junior classes in particular. This is largely due to the focus the school has placed on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. In reading girls often achieve better than boys in line with national trends. The school is aware of this and has plans to enhance reading materials to appeal more to boys. However there are variations between standards achieved in particular aspects of mathematics in different classes which is due, in the main, to the different schemes of work they use. Teachers' confidence in the teaching of literacy skills results in greater consistency of standards in this subject. Targets have been set which are appropriately challenging and this is already beginning to raise standards. In science planning for the infant classes does not sufficiently challenge higher attaining pupils and this is the main reason standards are not as high as they should be.
2. In design and technology, art and design, music, geography, physical education and religious education pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In history standards are above those normally found at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is because the subject is well led and the quality of teaching is good. Work is effectively linked to other subjects, such as art and design. As a result, pupils are interested in the subject and remember what they have been taught.
3. The progress pupils make overall throughout the infant and junior classes is satisfactory. However there is variation between classes in the different year groups and in some classes the pupils' achievements are good overall due to the consistently good teaching they receive, while in others teaching and learning are only satisfactory, which leads to only satisfactory progress.
4. The progress that children in the nursery and the three reception classes make is good overall. There is a consistency of approach and good teaching in all classes for the Foundation Stage, which results in children being given a good start to their formal education and developing good attitudes to school and to their learning.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, both in the unit and in the main stream school, due to the good quality of the support they receive. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers. Foundation Stage children in the nursery and three reception classes make good progress overall in all six areas of the curriculum for young children.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The pupils' attitudes to their school, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all good, and these positive aspects all contribute significantly towards the success of their learning. Such outcomes are also a tribute to the successful way that the school deals with its spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching.
7. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in their lessons. This was very clear, when talking to children from all classes. They said that they liked their teachers and usually found the lessons interesting. The pupils concentrate well and as a result come up with some very good answers. This was demonstrated in a reception class, numeracy lesson, on money. The children enjoyed the lesson and worked hard. Almost without exception the children recognised every coin, at the end of the lesson. However, they did have trouble with the £2 coin which most thought was a foreign one put in by the teacher as a joke.

8. Behaviour in lessons is good and in those lessons where management and discipline are well applied and the content is stimulating it is often very good. Conversely, where the pace and management fall away behaviour can become a problem, although rarely becoming completely unsatisfactory. In and around the corridors, going to physical education or assemblies, the pupils conduct themselves well. At lunch and playtimes they sit or play well together in an orderly manner. No semblance of bullying, whatsoever, was witnessed during the whole inspection. Most pupils are very well aware that if you initiate an action against someone else, more often than not they will retaliate, setting up a chain reaction. They understand well that not everyone has the same values on life or a similar upbringing, even within their own school. The children are proud of their school and really enjoy opening doors ahead of visitors or asking if they like the school. They are mostly very outspoken but polite. The school is a tidy place and during the inspection no evidence of graffiti, litter or vandalism was witnessed. The school has had five exclusions, within the twelve months preceding the inspection. These involved three pupils, one of whom was eventually permanently excluded.
9. Although the school does not as yet have a pupils' council, which would allow pupils to take part in decisions about school life, they do show satisfactory initiative and personal responsibility. Attendance and dinner registers are promptly taken to and collected from the office twice daily. In the playground several instances were seen of older pupils looking after the younger ones. Specially picked helpers in classes, do a very efficient job of putting out and collecting in resources and the litter and library helpers are all volunteers. One other specific job for which there is never any lack of helpers is serving in the fruit and vegetable stall at break time.
10. The pupils get on well together. They work well in teams or pairs. For example in a physical educational lesson for a Year 1 and Year 2 class, the pupils had to make shapes in pairs, such as making bridges under which the other partner could crawl. The liaison and consequent final result was quite mature as was the automatic applause from their watching classmates. The relationship between adults and children in the school is also good. Teachers know the pupils well whilst the children know to whom they can always turn for emotional or practical support.
11. Attendance at the school is currently below the national average for this type of school and therefore unsatisfactory. The school does have pupils who, due to disabilities, are very frequently in hospital. Also, previous to last Christmas almost half of the school was absent due to a severe flu epidemic. However, most pupils come to school and into classes on time and the majority of lessons do commence promptly. The school has no long-term absentees unaccounted for.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory overall in the infant and junior classes and good overall in the Foundation Stage. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the infant and junior classes and while teaching in some classes is consistently good, in others in the same year group it is only satisfactory. This is a weakness and leads to variation in standards in subjects between classes in the same year. There is greater consistency in the teaching of literacy due, in the main to the recent focus for development this area of the curriculum has had. On occasion very good or even excellent teaching occurs, but also teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory and leads to pupils making insufficient gains in their learning.
13. Teaching in the nursery and the three reception classes is of consistently high quality and is good overall. As a result children in these classes learn effectively. The four teachers and support staff have a shared commitment to the teaching of young children by providing them with as many practical and exciting activities as possible, both indoors and outside in all six areas of the curriculum for Foundation Stage. Routines are well established and children respond well. For example in a lesson finding "hidden numbers" for nursery children there was a good balance between new and exciting activities, such as searching the playground for numbers put there by the nursery nurse, and established routines, such as finding and putting on coats and lining up at the door. The lessons are planned well to ensure that there is full equality of access to each activity by all boys and girls, irrespective of prior attainment or preferred spoken language. The teaching in these classes appropriately relies on giving pupils many opportunities to learn the same thing in a variety of ways, such as forming letters in sand and flour as well as writing them in chalk and pencil. As a result, children all make equally good gains in their learning.

14. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and leads to them making good progress towards their learning targets. Information in detail is kept in the school's special educational needs file. Pupils are identified as soon as possible in the nursery or the reception classes. Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) are written by the class teacher and are checked by the special needs co-ordinator. Pupils on "school action plus" are assessed by the co-ordinator who decides what type of assistance is required. For example, the behaviour support teacher is visiting the school and is working effectively with teachers in Year 3. Teachers share targets with pupils. Short steps planned to help pupils realise that progress is being made. Class teachers work very hard, to good effect, with special educational needs pupils and receive very good help from support staff.
15. Teaching is satisfactory overall for Years 1 to 4, although there is greater consistency in the quality and slightly higher overall standards in Years 3 and 4. Teaching of history is good throughout the school and leads to pupils in infant and junior classes making good gains in their learning irrespective of their prior attainment. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall; it is satisfactory in the infant classes and broadly good in the junior classes. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall in the junior classes and pupils from all groups make good progress as a result. Teaching in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory throughout the school and as a result progress is slower than it should be. This is in the main due to teachers' lack of confidence and expertise in the subject. However, individual lessons are, on occasion, of a higher standard, depending on the subject knowledge of individual teachers. Teaching in all other subjects is satisfactory overall but there is great variation in the quality of teaching between classes within the same year group. The head teacher and deputy are aware of these differences and support and extra training have been undertaken and continue in an attempt to raise the quality overall.
16. A consistent strength of the teaching throughout the school is in the management of pupils and the appropriately high expectations that teachers have of pupils' response. As a result, pupils in most cases are well behaved and apply themselves to their lessons with concentration. For example, in a lesson for reception children "orienteeing" around the school field, the teacher had planned the route well. Her good questioning ensured that all children were fully occupied and their attention was drawn to a wide range of plants and animals. As a result, they maintained their interest throughout the whole walk, their behaviour was good and they gained a lot from the activity.

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

17. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. All National Curriculum requirements are met and there is appropriate provision for religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils are given a satisfactory range of relevant and worthwhile learning opportunities enabling them to achieve well in the Foundation Stage and make steady progress overall in Years 1 to 4.
18. The school is working hard under difficult circumstances to develop a whole school approach to curriculum development. This has been more successfully achieved in priority areas such as literacy where standards can be seen to have improved. The national frameworks for numeracy and literacy have been helpful bringing about a cohesive structure to planning. National subject guidance is being adapted to support planning in most subjects so that pupils' knowledge and skills can be built up systematically. However this is not yet the case in all subjects. In science, for example, the approaches to planning are fragmented and result in too little challenge being built in to some aspects, such as life processes, which are not dealt with in sufficient depth in Years 1 and 2. This is holding back standards.
19. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' interests in the arts. This is supported well by activities such as "Arts Week" and through visiting artists who work with pupils in dance, music, sculpture and poetry writing. Provision for information and communications technology is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not helped to develop their computer skills at a fast enough pace and consequently, overall standards are below expectations in this area.
20. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The scheme of work covers all aspects of the curriculum for young children in sufficient depth. The consistency of planning combined with a full commitment to the aims for the Foundation Stage by all staff result in equality of experience for

children in the nursery and three reception classes, regardless of gender, prior attainment and original language.

21. Provision for pupils who are on the school's register for special educational needs is good. It is managed efficiently and all pupils with special educational needs, in the unit and in main school, are given the same opportunities as other pupils to take part in every aspect of school life.

22. The curriculum is enriched through a range of visits to places of interest such as Field farm house, Forge Mill and Harvington Hall and by the residential visit for pupils in Year 4. The youngest pupils visit a teddy bear museum. Visitors to school bring history lessons to life, for example by modelling life in Roman and Viking times. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have opportunities to further their sporting interests during clubs arranged after school but there is no provision currently for pupils below Year 3. The study support group for Year 4 pupils, which meets weekly to work on an environmental project linked to the school's move to a new site has a beneficial effect on pupils' understanding of design issues.
23. The school has fully embraced the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of the pupils. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in reading and writing. Additional literacy support is provided for pupils where it is needed. Number skills are taught satisfactorily overall and in the older classes pupils are given good opportunities in some classes to develop their skills in problem solving. The school has plans to focus on a review of the numeracy strategy in the forthcoming year.
24. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This includes appropriate sex education and teaching about the harmful effects of some medicines and drugs. Through circle times when whole class discussion takes place, pupils widen their understanding of the need to stay healthy and of the importance of making the right decisions. The draft policy aims to provide more fully for pupils' personal development, including citizenship, once it has been finalised by the school's governing body.
25. The school is developing good links with the community and with partner institutions. Pupils benefit from the visits made by the community police officer who talks to them about safety. There are some good links with local clergy resulting in their participation in school assemblies. The head teacher has a business partnership link with a manager in industry. This has led to some management training for governors and some teachers. A local football club also provides soccer coaching sessions for pupils in Year 3 and 4.
26. Matchborough nursery and reception staff meet termly with staff from local private nurseries to share ideas and help plan the smooth transfer of pupils between stages of their education. Similar good links are established with the middle and high schools to discuss curriculum developments in mathematics, literacy and special educational needs as well as to share resources. For example, the school recently staged a performance of "Joseph" in the high school's theatre, giving pupils a more exciting theatrical experience.
27. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and contributes well to the caring, respectful and inclusive ethos that pervades the school. Its provision for cultural development is satisfactory. There is no previous inspection report against which to measure the school's improvement in these aspects of pupils' personal development, but in the eighteen months since the school was established, it has succeeded in embedding effective practices in the life of the school, both in and out of lessons.
28. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, with many opportunities for pupils to develop self-awareness and esteem. Teachers encourage and value pupils' contributions in lessons and assemblies and this helps to give them confidence to voice their opinions. In timetabled personal, social and health education lessons, pupils participate in discussions that help them to consider feelings, emotions and things that are special to them or concern them. Pupils have good opportunities to consider different values and beliefs and how they effect people's lives, as was observed in lessons and assemblies in which aspects of the Easter Story were taught.
29. The provision for moral development is good and is shown in the consistent moral codes promoted throughout the school. Teachers provide good role models of moral behaviour and make clear their high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They show that they value pupils by ensuring that all have an equal opportunity to take part in all activities. They nurture respect for people and things through the good relationships they form with pupils and the care they take in the presentation of their classrooms. They create an open and safe environment for pupils to discuss moral issues, such as the behaviour of people during the capture, trial and crucifixion of Jesus, and pupils' own expectations and aspirations for behaviour within the classroom. Public recognition is given to pupils who try hard to behave well, to be helpful to others and to work hard, such as inclusion in the "Golden Book", on the "Tree of Considerate People" or being allowed to wear a "Whizz Kid of the Week" badge.

30. Provision for social development is good. The staff work hard to promote social inclusion and prevent racial or anti-social behaviour. Opportunities are used well for pupils who attend the unit to mix with pupils in mainstream classes during some lessons, play times and assemblies. Pupils from different cultural heritages, learning English as an additional language or who have special educational needs are fully included and this ensures that they feel an integral part of the school community. The school is determined to create one school community despite the difficulties of operating on two separate sites and has succeeded in establishing a consistent approach to social development. Teachers involve pupils in developing rules for classroom behaviour and reinforce them well during lessons. They effectively promote personal responsibility, co-operation, tolerance of other people's ideas and the importance of good relationships. As a consequence, pupils work and play well together. Most extra-curricular activities involve pupils from both sites and visits, visitors and special events, such as the annual music festival and the mini Commonwealth Games, provide additional opportunity for them to meet each other and to participate in wider community life. A residential course for Year 4 pupils at the Malvern Outdoor Education Centre provides further good opportunities for their personal and social development.
31. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. During "Arts Week" and through visits, visitors and community events at other times, pupils participate with artists, writers and musicians in a range of cultural activities. They are given opportunities to explore their own culture through experience of literature, music, art and crafts in lessons. Opportunities to broaden their appreciation of different cultures is more limited, but does feature, for example, in work on Africa in geography, Hinduism in religious education and the range of music and stories covered in assemblies. Whilst the school ensures that pupils from other cultural heritages are valued, opportunities for pupils to learn about the attitudes, values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in British society today are only satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. These procedures are a significant strength of the school.
33. The head teacher is responsible for child protection. His deputy is also well experienced and the school in addition has a relevant governor with responsibility for this aspect of school life. Between them they ensure that the staff are well informed of pertinent issues. There is an up to date written policy and all relevant documentation is securely locked away. The school has very good liaison with the local social services and police protection team. The school's small number of "looked after" pupils is under the responsibility of the head of the language unit.
34. The head teacher is also responsible for health and safety. With the premises committee he ensures that sites are checked regularly. Risk assessments are held for each curricular area and for visits out of school. All fire, physical educational and portable electrical equipment are tested appropriately. Fire exercises are held every term and escape routes are accessible and well marked. The school has caring and efficient accident and medicine routines. There are comfortable medical rooms and trained first aid persons.
35. The school makes good use of outside professional help to enrich the curriculum. The police talk to the children about stranger danger and personal safety and the school nurse advises on health and hygiene. School lunches are brought in and served and consumed in hygienic conditions. The school has an up to date and appropriate Internet Safety Policy.
36. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Computerised register sheets are well maintained for each class and the school regularly analysis its figures. All parents are made very well aware of their relevant responsibilities. There is a tight lateness routine and very good use is made of the educational welfare officer to track repeated absences.
37. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and also for eliminating that of an oppressive nature. The school's written behaviour policy contains realistic awards and sanctions, which are proving effective. Each class also makes up its own rules. Class awards and treats are eagerly sought after by the children. Poor behaviour results in a range of sanctions including loss of "Golden Time" and, finally, exclusion.

38. The school has a written bullying policy of which all staff and parents are well aware. The children are given confidence to report incidents by constant reference in assembly, circle time and personal, social and health education lessons.
39. The provision for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development is also good. The staff know the children very well and with an open door policy for parents they can talk to them regularly on any problems or otherwise. Each child has a personal folder into which go special pieces of work certificates and reports. Personal development is also detailed to parents on the child's annual report.
40. The school supports its pupils very well and provides a caring, happy and secure environment within which their learning can flourish. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their work, and are helped to achieve the targets set in their Individual Education Plans. The teachers set clear targets for their work. This enables teachers and support assistants to focus on what the pupils need to do to improve further.
41. Since the school was formed there has been very good development in the effectiveness of the school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics and science.
42. In Years 1 to 4, the school's systems for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance are now good in English and mathematics. In order to improve standards in literacy and numeracy, the school has focused on developing assessment in these subjects. A range of tests is regularly conducted and recorded. The school analyses this information well to identify where improvements are needed and to target individuals and groups of pupils. There are appropriate procedures in place to ensure that pupils entering the school at different stages during the year are assessed as quickly as possible to ensure that work can be matched to their attainment.
43. Co-ordinators in subjects other than mathematics, science and literacy have not yet had sufficient time to develop and retrieve information from suitable whole-school ways of assessing and recording pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for co-ordinators to have a clear view of standards in their subject throughout the school. However there are plans to address this shortcoming with the school using what it has learned in English as it develops other subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents are generally very supportive of the school and overall have very positive views of the quality of its work. The school has good effective links with its parents, which contribute well to the success of their children's learning.
45. The quality of information that the school provides for its parents is good. Each family receives an up dated prospectus and an annual governors' report. Both documents comply fully with statutory requirements. Annual pupils' reports are good. They cover every subject of the curriculum in suitable depth, say what a child can do and give realistic targets. In addition, they are clear and straight-forward, for parents to understand. There are also regular and informative newsletters and a "meet the teacher evening" each term. Easy access to the head teacher and staff means that parents can consult them almost as required.
46. The contribution of parents to children's learning is satisfactory. Several come into school and listen to readers, at lessons or at playtime. Some parents have become classroom assistants and others are parent governors. At home the parents are keen to use the home and school readers record books as a two-way communication with the school. They also help with projects and topics by using home computers.
47. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is also satisfactory. At Christmas mums help with costumes for plays and several can be relied upon to help with swimming or trips. There are also volunteers at all sports days.
48. The school establishes close relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents receive a copy of their child's Individual Education Plan so that they are fully informed and can give any assistance that may be required. Parents are always invited to reviews of pupils' statements and education plans and an increasing number now accept the invitation.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership of the school by the head teacher and deputy is good. The clear vision they share for the improvement of standards has led to the development of whole school policies and schemes of work for all subjects, the beginning of building of key stage teams, establishment of effective systems to start to monitor standards and the formation of a good development plan which clearly identifies appropriate areas for improvement. They manage the school well, despite the difficulties created by the distance between the two sites. There is a good system of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the head teacher and deputy and a consequent good link to training and support for staff to raise standards further.
50. The leadership of key stage leaders and subject co-ordinators is variable in its development and effectiveness. The leadership of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is good. Since her appointment in September, she has conducted a full audit of the provision for young children, led team meetings to agree policy and practice and developed a whole school consistency in the approach to the teaching of young children. As a result of her good leadership, the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and all three reception classes is of the same consistently high quality. Leadership of the Speech and Language Unit is good. The teacher in charge has contributed effectively to whole school training on issues concerning special educational needs.
51. Leadership of infant and junior departments has not been as effective in developing consistent whole school approaches to teaching and learning. In particular there are inconsistencies in the infant classes in the development of some subjects. For example, the science scheme does not currently adequately deliver the full requirements of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth for pupils to attain high standards. Aspects of the subject which are not required are taught to the detriment of those which are required. As a result, standards in science are not as good as they could be at the end of Year 2. The organisation of the curriculum for mathematics in the infant classes has resulted in the use of a two schemes and, as a consequence, standards vary class by class in different aspects of the subject. The difficulties of developing management on two sites have been partially responsible for the delay in auditing the subject, however.
52. Leadership of other subjects also varies in its effectiveness. In some, such as English and history, it is good and has resulted in good progress being made currently by pupils. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are also good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is well organised and provides good advice and support for colleagues. The school has a good special educational needs policy which is effective. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is in the early stages of development. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is appropriate and managed well. These pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and make progress in line with their peers as a result.
53. In other subjects and aspects leadership and management are broadly satisfactory, but hampered by the absence of a clear understanding of leadership roles and responsibilities in some cases. However, the leadership of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. It does not ensure that pupils achieve the standards of work expected from children of their age or that provision is of high enough quality and consistent throughout the school.
54. The accommodation provided by the two original school buildings is clean, attractive and spacious. It is kept to a high standard. However, it is inappropriate for the development of one whole school atmosphere. Despite the very hard work of the head teacher, deputy and governors, the difficulties of managing two sites three miles apart by road, with the knock on effects of the impossibility of meeting as a whole school without a great deal of planning has inhibited the development of many whole school schemes and policies. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are differences within subjects over the two sites. Again the difficulty of the two sites has caused some subject co-ordinators to delay the audit and rationalisation of resources across the whole school. Resources for special educational needs pupils are very good but staff find difficulty in gaining access to them, due again to the difficulties imposed by the accommodation. Resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory, and are variable between the two sites, but even so best use is not made of those the school does have.
55. The governors have good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and contribute appropriately to the development of plans for improvement. Statutory requirements are broadly met and governors take a suitable role in shaping the direction of the school and establishing a development

plan and are frustrated at the lack of progress in moving to a single site. The

principles of Best Value are applied effectively to the deployment of staff and in planning for purchases. Governors consult effectively with parents and staff. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum and class sizes are not large.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards further the head teacher and governors should:-
1. Improve standards in speaking, writing throughout the school, ICT in Years 1 to 4 and standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. (1, 66, 71, 72, 73, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 112, 113)
 2. Define and develop the roles of key stage co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators to raise standards in their areas of responsibility. (50, 51, 52, 53, 81, 91, 94, 98, 104, 116, 126)
 3. Consistently implement the school's new policy for teaching and learning so that the good quality of provision in some classes is reflected in all classes in each year group. (12, 15, 82, 89, 90, 114, 125, 129)
 4. Develop whole school systems for assessing and tracking the progress pupils make in the non-core subjects of the curriculum so that co-ordinators and managers can monitor standards throughout the school in their subject. (42, 43, 94, 98, 104, 110, 116, 126)

In addition to the issues above the following minor issues may be considered by the governors for inclusion in their action plan.

Attendance is below average. (11)

While the provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, and in some aspects it is good, opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures is only satisfactory. (31, 93)

THE WORK OF THE SPECIALIST LANGUAGE UNIT

57. Matchborough Language Development Unit provides up to ten places for pupils with language delay and disorder. Pupils attend the Unit full time and participate in a range of activities with pupils from the main part of the school. The Local Education Authority funds the provision, but the head teacher has management responsibility for the Unit. A full time teacher and support assistant in addition a part time speech and language therapists staff the Unit. This team ensures that pupils receive effective support through a planned and appropriate curriculum and individual intensive speech and language therapy.
58. Pupils attending the Unit join other pupils for assemblies, play and lunchtimes and for special events. A number of pupils are included in lessons such as maths and physical education in the main school as part of a planned reintegration programme. In addition the Unit's approach to 'inclusion' provides opportunities for some pupils with specific needs from the main school to benefit from specialist teaching by joining in language and other activities in the Unit. These activities contribute to the recognition of the Unit as an integral part of the school.
59. The teaching team works well together. Teaching is good and ensures that pupils make good progress. On entry to the Unit many pupils lack confidence in speaking, have difficulty concentrating and have poor listening skills. During their time in the Unit most pupils make rapid progress. The teaching team is experienced and well informed. The teacher and therapists make careful assessments to identify pupils' needs. They work closely together and with both pupils and parents to set appropriate targets. Through skilled individual and class teaching pupils meet these targets and develop increasingly effective skills and strategies in speaking, listening and understanding. Activities are well planned and because of the good working relationships between staff, individuals understand

their role in the work. However these roles are not clearly defined in the planning which results in some lack of focus when less experienced staff join the team.

60. The staff and pupils enjoy very good relationships. These are a result of the careful induction of pupils into the Unit and the establishment of well understood routines and procedures in the class. The clear emphasis on the development of pupils' self-esteem means that they grow in confidence and feel valued members of the group and of the school.
61. The Unit is well managed. Staff are experienced and well qualified. Training and expertise is updated through regular attendance at courses and through contact with other similar provision. The Unit is an integrated part of the school. The teacher in charge is a member of the senior management team and has contributed to the expertise in the school staff through the provision of training.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	96

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	27	25	3	0	0
Percentage	2	15	41	38	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	298
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	57

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	73

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	33	31	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	28
	Girls	28	28	26
	Total	52	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (n/a)	83 (n/a)	84 (n/a)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	28
	Girls	28	28	30
	Total	51	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (n/a)	88 (n/a)	91 (n/a)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
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
266	5	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	£503550.69
Total expenditure	£498373.08
Expenditure per pupil	£1528.75
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	£5177.61

As the school has been open for only eighteen months there are no complete set of figures available for one whole financial year, but only for the first five months.

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	22.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

309

Number of questionnaires returned

58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	38	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	40	12	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	43	16	3	5
The teaching is good.	57	40	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	48	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	22	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	9	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	38	12	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	40	7	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	45	12	2	9

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children start in the nursery in the September of the year following their third birthday. Most children attend for the full five sessions each week in either the mornings or the afternoon. They start in one of the three reception classes in the September of the year following their fourth birthday. Most children have either previously attended the school's own nursery or another local 'early years' setting.
63. The children have a wide range of differing attainments when they start school, but, taken overall, standards are below those normally attained. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. There has been an efficient audit of procedures leading to discussions and agreement by all staff of the aims and guiding principles for improvement of standards for young children in the school. As a result of the scheme of work developed by all staff covering the six areas of the curriculum for young children, teachers have a shared commitment to the goals of the Foundation Stage and a consistent teaching approach. These areas are communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development, creative development and physical development. Teachers and support staff communicate very effectively to ensure that the progress of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language, is carefully monitored and that they achieve as well as their peers.
64. Teaching of young children in the nursery and the reception classes is good overall. During the inspection there was a consistency in the high quality of teaching observed and all lessons were at least good. The teachers plan together very effectively to ensure that all children have equality of access to all six areas of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of the effective systems the school has in place to assess children's attainment and to monitor the progress they make carefully. These assessments are based on the 'stepping stones' for young children's development. As a result of this good tracking of the needs of each individual child, there is early identification of any child with special educational needs and swift provision of support. This ensures that these children make good overall progress and achieve well, in line with their peers. Liaison between home and school is good and the teachers and support staff build good relationships with the children and their families. This starts with home visits before the children start school and continues with opportunities for the children and their parents to meet with teachers and support staff and become accustomed to the routines. All of which helps the children to quickly and happily settle when they actually start school.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in this aspect of their development, due to the good teaching and good range of opportunities they are given. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Nursery children separate from their parents and guardians with confidence at the start of sessions, coming into the nursery happily. They feel safe and secure and are willing to try new activities, such as playing with the Noah's Ark. When playing, they work side by side, for example with construction toys and when 'flying' planes up and down the classroom. They show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities, such as choosing toys and equipment and develop confidence in linking up to help others with their games, or on the computer. They begin to accept the needs of others, with support, although some children have difficulty in sharing toys and books on occasions. The regular nursery and reception routines are well established and children make good progress in learning them, as a result. Reception children continue to make good progress in this area of learning and show increasing confidence in selecting activities. "We shall play in the tree next!" when playing in the garden. They display high levels of involvement in activities, such as colouring for prolonged periods with chalk or 'painting' with water.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children in the nursery use simple statements and questions. They talk activities through, reflecting on and modifying what they are doing. For example, when playing with friends using a building kit one child says to the other "no we don't want that one". They use gestures and single words to explain their needs, such as when seeking assistance to put on coats, and sing phrases from well known

songs as they work, such as “Bob the builder”. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good and children are given good opportunities to develop their vocabulary and to learn early reading and writing skills. They take part in regular discussion sessions sitting in a circle. At these times the teacher takes care to ensure that children all have a chance to join in and to listen to others. This also has a positive effect on the development of their social skills. A significant proportion of the children in the nursery and reception classes have limited vocabulary and speaking skills. However they listen to stories with increasing attention and recall, such as the story of Koala. Due to the appropriate emphasis that teachers and support staff place on using appropriate words, the children build up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences. “Before my mummy bought me a light I used to use a torch!” Higher attaining children hear and say the initial sound in words and know which letters represent some of the sounds. Some children, but not all, recognise their name in print and are beginning to recognise some familiar words. They realise that writing can record and communicate information and are starting to ascribe meaning to the writing they do. Most children are likely to attain the early learning goals in early reading and writing skills. However speaking skills are still below average overall on entry to Year 1.

Mathematical development

67. Teaching of mathematical skills is good in the nursery and in the reception classes, but standards are still likely to be below those expected at the start of Year 1. Children use computer programs in the nursery to order animals according to their size. They show an interest in shape and space, for instance when clicking construction equipment together and sorting teddies by size. They recognise groups with one, two or three objects and a large number can count an arrangement of up to 10 objects, one child spontaneously counting the eight children in his group during snack time, for example. Reception children count reliably up to ten and show confidence by initiating number activities, such as playing with numbered logs. The children show an interest in shape and space, playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects, talking about shapes as they draw patterns outside. Teachers and support staff are careful to encourage counting and the use of mathematical vocabulary, such as when taking the register.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in their developing knowledge and understanding of the world, due to the good teaching they receive. They show curiosity and interest in the world around them, such as when they dig in the garden or fly “paper bag kites”. They describe simple features of objects and events. For example, when going on an observational walk around the grounds reception children were fascinated by the developing buds on the hedge. They investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate, tasting the “flower biscuits” they have made and using twigs and sticks to paint, as well as brushes. Children are given good opportunities to talk about what they can see happening, noticing and commenting on patterns. For example, they show an awareness of change in the weather and the seasons. The children are given good opportunities to begin to try out a range of tools and techniques safely, such as using scissors, paintbrushes and trowels. They work on the computer, manipulating the mouse to activate a simple sorting program. They begin to learn about the cultures and beliefs of other people, such as finding out about Chinese New Year and the festival of Holi. Standards are likely to be in line with those expected at the start of Year 1.

Creative development

69. Teaching of this aspect is good; children in the nursery and reception classes are given a wide range of opportunities to express themselves. Nursery children print and paint in work linked to topics, such as teddy bears. They print using leaves and make collages using tissue, crepe paper, coloured sticky paper and wool. They illustrate their work on the environment by drawing families and making self-portraits. In work linked to their topic on growing things they make carefully observed paintings of flowers and mini-beasts and weave spiders’ webs with ribbon and string. They enjoy listening to the way musical instruments sound, for example the tapping of cymbals together, and enjoy singing well known songs and rhymes. Reception children paint daisies with care and good attention to detail to illustrate songs. When drawing children use lines to enclose a space, then begin to use these shapes to represent objects, painting portraits with faces and some limbs. When playing with blocks and construction toys they begin to stack blocks vertically and horizontally and make enclosures and creating spaces, towers and imaginary tents and houses. They sing a few simple, familiar songs, with pleasure, such as, ‘I’ve got a sunflower seed in my hand’, which was linked to their topic on growing.

They use available resources to create props to support role-play, as when playing with construction toys as when a child with two bricks said "I've got two aeroplanes". Standard are likely to be in line with those expected at the start of Year 1.

Physical development

70. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in overall physical development. Teaching of most aspects is good and children make good progress in many aspects of physical development. They learn to move spontaneously within available space, in the playground and the school hall. They know to adjust speed or change direction when running with footballs or riding on scooters and other wheeled toys to avoid obstacles. They develop increasing control over objects, such as footballs, throwing, catching or kicking them and retrieving them when they roll away. They negotiate space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, such as when playing with paper bag kites in the garden. The children manipulate materials and objects appropriately, such as making "lazy eights" in the sand and painting, taking care to stay within the lines or using scissors. They make good progress in developing skills with activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination, such as icing biscuits and cutting out shapes. They show increasing control over clothing and fastenings and most manage to take off and put on coats for themselves, for example. Most of the children are aware of own needs with regard to taking themselves to the toilet and washing hands afterwards but some occasionally need adult support to meet those needs. Standards are likely to be in line with those expected at the start of Year 1.

ENGLISH

71. Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 4 is still below national expectations. However this represents a significant improvement as their results in 2002 were well below the national average in reading and writing. Most pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are making satisfactory progress and many pupils with special educational needs are making good progress.
72. When the new school was opened, improvement in the pupils' attainment in writing was identified as one of the main areas to be addressed. The National Literacy Strategy is now effectively in place throughout the school and most teachers are confident in its organisation and teaching. Other initiatives have been put in place to help develop literacy for all groups of pupils. For example, booster groups and additional literacy groups for pupils with special educational needs have been introduced. These initiatives have led to a significant improvement in standards in a comparatively short time. Efforts are also being made to improve the performance of higher attaining pupils, especially in writing. The subject manager expects that a few pupils will reach the higher level, 3 in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. The school is now providing all pupils with the opportunity to enjoy a well balanced and stimulating English curriculum.
73. The standard of listening throughout the school is now good. Pupils listen well in assemblies. For example, in an excellent assembly conducted by the deputy head teacher, pupils listened attentively as she read a story about a scarecrow. As the story developed most pupils joined in the chorus spontaneously, showing that they were listening carefully. In most classes pupils listen closely to instructions and questions. Their responses show that they have understood what has been said. Teachers make very good use of carpeted areas in classrooms to make it easier for pupils to listen attentively in lessons. Overall, however the standard of speaking is below average. When given opportunities to speak, for example when pupils read out completed work at the end of lessons, a few pupils are self assured, but for many there is still a lack of confidence to speak out in front of others. Vocabulary is limited and pupils speak, in the main, in simple sentences.
74. Teachers have worked hard to improve the standard of reading. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now broadly in line with national expectations and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Classroom support assistants provide valuable help to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and this is having a positive effect on raising standards. Skills such as recognition and articulation of letter sounds are developed effectively and this helps pupils tackle unfamiliar texts. With this additional help many pupils are now beginning to enjoy reading, especially in the small groups where they have an opportunity to read to their friends.
75. On World Book Day pupils enjoyed dressing as a character in a book of their choice, which enhanced their interest in reading. However, in most classes there are still pupils who find reading quite difficult, especially when it comes to tackling unfamiliar texts. The school is doing all it can to encourage these

pupils and to teach them the strategies that will help them to read with greater accuracy and understanding. The school tries hard to encourage parents to hear their children read at home.

76. There are clear signs of improvement in the pupils' writing in English since September 2002, but standards are still below average. The combination of carefully planned lessons together with a well focused daily Literacy lesson and good teaching in over half the lessons observed are beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' writing. The emphasis is effectively placed on different forms of writing, often related to texts read or tasks set in other subjects. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write in other subjects. For example, Year 4 had written good accounts of their visit to Bordesley Abbey and three pupils in Year 1 had used a computer to write about the improvements Florence Nightingale made to nurse wounded soldiers. However, teachers do not consistently insist on pupils applying the basic skills they have been taught in their English lessons. As a result, spelling, punctuation and handwriting are sometimes unsatisfactory.
77. Due to the regular monitoring of teaching by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and the subject manager the overall quality of teaching in English has improved since the new school was formed. During the inspection, teaching was always at least satisfactory with over half of lessons observed being good. The very good relationships between pupils and staff in most classes create a happy learning atmosphere. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding. They plan effectively and share learning objectives with pupils so that they know what they are about to learn. Good use is made of support staff who provide additional help for many pupils. Most teachers have good management skills. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and use this assessment well to encourage them to overcome difficulties. Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT to extend pupils' learning in lessons, however.
78. Pupils show interest in lessons, acquiring new knowledge and skills. In discussions, pupils put literacy as one of their favourite lessons. The majority of pupils understand the importance of reading regularly at home and many parents are now giving valuable help to their children in reading. However it is quite noticeable that girls often achieve better than boys in line with national trends, although the school is trying hard to provide books of special interest to boys.
79. The leadership and management of English by the subject manager are good. Regular assessment is in place. The data gathered provides valuable information on pupils' progress, which is used well to identify pupils who will benefit from additional support or certain areas of the English curriculum which will need more attention in the future. Resources are good and the subject manager has made an effort to overcome the difficulty of providing for two halves of a school three miles apart.

MATHEMATICS

80. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2 and broadly in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Year 4. This indicates an improvement since the end of key stage tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2002, when standards were well below those attained nationally.
81. The school has identified the subject as a current focus for improvement in its development plan. However the difficulties of managing the subject on two separate sites have led to inevitable delays in the whole school review. Staff training has started and teachers are suitably confident with the national numeracy strategy. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and has established a sound policy for teaching and learning throughout the school. She has started to monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons in each class and by sampling pupils' work in books. However, although there is consistency in the development of mathematics in the junior classes and a suitable emphasis on presenting problems to pupils in a range of ways, there is as yet no whole school scheme of work. In fact teachers on the two school sites use two different teaching systems in the infant classes and there are also differences in the resources available in the two buildings. This results in inevitable differences in results as pupils in some classes perform better in some aspects of the subject than others and vice versa. A good whole school assessment system has been set up using local authority advice and this has enabled the co-ordinator to start to track the progress pupils are making.
82. Currently teaching and learning in the infant classes is satisfactory overall and in the junior classes it is good. However there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school and while teaching in some classes is consistently good or very good in others in the same year group it is only satisfactory. Teachers' management of pupils is generally good throughout the school and, as a result, they have good attitudes to their work and behave well in lessons. They are generally well focussed on the subject of the lesson and maintain concentration well.

83. Numeracy skills are developed appropriately through other subjects. Pupils can interpret and discuss information on simple graphs, for example when finding out about sound and how it travels in science. They also used mathematics in their science work to carry out a survey on thermal insulators. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 achieve suitable standards. They understand place value and how to do calculations involving money and can use money notation. However the majority of pupils at the end of Year 2 generally have poorly developed skills in recognising number patterns and knowing the relationships between pairs of numbers. They struggle to count in fives, for example, with real speed and confidence. In addition the general lower than average skills in speech and language causes pupils to misinterpret what they are asked to do on occasions. They frequently misread questions, due to limited vocabulary and have difficulty in realising that there are several different ways to ask or answer the same thing. In combination these two factors have a detrimental effect when pupils attempt to work out mathematical problems. For example, pupils of all levels of prior attainment had great difficulty during the week of inspection in learning to tell the time correctly, despite all having work in their books which indicated that they had managed to write correct answers several months earlier. During inspection there were several occasions when pupils could not transpose information they had learnt earlier into a new situation, due to lack of confidence with both language and number bonds.
84. The use of information and communication technology to support work in mathematics is not consistent in all year groups; in the main school often opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning are missed. The school is aware of the need to develop the curriculum further to make greater use of computers to support numeracy and to develop the range of programs available for pupils to use.

SCIENCE

85. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 are below average. By the end of Year 4 standards are in line with expectations. Teachers' assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who are likely to achieve at least the average level for their age is below that expected nationally. The picture is broadly similar to that shown by the teachers' assessments for 2002. Previous data also shows, however, that when compared with similar schools, Matchborough pupils achieve well overall. There is no significant difference between girls' and boys' achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and take part fully in science lessons.
86. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, given pupils' level of attainment when they start school, but the good progress seen in developing knowledge and understanding of the world in the Foundation Stage, for example, is not built on sufficiently. The curriculum planned for pupils in Years 1 and 2 does not challenge pupils' scientific knowledge and investigative skills rigorously enough. Some aspects of life processes are not dealt with in sufficient depth. Planning does not take account of the needs of higher attaining pupils. Progress is better in Years 3 and 4. This reflects the way in which national subject guidance has been adapted by the school. Planning is more structured so that skills and knowledge are taught systematically. However this too could be improved by including elements which specifically target pupils capable of higher achievement. There are limited opportunities for pupils to link science to other subjects. In one lesson pupils used their mathematical skills to measure various distances from a sound source and data is sometimes presented in the form of a graph but this happens too infrequently. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to research, record and present data.
87. By the end of Year 4 pupils have a sound scientific vocabulary and can understand what is meant by evaporation, condensation and insulation. They know that materials are best suited for different purposes and that heat and cold can cause materials to change. Pupils understand that living things grow and reproduce when they have food and water. Through their investigative work pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of fair testing and apply these principles when planning their work.
88. Pupils in Year 2 learn that 'pushing' and 'pulling' are forces and that magnetic force attracts some metal objects. They sort materials according to their qualities such as flexible, rigid or transparent and learn, for example, that many materials are used to build a house. Pupils go on sound walks and learn how sounds become fainter when they move further away from the source. Although pupils learn basic facts about food from plants and animals and link this to a healthy diet there is too little depth overall to the study of life processes, for example by relating this to living things in different environments, animal and human growth and ways of exploring similarities and differences between habitats.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although some good teaching was seen during the inspection there was also a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the infants. Work in pupils' books shows that over time the pace and quality of their learning is better overall in Years 3 and 4, particularly with regard to investigative skills. In most lessons teachers manage pupils well by establishing good relationships in the classroom. Teachers listen to pupils and value the contribution they make, using praise effectively to encourage and reward their efforts. As a result pupils show respect for their teachers and try hard to please them. The teachers' clear planning and thorough approach led to some good learning for pupils in Year 3. Pupils first discussed ways to test thermal insulators, deciding what needed to be changed and what would remain the same. Pupils then worked collaboratively to test and record the temperature of water in insulated jars at regular intervals after predicting which material would be most effectively keep the water warm. The groups then compared results and drew reasonable conclusions from their findings. This lesson provided good opportunities for pupils to develop and practice basic investigative skills whilst learning more about the properties of some materials. This was in contrast to a lesson for pupils in Year 1, where interest and learning could not be sustained because the planned task was not challenging. The whole class approach to recording the distance a sound will travel did not engage all pupils well enough. This caused some unsatisfactory behaviour in the lesson. There was too little discussion before the activity to generate ideas about the different ways there are of measuring so that some pupils might try out simple tasks for themselves.
90. Throughout the school the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. At best pupils' ideas are challenged by the teacher to indicate how work might be improved. Mostly, however marking does not show pupils how well they are learning by making reference to lesson objectives. The quality of pupils' presentation of work is seldom challenged so many pupils are not encouraged by seeing their work improve over time. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to improve and enhance recording skills. Although most pupils are challenged appropriately in lessons there is too little recognition both in planning and practice of the potential for some pupils to work more independently at a higher level.
91. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Since the creation of the new school the co-ordinator has worked hard under difficult circumstances to establish a whole school approach to planning. Teaching and the quality of the curriculum have been clearly evaluated and there is a sound action plan for improvement, in particular the long term planning for Years 1 and 2. The distance between sites currently inhibits a comprehensive monitoring schedule which would help unify planning methods and help raise standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

92. Standards in art and design meet expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of experiences in drawing and painting, collage and printing but do not use computers often enough to generate and create art and design work. National subject guidance is used as a basis for planning. This is currently being adapted to suit the needs of pupils more specifically. Art is linked well to learning in other subjects such as literacy, drama, music and dance and is often the stimulus for work in history. The school recognises the value of 'the arts' within the curriculum and staff are working hard to provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils are taught basic skills well as they progress through the school. This is particularly true of observational drawing skills. Pupils make good use of sketch books to practise in techniques such as shading and hatching to create tone. Those skills are reflected well in the quality of the work done by pupils who are now in Year 4. Drawings of fruits, for example, show fine detail and sensitive use of tone and colour. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also produced some commendable drawings because of the teacher's use of prints by L.S. Lowry to compare ideas about what they might see out of a window. The model figures made from clay in Years 1 and 2 and the chairs specially designed by Year 4 pupils for God, Harry Potter and 'Elvis' show developing skills in three dimensional work. Teachers plan lessons thoughtfully and ensure that there are enough resources to engage the whole class in activity. Good relationships are established, and this results in pupils working enthusiastically and behaving well. Work is displayed attractively around the school so pupils know what they do is valued. This encourages pupils and raises their self esteem. However there are few examples of other than Western European art around the school to develop pupils' understanding of art of other cultures.

94. The co-ordinators for art and design and 'The Arts' work closely together to develop an overview of how the subject can be developed in a meaningful way. As yet however, there has been no monitoring of standards or teaching and learning in order to assess the quality of work and formulate an action plan. Resources are adequate but need to be enhanced in the light of the changing curriculum. Recent visits made by working artists provided some enrichment for pupils. For example they built a giant bamboo sculpture on one occasion while in another workshop pupils learned how to make puppets.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 is as expected for pupils of their age. Only lessons for Year 3 pupils were observed during the inspection but analysis of pupils' work shows that design and make processes are firmly embedded throughout the school with pupils achieving satisfactory standards through a limited but stimulating range of projects. Pupils achieve best in the practical aspects of the subject. Planning and evaluating their products are the weakest areas of achievement in most classes throughout Years 1 to 4 and reflect the general weakness in speaking and writing skills in the school. Some variation in the quality of work is evident between the older classes.
96. Year 2 pupils consider the features of existing products well before drawing their own designs. They describe their product by identifying the different parts and labelling these on their design, sometimes also indicating the materials they might use. Their vehicles show that they thoughtfully selected materials and carefully assembled them to match or improve on their designs, using a limited range of joining techniques. They painted them well, highlighting the characteristics of their chosen vehicle to distinguish it from others. They are beginning to evaluate products by identifying what they like and don't like, as was seen in their comments on the range of fruit yoghurts they made. By Year 4 pupils begin to identify good design features in familiar products. They experiment with different techniques before finalising their own designs and annotating them to show key features or components and their choice of materials. This was seen, for example, in their work on pneumatics to control the moving parts of their monster models. Their designs and finished products show that they are beginning to think about the needs of the people who will use them. For example, the chair they made for a teacher has an integral container for pens and pencils. The finished products show that materials have been measured, cut and assembled with care, and thoughtfully decorated to appeal to the target user. Although there is some evidence of pupils satisfactorily explaining how they will make their products and evaluating what works and what could be improved, these are the weakest areas of achievement in most classes throughout Years 1 to 4.
97. Although teaching was only seen in two lessons, the quality of work on display and recorded in photographs and pupils' books shows that teaching is satisfactory overall. The management of pupils is good and provides good opportunities for pupils to collaborate with a partner or in groups. Teachers introduce pupils to a suitable range of materials and tools and provide effective guidance to help them develop their practical skills and understanding of the design and make process. Teaching seen in one Year 3 class was very good because effective planning and the structured use of time and resources ensured that pupils learned a new joining technique and were able to apply it well to their own models.
98. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has introduced a scheme of work and supplemented it with helpful guidance for teachers on teaching approaches and developing pupils' skills and knowledge of different techniques. Whilst the older classes follow a national scheme that provides guidance on pupils' systematic learning of knowledge and skills a topic approach has been adopted with Years 1 and 2 which the co-ordinator recognises does not give sufficient guidance on progression. Inspection evidence indicates that standards vary between some classes, for example, the work produced over the last term in one Year 3 class is of better standard than that produced by some Year 4 pupils. As yet a common approach to assessment has not been introduced and no formal monitoring of achievement or teaching is taking place. There is little use of information and communication technology in the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has identified graphics as an area for development. The co-ordinator informally reviews displays of pupils' work around the school but gaining an overview of the subject in this way is difficult with the school being on two sites. Consequently, strengths and weaknesses in current practice have not been identified accurately enough nor used to plan improvements.

GEOGRAPHY

99. During the week of inspection no geography was being taught. Evidence was gleaned through discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator and a scrutiny of books, resources and displays. This indicates that pupils' attainment levels are typical for their age and all pupils learn at an appropriate rate.
100. Year 1 and 2 pupils learn about the world by taking an interest in the travels of Barnaby Bear and receiving his postcards from such places as Dublin, Cornwall and Turkey, which they find on maps of the world and the British Isles. Years 3 and 4 carry out an in-depth study of Kenya. They understand what it is like to live in a town or the countryside there and compare the lives of children in Kenya with their own lives in Matchborough. They had particularly enjoyed eating Kenyan food and comparing it with their own.
101. Throughout the school appropriate attention is given to the development of mapping skills with pupils using their mathematical skills to find points on maps by using co-ordinates. For example pupils had drawn a map of a farm in Kenya and made a key to help identify certain features. Visits to places of interest and the residential visit to Malvern during the inspection for Year 4 pupils create added interest in geography and resulted in pupils' increased interest in the subject.
102. In discussions with a group of pupils while looking at their books, they showed good attitudes to geography and said they enjoyed lessons. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communication technology, however, although pupils say they use the school libraries to find out information.
103. As no lessons were observed, it is not possible to comment on the standard of teaching in detail, but teachers' planning files indicate that they prepare their work effectively, use suitable resources and make good use of knowledge learned by pupils in mathematics to enhance work undertaken. Good use is now made of pupils' developing literacy skills to write accounts and describe features of different places in the world. Teachers mark work carefully and frequently include comments that encourage pupils to try harder or to develop their ideas further. This also improves the pupils' self esteem.
104. The co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped in geography. This is due to other subjects taking priority in the school's improvement plan. The school has rightly put a lot of emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics. The distance between buildings also makes communication very difficult and opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the school have not yet been provided. The national schemes of work have been adopted successfully, but assessment is not yet in place. A two-year programme enables pupils in mixed age classes to cover all required aspects of the subject. There is an adequate range of resources and books which are due to be improved when the school moves to the new building.

HISTORY

105. The analysis of pupils' work in books and displays together with lesson observations show that standards are above those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 4.
106. Pupils in Year 2 develop enquiry skills, finding out about famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Guy Fawkes and Samuel Pepys. They could recall many facts about the life of Florence Nightingale and understood how important she was in improving hospitals for soldiers and also training nurses in our own hospitals today. Year 4 concentrate on the Second World War, making good use of their improving literacy skills to write accounts about how the war started and of the blitz in London. Teachers arrange an extensive range of visits to places of historical interest and several visitors to the school give pupils a genuine feeling for the life in times past, such as the Roman and Viking era. The visit of Doris Dinsdale, who had lived through the war years, helped pupils to understand what life was like then. Year 4 carried out an in-depth study of Bordesley Abbey and took part in an archaeological dig on their visit there which widened pupils' understanding of historical research.
107. Overall, the teaching of history is good throughout the school. Although only two lessons could be observed during the inspection, an analysis of teachers' plans and pupils work in their books show that teachers plan very interesting activities which pupils enjoy. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good rapport with their pupils which enables them to answer questions with confidence. In the

Year 2 lesson the teacher's clear explanations and careful questioning established what pupils knew and understood about Florence Nightingale and set the context for new learning. Teachers make very good use of the pupils' developing skills in art and good displays throughout the school stimulate the pupils' interest in the subject as they paint portraits of the famous people they have learnt about.

108. History makes a good contribution to literacy in terms of speaking and listening. Pupils listen carefully at the end of lessons when some pupils read out their finished work. It contributes to writing when pupils are given opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words. For example, when Year 4 wrote about a day in the life of a monk at Bordesley Abbey or what it was like to be an evacuee in the Second World War. However, there are still significant numbers of pupils who find it quite difficult to express their thoughts in writing, although there are signs that this has improved over the past year in many classes.
109. The leadership and management of the subject by the subject manager are good, although she was absent during the week of the inspection. The latest national guidance in constructing a curriculum has been used for the new school. Although the subject manager has had considerable difficulty with the school existing on two sites so far apart, she has examined teachers' planning and has an appropriate grasp of the work being done throughout the school.
110. Assessment procedures are due to be introduced when the school moves into its new building. Staff and pupils currently make suitable use of the good resources in history and pupils use the library facilities appropriately for research. Information and communication technology are under used at the moment though in a Year 1 class a few pupils were able to write about Florence Nightingale on their computers with some help from their well-trained classroom support assistants. Pupils enjoy history and are looking forward to the exciting opportunities presented by the move to the new school building.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Pupils achieve below the standards expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The school is not making efficient use of the resources available to develop pupils' ICT capability and this leads to pupils having too few opportunities to use ICT. Teachers' subject knowledge is weak and their expectations of pupils' achievement are too low. The effect of these factors is that the curriculum is taught at too superficial a level to adequately promote satisfactory achievement amongst pupils.
112. By the end of Year 2 pupils are not achieving as well as expected for their age. Pupils of all ability levels underachieve. They use the mouse competently to select and order pictures and to create a town scene, choosing buildings from a given set and placing them onto a town plan. They use an art package to explore different colour and brush and paint options to create images, such as firework scenes and pictures of themselves. With help, they create simple pictograms and use a CD to find information about food. Pupils use the keyboard to write simple sentences, consolidating literacy work by demarcating them with capital letters and full stops. However, they usually copy previously written work, as seen with their Red Balloon stories, rather than generate and amend their work. Most pupils have not yet developed confidence in independently applying basic skills and knowledge in the subject. They know how to change font sizes and colours although there is little evidence of them routinely using these skills in their work. They do not yet know how to use the mouse or arrow keys to move the cursor to a selected point in their text to make changes. They are still dependent upon their teachers to open programs and to save and print their work.
113. Older pupils of all abilities do not make enough progress and do not achieve as well as they should by the time they leave the school. Pupils demonstrate reasonable competence in operating a computer although many do not yet make efficient use of the basic facilities available. For example, many pupils use the space bar to centre headings instead of using the justification buttons. Pupils use a word processor to create a 'best copy' of stories and poems they have previously written, e.g. their Untraditional Traditional Tales, Wishes and Animal poems, demonstrating competent correction-making skills but not the ability to use ICT to generate and amend work to develop their ideas. They use an art package to explore pattern making with pre-defined images and, in one class, to experiment with the Pointillism style of the artist Seurat, but only a few pupils use ICT to create or select images to illustrate word-processed work. They enter data they have collected in a simple graphing program and present it as graphs, pie charts and pictograms, and they know how to design a questionnaire to gather data and show some understanding of classification but there is little evidence of them applying these skills to solve problems. Pupils have found information on websites selected by their teachers

and are beginning to understand how to send messages to others by email but technical problems in school are hampering their development.

114. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, even though it was mainly satisfactory in the lessons seen, and on one occasion was excellent. This is because it is failing to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could during their time in the school. Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 4 to systematically develop their ICT capability. Most teachers do not have good subject knowledge. This leads to low expectations of pupils' work and missed opportunities to build systematically on previous learning acquired in lessons or at home. Some teachers lack familiarity with basic techniques and the functions of computers and, as a result, their pupils do not become efficient users of ICT. For example, in one lesson, pupils were taught to correct mistakes in their text by using backspace to return to the point of error, rather than moving the cursor to the required point using the arrow keys or mouse.
115. Teachers try hard to make sure they and their pupils use the vocabulary associated with the subject correctly. Often their planning does not show specific ICT objectives but they provide relevant subject contexts and give clear instructions to their pupils so that they know what they have to do. They plan work for pupils of different abilities and ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They have a good relationship with their pupils and generally manage them satisfactorily although, when not sufficiently challenged and supported, pupils are apt to be restless and their productivity reduces, as was seen in the one unsatisfactory ICT lesson that was observed during the inspection. Excellent preparation and organisation in one Year 3 class ensured that pupils of all abilities and those with English as an additional language were given challenging tasks that resulted in them developing good research skills using a history website to find and use information about life during World War Two.
116. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because they do not ensure that pupils achieve the standards of work expected from children of their age or that provision is of high quality and consistent throughout the school. The co-ordinator has ensured that a suitable scheme of work for ICT is in place, and that all teachers use ICT Skills Progression sheets to record individual pupils' development, but he is not systematically gathering information from across the school to help him identify current standards, strengths in provision or areas for development. This means that current weaknesses are not being addressed and good teaching is not being recognised, shared and built upon.
117. Inspectors acknowledge the difficulties posed for developing the subject caused by the formation of the new school nearly two years ago and subsequent operation on two separate sites and the delay in moving to new premises. Most of the National Grid for Learning funds available to the school during the past two years have been reserved to establish the ICT infrastructure in the new school, which is due to be ready in five months time. As a consequence, the school has a diminishing resource base as old computers fail and are not replaced. Staff and pupils comment on the unreliability of some of those that are left. There are fewer computers than in most schools of a similar size. This means that each pupil has less time than most children of their age to use them. Their opportunities are further diminished because the school is not making the best use of the resources it has available. During the inspection, working computers in classrooms and in the two computer suites were used in only a small number of lessons.

MUSIC

118. Pupils achieve the standards typical for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. They sing tunefully, recognise a wide range of instruments and enjoy performing. Teaching is satisfactory overall because teachers are supported well and some colleagues with good subject expertise provide effective models. Leadership and management of the subject are good.
119. During Year 1 and Year 2 pupils increase their knowledge of musical instruments and develop their understanding of how sounds can be changed and organised. By the end of Year 2 they know the names of many instruments, group them according to how they are played and identify instruments by name or type in recorded music. For example, they identify the instruments used to represent the characters in Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf. They recognise differences in pitch and duration of notes and describe how different pieces of music make them feel. They enjoy listening to music and respond to it well. They especially like adding actions and moving with the rhythm. When singing they show a reasonable understanding of the melody. Older pupils extend their skills and by the end of Year 4 they

sing clearly with good timing and expression. They concentrate well when singing two part songs but find it harder to keep in tune. They enjoy working with others to create simple tunes and record their compositions in a variety of ways, including using a five note scale. They experiment with different instruments before deciding which ones to choose and how to combine the sounds. They are beginning to appraise their work but do not find it easy to explain how it could be improved. Throughout the school all pupils are fully included in lessons and given equal opportunity to participate in musical activities.

120. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements. Teachers manage their pupils well and plan their lessons effectively so that pupils are actively engaged throughout the time available. As a result pupils try hard to achieve as well as they can. A few teachers, including the co-ordinator, have very good subject knowledge and this is reflected in good teaching of musical skills and the effectiveness of the methods they use. For example, they model what they want pupils to do, use visual images and signs, encourage pupils to learn new tunes by singing along using one word, such as "la", and tapping out or clapping the beat. Most staff are not as confident or knowledgeable but good support materials help them to teach satisfactory lessons. Music in lessons, assemblies and other activities, such as Arts Week, makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
121. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator provides good leadership so staff are clear about what they are trying to achieve. Teachers are guided by a suitable scheme of work and detailed supplementary support materials that help them to plan and teach the subject satisfactorily. Appropriate opportunities are planned to enrich pupils' musical development, such as participation in the Redditch Music Festival, listening to performances by professional musicians and high school pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to develop instrumental skills are limited to two recorder groups and little use is made of ICT such as keyboards or computer generated compositions. The co-ordinator has carried out some informal monitoring, and whilst recognising that she does not yet have all the information she needs to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision, has discovered some parts of the curriculum which do not follow on from each other well enough that she intends to remedy next year when music is a priority within the school's improvement plan. No previous inspection report is available against which to gauge the extent of the school's improvement, however, it has made a good start in establishing an effective music curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards in physical education are in line with the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils throughout the school achieve appropriate standards.
123. All pupils including those who have additional learning needs make steady progress and achieve as well as can be expected in gymnastics, dance and games. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in swimming. Most are competent in water safety skills by the time they leave school.
124. Pupils in Year 4 have the opportunity to take part in adventurous activities such as orienteering during their annual residential visit. This has a positive effect on standards as well as contributing to effectively to pupils' personal and social development. There are extra sporting opportunities outside of school time for those interested in soccer skills, dance and short tennis. A gymnastics club is also planned.
125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Although some better teaching was seen during the week of the inspection there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching also. Where teaching was strongest the teacher had made out a detailed lesson plan with clear objectives. These were shared with the pupils so they knew what was expected of them. Resources were used effectively to challenge pupils' skills and ensure that activity was sustained. The teacher's management skills ensured that pupils were well behaved throughout. The pupils who were in a mixed age class for Years 1 and 2 used the floor and apparatus well to work out sequences of different body shapes and movements. The teacher questioned pupils about working safely effectively raising their awareness of others working around them. Where teaching was unsatisfactory the slow pace of the lesson contributed to pupils' restlessness. Pupils in Year 3 were not active for almost half of the lesson. Although apparatus was used to test pupils' skills the teacher did not draw attention to good performances or give guidance on how pupils might improve.

126. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. Since being appointed she has revised the subject policy and developed a sound scheme of work for gymnastics and games based on published subject guidance. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the subject as and a result she does not have clear picture of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. Standards overall in Year 2 and Year 4 are broadly in line with expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
128. Pupils throughout the school develop a good knowledge of Christianity but their knowledge of other faiths is inconsistent. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 for example have some basic knowledge of the faith and practices of Judaism. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' knowledge and understanding of Hinduism is sparse. They do not sufficiently understand for example how people's everyday lives are guided by their faith culture or how Hindus express and celebrate their beliefs within their own communities.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. During the week of the inspection some lessons about Christianity resulted in very good learning for the pupils. For example pupils in a Year 4 class were inspired by William Holman Hunt's painting of 'The light of the world'. This led to some very good discussion about the symbolism of light and how it is used in stories from the Old and New Testaments. In another lesson the teacher showed Year 3 pupils some palm fronds and a palm cross in order to stimulate their interest the Palm Sunday and Easter stories. Good questioning and allowing pupils time to express their own views were strong features of both of these lessons. Work in pupils' books shows there is a reasonable pace to pupils' learning about Christianity. Standards of presentation in pupil's work are not challenged rigorously enough through teachers' marking, however. As a result some pupils do not see their work improving over time. There is too little evidence of ICT being used either to enhance presentation of work or for research about different faith practices and this is a missed opportunity.
130. The subject is managed satisfactorily overall. The school recognised that some development is required including a review of the time allocated to the subject especially in Years 3 and 4, where there is some variation.