

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT MALVERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Malvern

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116709

Headteacher: Mr J Sides

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian McCutcheon
2420

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 252050

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pickersleigh Road Malvern Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR14 2BY
Telephone number:	01684 574219
Fax number:	01684 577582
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Crabbe
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2420	Mr B McCutcheon	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? Equal opportunities How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1333	Mrs E Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19302	Mrs C Perrett	Team inspector	History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? The Language Unit
2414	Mr D Westall	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music	
3349	Mrs J Ikin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design	
3856	Mrs S Wellsted	Team inspector	English Religious education	Special educational needs
21034	Mr S Smith	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

OASIS
Waterstone Cottages
Naunton
Nr Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL54 3AS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the

inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
THE DESIGNATED LANGUAGE DISORDER UNIT	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 391 pupils on roll, aged from three to 11 years, including seven pupils who attend a Language Disorder Unit. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average and there are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in children's standards but they are mainly below, and in some year groups well below, average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher, from the commitment of governors and from an experienced, dedicated and hard working staff. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is mainly good. For younger pupils it is satisfactory, overall, although there are some weaknesses in the nursery. Pupils make mainly sound progress in the lower part of the school and good overall progress in Years 3 to 6. Given attainment on entry to the school, most pupils achieve well and, in the 2002 Year 6 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), standards were well above those of similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Behaviour is good and pupils' attitudes are very good. Both are fostered by the school's effective provision for their social and moral development. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of English, and pupils' attendance rate is unsatisfactory. Overall, however, the school's strengths very considerably outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills and is providing the school with a clear sense of direction.
- Teaching is mainly good in English, mathematics, science and history in Years 3 to 6, and in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education in Years 1 to 6.
- Across the school, pupils' singing skills are very good.
- Older pupils achieve above average standards in history; and in physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points on entry.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils who attend the Language Disorder Unit.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, their behaviour is good and they have positive relationships with others.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development; and social inclusion is a strength of the school.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

What could be improved

- The progress children make in their creative and physical development in the nursery, and continuity in their learning between the nursery and the reception classes.
- The teaching of some aspects of English, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- The attendance rate of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress since the last inspection, in 1998. The curriculum has been strengthened by the introduction of helpful guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and subject specific skills are now systematically and progressively taught. The school's strategy for behaviour management has been improved, and the number of fixed term exclusions has been significantly reduced. Following the appointment of a new headteacher last year, the management structure of the school has been streamlined and the current senior management team provides good support. The last report found that co-ordinators had insufficient opportunities for monitoring, but this is no longer the case. Their roles and responsibilities have recently been strengthened and co-ordinators have begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects more effectively. The governors are becoming increasingly involved in the management of the school and in the evaluation of its work.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

This table shows that the results of the Year 6 statutory tests in 2002 were in line with the national average and well above the average results of similar schools in English, mathematics and science. They are a significant improvement on the school's 2001 results for English and science. Inspection findings show that standards in all three subjects are a little below national expectations as a consequence of year to year variations in year groups.

Standards in Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally in ICT, art and design, design and technology and geography; and match those of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. However, standards are above average in physical education and history. Pupils' singing skills are a significant strength of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, overall, throughout the school day.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably, and respect each other's opinions.
Attendance	Well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in the vast majority of lessons observed and was good, and occasionally very good, in almost seven out of every ten lessons. The most effective teaching is in Years 3 to 6, in the Year 2 class taught by the assistant headteacher and in the Language Disorder Unit. In the nursery, reception class and in Years 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, although there are some weaknesses in the nursery particularly in relation to the development of children's physical and creative skills. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and most other subjects is mainly good, and otherwise satisfactory, in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' progress is generally sound in the younger classes and good in the older half of the school reflecting the quality of teaching they receive. Information and communication technology and physical education are well taught across the school and the teaching of singing is very good. However, there are some weaknesses in the teaching of English, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and geography to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, evidence suggests that the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in art and design and geography, and sound progress in design and technology. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between pupils and teachers and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Pupils try hard to meet the expectations that are set for them; and teaching assistants provide good support and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a wide range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6, including very good extra-curricular provision. However, planning for progression in children's learning across the nursery and reception classes (the Foundation Stage) is not fully secure.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs who are in mainstream classes. The provision made for pupils in the Language Disorder Unit is very good.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community and this is one of its strengths. Assessment procedures are good in Years 1 to 6 but require review and improvement in the nursery and reception classes.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a strong presence in the school and knows pupils well. He is highly conscientious, has good analytical skills and is providing very good leadership, which gives the school a clear sense of direction. He also has very good management skills that enable the school to function efficiently. A new senior management team provides good support; and subject co-ordinators have successfully developed their monitoring roles over the last year.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which is increasing its strategies for monitoring the school's work following a period of significant turnover in membership. The chair and vice chair meet weekly with the headteacher and some governors have made focused visits to the school. All are appropriately linked to year groups and/or to subjects or aspects of the school. Statutory requirements are met, and governors fulfil their roles soundly.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed carefully by the headteacher and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science and assessment. In addition, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work are now enabling key staff to develop a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and to target areas for improvement accurately.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school makes good use of the available resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teaching is good and that pupils make good progress;• the staff are easy to talk to;• the school has high expectations of its pupils;• the children are happy at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like more information about children's progress.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school although teaching and pupils' progress are judged to be satisfactory, overall, in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Parents have the usual range of opportunities to discuss their children's progress throughout the year; and annual reports give sound indications of attainment and progress. The school has appropriate plans to issue termly reports giving brief indications of progress and effort.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in children's standards but, overall, they are below average. Indeed, there are variations in some year groups which mean that some are well below average. Overall, children make broadly satisfactory progress in all areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes. However, because of some weaknesses, particularly in the teaching in the nursery, progress could sometimes be better especially in physical and creative development. Most children do not achieve the expected Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.
2. The results of the SATs for pupils in Year 2, in 2002, were in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools in mathematics. In reading and writing, the results were below the national average but in line with the average results of similar schools. The 2002 SATs results in Year 6 were in line with the national average and well above the results of similar schools in English, mathematics and science. These results represent good achievement, given pupils' starting points at the school.
3. Inspection findings show that most pupils reach the expected level in English and mathematics in Year 2 but few do better. While overall standards are consequently below the national average, pupils' achievements are sound in Year 2 in relation to their mainly low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. In English, however, a minority of pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress increases and is mainly good. In 2002, this good achievement was clearly demonstrated in the statutory test results in Year 6 that matched the national average. However, current standards in the Year 6 classes are a little below national expectation. This is due more to the nature of the particular year group, which includes a higher proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties, and consequently had a very low starting point, than to weaknesses in teaching or pupils' progress in learning.
4. In English, pupils listen well and show an interest in what is said. They make good progress in developing confidence as speakers and gradually acquire a broad range of technical terms related to the subjects they study. This is a strength throughout their time in school as are their handwriting and presentation. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to read, understand and respond to literature and other texts; and have mastered basic punctuation and sentence structure. They can write empathetically and for a range of audiences. However, there are some weaknesses which characterise the work of many younger pupils and which are also found in the work of a minority of older pupils. Some less able readers draw on only a narrow range of reading strategies and have a limited awareness of phonics, which adversely affects their writing as well as their reading. A significant number of pupils do not recognise the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English, with the result that their use of grammar is often inappropriate or inaccurate; and some have not mastered the construction of complex sentences. The school has identified, and has plans to address, weaknesses in spelling and in pupils' use of library skills.
5. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make mainly satisfactory progress from their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1, however, overall standards are below

national expectations in Year 2. Pupils extend and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the number system and of the importance of place value. They usually employ the correct number operations when making calculations and, by Year 2, understand important links such as that between repeated addition and multiplication. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is mainly good and pupils develop a sound understanding of the patterns and relationships that exist between numbers; and of shape, space and measures. Older pupils can also apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. However, attainment in Year 6 is a little below average because of the relatively high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, who had a low starting point in Year 1.

6. In science, inspection findings show that most pupils reach the expected level in Year 2 but few do better. Their achievements are sound in relation to their mainly low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is mainly good although current standards in Year 6 are a little below national expectations. A relatively small proportion of pupils demonstrate standards which exceed those expected nationally, and the learning difficulties of a significant number mean that their scientific skills and knowledge are understandably below average, despite the effective teaching they receive. The school has made very good progress in the last 12 months in updating its ICT resources and curriculum and pupils are now making good progress as a result of good teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils use computers with enthusiasm and confidence. Standards are in line with those expected for their age, and sometimes a little above. Although this judgement is similar to that of the last inspection, in reality pupils' achievements are higher because of more demanding curriculum requirements.
7. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory in the subject, across the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2, but have improved in the older classes where they were below national expectations in 1998. In art and design and geography, standards are in line with those expected by the time pupils reach the end of Years 2 and 6 and this represents good achievement given pupils' starting points. In history, standards in Year 2 have been maintained since the last inspection and match national expectations. In Years 4 to 6, pupils' skills of historical enquiry are well developed, and they demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the periods they study. As a consequence, standards are above average. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' overall standards in music. However, there is ample evidence to show that pupils' singing skills are very good. When the school was last inspected, singing was also a significant strength. In physical education, satisfactory standards have been maintained in Year 2, while standards have improved in Year 6, and are now above average. In religious education, pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6 and this represents sound achievement.
8. Mainstream pupils on the school's special educational needs register are well supported and make good progress in relation to their starting points and to the targets set out in their individual education plans. In a number of cases, pupils have multiple and quite complex needs. Although these particular pupils sometimes make only modest gains in relation to the National Curriculum criteria, which define levels of attainment according to national standards, their achievements represent significant advances in their own learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils of all abilities have very positive attitudes towards school. With rare exceptions they are diligent in lessons, try hard to recall what they have learnt previously and do their best to meet teachers' expectations. They relish the opportunities provided by assemblies to come together as a school, and sing with great enthusiasm. Pupils concentrate well, listen attentively, persevere with their tasks and take pride in presenting their work neatly. In most circumstances, they can be trusted to work independently of their teachers and settle to their tasks with little fuss. They are keen to answer questions and the majority learn quickly not to call out. It is only rarely, when the purpose of a lesson is not clear or the task is not well matched to their abilities, that pupils can sometimes lose concentration. Pupils are keen to use the wider opportunities presented to them such as joining after school clubs, singing in the choir or taking up musical instruments.
10. Pupils work together sensibly, willingly supporting one another and sharing resources fairly. This is evident, for example, in ICT lessons, when pupils are happy to work in carefully selected pairs, chosen so that the more able readers can help those with less fluency. In these sessions, they are happy to take turns and learn from each other. Relationships are good and pupils show respect for one another and for the adults who work with them. During personal, social and health education and in religious education, pupils express views that show their caring concern for each other and the wider community.
11. These caring attitudes are also reflected in pupils' good behaviour, whether in lessons, the dining hall or the playground. No aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection but some older pupils report that instances of teasing and name-calling do occur. However, they are also confident that adults listen to them if they raise such issues and that they are dealt with promptly and appropriately. There have been a few fixed term exclusions this term but the vast majority of pupils understand the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and, if necessary, take advantage of the chance to 'cool off' in the designated classroom at playtimes if they feel stressed. All agree that the new system of rewards and sanctions has already improved behaviour and are delighted that it is consistently and fairly applied. They believe that the creation of a school 'house' system makes them work for a common purpose and also find that the individual reward system recognises their efforts and raises their self esteem. Pupils are friendly and courteous and show respect for property. They greet staff and visitors politely and are thoughtful about holding open doors and letting others pass along the narrow passageways. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and understand that the choices they make have consequences.
12. Pupils respond well to the opportunities that they are given to take responsibility. They are proud to be voted as house captains or members of the newly created school council and are beginning to think about how their views can contribute to the improvement of the school community. Pupils in all classes carry out routine tasks willingly and efficiently; and older pupils take pride in jobs such as the distribution of fruit and milk to younger ones and the operation of the overhead projector in assemblies. They enjoy organising and taking part in activities to raise funds for charities supported by the school.
13. Levels of attendance at the school are well below the national average and this is unsatisfactory. Some pupils also regularly arrive late in the mornings and

consequently miss the start of lessons. The school is working with parents to improve this situation. Registers are correctly completed and sessions start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in the vast majority of lessons observed during the inspection, and was good, or better, in almost seven out of every ten lessons. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last inspection. The most effective teaching is in the Year 3 to 6 classes where four out of five lessons were judged to be good, and sometimes very good; and in the Language Disorder Unit. In Years 1 and 2, the overall teaching is mainly satisfactory but sometimes good. Lessons observed in the assistant headteacher's Year 2 class were consistently good. The quality of teaching in the reception class is mainly satisfactory, and occasionally good; while in the nursery it is broadly satisfactory but with some weaknesses. The teaching enables children to make sound overall progress in the nursery, reception and in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in their learning in Years 3 to 6.
15. In English, the teaching is mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, in Years 1 and 2 and is consistently good, and occasionally very good, in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are valued as individuals and teachers ensure that all play a full part in lessons. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, resources are carefully chosen and teachers try hard to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. The organisation and management of pupils and of their behaviour are always at least good, and often very good. All teachers present good role models for spoken language and for reading aloud; and links between subjects are used effectively by many teachers to develop pupils' language skills. There is, however, a lack of coherence and progression in the teaching of reading strategies which reduces the overall effectiveness of teaching; and opportunities to engage pupils in the development of 'shared writing' are sometimes missed. In Years 1 and 2 in particular, teachers do not always make the best use of the links between reading and writing; and the mistakes which pupils make are rarely used as valuable teaching points. In several year groups, lower attaining pupils are given insufficient opportunities to write.
16. In mathematics, the teaching is mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, in Years 1 and 2 and is mainly good in Years 3 to 6. Good use is made of assessment to inform planning and, as a consequence, the work is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Older pupils benefit from well-focused teaching within the school's 'setting' arrangements, while 'Springboard' and 'Booster' programmes are used effectively to enhance the achievements of those pupils who need additional support. The pace is good in the most effective lessons, particularly during the mental/oral starter, but is occasionally too slow in Years 1 and 2. Across the school, there is scope to give pupils more opportunities to offer their methods and solutions for discussion.
17. In science, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 to 6. As a consequence, pupils make mainly sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in the older classes. When the school was last inspected, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching were satisfactory overall, so there are clear improvements in Years 3 to 6. The school has made very good progress in updating its ICT curriculum and resources since the last inspection. The subject is extremely well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has put in place a very secure curriculum framework and ensured that all staff have received training. As a result teaching in the subject is now good.

18. In physical education, the quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good features in Years 4 to 6, and this enables pupils to make good progress in the subject. The majority of music lessons observed during the inspection were taught by the music co-ordinator whose excellent knowledge informed her very good teaching and enabled pupils to demonstrate very good singing skills. In history, the quality of teaching in the lessons seen in Years 4 to 6 was consistently good, with some very good features, enabling pupils to achieve above average standards in these year groups. Inspection evidence also indicates that historical skills are systematically developed from an early age. In religious education, evidence from lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching is mainly sound, and occasionally good. Insufficient lessons were observed to judge the overall quality of teaching in art and design, geography and design and technology. However evidence from the lessons which were seen, and pupils' completed work, suggests that the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in art and design and geography, and sound progress in their learning in design and technology.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is particularly effective in literacy where the pupils often benefit from additional adult support within the classroom and from tasks that are tailored to meet their learning needs. In some cases, pupils are withdrawn during part of the literacy hour to work in a small group with a trained teaching assistant. These sessions, too, are effective in helping pupils to make good progress. Pupils in such groups have similar targets in their education plans, and work is focused specifically on identified areas of weakness. Occasionally, pupils also benefit from one-to-one support from a teaching assistant or other adult helper, for example to help them with their reading, to provide specific therapy required in their statements or education plans, and, sometimes, to give them short periods of quiet and privacy away from their peers. In mathematics, pupils with special educational needs benefit from working within ability sets where work can be made accessible for them and where tasks set for independent work are matched to their capabilities. In lessons in other subjects, pupils with special educational needs are appropriately encouraged to take part in discussions. Sometimes, they are invited to take leading roles. However, there are some occasions when, along with lower attaining pupils, some pupils with special educational needs are not given the support they need to record their ideas independently in writing at an appropriate level.
20. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between pupils and teachers and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. In Years 1 to 6, assessment is used effectively to inform teachers' planning which is thorough and clearly identifies the objectives in relation to pupils' learning. However, the precision of teachers' assessments, and their effect on planning, are not as secure in the nursery and reception classes as in the rest of the school. Improvements in the continuity of teaching and learning between these classes are also required.
21. In most lessons in Years 1 to 6, the learning intentions are appropriately explained to pupils at the beginning of sessions and provide benchmarks for pupils to evaluate their achievements at the end of lessons. All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations and, in the best lessons, make good use of time by managing their classes well and motivating pupils to succeed. As a consequence, pupils listen attentively, concentrate on their tasks and try hard to meet their teachers' expectations. Good behaviour and effort are praised, and teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and this helps them to provide good support for the pupils. Sound use is made of homework to reinforce and extend what is learned in school.

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

22. The curriculum in the reception and nursery classes is broadly satisfactory, overall, and covers all of the required areas of learning identified in national guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, planning for progression in children's learning across this stage is not fully secure; and there are weaknesses in the curriculum offered in the nursery, particularly in relation to creative and physical development.
23. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is broad, balanced and relevant, and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the provision for design and technology did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Appropriate amounts of time are allocated for literacy and numeracy, and this time is well used to enable pupils' rate of progress to increase as they get older. Numeracy is taught in ability groups for the oldest pupils and this ensures that there is appropriate challenge for all abilities. When last inspected, the school lacked a systematic, planned approach for the continuous development of skills in some subjects. This is no longer the case as new schemes of work have been implemented in all subjects, to ensure that pupils make continuous progress, building well on their prior learning. However, some physical education lessons for younger pupils are too long, resulting in inefficient use of time.
24. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs and the importance of healthy eating and appropriate emphasis is given to sex education. The curriculum is enriched by very good extra-curricular provision. There is a wide range of activities including music, art and numerous sporting activities. Sport enjoys a high profile and the many teams that represent the school in competitive sports have a high degree of success. Although there is no provision for residential visits, the school makes very good use of regular trips to places of interest, and of visitors to the school, to further enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 enjoy the excellent facilities in local museums where they have first-hand experience of Victorian and Tudor life. These worthwhile visits have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and help to bring history alive. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
25. The school has a clear vision of its importance in the local community and works successfully to promote itself as a centre for all by being involved in a variety of outreach activities. It acts as the base for the regeneration project of a nearby estate and has worked successfully to establish worthwhile links with families there, raising the profile of education for them and their children. The local area is used well as a learning resource, particularly in history, giving pupils a detailed and perceptive knowledge about the development of Malvern that encourages them to take a wider interest in their environment. 'Activity Weeks' for science and art attract specialists who enliven these subjects through interesting projects and experiments. The school benefits from business grants for equipment such as musical instruments, and makes good use of opportunities to acquire or rent computers at reduced costs.
26. The school has good links with the local secondary school and benefits from donations of equipment, such as digital cameras, as well as technical support for its own ICT resources. The oldest pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in 'Technology Days' at the secondary school while science teachers help with Great Malvern's 'Science Week' activities. Pupils also have the chance to mix with others in sporting events and, during the inspection week, were learning a repertoire of songs to perform in a concert of voices from Malvern schools.

27. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and very good provision for the moral and social aspects of their personal development.
28. The good relationships within the school underpin its good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school functions well as a community, and a sense of belonging is promoted strongly in assemblies. Special occasions such as 'Award Ceremonies', where pupils' achievements are celebrated, convey a sense of corporate pride and serve to enhance pupils' self-esteem. At the same time, assemblies also offer pupils powerful opportunities to reflect on spiritual matters and on the deeper meanings of life. For example, pupils are invited to consider the true nature of friendship and to appreciate the spiritual strength derived by many people who welcome God into their lives. Hymns are well chosen, and pupils have frequent opportunities to consider the spiritual messages their words convey during periods of quiet reflection while the candle-flame burns as a sign of God's presence. The high standard of singing in assemblies also adds considerably to the spirituality of such occasions; pupils' vocal harmony very effectively promoted a sense of unity and shared identity. The school's strong links with local churches of different denominations add a further dimension to pupils' spiritual development. Clergy from these churches lead school assemblies every Friday on a rota basis. Pupils are also able to visit the local Anglican church as part of their studies. The vicar helps them to learn about the nature and purpose of its work and to explore the meanings of Christian ceremonies and Christian symbols. In religious education lessons, pupils learn something about the importance of religion in the spiritual lives of those who are Christians and, to a lesser extent, also in the lives of those who follow other major world faiths. In science, and during visits, teachers encourage pupils to be aware of the miracles of the natural world. For example, photographic evidence shows pupils in the reception class observing butterflies emerging from pupae, while a group of older pupils with special educational needs are introduced to the awesome power of magnetism when they see paper-clips 'jump' from a dish to a magnet. In personal, social and health education and in 'circle-time' sessions, pupils are helped to express their feelings, while history lessons offer very effective opportunities for them to empathise with the feelings and aspirations of those who lived in the past.
29. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school provides clear moral guidance through its behaviour policy, its rules, its day-to-day procedures and its practices. All staff promote the behaviour policy consistently and their own conduct and caring attitudes present pupils with powerful role models. In personal, social and health education, in religious education lessons and in assemblies, pupils are given many very good opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour and to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. Special provision in the form of group work also offers a few pupils additional opportunities to recognise ways in which anger and the use of inappropriate language affect others. In these ways, pupils are taught to understand the social consequences of certain types of behaviour, as well as learning about the moral reasons for behaving well. The management of pupils and of behaviour in lessons is a strength throughout the school; and means that lessons are able to proceed calmly and purposefully at all times. The fact that pupils are also taught manners and are encouraged to show respect for others and for their environment also means that pupils' movement around the school and on the school site is orderly.
30. In the Year 5 classes, pupils are given targets for personal and social aspects of their development and these serve as reminders of each pupil's individual progress towards self-knowledge. Within the wider school, the recently introduced 'house'

system, which is designed to recognise achievements, effort and good behaviour, serves to keep pupils aware of more than just the will to win.

31. There are very strong links between the school's provision for pupils' moral development and their social development. Social interaction is a regular, planned feature of classroom practice and of work elsewhere. For example, paired and group-work frequently requires pupils to co-operate over the use of resources and to share, and build on, others' ideas. In physical education, in sport and in music, pupils are presented with activities that often call on them to contribute their individual skills towards a 'team' effort and, in a wider sense, also to represent their school, for example at outside events. All pupils are made aware of their social responsibility to help others. Even the youngest pupils are expected to undertake routine duties to help in class, while older pupils are expected to take leading roles, for example as members of the school council and as house captains. In order to promote a sense of fairness, arrangements are such that 'jobs' such as these also involve regular changes of 'personnel', thereby making sure that all pupils are given a chance to lead. Indeed, social inclusion is a real strength of the school's provision. It can be seen in action during lessons when pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities and are encouraged to participate in discussions, share their work with others and play leading parts in role play and other activities. It is also to be found when more able pupils are paired with less able readers, for example as 'computer buddies' in ICT lessons. Outside lessons, older pupils are encouraged to care for younger pupils in many different ways. They are given responsibility for supervising aspects of outdoor play and for involving younger pupils in games, particularly if the younger children seem 'left-out'. They help in the dining hall, for example, by serving drinks and supervising lunches; and they are asked to patrol corridors, particularly during wet play-times, just to make sure pupils move safely around the school. To extend pupils' awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, the school involves them in supporting the elderly in the community, for example by distributing harvest produce, and in raising funds for both local and national charities.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall, although there remains some scope to extend their awareness of other cultures and of the multicultural dimensions of British society. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own cultural heritage are promoted well, for example through the celebration of Christian religious festivals such as Easter, harvest and Christmas, through literature and through music. In history, pupils learn about various periods of British history and are given good opportunities to see history brought to life, for example through visits to a Victorian school where, for a short time, pupils 'become' Victorian school children. They also learn how people lived in other times and other cultures, for example in ancient Greece. In geography, they learn about how people live in other countries today. Postcards from 'Barnaby Bear' extend pupils' knowledge about holiday destinations outside the United Kingdom, while a focus on international news in some classes highlights issues affecting other countries and raises pupils' awareness of global issues affecting the environment. In religious education lessons, pupils are taught about the main traditions, festivals and stories associated with major world religions including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. During 'Arts Week', they learn traditional crafts and benefit from working with artists. In art and design lessons, they learn about a number of famous European artists and about art forms from other cultures. For example, they become aware of aboriginal designs and of the Japanese art of 'origami' or paper-folding. During the inspection, they listened in assemblies to the sound of Mozart's 'Horn Concerto' and other works by this composer. Many pupils benefit from opportunities to play the recorder and other musical instruments

and to join the school choir. Overall, musical provision is a particular strength, making a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. When the school was last inspected, procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and standards were good, and this is still largely the case. However, in nursery and reception, teachers' assessments do not always inform their planning as well as they should. The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are analysed carefully and, in English and mathematics, individual test papers have been rigorously studied to identify particular elements where pupils achieved well or had difficulties. Effective use is made of an assessment system provided by the local education authority in order to track and predict pupils' standards and this information is linked wisely to the useful ICT programme 'Assessment Manager'. These procedures, backed up by the regular assessment notes kept by individual teachers about the significant achievements and need of pupils, enable the school to target strategies for improvement on those who most need extra support in English, mathematics and science. As a result, they have a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements. Assessment procedures are good in ICT and there are sound procedures for assessment in other subjects, particularly through the use of the guidance provided in the schemes of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school appropriately recognises that the existing assessment policy does not accurately reflect current procedures, since it was produced in 1996, and should be updated.
34. The school staff share a common determination to provide educational opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils and demonstrate this in their promotion of a community where all are valued. The good care and support given to pupils underpins all aspects of school life and are strengths of the school. The headteacher and other staff know pupils well. There is good communication with parents and a willingness to listen carefully to pupils when they have any worries or difficulties. Consequently, the support they receive, whether for academic or personal needs, is sensitive and well targeted. Good use is made of outside experts to support particular educational, behavioural or medical needs. Child protection issues are very well handled with good briefings for all adults on how to record any concerns. Pupils have regular reminders, through assemblies and their personal and social education, about the importance of personal safety.
35. The school has recently introduced an effective new scheme to promote good behaviour, based clearly on rewards and sanctions, with the emphasis on praise for pupils making the right choices about how they behave. This is consistently implemented across the school and is popular with pupils because it is perceived to be a fair system. Staff, parents and children believe that this has had a positive effect on behaviour and is working well in motivating pupils to work harder and to encourage them in helpfulness and acts of kindness to others. The level of exclusions is significantly lower this year and all incidents are appropriately recorded. At lunchtimes, the supervisors are also involved in rewarding pupils for good behaviour and pupils may choose to go to a designated room to be away from others if they feel they cannot maintain the high standards expected of them. Pupils feel confident that adults will listen and take action if they alert them to any bullying incidents.
36. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by the school in co-operation with the education welfare officer. The use of first day follow up calls to check on children who have not come to school not only draws attention to the importance of regular attendance but also helps the school maintain its awareness of children at risk.

Parents who are not sending their children to school regularly, or who consistently arrive late, are reminded of their obligations. Certificates for good attendance are awarded to motivate pupils to attend and, where necessary, specific comments linking any lack of progress to poor attendance records are included in pupils' annual reports.

37. The pupils benefit from a well planned programme of personal, social and health education. Healthy eating and the drinking of water are strongly promoted, with younger children receiving free fruit for breaktime snacks. Drugs and sex education are appropriately taught and there is a strong focus on road and water safety in the programme of study for Year 4. Pupils have regular opportunities to express their feelings in 'circle times' and this helps them to develop positive attitudes towards school and their peers.
38. The health and safety of pupils and staff have a high profile in the school. Regular site inspections are made of the buildings and grounds and proper fencing is in place to separate pupils from the building work currently being undertaken. Pupils are very well trained in moving around the building in an orderly fashion. This is particularly necessary because of the narrowness of some of the corridors and the steps between different areas. The staff and governors work together systematically to review safety and to prepare risk assessments of activities. There are good guidelines for staff to ensure safe practice in lessons; and records show that consideration is always given to ways of improving safety following any incident. Despite the ongoing building work, there are high standards of cleaning. The buildings and grounds are soundly maintained, providing a safe and secure environment for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The headteacher and staff work hard to maintain the strong partnership with parents. An open and welcoming ethos ensures that parents feel comfortable about talking to staff, and the presence of staff on the playground before and after school makes it easy for them to do so. Parents have positive views about the school and the education that their children receive. They particularly value the way each child's abilities are recognised and celebrated. They know that they will be quickly involved if there are any pastoral, behavioural or educational concerns about their child and are confident that the school always acts in the best interests of the pupils.
40. The school documentation provides clear and comprehensive information; and regular newsletters from the headteacher explain any initiatives or changes, such as the new behaviour policy, and the role of parents in supporting the school. Parents' views are sought about aspects of school life including proposals for change or improvement. The school is beginning to provide more information about what is taught through curriculum summaries which are issued at the beginning of each term. A series of workshops is also planned to explain how subjects are taught. The homework policy and expectations are clearly set out and the use of homework diaries enables parents to know what tasks have been set. Parents also receive some guidance on how to support children's learning when they start school but there is scope to produce a more comprehensive 'starter pack' for new parents.
41. Parents have the usual range of opportunities throughout the year to discuss children's progress with class teachers and to learn about targets for improvement. The format for annual written reports was changed last year and some parents feel that they are less informative than previously. However, a scrutiny of reports shows

that they are perceptive and detailed, and provide sound indications of attainment and progress. Parents enjoy the opportunity to see what work has been produced during the year at an open day in the summer term.

42. For their part, parents are supportive of the school and are pleased that it is active in promoting the betterment of the community it serves, for example by providing a base for an adult literacy scheme. Some parents are able to help in classes, accompany visits, or share their expertise in activity weeks such as those for art and science. The parents' association is active and successful, not only in generating additional funds for the school and in organising social events for the pupils, but also in raising the profile of the school in the area. However, a minority of parents do not comply with the requirement in the home/school agreement to ensure that their children attend regularly or on time. As a consequence, in 2001/02, the attendance rate at the school was well below the national average and this has a negative impact on the progress made by pupils.
43. The school works hard in its attempts to establish positive links with the parents and carers of all pupils with special educational needs. Staff ensure that parents are informed when pupils' special educational needs are first identified and they make every effort to involve parents in reviews of their children's progress. Evidence from the parents' meeting, and from the questionnaires returned by parents, show that they appreciate the school's efforts on their children's behalf.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The governing body has recently undergone a significant turnover in membership, including a number of changes to the position of chair of governors, in the last 18 months. The current governing body is committed to the school and is beginning to work effectively with the headteacher, senior management team and staff. Appropriate committees are established which help to guide the school's work; and all governors are linked to a particular year group and/or to subjects or aspects of the school. The chair and vice chair of governors meet weekly with the headteacher and some governors have been able to visit the school to observe it in operation. For example, during the last year the governors with responsibility for literacy, science, the 'arts', special educational needs and the Foundation Stage have made focused visits to the school and have liaised with co-ordinators. The literacy governor has appropriately written reports of lessons which she has observed using an agreed format; and the governors for science and the 'arts' have assisted with relevant school initiatives. All governors have benefited from recent training provided by the local authority and from guidance from the headteacher, for example on the analysis of the results of statutory testing, which has increased their awareness of the school's performance. The priorities in the improvement plan are properly costed and the governors have a sound, and growing, understanding of the school's financial position. With the encouragement of the headteacher, the finance committee is becoming increasingly involved in budget setting as well as monitoring; and members of this committee have recently formulated a helpful 'Budget Objectives and Strategies' document to guide their work. The school's 'carry forward' figure and expenditure are appropriately debated and the governors are planning to monitor the 'value added' benefits of their spending decisions. Overall, the governing body provides sound support for the leadership and management of the school, and ensures that statutory requirements are met. Governors recognise that their visits to the school need to follow a more carefully structured pattern and that they need to continue to develop their role as critical friend to the school.

45. The headteacher took up his post in September 2001 and has very good leadership and management skills. He is highly conscientious, has good analytical skills and his effective leadership has ensured that the school has a clear sense of direction. He quickly established, with the help of key members of staff, where improvements were required and significant progress has been made in implementing these in a relatively short amount of time. The headteacher is rigorous in his analysis of the results of statutory and non-statutory testing and uses his own ICT expertise, as well as that of the assistant headteacher, to identify and track relative strengths and areas for improvement, which helps to focus the work of teachers. He monitors teachers' planning and the quality of teaching through well-focused lesson observations across the school, but has not yet formally monitored nursery provision. He provides teachers with valuable feedback as well as helpful guidance which benefits their professional development. The headteacher has worked very effectively with co-ordinators to enhance their monitoring skills and to create useful action plans for their subjects. He is a strong presence in the school, knows pupils well and has developed positive relationships with parents who feel that he responds quickly and sensitively to any concerns or suggestions they might have. The analysis of parent questionnaire returns indicates that the vast majority of parents think that the school is well led. The day-to-day management of the school is good, routines are well organised and there is an orderly atmosphere in the school. The senior management team, consisting of deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), provides good support for the management of the school.
46. The school improvement plan has been formulated through very good leadership by the headteacher and the effective involvement of staff. Co-ordinators have made a good contribution to the plan by preparing action plans for individual subjects. The chair and vice chair of governors were involved in discussions about the plan and, in future, the full governing body appropriately aims to be more actively involved in its formulation and evaluation. The plan is well organised and provides detailed planning for initiatives in the current year and outline planning beyond this. It identifies relevant priorities, is a valuable management tool and is making an important contribution to school improvement.
47. Responsibility for subjects and aspects of the school has been delegated to various members of staff, acting as co-ordinators. The last OFSTED report stated that they worked hard to fulfil these responsibilities efficiently and effectively, and this remains the case. However, the report also stated that co-ordinators had insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning through direct lesson observations. Since his appointment, the headteacher has strengthened the roles of co-ordinators by providing non-contact time to enable them to observe teaching and learning and to undertake scrutinies of pupils' work. This is appropriately allocated according to the priorities set out in the school improvement plan. All co-ordinators check teachers' planning and have been given budgets to enable them to manage the improvement of resources. Where co-ordinators have analysed test results, for example in English and mathematics, the information has been well used to inform focused actions for improvement. Support teams of teachers for each subject have also been created so that suggestions for development can be debated with interested parties across the school. Some co-ordinators have visited other schools to observe good practice while others have provided demonstration lessons for their colleagues.
48. The SENCO provides excellent leadership in her role; and the administration, organisation and management of special educational needs provision are very effective indeed. Policies, procedures and practices related to all aspects of special

educational needs provision are of a high order and all systems run smoothly. The school's investment in support staff is generous, and all staff are deployed effectively and with flexibility so that the whole range of special educational needs represented amongst mainstream pupils can be met. Both the SENCO and the special educational needs assistant who supports her in her role are well qualified and experienced in special educational needs work. The special educational needs assistant gives appropriate and effective support to those mainstream pupils on the school's special educational needs register who are withdrawn for short periods of time to work on specific tasks related to the targets in their individual education plans. Professional contacts between the school and external agencies are very constructive and work in the best interests of the pupils. In their turn, the SENCO and special educational needs teaching assistant advise their teacher colleagues on a regular basis, for example with planning, assessments and resources. They monitor pupils' progress very carefully, and pupils' places on the special educational needs register are reviewed regularly in the light of progress made. The SENCO and special educational needs assistant also work with class teachers to draw up individual education plans and to set relevant targets. Liaison is effective at all levels and class teachers are very well informed about pupils' needs and about the resources available to help them. Individual education plans set out very clear, accessible but challenging targets. All statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs provision are fully met. The special educational needs governor is new to her role, but documentation shows that the governing body has appropriate oversight of provision. The school is appreciative of the help given by local authority special educational needs advisers, for example in the form of staff training, advice, and the assessment of pupils. The headteacher supports staff effectively in their endeavours to provide well for pupils with special educational needs. He holds regular meetings with the SENCO to discuss changing needs in relation to provision and resources, and keeps abreast of all developments.

49. There are sufficient teachers. They are able and committed, and have the expertise and experience to cover the age range and ability of the pupils. Appropriate performance management procedures are in place and provision for the induction of newly qualified teachers is good. The school makes good use of the experience and expertise of the staff of the Language Disorder Unit and of the skills of co-ordinators such as the music co-ordinator who has achieved the status of Advanced Skills Teacher. Support staff are well trained for their roles and play an important and much valued role in helping pupils to make good progress. The efficient administrative staff provide very good support and help to maintain the good day-to-day management of the school.
50. The accommodation is kept in clean condition and is a well organised environment for learning. Overall, there is sufficient space for pupils although the nursery accommodation is very limited and, because of the design, some areas are difficult to supervise. Good use is made of the space available throughout the school and teachers take considerable care to enrich the environment with attractive displays of pupils' work. A well equipped and attractive ICT suite has been added in the last 12 months and a new library is currently under construction. The headteacher and governors have provided the local authority with detailed and helpful information about the difficulties encountered with the four mobile classrooms, and the building in which the nursery is housed, in order to gain support for a major building programme at the school. Resources for learning are at least sound and in a number of subjects are good.

51. Overall, the school makes effective use of its resources and provides good value for money. This judgement is informed by the good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and the satisfactory teaching in other classes; by pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour; by the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs; and by the school's very effective provision for pupils' personal development. The school's strengths very considerably outweigh its weaknesses.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve provision in the Foundation Stage, the teaching of some aspects of English and attendance, the headteacher and governors should:

1. Foundation Stage

- improve the planning for progression in children's learning across the nursery and reception classes;
- develop assessment systems to provide a clearer picture of children's progress throughout the Foundation Stage; and make better use of assessment to inform planning and provision;
- ensure that the environment in the nursery is sufficiently rich and stimulating and provides an appropriate range of opportunities, particularly for children's creative and physical development.

(see section on the Foundation Stage)

2. English

- ensure that pupils are taught to apply a suitably wide range of strategies for decoding text; and also benefit from teaching of phonics which is consistent, systematic and progressive;
- provide adequate individual support for pupils experiencing significant difficulties with the early stages of reading, irrespective of age;
- strengthen the links made between reading and writing; and raise pupils' awareness of the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English in both its spoken and written forms;
- place greater emphasis on the evaluation, improvement and completion of pieces of written work; and help weaker writers to overcome their difficulties through writing.

(see paragraphs 90, 93 and 94)

3. Improve rates of attendance at the school.

(see paragraphs 13 and 36)

THE DESIGNATED LANGUAGE DISORDER UNIT

53. A Language Disorder Unit, funded by the local authority, operates within the school. There are places for ten pupils with language disorder difficulties. However, currently there are seven pupils in the unit between the ages of six and ten. All these pupils have statements of special educational needs, have a range of differing needs and are drawn from a much wider area than that normally served by the school. The provision made by the school for these pupils is very good, maintaining the standard achieved at the time of the previous inspection. The aim of the unit is to integrate pupils into mainstream education, if possible. The school is very successful in achieving its aim and all the pupils integrate well into their mainstream classes in the afternoons. The characteristics of the pupils make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. Judgements about progress and attainment take account of the information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews, each pupil's individual education plan and the learning that took place in the literacy and numeracy lessons which were observed.
54. In the mornings, the pupils are taught as a group for their numeracy and literacy lessons and then they access the remainder of the curriculum in the afternoons. Work is set to meet their specific needs and they make good progress against the individual targets set out on their individual education plans. In language lessons, pupils read a 'Big Book' together and discuss the text and recognise repeated words and phrases. The most able pupils identify important details and can sequence events successfully. They are beginning to appreciate, for example, the role of adjectives and can suggest appropriate ones of their own. In numeracy sessions, pupils can accurately sequence the events of the day and are extending their understanding of the concept of time. There is a very wide range of abilities within the unit, but all pupils are appropriately challenged. The youngest pupil is beginning to recognise numbers to ten, whereas the most advanced learner can tell the time correctly using half and quarter hours. The tasks that are set for pupils are well matched to their knowledge and understanding at all stages of learning.
55. A strength of the unit is the quality of teaching and support that the pupils receive. The quality of teaching is never less than good, and often is very good. The teacher works very well with learning support assistants, who know the pupils very well. A range of interesting tasks is set for the pupils, which provides appropriate challenge to ensure success, and a continuous development of the pupils' skills. Time is well used in lessons and every opportunity is used to enhance learning. The adults have a firm but sensitive approach to their pupils, resulting in very good relationships and sensible attitudes to work by the pupils. The pupils want to succeed and generally work hard throughout the sessions. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and their attitude to learning, both in the unit and in mainstream lessons, are very good. This has a positive impact on their learning. In the afternoons, the pupils are well supported in their mainstream classes and this enables them to access the same curriculum as their peers, and complete the tasks set. The other pupils display a very good tolerance of the needs of the unit pupils and integration is very successful. All the teachers are very aware of the pupils' individual needs, and use praise and rewards well to raise self-esteem and ensure learning. Appropriate methods are used both in the unit and in mainstream classes to ensure that the unit pupils are positively engaged and feel part of the class. For example, one unit pupil who has good artistic talents was asked to lead his group. In physical education lessons, the pupils are so well integrated that it is difficult to identify them. All teachers use questioning effectively to ensure that unit pupils are fully included in the mainstream lessons.

56. The teacher who is the special educational needs co-ordinator keeps well-ordered records of all her pupils. The school's procedures comply fully with the national Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for the annual review of statements are good. Parents are invited to attend, together with other professionals and, where appropriate, special educational services. Targets for each pupil's individual education plan are agreed and are reviewed at regular intervals. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good. The speech and language therapist has assessed those pupils who have communication difficulties, and her assistant currently gives good support to those pupils she sees. She works closely with the teacher who follows through her recommendations.
57. The co-ordinator of the unit has established good links with parents who are kept well informed about their child's progress. As well as attending their child's annual review when new learning targets are agreed with the school, the parents are invited to the unit to enjoy a tea party each term and examine the work done by the pupils. When the time comes for pupils to transfer to secondary schools, the unit co-ordinator works closely with parents to minimise problems and to give general advice and support.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	93
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	47	26	4	0	0
Percentage	1	16	51	28	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	367
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	76

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	65

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	26	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	32
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	50	50	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (77)	85 (80)	95 (82)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	32	32
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	50	55	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (75)	93 (80)	93 (79)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	24	31	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	24	23	28
	Total	45	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (68)	80 (70)	93 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	21	21
	Girls	23	25	25
	Total	40	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (66)	84 (77)	84 (79)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
323	4	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	239.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	906,789
Total expenditure	903,008
Expenditure per pupil	3,780
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,046
Balance carried forward to next year	77,827

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

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	391
Number of questionnaires returned	207

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	48	2	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	56	10	2	0
The teaching is good.	60	34	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	42	12	5	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	29	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	47	11	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	54	37	2	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	44	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	35	5	1	5

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

58. The nursery is housed in a small bungalow on the school site and has its own outdoor play area. The reception class is located in the main school building and also has a designated outdoor play space. Both classes have access to a good adventure play area. All children are visited at home prior to starting nursery; and induction procedures ensure that children are soundly prepared for entry into both the nursery and the reception class. Children enter the nursery in either the September or January of the year in which they become four and spend three terms in the nursery on a part-time basis. They then move into the reception class in the following September or January, depending on their age, and remain there for either two or three terms.
59. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall. However, although nursery and reception staff are beginning to meet together, they do not yet operate as a cohesive whole to ensure that there is continuity; and there are some weaknesses in the nursery. In both classes, teachers' assessments do not always inform their planning as well as they should. The quality of the learning environment in the reception class is satisfactory with an appropriate balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks; and some useful planned opportunities for children to take part in purposeful activities involving play and talk. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together when sharing responsibilities for group work. However, more should be done to involve the teaching assistants in whole-class sessions. The indoor space in the nursery is very small and this creates significant difficulties for staff. In addition, current provision in the nursery does not include enough purposeful, rich and stimulating experiences which motivate children to learn and extend their thinking in relevant and imaginative ways. Better use could also be made of the outdoor area to engage nursery children in working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. On entry to the nursery, the children's personal, social and emotional development are below average. They lack confidence and find it hard to work with their classmates. Children make satisfactory progress, overall, but many do not reach the levels expected for their age and overall standards are below average when pupils start in Year 1.
61. By the end of the reception year, children have a sense of themselves as a member of the class community, and most can express their needs and feelings in appropriate ways. They generally feel safe and secure, demonstrate a sense of trust in the adults who work with them and are able to adapt their behaviour to changes in events. For example, the children in the present reception class have settled well to their new classroom and have very good relationships with their new teacher. The children have a developing knowledge of what is right and wrong and some understanding of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. They can dress themselves and take care of their personal hygiene. Many are able to concentrate on their work for considerable periods when tasks are relevant, interesting and set at an appropriate level. In the nursery, older and more confident children often work well together and join in whole-class activities and self-chosen tasks with enthusiasm. However, they often dominate lessons whilst younger and quieter pupils sit passively

or engage themselves in insular activities. Where there are weaknesses in children's development it is in their ability to articulate their emotions and feelings, to work co-operatively with others and in their skills of working independently.

62. Teaching is satisfactory overall. One of the teachers in the reception class is new to the school, but she has already established a very good relationship with the children. She has planned a number of situations that encourage children to work together, for example, in literacy they were supported well in a collaborative effort to create a setting for a story. The teaching of reading also provides valuable opportunities for children to learn to take turns with their reading and to listen to each other. Reception staff give sensitive encouragement to the more reticent children to try new experiences for themselves. For example, the teaching assistant worked beside a quieter child during a dance lesson, and this helped her gain in confidence. Whole-class discussions help children to develop an awareness of their own feelings. This results in children who do have problems and concerns being able to approach the adults who work with them to make their needs known. Children's growing ability to accept the needs of others makes a significant contribution to the positive relationships that they develop with their classmates. As a result of their work on Diwali, and the positive attitudes of their teachers, children in the reception class have gained a respectful awareness of a different culture and its traditions. They enjoyed dressing in Indian costumes which helped them develop their understanding of what it might be like to be somebody else and to talk about their own feelings. One child spontaneously commented that it made her feel like a princess.
63. In the nursery, there are opportunities for children to learn about the importance of friendship in the course of whole-class sessions. For example, they listened to a story which was sensitively narrated by the teacher and were encouraged to think about the rights and wrongs of the behaviour illustrated by the tale. The nursery nurse supports children well by engaging in their play, supporting their interests and conversing with them. She notices when children are feeling unhappy or when they are having a problem and intervenes effectively to give support. Children in the nursery are generally given a free choice of play activities and because of this the more confident children develop decision making skills and begin to work together. However, some children do not have the confidence they need to join the activities by themselves and often remain at the periphery of the class.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Children's communication and language skills are below average on entry to the nursery. They make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. However, overall standards are still below average by the end of the reception year.
65. Most children use words and gestures and go on to develop these into simple statements while they are in the nursery, sometimes changing their tone of voice to make the meaning clear. Their vocabulary in the initial stages mainly focuses on objects and people that are of particular importance to them. It is gradually broadened, particularly in the course of more formal lessons in the nursery and group discussions in the reception class to reflect the range of technical vocabulary that they need for the subjects they are studying. For example, in the nursery they learn the names of shapes in mathematics lessons while in the reception class they learn the names of Hindu artefacts, such as the diva and, of traditions, such as Rangoli and Mendhi patterns. However, children's more general vocabulary, is not developed to the same extent and many children do not have a sufficiently wide range of words or the ability to use more complex sentences. This limits their ability to describe or talk

through their actions, to sequence ideas and recreate roles and experiences clearly. Although many children initiate conversations they do have the skills they need to sustain them by active listening and by responding with relevant comments. However, there is evidence that they begin to use vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experience of books, when given the opportunity and encouragement to do so.

66. Children begin to enjoy listening to stories and poems and sharing books with adults when they are in the nursery. By the end of their time there, most children hold books the correct way round and understand that the marks on the page carry some meaning. They take a particular interest in the illustrations and listen intently as adults read to them. Some children begin to associate the sounds of letters with their symbols. In the reception class, they begin to recognise rhyming words, hear and say the initial sounds in words and develop a more secure knowledge of which letters represent the sounds. Some higher attaining children hear and say all the sounds in three letter words when the middle letter is a vowel. These children begin to enjoy an increasing range of books and can recognise some of the key words that they need to know. Children in the nursery make marks using pencils, crayons and paints and some are beginning to write their name with help. They begin to do this more confidently and to write new and different words, using recognisable letters in the reception class.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and some good teaching was seen in the reception class where well planned opportunities for children to learn language and literacy were incorporated into play activities. For example, in the role-play area they used the language associated with Diwali as they put up decorations and prepared 'food' for the party. Other pupils were busily engaged in making marks and patterns on the 'doorstep' and yet another group of children used their early writing skills as they prepared Diwali cards. A group of children constructed the setting of the Rama and Sita story, using fabric for the lake, blocks for the river and palace and small palm trees and plants for the island. One child confidently and eloquently articulated the story of Rama and Sita, as two children, holding puppets, acted out the story, using the setting that had been built by their classmates. The whole class was invited to watch and they listened with wrapt attention to the high quality performance, applauding enthusiastically to show their appreciation at the end.
68. Whole-class sessions are used appropriately in the reception class to introduce the skills that children will later apply in a range of activities. Although the teacher engages children's attention well, for example, by the use of a puppet who speaks to them, the size of the class is too large and the spread of ability too wide for her to give all the children the attention that they need. The formal skills of reading are taught through the use of shared reading books, the recently introduced 'Jolly Phonics' scheme, and large picture books. Individual reading books are sent home as children become more competent readers, but children are not heard to read individually in school. This, and the fact that focused reading sessions only take place two or three times a week, does not give some children and, in particular, the average and lower attainers, the help and support that they need to develop their reading skills. Whilst there is appropriate reference to the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, there is insufficient reference to the supportive documentation for the reception year that is available from the National Literacy Strategy. Some good story telling was observed in the nursery. The teacher also appropriately shared books with individuals and small groups when sitting in the book corner. Planning indicates that there is also some formal teaching of phonics, although none was seen during the inspection.

69. Where weaknesses occur it is because insufficient attention is given to the promotion of the skills of reading, writing and talk through well planned and purposeful play. Throughout the Foundation Stage there needs to be a greater emphasis on the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills through the provision of relevant experiences which will help children to widen the range of words that they have at their disposal. Activities which promote the use of talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, within a print-rich environment, need to be increased.

Mathematical development

70. When children enter the nursery their mathematical development is below average. Although they make generally satisfactory progress and some children exceed the standards expected for pupils at the end of the reception year, many do not, and overall, standards are below average.
71. Most children enjoy counting, are interested in numbers and can count accurately up to ten by the end of the reception year. For example, they enjoy singing a range of songs such as 'One, two, three four five, once I caught a fish alive'. They are beginning to understand that the last one in the count represents the number of objects in a set. They go on to develop an understanding of 'more' and 'less', for example, when taking buns from the shop in the course of singing 'Five currant buns in a baker's shop'. Children begin to recognise simple numerical patterns, for example, when putting pairs of socks on a line and when making animals go into an ark in twos. Older and higher attaining children are beginning to record and write numbers accurately and are able to apply their early mathematical skills in simple problem solving. In the nursery, older children are able to count accurately up to ten but do not always recognise the symbol for each number in the count. Younger children begin to develop an early understanding of shape and space as they build models and enclosures with 'Lego', and make different shapes out of play-dough.
72. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall. In the reception class, everyday activities, such as registration, are used well to promote the use of counting, number recognition and addition and subtraction. One higher attaining pupil demonstrated that he could accurately calculate the difference between 30 and 27. Planning for group work takes into account children's different attainments although more should be done to differentiate work during whole-class sessions in order to provide an appropriate level of challenge for the wide spread of ability levels within the class. There is a particular need to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Whilst appropriate use is made of the guidance for the Foundation Stage, more use should be made of the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. There are some weaknesses in the nursery which include insufficient planning for the different needs of children and an over emphasis on teacher directed activities. For example, children are encouraged to count and order numbers at the start of sessions. Older pupils can do this and join in as the teacher counts, shouting out their answers to questions about sequence. Younger and quieter pupils sit quietly at the back of the group during these sessions and are often insufficiently involved. Some mathematical activities are not always well matched to the ways in which young children learn best. For example, children could accurately identify the names of shapes such as circles, triangles and rectangles during an introductory, teacher directed, lesson on shape. However, later in the week they were encouraged to identify objects scattered on the lawn as circles whereas most were three dimensional and opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of cylinders and spheres were missed. The youngest children in school need more opportunities to

develop mathematical understanding through activities that are interesting and enjoyable, including play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are below average for their age on entry to the nursery. They make satisfactory progress overall, but standards remain below average by the end of the reception year.
74. Most children in the nursery and reception classes demonstrate a desire to explore and make sense of the world when they are given the opportunity to do so. For example, children in the nursery were fascinated by the behaviour of a cornflour mixture when they stirred it with their fingers and squashed it their hands. They enjoyed making bubbles and watched with a sense of wonder as they swirled up into the air and floated out of sight. They 'painted' fences and walls in the outdoor area and observed the water as it trickled down the wall, showing an awareness of the changes as it slowly evaporated. When working with construction kits, such as 'Lego', children change their constructions as they progress to meet the purpose that they had in mind. They have produced kites at home and brought them into school to test. They show an interest in computers from an early stage and gradually learn how to operate the mouse to control images on screen. In the reception class, children are able to examine objects more closely to find out about them. For example, they looked carefully at the materials that candlesticks are made from and considered why some materials are not suitable for the purpose. They observe the movement of candle flames, watch the smoke as the flames are extinguished and comment on the smells that they detect. They have begun to identify some of the features of living things in their explorations of the outdoor environment. For example, they have looked closely at autumn leaves and observed snails and the way they move. Children in the reception class demonstrate a sound early understanding of forces and structures when they use wooden blocks to build an increasing range of complex structures which involve the careful balancing of blocks of different sizes, on top of each other. Children have gained an awareness of other beliefs and cultures through their work on Diwali. They use computer equipment with increasing accuracy in the course of their work. Where there are weaknesses in children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them it is because they have a fairly narrow range of experience to draw on and their skills in asking questions about why and how things are as they are, are not sufficiently developed.
75. Teaching for knowledge and understanding of the world is broadly satisfactory in the nursery and the reception classes. Both the teachers and the teaching assistants in the reception class interact well with the children, encouraging them to make careful observations and asking questions to help pupils develop their ideas. They also set up a range of activities which actively involve the children and engage them in learning, using all their senses. The nursery nurse gives good support to children in the nursery, for example, she responded well to their observations of bubbles and encouraged them to try making bubbles of different sizes and to see how far they floated before they popped. However, there is scope for nursery staff to use more skilful questioning in order to promote children's thinking; and to extend the use of resources, particularly in the outdoor area, to motivate the children to explore the world about them in greater depth.
76. Given children's limited experiences of the world about them on entry to the nursery, there is a particular need for a greater emphasis on this area of learning in the Foundation Stage. This should include more opportunities for exploration, observation, problem solving, decision making and discussion; and the development

of an environment with a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, to stimulate children's interest and curiosity.

Physical development

77. Children's physical development on entry to the nursery is below average and remains below average at the end of the reception year.
78. Children in the nursery improve their hand-eye co-ordination and their manipulative skills, for example, as they pour water from one container into another; when using construction toys and play-dough; and when painting, cutting and drawing. They particularly enjoyed working with an adult helper as they squeezed a cornflour and water mixture through their fingers. In the reception class, children show that they are aware of their space in relation to others when moving around the hall and when playing outdoors. Most respond appropriately to rhythm in the course of dance, moving freely with pleasure and confidence and can stop with precision when asked. Children in the reception class demonstrate increasing control, for example, when balancing wooden blocks with precision in the course of their model making, when using tools to make patterns on clay and when moving their hands in response to Indian music. Activities on the hard play areas, and in the adventure playground, help pupils to control their movements through a growing awareness of the speed and direction in which they travel. Children in both classes learn how to keep themselves healthy in the course of 'snack time', when they are given fruit to eat. They also know the importance of washing their hands before they eat and after they have been to the toilet.
79. The quality of teaching for children's physical development is satisfactory in the reception class but unsatisfactory in the nursery. In the reception class, teaching actively promotes children's physical development. For example, in the course of a dance lesson, the teacher talked with the children about their actions and encouraged them to explore different ways of representing their ideas as they moved. There were opportunities for them to repeat and change their actions so that they could think about them, refine and improve them. There are daily opportunities for children to play outside and a satisfactory range of playground markings and equipment is used to encourage children to move in different ways. Regular use of the adventure playground ensures that children develop increasing control in using the equipment for balancing, climbing and jumping. Although small equipment was available in the reception playground, there was no use of wheeled toys during the inspection because of the proximity of building work. Although it has its own outdoor area and an appropriate range of resources, there are insufficient opportunities for regular and frequent physical activity outdoors in the nursery. There is an over emphasis on instructional and controlled tasks which limit opportunities for children to try out their own ideas, think for themselves and work collaboratively with others. Interaction between staff and children is limited during the course of activities and, as a consequence, opportunities to help children to use the vocabulary of manipulation, movement and direction are missed. One session in the school hall was judged to be unsatisfactory because of the inappropriate nature of the activities for these very young children.
80. The school recognises that more needs to be done to develop the outdoor area, but this is mainly focused on the reception class facilities. The plan should be broadened to include the nursery. There is a particular need to ensure that nursery children have regular and frequent access to outdoor physical activities which provide well planned opportunities for them to think for themselves, develop their own ideas and work

together. Adult interaction should focus not only on the development of physical skills, but also on helping children to develop the vocabulary to describe them.

Creative development

81. Children's creative development is below average on entry to the nursery and remains below average at the end of the reception year.
82. Children in the reception class make satisfactory progress in painting and enjoy mixing it to create different colours to represent different shades. They enjoy working with materials such as clay and other natural materials to build three dimensional objects. For example, children have visited a wood and made imaginative sculptures using the twigs, leaves and sticks that they found there. They respond well to opportunities to express their ideas when singing and moving to music. A good lesson was seen in which the children responded with enthusiasm and enjoyment to Indian music, energetically copying and then embellishing the movements demonstrated by the teacher. They learn a range of songs by heart, sing them enthusiastically at an early stage and accompany themselves with appropriate movements and mimes. Children act out familiar experiences and stories when they play in the home corner and use the small world equipment. Their ability to make up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play areas and small world equipment is at an earlier stage of development, however, and is mainly inhibited by their skills in using language to converse with others, sequence their ideas and confirm their thinking. Children in the nursery begin to know about different colours and make different marks and movements on paper. They create different textures and effects when making collages and enjoy making patterns with chalk when drawing in the outdoor area. They particularly enjoy joining in with favourite songs, and are developing a good repertoire as a result of some good teaching by a parent who visits the nursery for the purpose on a regular basis.
83. Teaching for creative development is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good in the reception class. There are a range of opportunities for children to explore colour and texture in painting and to experiment with materials, both man made and in the natural world. There are good opportunities for children to learn about art from other cultures, for example they have created Mendhi and Rangoli patterns as part of their work on Diwali. They have also made traditional lamps out of clay and marked them with imaginative patterns. There is satisfactory consideration of the props that are needed to promote imaginative role play. For example, a selection of Indian clothes, decorations and a doorstep were effective in promoting children's imaginative preparations for a Diwali party. The teacher actively worked alongside children in the course of creating a setting in which to act out the story of Rama and Sita, and this was effective in helping the children to extend their ideas and the language that they needed to tell the story.
84. In the nursery, there are satisfactory opportunities for children to make collages, to use a range of pre-cut materials and paper, and to work with paint. There is some use of small animals and toys in the sand and water play areas but their purpose is not always clear from planning and there is insufficient development of children's imaginative ideas in these areas, through adult interaction. The role-play area has few 'props' to help children to develop their ideas beyond what they already know and insufficient consideration is given to the provision of settings, other than a 'home corner', which might more actively involve boys in role play. Overall, the activities that are offered give insufficient opportunities for children to use all their senses and express their creativity in a sufficient range of ways; and the environment is not

sufficiently stimulating. As a consequence, teaching for creative development is unsatisfactory.

ENGLISH

85. On entry to Year 1, the communication, language and literacy skills of most pupils are below average for their age, and those of a minority are well below average.
86. During Years 1 and 2, pupils make mainly sound, and occasionally good progress in relation to their starting points. Given the profile of attainment on entry, it is not entirely surprising that the school's results in the national tests for pupils aged seven should have been below the national average in both reading and writing for the last four years. Nonetheless, in 2002, the school's results for pupils aged seven were broadly in line with those of similar schools, while the results of national tests in English for pupils aged 11 not only matched the national average but were well above the average results of similar schools and represented a significant improvement on the results for the previous two years. Inspection findings and the school's own assessments show that, irrespective of their starting points, most pupils make good, and sometimes very good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. There are, however, considerable variations in the numbers of lower attaining and higher attaining pupils in different year groups, and also in the numbers of pupils who have special educational needs. These variations are clearly evident in the school's own assessments of pupils' performance and are likely to be reflected, year on year, in the results of national tests. Attainment in the current Year 2 cohort is below average overall in both reading and writing, and, in spite of the good progress made in lessons in Years 3 to 6, the overall attainment of the current Year 6 cohort remains slightly below average. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils may not be making the progress of which they are capable, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well in Years 3 to 6 where they benefit from consistently good teaching, and a few attain standards which are above average for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school. As a consequence, they make consistently good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans and steady, though sometimes slow, progress in relation to the criteria used to define National Curriculum levels.
87. Certain aspects of pupils' work are strengths throughout their time in the school. For example, from Year 1 onwards, pupils listen well. They are interested in what their teachers and other pupils have to say, follow instructions without needing to be reminded and, with rare exceptions, sustain concentration well, even during quite lengthy discussions. Most pupils also make good progress in developing confidence as speakers. On entry to Year 1, many pupils say little during discussion, or, when they do, find it difficult to express their answers clearly, but most pupils in Year 6 have overcome many of the difficulties that beset them in earlier years. In particular, they have acquired a broad range of technical terms related to many subjects, and this means that they are able to talk confidently about what they have learned. Handwriting and the presentation of written work are also strengths, especially in work in English, although not all pupils manage to sustain the highest standards of presentation in all subjects and at all times.
88. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to read, understand and respond to literature and other texts appropriate for their age. For example, having read extracts from Anne Frank's diary, pupils in one Year 6 class wrote moving letters, as if to Anne herself, empathising with her experiences and reflecting on how they themselves

might have coped in her situation. In the parallel Year 6 class, pupils wrote powerful descriptions which brought to life the images seen in the moments when the first member of a boarding party braved the storm to scale the side of the 'Marie-Celeste'. In other work seen, pupils showed that they could not only identify the key features of different kinds of writing such as advertisements, information and instructional texts, but could also generate similar writing of their own. Most pupils in Year 6 have mastered basic punctuation and sentence structure, and their written work, in spite of some other weaknesses, usually reads aloud well.

89. No less a strength, though different in kind, is the way in which pupils of all ages and abilities respond to lessons and to the tasks they are given. With very rare exceptions, pupils try hard to follow discussions and to apply what they have been taught.
90. There are, however, certain weaknesses which characterise the work of many younger pupils and which are also found in the work of a minority of older pupils. For example, some weaker readers are able to draw on only a narrow range of reading strategies, and their awareness of phonics is often too limited to help them work out more than the initial sound of unfamiliar words when reading. For the same reason, many pupils struggle to build words and to record their ideas in writing, and many pieces of writing are unfinished. When reading, some lower attaining pupils, in particular, find it hard to understand 'hidden' meanings in text, and only the few most able pupils are able to give precise and relevant evidence from texts to justify their opinions about its quality or to answer challenging questions about its content and ideas. A significant number of pupils of all ages are insufficiently aware of the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English which results in pupils' use of grammar often being inappropriate or inaccurate. In some cases, the style of pupils' written work, although coherent, is stilted because they have not mastered the construction of complex sentences, a skill which would improve the 'flow' and readability of their writing and which would enable them to give variety and 'texture' to their written work. Sometimes, too, otherwise competent writing lacks impact partly because it lacks detail, and partly because the writer is unable to draw on a rich general vocabulary. The school has already identified, and has plans to address, weaknesses in spelling and in pupils' use of library skills.
91. The teaching of English is mainly sound and sometimes good in lessons observed in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is consistently good, and occasionally very good. Generally speaking, individual lessons are delivered well. All teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, and they make sure that pupils know what they are expected to do and to learn. All teachers have established good relationships with their pupils, so that learning proceeds within an atmosphere where there is mutual trust. Pupils are valued as individuals. Teachers work hard to make sure that all pupils play a full part in lessons and that each child's self-esteem is promoted. Lesson plans include appropriately differentiated tasks and indicate additional support for those pupils whose needs make such measures necessary or helpful. Teachers choose resources and plan activities carefully. They try hard to make lessons interesting and enjoyable, and they use methods which are designed to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn what they are intended to learn. The organisation and management of pupils and of their behaviour are always at least good, and often very good. Support staff and other adult helpers are well briefed about what pupils are intended to learn, and their interaction with pupils is effective.
92. In the best lessons seen, in Years 5 and 6, teachers' knowledge and understanding of English as a subject are very secure. As a consequence, their teaching is very well

informed, and they have the expertise and confidence to respond to opportunities for learning as they arise in the course of a lesson, as well as to address the topics and skills which have been planned beforehand. However, although all teachers present good role models for spoken language and for reading aloud, only the most confident teachers engage pupils effectively in the development of 'shared writing'. There are some very good examples of teachers engaging the pupils themselves in the evaluation and improvement of their own and others' written work, again, most notably, in Years 5 and 6. However, evidence from the lessons seen and from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that this practice, so useful a tool in raising pupils' awareness of ways in which they might achieve high standards, is by no means a common feature of teaching across the school as a whole.

93. In some lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and in written comments in pupils' exercise books, teachers often use praise appropriately to raise pupils' self-esteem but stop short of giving them the advice they need to do even better. In a similar way, teachers in several year groups encourage lower attaining pupils, many of whom find writing difficult, to respond to tasks first by drawing and only later by writing a few words, dictating sentences for an adult to scribe and copying them, or, at most, writing a sentence or two independently. This practice means, in effect, that those pupils most in need of writing practice do least. While teachers of older pupils use 'model texts' to show pupils how writing of high quality is achieved and to directly influence their own writing, the scrutiny of work shows that, overall, teachers of younger pupils place too much emphasis on skills-based worksheets and on exercises which do not make best use of the links between reading and writing.
94. In a more general sense, the impact of teaching on pupils' attainment and progress across the school is weakened by a lack of coherence and progression in the teaching of reading strategies, including phonic awareness. There is also a lack of consistency in the provision of one-to-one support from an adult for those pupils who are poor at reading. Mediation to help pupils develop a wide general vocabulary, to understand and use the 'grammar of writing' or the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English is not always forthcoming and this restricts pupils' progress. Additionally, many young pupils who have already learned how to write and demarcate sentences accurately, and who would benefit from learning how to construct complex sentences, are not receiving the help they need to do so. Evidence suggests that some teachers may not feel secure about teaching this particular skill.
95. The English co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject for the past year. During this time, she has worked very hard, with the full support of the headteacher, to set in place policies and procedures that provide suitable guidance for staff and for the work of the school in relation to English. She has observed lessons in order to appraise herself of relative strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. With the headteacher, she has undertaken a rigorous analysis of assessment data, including that provided by the local education authority and based on pupils' performance in national tests. She is a very good role model in her own teaching, and she is therefore well placed to influence practice and to help staff to raise standards. She is fortunate in working with staff who, at all levels, are also dedicated and hard-working, and who hold pupils' best interests at heart. When account is taken of the low starting points of many children on entry, the mainly good progress already made by pupils throughout their time in the school testifies to the combined and sustained efforts of all staff and pupils. Inspection evidence suggests that there remains some scope for improvement, most significantly in those areas outlined in this report.

96. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' library skills were judged to be underdeveloped, largely because the school lacked adequate library provision. This remains the case, although a new, purpose-built library was under construction at the time of inspection. Plans for its organisation and management and for the purchase of appropriate resources are in hand, and this new feature should add considerably to pupils' learning experiences when it is completed. In other respects, resources for English are adequate. Links between subjects are used to very good effect by many teachers to develop pupils' language skills. For example, a Year 5 lesson on democracy in ancient Greece involved pupils in a well constructed debate, while a focus on the use of adjectives in a physical education lesson helped pupils to interpret a poem into a dance. There are also many good examples of powerful writing based on historical themes, although the practice of using worksheets to record what has been learned sometimes constrains pupils' opportunities for writing in some lessons. Information and communication technology is often used well to support the learning of basic skills, and for the retrieval of information, but there is scope to extend its use more widely, particularly for the drafting and editing of written work.

MATHEMATICS

97. On entry to Year 1, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average. However, there are variations between different year groups which mean that some are well below average. Since the last OFSTED inspection, the school's Year 2 statutory test results have mainly been below average when compared with all schools nationally; and well below average in 2001 because of the larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this particular year group. However, the overall 2002 national test results were in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools. The percentage of pupils demonstrating above average standards for their ages was also close to the national average.
98. Inspection findings show that in Years 1 and 2 pupils with special educational needs make good overall progress; while most other pupils make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress from their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. However, the overall standards achieved by the current Year 2 pupils are below national expectations because, although the majority of pupils reach the expected standard in mathematics, relatively few do better. The 1998 report also identified significant variations in attainment amongst different year groups but, at that time, pupils' attainment at the age of seven was judged to be in line with national expectations. Pupils steadily acquire key numeracy skills and demonstrate a growing understanding of shape, length, weight, capacity and time. For example, in an effective Year 1 lesson, pupils made good progress when singing number rhymes and using number 'fans' to extend their understanding of numbers up to 30; and in developing their understanding and use of the vocabulary related to time.
99. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils are extending and consolidating their knowledge and understanding of place value and are learning to employ the correct number operations when making calculations. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson taught by the assistant headteacher, pupils made good progress as they recorded 'lots of', 'groups of' and 'sets of' on arrays and pegboards in order to develop their understanding of the concept of multiplication as repeated addition. As a result of skilful teaching, pupils demonstrated a growing understanding, and familiarity with the use of, the multiplication symbol. They learned, for example, that $2 \times 3 = 3 + 3 = 2 + 2 + 2 = 3 \times 2 = 6$.

100. At the end of Year 6, the school's overall statutory test results have mainly been close to the national average since 1999. In 2002, the school's results were in line with the national average and well above the average results of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving above average standards in 2002 was a little above the national average. However, the current Year 6 classes include a relatively high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, who had a very low starting point in Year 1. As a consequence, pupils' overall attainment is a little below average. In 1998, pupils' attainment, at the age of 11, was judged to meet the nationally expected standards.
101. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, make mainly good progress in relation to their starting points. They are developing a secure understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space; and can handle data. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils used their understanding of multiplication tables to solve money problems. Following practice in the rapid recall of the two, five and ten times tables during the introduction to the lesson, pupils then applied this knowledge to calculate the smallest number of coins required to make, for example, 56p or for more confident pupils, £2.34. In Year 4, pupils in a lower ability set made good progress in learning how to use strategies such as 'double and double again' to support their calculations when solving $\times 4$ problems. Pupils in Year 5 made good use of ICT to extend their understanding of rotation and symmetry as they manipulated shapes to create attractive designs. In a Year 5/6 lesson, very good teaching enabled pupils to build on their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and metric measures of length in order to calculate the perimeter of regular and simple compound shapes; and to discover quick methods of calculating perimeters. By the end of the lesson, most pupils could, for example, mentally calculate the length of each side of a regular hexagon given a total perimeter of 36 cms or the perimeter of a regular octagon whose sides measure 4 cms.
102. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good; while in Years 3 to 6, it is mainly good and never less than sound. Teachers' planning takes account of guidance contained in the National Numeracy Strategy and the recommended three-part numeracy lesson is the structure on which lessons are securely based. Learning objectives are clearly defined and are appropriately shared with pupils, usually at the beginning of lessons. Resources are well prepared and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Teaching assistants are carefully briefed and provide good support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers usually ensure that sufficient time is left at the end of numeracy lessons to summarise key ideas and vocabulary, and these sessions provide a satisfactory conclusion. A well-equipped computer suite has been established in the last 12 months and teachers are beginning to make good use of ICT to extend pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.
103. All teachers know their pupils well and this ensures that the work set is carefully matched to their needs. They make good use of day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to inform their short term planning and of 'end of unit' testing to check on the progress of individual pupils each half term. The results of statutory testing in Years 2 and 6, and of a range of other standardised tests, are also evaluated in order to monitor the development of pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge over a longer period of time. Good use is made of ICT to track the performance of individuals and of specific groups of pupils. Assessment information is also used effectively in Years 3 to 6 to 'set' pupils for mathematics teaching and this also ensures that the tasks they undertake provide an appropriate level of challenge. 'Springboard' and 'Booster'

programmes are also used to enhance the achievements of those pupils who need additional support.

104. In the more effective lessons, teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of them. There is a good pace to these lessons, particularly in the mental/oral starter, and teachers use skilful, differentiated, questioning to probe pupils understanding and to extend their thinking. Across the school, pupils are given some opportunities to offer their methods and solutions for discussion but there is scope to extend this good practice. In Years 1 and 2, there is also room for teachers to improve the pace of some lessons and to have higher expectations of pupils' work rate.
105. The co-ordinator benefited from initial National Numeracy Strategy training and has appropriately led staff training sessions in mathematics. She monitors teachers' planning and conscientiously analyses the outcomes of statutory and other tests used by the school to monitor pupils' progress. The results of this analysis have been disseminated to staff in order to help them to identify strengths and any weaknesses in pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding, across the school. A helpful action plan for the subject has been formulated by the co-ordinator and this identifies priorities for the development of mathematics during the current school year. The headteacher has observed the teaching of mathematics in all year groups and has provided valuable feedback to teachers. Plans for the co-ordinator to undertake some observations of teaching during the current term have had to be delayed because of her absence through illness.
106. Resources for the subject are good.

SCIENCE

107. On entry to Year 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average. Indeed, there are variations in some year groups which mean that some are well below average.
108. The results of the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2, in 2002, were an improvement on those achieved in 2001, and were broadly in line with the national average in relation to the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard. However, the percentage exceeding this level was below the national average. In Year 6, the 2002 results were also higher than those achieved in 2001, and were in line with the national average and well above the average results of similar schools.
109. Inspection findings show that most pupils reach the expected level in science in Year 2 but few do better. While overall standards are consequently below the national average, pupils' achievements are sound in Year 2 in relation to their mainly low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress increases and is mainly good. In 2002, this good achievement was clearly demonstrated in the statutory test results in Year 6 which matched the national average. However, current standards in the Year 6 classes are a little below national expectations. This is not due to weaknesses in the teaching of these pupils or in their progress in learning. It stems from the nature of the particular year group which includes a high proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties, and had a very low overall starting point in Year 1.
110. In Year 1, most pupils understand there are a range of sources of light. They benefit from simple investigations which show that objects cannot be seen without the

presence of light although a significant proportion find it difficult to explain their findings clearly. Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress when learning about their senses; and can identify and name the main external parts of the human body. In Year 2, pupils understand that different living things can be found in different habitats but there is no evidence of the higher attainers learning how some creatures are adapted to their environments. Year 2 pupils make sound progress when identifying the properties of common materials, and learn that some materials change when they are heated. However, many are unsure about which materials occur naturally and which do not, and some do not understand that a melted solid, such as chocolate, can be returned to its original state.

111. In Year 3, pupils make good progress when conducting simple experiments to test the strengths of different fabrics and the absorbency of a range of paper towels. Year 3 pupils are given ample opportunities to learn about magnetism, and are introduced to appropriate vocabulary such as 'attract' and 'repel'. After guidance from their teacher, Year 3 pupils are able to make sensible predictions about the relative strengths of different magnets, and enjoy testing them by counting the number of paper clips each can attract. However, many pupils have yet to develop their early understanding of the importance of fair-testing, and this affects their results. In Year 4, pupils achieve well when learning about the human skeleton, and know where ball and socket and hinge joints are located in the body. They can create simple electrical circuits, and can interpret pictorial diagrams to decide whether circuits will work. Most can use the correct symbols when drawing their own circuits, and all are aware of the potential dangers of electricity.
112. In Year 5, pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the need for exercise. They make good progress when learning about the function of the heart, and can create simple graphs to show the effects of exercise on the pulse rate. In an effective lesson seen during the inspection, Year 5 pupils achieved well when investigating whether the length, thickness or tightness of string changes the pitch of the sound which the string can produce. These pupils demonstrate satisfactory enquiry skills and have appropriate scientific knowledge and understanding for their ages. They are on course to at least match the nationally expected standards in science in the national tests next year when they are in Year 6. In the current Year 6 classes, pupils are progressing well but overall standards are a little below average, as stated earlier. They make good progress when learning about the function of the parts of a plant, and can identify organs such as stamen and stigma. They also understand that feeding relationships exist between animals and plants in a habitat, describing them with terms such as predator, prey and food chains. Year 6 pupils are given good opportunities to develop their investigation skills, for example through tasks to separate materials from mixtures, including by sieving, filtration and evaporation. However, many are not fully secure about how to conduct systematic investigations which take enough account of the need for fair-testing. A relatively small proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 classes demonstrate standards which exceed those expected nationally, and the learning difficulties of a significant number mean their scientific skills and knowledge are understandably below average, despite the effective teaching they receive.
113. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 to 6. As a consequence, pupils make mainly sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in the older classes. When the school was last inspected, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, so there are clear improvements in Years 3 to 6.

114. Teachers' planning is mainly good, across the school, and they generally make effective use of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. When the school was last inspected, planning did not secure the systematic development of pupils' key skills in the subject but this is no longer the case. On occasions, however, there is an over use of commercially produced worksheets in the youngest classes, some of which benefit pupils' learning very little. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in most classes and is otherwise sound. Scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced effectively. Almost all teachers engage pupils' attention well, provide clear explanations, and make effective use of questions to probe pupils' understanding. On rare occasions, pupils in the younger classes need more opportunities to express their ideas. In one lesson, they made unsatisfactory progress because the teaching did not engage their interest sufficiently and they were unclear about what to do. In Years 3 to 6, in particular, effective use is made of the time available in lessons and pupils are often working at the edge of their capabilities. Sound opportunities are provided for teachers to use ICT to support their learning in science. Procedures for assessment in science are good, overall, and teachers keep useful records of pupils' progress. The relationship between teachers and pupils is a particular strength in the school and has a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes to learning in science.
115. The science co-ordinator is highly conscientious and is well informed. She studies the results of teacher assessments and statutory test results carefully, and has analysed samples of pupils' work. As a consequence, she has a sound overview of pupils' achievements in the subject. Time has been set aside for the co-ordinator to observe science teaching during this academic year, and this will help to inform further the advice she already provides for her colleagues. The co-ordinator arranged a very successful 'science week' in the school earlier this year, and the event included a wide range of opportunities which benefited pupils' learning. Resources for science are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

116. As a result of timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any art and design lessons during the inspection and, consequently, there is insufficient evidence to form a judgement about the overall quality of teaching. However, evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils make good progress in this subject and standards are in line with those expected by the time that they reach the end of Years 2 and Year 6.
117. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to develop their ideas creatively and imaginatively by exploring the visual and tactile qualities of an appropriate range of media and materials. They have a sound awareness of the role of art and design in their environment as a result of their observations of the natural and the material world. For example, they have looked closely at the shapes of fruit and considered how they might be depicted using two-dimensional media and utilising overlapping techniques to create effect. They have linked this to the work of William Morris and then developed their own ideas further by making repeating pattern; and have also used a range of materials such as leaves and twigs to enhance their designs. They are beginning to understand how to use colour, shape, space and pattern to represent their ideas and feelings. For example, they have looked closely at patterns in buildings, taken digital photographs of parts of their school and then manipulated these images on computers to create patterns, prior to incorporating them into collages that they have designed with others.

118. Pupils develop their skills in drawing and painting well and, as a result, produce increasingly interesting visual effects using lines, shading and different tones of colour. For example, pupils in Year 2 have used view finders to capture the way objects can be seen from different perspectives and have then drawn what they saw. In Year 3, pupils have made still life drawings of their classmates and succeeded in capturing broadly correct proportions. By the time they reach Year 5, they set up their own still life arrangements and produce realistic impressions of their form, colour and perspective using pastels and paint.
119. Pupils also engage in more complex activities to develop their creative and imaginative ideas. They improve the control of their materials, tools and techniques, often combining several materials or the use of more than one technique or process. In Year 3 for example, they have produced repeating patterns using both stencilling and block printing. Year 5 pupils have produced some imaginative three-dimensional paper and card sculptures using 'quilling', 'folding' and 'fringing' techniques. In Year 6 pupils have used a range of techniques to create collages with textiles to depict ancient myths and legends.
120. Although overall standards are similar to the last inspection, there have been considerable improvements in the standards of three-dimensional work as a result of the very good leadership and management of the co-ordinator. She is well qualified in art and design and has sustained its development through the provision of training and ongoing checks on standards, teaching and learning. She has a clear view of the school's strengths and the areas that need to be improved and ensures that there is clear direction to the school's work. A secure scheme of work, which is based on the guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, supports teachers' planning effectively. This ensures that pupils have access to a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject which are developed progressively throughout the school. The scheme has been recently reviewed and the co-ordinator has developed an ingenious way of helping teachers to use it more flexibly. Assessment in the subject has been recently reviewed and improved to ensure that it helps teachers to keep track of pupils' progress in a manageable format.
121. The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' progress in art and design. For example, there are good links with a local artist who has visited the school and talked about her landscape paintings. A local potter has also visited the school to work with the pupils. Opportunities for pupils to learn about art are also developed well through visits to galleries. An 'Arts Week' made a very effective contribution to the promotion of art throughout the school because of the opportunities that it gave for pupils to meet and work with visiting artists and to explore a wide range of media and techniques.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory in the subject, across the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2, but have improved in the older classes where they were below national expectations in 1998.
123. In Year 1, pupils benefit from learning about food hygiene and how to prepare and present fruit salads. They have a range of appropriate opportunities to develop their skills in using scissors and in joining paper and card. In Year 2, pupils have examined a range of commercially made puppets, and identified the main characteristics of effective puppets. They make good progress when creating their own designs for puppets which reflect their discussions about success criteria, and are able to reflect

carefully on the kinds of materials they could use. Year 2 pupils are able to make simple paper templates from their puppet designs, and make sensible comments about the elements of their work they particularly like and those which could be improved. These pupils make sound progress when learning simple sewing skills; and clearly enjoy their design and technology lessons.

124. In Year 3, pupils make sound progress when examining food packaging, and have used their ICT skills effectively to create nets for their own boxes. Evidence from pupils' completed work also shows Year 3 pupils make sound progress when designing their own sandwich snacks, and achieve satisfactory standards when making models which incorporate simple pneumatics. Year 4 pupils examine torches and discover how they are constructed. They make sound progress when designing and making their own torches using recycled materials and simple electrical circuits. They also demonstrate satisfactory standards when creating pop-up pictures. Year 5 pupils have sampled a range of breads and assessed each bread in relation to its taste, appearance, smell and texture. They have learned to make their own special breads, and have made sensible evaluations of the success of their products. In Year 6, pupils make sound progress when analysing a range of shelters, including the local bus shelter, and creating their own designs for shelters. They achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages when creating frameworks for their model shelters, and use appropriate techniques to reinforce the structure.
125. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe two lessons in design and technology during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work provides secure evidence that the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning in design and technology. Teachers' planning is thorough and ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to develop key skills in the subject, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. In the two lessons seen, the teachers demonstrated subject knowledge which was at least satisfactory, and they provided pupils with well judged advice and instruction throughout the sessions.
126. The conscientious design and technology co-ordinator has worked effectively to improve provision in the subject since the last inspection. She has increased her own expertise and has provided in-service training for her colleagues to raise their confidence and skills. She has formulated a policy for the subject and introduced the good scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. A useful system for assessing pupils' progress and standards in design and technology is now being used; and the co-ordinator has a sound overview of the standards in the school. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall.

GEOGRAPHY

127. As a result of timetabling arrangements, only three geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence gained from these, from a scrutiny of teachers' planning, and from discussions with staff and pupils. A valuable 'Geography Evidence File' compiled by the co-ordinator, and containing examples of pupils' work from each year group, also provides a good overview of pupils' achievements in this subject.
128. As they enter Year 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are mainly below the standard expected. In Years 1 and 2, they make mainly good, and otherwise sound, progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of places,

patterns and processes; and they achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages. Year 1 pupils undertake valuable fieldwork when they visit the immediate area around the school and discuss features such as roads, shops, the church and houses. They also conduct a traffic survey and begin to understand environmental issues when they consider the advantages and disadvantages of motor transport. These younger pupils are also introduced to the plans and make simple maps of their own, for example, of their journey to school. The theme of travel is appropriately established in Year 1 and extended in later years as pupils follow the movements of 'Barnaby' a toy teddy bear. Photographs and postcards, often linked to world maps, show the progress of 'Barnaby' who travels extensively around the world with the help of parents and teachers. Through their interest in 'Barnaby', pupils deepen their understanding of the notion of travel and begin to develop their awareness of the similarities and differences between other countries and their own. Year 2 pupils successfully build on fieldwork undertaken in Year 1 when they visit Porthcawl for a day to compare and contrast this seaside town with Great Malvern. They benefit from a well organised visit which promotes their investigative skills, geographical vocabulary and understanding of a different locality. Environmental issues are given consideration in relation to 'Blue Flag' beaches as well as patterns of employment and physical features such as cliffs, bays, beaches and sand dunes. Year 2 pupils are also able to compare their own locality and another when they are introduced to 'Katie Morag's Island Stories' which are based on life on the tiny island of Struay. They make good progress in developing their knowledge of key geographical features and understanding of life on an island.

129. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in geography. The majority achieve average standards in Year 6 and some do even better, which is a similar judgement to that made in the last OFSTED inspection. Year 3 pupils explore ways of improving their immediate environment through a unit of work entitled 'Through the Window'; and extend their understanding about patterns of settlements as part of their work on 'Village Settlers'. Mapping skills are further developed as pupils learn to recognise the need for map symbols, and for grids and co-ordinates, in order to locate places and features. Pupils in this year group also undertake studies of weather around the world which enable them to begin to offer observations about locations and patterns, for example, areas of the world where there are particular types of climate. In Year 4, pupils build on their growing understanding of their own locality to make comparisons with the contrasting locality of Chembakolli in India. They appropriately contrast their own lives with those of people living in a distant country, overseas, as comparisons between life in the village of Chembakolli and in the city of Bombay are explored. Good use is made of ICT to access weather information to inform pupils about the different seasons in India and of the importance of the monsoon season in particular. Year 4 pupils also make good progress in developing their geographical enquiry skills as they undertake surveys around the school as part of their work on improving the environment.
130. In Year 5, pupils extend their knowledge of the importance of the water cycle when they visit the Bishopswood Environmental Centre and engage in valuable practical activities. As with previous year groups, these pupils also benefit from valuable fieldwork, in this case at Castlemorton Common. They make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the main features of a river's course as it descends towards the sea and of the geographical vocabulary associated with rivers. Global aspects are also considered as pupils investigate the oceans of the world and important rivers such as the Nile. In Year 6, pupils make good progress in their studies of mountain environments. Through research, which includes the use of ICT, globes, atlases and maps, they investigate places in the UK, Europe and further

afield that share a similar physical environment. Pairs of pupils, using ICT to enhance presentation, then produce attractive information booklets. In these, pupils appropriately include their observations, for example, about what these places are like, how the weather compares in each, what effect the weather has on tourism and what effect tourism might have on their chosen areas. They also extend their global awareness through collectively covering important mountain areas such as the Andes, Rocky Mountains and Himalayas. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also being introduced to local, national and world-wide issues, through a study of 'What's in the News,' in order to develop a critical and growing awareness of important issues which affect their lives and those of others. At present, older pupils have the opportunity to carry out fieldwork during visits to the Malvern Field Centre but the school is appropriately considering the introduction of an annual residential visit to a contrasting location in the UK.

131. It is not possible to make a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching in geography. However, the three lessons which were observed during the inspection were judged to be good. Evidence obtained from photographs, and during the inspection, shows that teachers promote the subject well through attractive displays which stimulate pupils' interest in the subject. Helpful guidance, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, has been adapted to suit the needs of the pupils at the school and is used effectively to inform teachers' planning. This is having a positive impact on classroom practice and helps to secure progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
132. Geography has been designated a priority subject for development over the last 12 months and the co-ordinator has used this to very good effect. She provides excellent leadership for the subject and has ensured that pupils in all year groups benefit from an emphasis on geographical enquiry and skills, knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes and the understanding of environmental change and sustainable development. The co-ordinator is very well informed and some of her work at the school has recently been acknowledged in 'Primary Geographer' a national Geographical Association publication. She has observed teaching in a number of classes and has provided helpful feedback to teachers; and organised an in-service training day aimed at developing pupils' thinking skills through an enquiry approach to geography. A file of pupils' work from all year groups has also been conscientiously compiled and this provides evidence of continuity and progression throughout the school and of the standards which pupils achieve. The additional funding available to the co-ordinator during the last year has enabled her to fully resource the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority units of work that are used in the school and, overall, resources for the subject are good.

HISTORY

133. During the inspection, lessons were observed in Years 4, 5 and 6. Timetabling arrangements meant the subject was not being taught in Years 1 to 3. However, teachers' planning was scrutinised and a careful examination of pupils' work was undertaken. The latter indicates that, at the age of seven, most pupils achieve standards which match national expectations. At the time of the last inspection, standards were unsatisfactory in Year 1 but this is no longer the case. Standards have improved as historical skills are now systematically developed from an early age. This is as a result of the implementation of a new scheme of work that ensures that pupils make steady progress, building on their prior knowledge and understanding. There is good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs

within all lessons, where they receive appropriate support to enable them to do the same tasks as their peers and make good progress.

134. The last inspection judged pupils' achievements to be above national expectations in Year 6 and, currently, the standards attained by pupils in Years 4 to 6 are also above average. Their skills of historical enquiry are well developed, and pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the periods of history they are studying. They have a good sense of chronology and identify changes over time, and the reasons why such changes have occurred. For example, pupils in Year 6, look at maps of the local area and note how the town has developed. They investigate why different kinds of buildings, such as shops and hotels, have been constructed as a result of the supposed healing powers of the local water. Pupils in Year 4, have a good knowledge of the Tudor period, and have a good understanding of the character of Henry VIII, and why he acted as he did. Throughout these year groups pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, as a result of the infectious enthusiasm of the teachers, and this encourages the pupils to want to learn. This thirst for knowledge ensures that these pupils make good progress.
135. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was consistently good, with some very good features. All teachers have good subject knowledge, and use a variety of resources well to develop the pupils' historical skills. Teachers plan an exciting variety of activities to interest and motivate the pupils. A range of very successful methods is used to bring the subject alive. For example, in Year 5 the pupils engaged in a lively debate about the proposition for the ancient Greeks to spend money on rebuilding a temple. Pupils prepared their reasoned arguments for and against well, based on their good knowledge and understanding of the period. The teacher set the scene very well, and encouraged the pupils to act as members of the Athenian assembly. Role play was very effectively used to make the pupils very aware of this early form of democracy, and then good links were made with the democratic procedures of today. Teachers enhance pupils' literacy skills very well, and these are used to heighten understanding of particular periods of history. For example, pupils use empathetic writing creatively to describe the lives of Victorian children. Pupils are encouraged to use colourful language to describe the life of an overworked maid. For example, one pupil wrote 'I feel wheezy and dehydrated and I don't think I shall live long' to give a real sense of despair. Learning opportunities are greatly enhanced when pupils visit local museums, and experience the rigours of the Victorian schoolroom, make wattle and daub walls used in Tudor times, and study the rich local environment. Very good use is made of the curriculum time allocated for the subject to ensure that pupils attain good knowledge and understanding of historical facts as well as developing their skills.
136. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a good overview of the subject. She has started to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject by observing teaching and scrutinising pupils' work, to ensure that standards continue to rise. Arrangements are in place to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of units of work, and these are well used to check pupils' achievements against National Curriculum levels. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and the school has a good range of artefacts for the pupils to handle. Satisfactory use is made of ICT when pupils access the Internet to find out about their historical topics. The positive leadership of the subject, the consistently good teaching, and the very good attitudes of the pupils ensure that pupils achieve well in history and attain above average standards by the time they leave the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. In the last inspection, provision and attainment for ICT, were found to be satisfactory. Since then, the school has made very good progress in updating its curriculum and resources to ensure that it meets current requirements. The subject is extremely well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has put into place a very secure curriculum framework and ensured that all staff have received training. As a result, teaching in the subject is now good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and ensures that pupils make good progress.
138. Most pupils achieve the standards that are expected of them by the end of Year 2 and have a sound grasp of the basic skills. This provides a firm foundation for their work in Years 3 to 6. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils use computers with enthusiasm and confidence. Standards are in line with those expected for their age in all aspects of the subject, and sometimes they are a little above. Although this judgement is similar to that of the last inspection, it needs to be borne in mind that the technology involved has moved on and consequently the curriculum requirements for ICT are now more demanding. In reality, pupils are achieving more than they were four years ago. For example, pupils can now produce multimedia presentations and use sensor equipment effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and benefit from working collaboratively with their 'computer buddies' who are more expert in the use of English. This ensures that they have good access to the curriculum in ICT. All pupils make good use of their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects, including those with special educational needs.
139. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently enter data into the computer and, through a series of instructions, can print out simple charts to show the results. They use ICT to access sources of information, and work well with each other to import it and save it for later access. For example, they have extracted information about animals and their habitats from a CD ROM. They develop their ideas and change images on the screen by placing them in different positions and creating different effects, for example, in using pictures taken with a digital camera. They know how to change the size, colour and styles of fonts; and can apply these skills in the course of their work in English, mathematics, art and science.
140. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their skills and knowledge of an increasing range of ICT applications. In Year 3, they control images on screen to develop their own musical compositions. They develop the use of word processing and by the time they reach Year 4, they also learn about desk top publishing. As part of this work they extract information and pictures from current news stories on the Internet. They refine their skills in using computers to find things out, for example in Year 5, they ask sequences of questions in the course of interrogating data bases. In Year 6 they give a series of instructions to control visual representations of such things as traffic lights to make them work. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have the skills that they need to bring together text, tables, images and sound in the form of multimedia presentations. They make good use of their knowledge of ICT in all aspects of the curriculum. For example, they use sensor equipment to produce graphs of sounds, and an electronic microscope to produce magnified images of fibres.
141. The teaching of ICT is good. All teachers demonstrate a good subject knowledge and a confidence in the use of computers. Lessons are very well prepared and structured. There are clear instructions and demonstrations, using the interactive whiteboard, and this ensures that skills are systematically taught. Pupils are given

relevant and purposeful opportunities to apply their skills throughout the curriculum and this is effective in deepening their understanding.

142. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths of the subject and where it needs to be improved as a result of very good monitoring procedures. The school has benefited from the very good links that have been built with the local technology college. For example, it has made use of the college's ICT suite, borrowed more advanced equipment and has the services of a technician once a week. Assessment procedures are good and the school makes very good use of a commercially produced scheme to support its work. Resources are good.

MUSIC

143. During the inspection, music lessons focused predominantly on pupils' singing, and singing was also heard in assemblies, in a practice session for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and from the choir. In addition, the teaching of recorder playing was observed in a Year 3 class and in lunchtime clubs. As a consequence of the limited breadth of evidence available, it is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' overall standards in music. However, there is ample evidence to show that pupils' singing skills are very good. When the school was last inspected, singing was also a significant strength, while overall standards in music were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
144. Pupils clearly enjoy singing. They retain concentration during sessions, listen carefully to the guidance provided by their teachers and do their best. They understand that they perform well and take pride in their achievements. Nearly all pupils in Years 4 to 6 chose to be part of the choir, demonstrating their enthusiasm. Pupils are taught to pay attention to their breathing and posture when singing, and their diction is clear. In Year 1, most pupils already sing confidently and many are keen to perform short solo pieces in songs. They make very good progress in learning to develop control of pitch and rhythm; and have already learned a good repertoire of songs. In a lesson observed in Year 3, pupils demonstrated their good skills in expressing the mood of songs like 'L'il Liza Jane' and 'Boney was a Warrior'. In a lesson observed in Year 6, pupils performed a range of Victorian songs well, and their rendition of 'Oh Mr Porter' was particularly effective. Across the school, pupils make very good progress when learning to adjust the dynamics of their singing to match the particular requirements of their performance, and the choir achieve very well indeed when singing songs in two parts expressively with very good control of pitch and rhythm. In Year 3, all pupils are learning to play the recorder, and they are achieving well for their ages. Pupils who take part in lunchtime sessions make good progress in recorder playing and the most advanced learners perform well. Across the school, pupils are adept at recognising the beat of recorded music, and use body percussion effectively to accompany the music.
145. The majority of music lessons observed during the inspection were taught by the music co-ordinator, including a lesson for Year 1 pupils, the choir, music practice for Year 1 to Year 6 pupils, and a lunchtime recorder club. The co-ordinator is a key strength and her teaching skills are very good. Her energy, commitment and ability to motivate pupils to continually improve, as well as her excellent subject knowledge, means she makes a vital contribution, particularly in relation to the development of pupils' singing skills. Insufficient lessons taught by other teachers were observed to make a secure overall judgement about the quality of music teaching across the school. However, in the lessons seen, other teachers demonstrated skills which ranged from sound to good. A common feature in all lessons was the ability of

teachers to engage pupils fully in the activities and to make learning an enjoyable experience in music.

146. The music co-ordinator has effective strategies to monitor and develop the subject. For example, she has taught demonstration lessons for her colleagues in most classes, and has observed teaching across the school. She provides her colleagues with well judged advice which benefits their confidence and develops their teaching skills. Visiting specialist teachers teach clarinet, flute and guitar to some pupils, while a significant proportion take part in school productions and perform in music festivals. There are sufficient music resources, and they are well organised.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. During the inspection, no games lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but the work seen in gymnastics and dance indicates that the satisfactory standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are learning to control their bodies well in gymnastics, and perform a sequence of different travelling movements showing clear starting and finishing positions. In dance lessons, pupils interpret music imaginatively and develop sequences of movements to demonstrate strong and light movements using different speeds and levels. They are beginning to look at the efforts of their peers with a critical eye, and make sensible suggestions for improvement. All pupils appreciate the need for exercise and the effect it has on their bodies.
148. In Years 3 to 6, lessons were observed in games, gymnastics and dance. At the time of the last inspection, standards were described as well above average, but during this inspection in all lessons seen pupils attained standards that were above average. Skills are progressively and systematically developed to enable pupils to make good progress. In Year 6, pupils enjoy a wide range of games activities, and benefit from external expert coaching in games such as lacrosse. These oldest pupils can cradle the ball in their nets as they run and pass with increasing accuracy. The most able appreciate the need for rules when playing small games, and understand the notion of fair play well. Good links are made with history in Year 6 when pupils use their dance motifs expressively to demonstrate Victorian street sellers. They use gesture and different modes of travel well to create a dance sequence. In gymnastics lessons, pupils demonstrate precision of movement with very good control of their bodies, and successfully link a range of movements into fluent and controlled sequences. Throughout all lessons pupils are encouraged to critically analyse the work of others so that they can improve their practice.
149. The quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good features in Years 4 to 6 enabling the pupils to make good progress. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, work hard in most lessons, responding well to the high expectations set by the teachers. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are well supported in their planning by a very able co-ordinator. Lessons are jointly planned across the year groups to ensure that all pupils receive the same learning opportunities. Time is generally well used, particularly in Years 4 to 6, to ensure that all lessons have an appropriate warm-up, teaching section, and cool down. However, some lessons in Years 1 and 2 are too long to sustain the pupils' interest at the level that most teachers require; and the pace of learning slows resulting in some inefficient use of time. Teachers manage their pupils well, and health and safety requirements are stressed in all lessons, particularly when pupils are moving apparatus. Good use is made of pupils' demonstration to highlight

teaching points and show good practice. In all lessons, there is very good emphasis on the need for quality movements, and very good opportunities for enhancing pupils' personal development through co-operative partner and small group work. Teachers use praise appropriately and value the work of the pupils, thus engendering pupils' positive attitudes. Skills are progressively developed from an early age and activities are well planned to build on pupils' previous skill acquisition. In one unsatisfactory lesson, some younger pupils were not sufficiently engaged in the task or sufficiently challenged and, as a result, made little progress.

150. The subject benefits from the considerable skill and knowledge of the very able co-ordinator. She ensures that the subject has a high profile in the school, and monitors the subject well so that all the disciplines are well taught, and standards remain high. The school is seeking an 'Active Gold Mark' currently in recognition of the wide range of physical activity that is offered to the pupils and the high standards achieved. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities offered to the pupils from Year 2 to 6 and good use is made of various professional coaches who are employed to further games skills such as football, lacrosse, and rugby. These opportunities enhance the curriculum and further develop the skills of the pupils who participate in these activities. Pupils' achievement is continuously assessed and used effectively to plan future learning. Resources both inside and outside are good to support the wide range of activities. However, the swimming provision is limited to a block of 20 weeks in Years 3 and 4. This ensures that the majority of pupils achieve the required standard but there are still a few pupils in Years 5 and 6 that cannot swim.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Evidence from lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils make mainly sound, and occasionally good, progress in religious education as they move up through the school. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 broadly meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and 11.
152. Throughout their time in the school, pupils develop a sound knowledge of the Christian traditions, festivals and stories that are part of their British cultural heritage. Through visits to churches, through contacts with local clergy and through discussions in class, they learn that Christianity is a religious faith which has particular significance for those who follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. For example, pupils in Year 1 know about the significance of baptism. They learn about the nature of the christening ceremony itself, and they become aware that it marks the time when a person - usually, though not always, a baby - is welcomed into God's family. During Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the life and work of Jesus. They know that he was born into a Jewish family and that he is regarded by Christians not only as the son of God, but also as a friend, helper, healer and storyteller.
153. In Years 3 to 6, pupils become increasingly aware of the special nature of Jesus' teachings and of his work. They know about the miracles he is said to have performed, and they begin to understand the messages and morals contained in some of his teachings and in the stories he told. For example, pupils in Year 6 consider the story of The Prodigal Son. They reflect on the feelings of the characters involved, identifying feelings of sadness and happiness on the part of both father and son. However, some pupils find it harder to grasp abstract concepts such as that of forgiveness embedded in the story and depend on their teacher to make this apparent.

154. In all years, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of Christian symbols and of churches as special places of worship. In Year 4, for example, pupils know what is meant by terms such as 'altar', 'pew', 'lectern' and 'font'. They can talk in simple terms about the purposes and uses made of different parts of a church, and they know about the wider significance of symbols such as the cross, the fish and the candle.
155. In a particularly well taught lesson in Year 5, pupils demonstrated above average attainment when they considered 'good' and 'evil.' Using the Ten Commandments as their starting point, they discussed the relevance of ideas of 'good' and 'evil' to the modern world. They expressed their opinions that 'sins' such as murder, theft, jealousy and adultery condemned in the Commandments are still 'bad', and they gave valid, and sometimes very powerful examples, when stating their reasons for the rank order in which they would choose to place such 'sins' today.
156. From their early years in school, pupils are aware that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian. However, their studies also develop their awareness of other major world faiths. As a consequence, by the time they are 11, they have a satisfactory level of knowledge about traditions, festivals and stories related to Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam, about the religious leaders whose faith inspired their respective followers, and also about the sacred writings - such as the Qu'ran - which are held in the highest esteem. They are able to recognise some similarities between the beliefs and traditions of different religions, for example that the celebration of 'light' is significant not only in Christianity but also in Judaism and Hinduism. Overall, however, pupils' ability to draw parallels between various religions is rather limited, and their knowledge about religion is much stronger than their understanding of what can be learned from religion.
157. The quality of teaching is mainly sound, and occasionally good. Lessons are based on the locally agreed syllabus and, in the best lessons, teachers use appropriately interactive methods to engage pupils' interest. For example, effective use was made of a 'home video' in a Year 1 lesson to enhance pupils' understanding of baptism, and the local vicar also came in to talk to pupils about the ceremony and its significance. Visits by pupils in Year 4 to a Hindu shrine and by those in Year 5 to a Sikh temple bring the subject to life and present valuable opportunities for their questions to be answered. Drama techniques such as 'hot-seating' characters from religious stories help pupils to gain insights into the feelings experienced by those, like Moses and Gandhi, whose religious faith was at times severely tested. In Year 5, a particularly skilful lesson challenged pupils' thinking and ensured that pupils of all abilities made meaningful judgements about the relevance of religious teachings from the past to their own lives and times. In much of the work seen, however, the teaching of information assumes far greater importance than helping pupils understand what is to be learned from religion; this is a weakness which detracts from the otherwise sound provision.
158. Religious education is identified as a focus in the current school improvement plan which outlines suitable priorities for development. To date, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly, although plans are in hand for this to happen in the very near future. Through informal monitoring methods, she is already aware of some strengths and weaknesses in provision. Inspection findings show that there are significant variations between classes in regard to the level of challenge in lessons and the depth and detail of coverage of the syllabus. Most importantly, while some teaching focuses almost entirely on the transmission of information, there is also some teaching, for example in Year 5, which makes pupils

aware of the deeper significance of religion to pupils' own lives. This teaching does not hesitate to address the 'deeper meanings' of life that all great religions have sought to fathom and explain. Good practice such as this should be disseminated more widely.