

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ALVELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bridgnorth

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123353

Headteacher: Mrs Derval Carey-Jenkins

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 22-23rd September 2003

Inspection number: 255337

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	114
School address:	Daddlebrook Road Alveley Bridgnorth
Postcode:	WV15 6JT
Telephone number:	01746 780284
Fax number:	01746 781164
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gillian Geary-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school which is smaller than most, serves its local village community. There are 114 pupils on roll, mostly from the village, and all speak English as their main language. Pupils are provided for within 4 classes, each with two year groups. At the time of the inspection 3 children, all girls were in the reception year, known as the *Foundation Stage*. These children are taught with Year 1 pupils. The attainment on entry of children is broadly average. There is an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each class with slightly more than this in the current Years 5/6 class. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, one pupil is awaiting a statement. The school has been through a period of staffing changes. Two out of four class teachers are new to the school, having started their permanent positions at the beginning of the term. The headteacher who joined the school three years ago is non class-based but teaches for a considerable amount of time. The school received a Government Achievement Award in 2001 for raising academic standards. The school is currently involved in the Safer Schools initiative and is working towards Eco School accreditation.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	
14214	J Smith	Lay inspector	
1189	S Brown	Team inspector	English, religious education, humanities, Foundation Stage, special educational needs
20326	P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, creative, aesthetic, practical and physical aspects.

The inspection contractor was:

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University of Warwick Science Park  
Unit 2, Barclays Venture Centre  
Sir William Lyons Road  
Coventry  
CV4 7EZ

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## PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Alveley Primary is an effective school with a very positive ethos. Pupils learn well within a happy, caring environment. Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well. The school's results in national tests in 2003 rose dramatically compared with the previous year, and reflect the very good leadership and management that have guided the school through a period of significant changes in staffing. Parents and the community hold the school in very high regard and support well its crystal clear ambition to strive for excellence in all respects. The school gives good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and has built a strong staff team committed to improvement.
- Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and also in art and design and religious education by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are good throughout the school but their writing is not as strong and needs improvement. There are missed opportunities for them to extend research skills and use information and communication technology (ICT) to support work in lessons.
- Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to progress at a good pace.
- The good provision made for children in the Foundation Stage ensures a good start to school.
- The school's highly inclusive approaches result in the needs of all pupils being well met; the provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting with very good enrichment from extra curricular activities.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are very good, as are relationships; their moral development is excellent.
- The school gives very good attention to the care, health, welfare and safety of pupils.
- Leadership and management are highly effective, however, more use could be made of good assessment data to help teachers track and target pupils' progress over their time in school.

There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection. Very strong and decisive leadership has kept the school focused and forward moving at a time of significant staff turnover. All of the issues raised by the 1999 inspection have been tackled well, though ICT and writing are still on the agenda for improvement as well as more in depth monitoring of how well girls and boys achieve in all years. The school has already begun work on these aspects. The results shown below dipped in 2002 but the trend of improvement is upwards and 2003 results are back to an above average level across the board. The school is judged to have very good capacity to become still more effective and has a very bright future.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	E	E
Mathematics	C	B	D	E
Science	B	A	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The overall achievement of boys and girls of different capabilities is good but varies from year to year. This is often because just one pupil did or did not reach a particular level but also because of

the high staff turnover. Stability in staffing plus intensive support from the headteacher, are ironing out the unevenness in achievement. The children in the Foundation Stage have made a good start and are well on track to reach the goals set for them. Pupils in Year 2 have achieved very well to reach above average standards in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have been most affected by staffing changes and their achievement, though satisfactory, reflects this. The provision being made for them this term is of high quality and consistently good achievement was seen in lessons. The indications for better achievement and raised standards are very positive. The above average standards attained by the Year 6 in 2003 reflect good achievement. Pupils currently in Year 5 and 6 are achieving well in lessons and making good progress towards the challenging academic targets set. **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good overall.** Pupils enjoy school and give of their very best. Relationships are very caring and the school is a happy community. The school helps pupils develop a very good set of principles by which to live and treat others, though opportunities for building spiritual awareness are more limited.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided is good.**

**The teaching is good** and the team of staff has been very well chosen by the headteacher and governors. New appointments have brought a freshness of approach and new staff have skills that complement those of colleagues. Teaching in lessons is exciting and imaginative and engages pupils' interest, giving rise to very good application. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the very best enable the pupils to not only make good gains in knowledge and understanding but also stimulate independent enquiry and develop self-review skills. Some teaching, as shown in pupils' work, has lacked these qualities and an over-use of worksheets in some subjects has capped off better achievement. There is a strong commitment amongst staff to sharing best practice and to drawing from one another's strengths. This is working to positive advantage in improving the quality of education provided for pupils. **The curriculum meets the needs of pupils very effectively and particularly those with special needs.** The school has made good progress in planning topics that enable pupils to learn about different subjects in a systematic way. The next step is to widen the use of ICT and allocate more time for pupils to write creatively and at length. There is very good enrichment from a well-focused programme of visits and visitors and a wide range of out of school activities that extend pupils' experiences. **Pupils receive very good care and support.** They are exceptionally well looked after during the school day and the standard of care provided is second to none. The school treats everyone as being special and ensures that personal successes are celebrated and shared. The provision for their personal and social development is a strength. **The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged strong and effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.**

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good.**

The headteacher has led the school very effectively through a period of great change with a crystal clear plan of action which is showing very good impact. School managers look critically at the quality of education provided and make very good use of a range of information to highlight areas for improvement. The next steps are to ensure that all staff are fully involved in tracking pupils' progress and to widening target setting systems. **The school is very well run by the governors who are both supportive and challenging in their pursuit of best value.** Governors work very much in partnership with the headteacher. They are very well organised and highly efficient.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Parents are very happy with the school**, they hold very positive views about the all round education provided and family values promoted. A few were concerned about staffing problems last year. **Pupils' very much enjoy coming to school** and they find lessons fun; especially the clubs, art and history. A few have concerns about the top playground, toilets and changing rooms and have already brought these to the headteacher's attention.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Extend the assessment, tracking and target setting systems.
- Widen the opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length across the curriculum.
- Make sure that pupils have increased opportunities to use ICT in lessons.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

**Pupils' achievement overall is good as is the standard of work seen.**

Standards in English, mathematics, art and religious education are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in science are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are broadly average in information and communication technology (ICT) and history across the school. Standards overall are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

*NB. This inspection did not find sufficient reliable evidence to judge standards in design and technology, music and physical education. However, teacher's planning, display and work in books shows that pupils are being provided with worthwhile experiences in all of them.*

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start and enabled to do well in their first year at school.
- Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in art and design and religious education by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are good throughout the school but their writing is more satisfactory and needs improvement.
- Standards in ICT are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities for them to use ICT to support work in lessons.
- An over use of work sheets caps more independent and creative learning taking place in some subjects.
- Boys and girls of all capabilities tend to make similar progress over their time in school, those with special educational needs do particularly well because of the good support they receive.
- Pupils' competence in mathematics is built up well over time but an earlier focus on numeracy skills would be beneficial to the accuracy and speed with which infant pupils work.
- The school exceeded the targets set in 2003 in Year 6 but has yet to make fully effective use of all available data to target the best possible achievement in all years.
- The targets set for 2004 are challenging and show well the school's high ambitions for raising achievement.

### **Commentary**

1. The standards in national tests in all subjects are rising despite the dip in 2002. The results in 2003 at Key Stage 2 are back to the much higher levels seen in 2001 when the school was given an achievement award by government for its improved standards.

### **Standards**

2. **Year 2 results in 2002** were above average and better than the previous year in reading and writing but not in mathematics. Standards overall were below those seen in similar schools. In 2003 more pupils attained at the higher level, although standards in mathematics remained lower than the other tested subjects. Inspectors looked carefully at why standards in mathematics were not as high as in English. The work in pupils' books from last year shows that too much emphasis was placed on calculations and there was a same-ness about the work set for pupils of different capabilities. Very little attention was paid to promoting numeracy skills in other subjects. All of these factors clearly had a limiting effect on standards.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.3 (15.2)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	15.8 (17.2)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. **Year 6 results in 2002** fell below those reached in the school in 2001. Results were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. A very good drive for improvement shows results in 2003 dramatically increased by between 30-40 per cent across the board.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (28.5)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.1 (28)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.7 (30.8)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Girls tend to do better than boys in national tests and the school has looked at why this might be the case through a thorough analysis of test papers. In writing in particular boys do not reach the same high standard as the girls. The school has re-looked at the resources being used to support pupils' skills development in writing and widened the range used to make them more *boy-friendly*. Inspectors saw lesson content being equally appealing to girls and boys, who were learning at a similarly good rate. This was particularly so in a Year 5/6 English lesson where links to the history topic on World War 2 were well made and involved pupils writing clear and useful instructions for wearing gas masks. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills across the curriculum. One off projects of high quality, for example, those completed at home on the Romans and Tudors show what could be achieved if more time and focus was given to further developing creative writing opportunities in school.
5. The targets set for the current Year 6 who take the national tests in May 2004 are challenging. Around four fifths of the group are expected to reach the expected level with a third predicted to reach the higher level 5. This overall profile suggests that standards will be broadly average.
6. Standards in ICT and history are average and in art and religious education are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are provided with worthwhile experiences in all of these subjects. However, better achievement is limited in ICT because there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in the subjects they study and there are too many work sheets used in history, especially in the infants. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy art and history and have benefited from a wide range of visitors who have shared their expertise with the pupils to produce some super work.

## **Achievement**

7. Children are well provided for in the Foundation Stage of their education and do well across all of the areas they experience. The current children are well on track to achieve the goals set for them.
8. Infant and junior pupils' achieve well from their different starting points. However, staffing instability has adversely affected the achievement of pupils in the middle years. The school's positive strategies are enabling them to catch up on things they did not learn well in the past. This group of pupils is currently achieving well across their studies because of consistently good teaching.
9. Pupils with learning difficulties do especially well because of the early assessment of their needs and very good support they receive. Individual education plans identify very precise targets for them to work towards and through a system of regular checks they are revised and adjusted as necessary. This approach of *plan. do* and *review* has a very beneficial impact on the achievement of pupils with special needs.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good.**

10. Pupils behave very well during lessons and give a 100 per cent effort. They enjoy one another's company and take care of each other at work and play. The school helps pupils develop a very good set of principles by which to live and treat others, though opportunities for building spiritual awareness are more limited.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' personal development is very good; they are quick to use their initiative and willingly accept responsibility.
- Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good; they are characterised by mutual trust, respect and consideration.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent but spiritual development is less effective as the school does not promote this aspect enough in lessons.
- Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and look forward to their lessons
- Pupils respond very positively to teachers' extremely high expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils are very well behaved during lessons and at other times; exclusions are very rare.

## **Commentary**

11. Pupils of all ages really enjoy coming to school and describe their lessons as *fantastic* and *great fun*. Children in the Foundation Stage mirror the very good attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the rest of the school. Members of staff insist upon a very high standard of behaviour and pupils of all ages live up to these expectations. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils behave very well during lessons and at break and lunch times. The rate of exclusion is low with one fixed-period exclusion made during the most recent school year that was entirely justified.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	114	1	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which is different from the number of pupils excluded.*

12. Pupils behave with great consideration for each other. For example, during discussions with inspectors, there was one chair short. Without anything being said, one pupil spontaneously got up, offered his chair to another and he then stood for the rest of the conversation. Similarly, if someone is hurt during playtime, older and younger schoolmates show great concern and make sure that the injured party receives the care and sympathy they need. Boys and girls say there is very little bullying and that there are only *silly disagreements*, when friends fall out with each other. Pupils enjoy taking part in the many extra-curricular activities provided, such as football coaching and cross-country running. They relish responsibility and those who have recently been asked to be *buddies* are thrilled, regarding it as a great privilege.
13. Pupils have a finely tuned sense of what is right and what is wrong and are very aware of the qualities needed to live in a harmonious and ethnically diverse world. The school has provided a range of experiences that enable pupils to learn about different cultures, for example they write to Indian children in an orphanage in Nepal and receive letters back. Members of staff are totally consistent in their expectations of behaviour and pupils' social development is fostered in numerous ways. For example, during a personal and social education lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked to think about why they liked their classmates and to write down their positive attributes. In addition, pupils are allocated to one of four *teams* and they usually sit at their team table during lunchtime. This fosters friendships between pupils of all ages and these relationships are reinforced through residential trips and partner -class activities such as shared reading. Beyond assemblies, there are, however, more limited opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and this is not an aspect that teacher's routinely plan to cover in lessons.
14. Pupils' attendance is good and their punctuality is very good. Lessons begin when they should and there is no wastage of time. These features support positively pupils' good achievements.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.6	School data :	0.4
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good with many very good features.

### Teaching and learning

15. Teaching is good and learning proceeds at a good pace. The high level of staff turnover has been a barrier to more effective teaching in the past but the school now has a very good team of permanent staff who are united in their determination to build for improvement. Banners proclaim, *You are now entering a Learning Zone*, over every class door and these give good prominence to the bid for even better effectiveness. Parents are happy with the quality of education provided for their children and identify the rounded education they receive as a real strength.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and reflect the overall quality found at the time of the previous inspection, though pupils with special educational needs are much better provided for than they were.
- Teaching in English is good with specific attention paid to reading, speaking and listening skills development in planning across subjects. There is not the same good attention paid to promoting writing skills in subjects other than English, and this is a missed opportunity.
- Weaknesses flagged up in teaching and learning in ICT by the previous inspection have been sorted out with a good programme of staff training and development. Satisfactory teaching enables satisfactory learning in ICT, however, even better use can be made of ICT to extend pupils' skills.
- The school's use of teaching assistants is very effective and ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Sometimes in mathematics lessons they could have an input earlier than they do.
- Teachers have exceptionally high expectations for behaviour and ensure that all classes are effective *Learning Zones*.
- Most teachers' use marking and questioning effectively to assess how well pupils are learning but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements, and how they target improvement and share this with pupils.
- The provision for homework is very good and through this, parents are truly on-board as partners in education.

### Commentary

16. The problems associated with a high staff turnover have been sorted out and the school is well on the way to building a highly effective teaching team who show strong commitment to improvement. The team has been well chosen to complement one another, individuals are reflective about their practice and very willing to share ideas and give one another support. There is an upbeat feel in school and a buzz about the place that is tangible. The pupils say they enjoy coming to school as they are learning plenty and having fun.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	19	4	0	0	0

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

17. The staff in the Foundation Stage have good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. Pupils with special educational needs receive some good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans. Pupils are provided with the correct blend of help and challenge, so that they do not become over-reliant. Teaching and learning in virtually all lessons observed by inspectors were of good quality. Good teaching is now supporting good achievement for all pupils across the infants and juniors.
18. The best teaching observed by inspectors was in a science lesson in the mixed age Years 3 and 4 class and in two English lessons in the Year 5/6 class. All three lessons had shared very good features that appealed to both boys and girls and enabled very good achievement. These were:
- Very well matched tasks that enabled pupils of all capabilities to be challenged well;
  - Very good use of time targets that were set to help the pace at which pupils worked;
  - Firm but fair class management that insisted on pupils taking responsibility for their own actions;
  - Highly effective use of the final part to check up on what had been learned and what should be learned next time.
  - A real sense of enjoyment in learning that was demanding but fun.
19. Teachers' methods by and large are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding at a good rate. Pupils' work saved from last year shows that they are not always successful in enabling pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry where appropriate. In history and geography books for example there are far too many work sheets used that require pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding but limit independent writing. Pupils are building sound ICT skills and there is plenty of use of word processing. However, there is limited use of ICT in classrooms. Pupils are being given some helpful comments when their work is marked in English and mathematics but it is rather hit and miss elsewhere. The next step is to set targets that pupils can work towards and review at timely intervals. For example, the good use of targets to support writing affixed in English books need to be available to support work in science, geography, history and religious education. Most teachers' are assessing how well pupils are learning through a variety of methods but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements, and how they target improvement. The provision for homework is very good and this has resulted in some high quality topic work being produced.

## **The Curriculum**

20. Good improvement has been made to the curriculum since the previous inspection which now provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and fully meets statutory requirements.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very inclusive; equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well.
- The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and broad and well-balanced for older pupils. Its strength lies in the cohesive cross-curricular opportunities, for example through the well-conceived topics. Its shortcoming concerns too little use made of ICT.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- Display is of good quality, it gives high profile to pupils' work and provides an environment of which they can be justifiably proud.

- The accommodation is of very good quality; it is bright, stimulating and well maintained; resources are well chosen and of high quality.

## Commentary

21. Planning is much improved since the previous inspection and identifies worthwhile experiences across all subjects. Topics generally hang together very well and result in pupils having a depth of study that is meaningful and long lasting. For example, through a focus on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, pupils in Year 5 and 6 have studied Elizabethan lifestyle (history), written their own poems, (English) and created waxed scrolls that they have written on in quill pen (art). Additionally, pupils have tried to replicate the style of writing found in Elizabethan times and in so doing have appreciated cultural differences and similarities. A very well planned range of visits and visitors that tie into the curriculum further enrich pupils' experiences.
22. A good innovation that is showing high impact is the identification of speaking and listening opportunities in all subject plans through a *key questions* approach. More tried and tested strategies for improving pupils' literacy skills are having a good impact, through the paired reading sessions and one-to-one support and through well organised additional literacy strategies. Some good writing has been produced, for example, the anthology of poetry in Year 6. However, the school has not looked at how writing skills can be extended across the curriculum whilst retaining the subject-specific content and this is a missed opportunity. The school's numeracy strategy is effective but, as with writing, there is lack of cross-curricular focus to accelerating pupils' skills development. Through activities undertaken in design and technology projects such as making Native American tee-pees and Tudor houses, pupils have applied their mathematical competencies and although not specifically planned for, numeracy skills are honed further. Planning for the promotion of such skills at the outset could support better achievement. The use of ICT can be seen in pupils' work in most subjects. For example, the use of ICT to help pupils create their own *Op-art* pieces in the style of Bridget Riley are of high quality but these tend to be *one off* experiences and are not enabling pupils' skills to be built systematically. There is limited use of ICT in classrooms to support pupils' work in lessons, though good use is made of computers in the suite, for example to support numeracy skills in Years 2 and 3. There is limited use made of ICT to support pupils' personal research, although many do use computers in this way at home. A virus attacked the school's system this term and has restricted Internet access.
23. Pupils have a range of good quality experiences in the creative and aesthetic and physical aspects of the curriculum. For example, work in reception about the Diwali festival celebrated by Hindus involved them in making clay divas. Infants' collage frieze representing Alveley village is of good quality. The Tudor portrait gallery of pastel drawings by Year 3/4 pupils and the Year 6 *Textile seascape* that includes rag-rugging, weaving and crochet are of good quality and reflect well the richness in art and design experiences. The school keeps a range of photographic albums in which it records pupils' sporting successes. All pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to go swimming and last year 90 per cent met the required standard in swimming.
24. The accommodation is very good and provides a bright, airy and attractively presented environment in which to explore the curriculum. A significant amount of pupils' work was on display during inspectors' time in school and pupils told them how proud it made them feel to have it celebrated in this way. The grounds are spacious and a new area for the children in the Foundation Stage is well resourced and of high quality. Pupils are not as keen on the toilets, which they describe as *smelly*, or the changing rooms and top playground which they feel need improving. They have brought these to the attention of school managers who have included them in their action planning. A new library is proving to be a real asset.

## Care, guidance and support

### Pupils receive very good care and support.

25. The provision for pupils' personal and social development is a strength. Child protection and health and safety procedures are extremely effective. Pupils receive very good personal and academic support, advice and guidance. The school actively seeks pupils' views and, whenever, possible, incorporates their ideas and suggestions into future plans.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school sees everyone as being special and ensures that personal successes are celebrated and shared.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Pupils are exceptionally well looked after during the school day and the standard of care provided is outstanding.
- Health and safety procedures are excellent.
- Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and pupils receive very good support and guidance, however, the monitoring of achievements is limited in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Target setting has been introduced in English and this good practice should now be extended to other subjects so that pupils know what they have to do to reach higher standards in their work.

### Commentary

26. Pupils are exceptionally well looked after during the school day; child protection and health and safety procedures are most comprehensive. The school is involved in *the Safer schools* project and risk assessments that include staff, pupils and governors working in partnership, are very thorough. Pupils are actively involved in the monitoring of potential risks, for example, they monitor issues such as the safe storage of lunch boxes. Pupils who have concerns of any type can draw attention to them by posting them into the *Worry Box* and pupils say any such issues are dealt with very promptly. Links with external agencies are close and enable the school to offer very good personal support to pupils who are facing particular difficulties.
27. Pupils like their teachers and speak warmly of the personal and academic support they provide. Inspectors agree with their positive comments; although procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are largely informal, they are effective. Whilst the monitoring of achievement in English, mathematics and science is effective, there is limited assessment of achievement in other subjects. In addition, the setting of academic targets has usefully been introduced in English, but should now be extended to other subjects. Links with the local playgroup are close and induction procedures into the reception class are very good. Home visits help everyone to get to know each other before the children enrol and also help to ensure that members of staff are able to meet the children's needs. Very good personal support helps them to settle in quickly and to get off to a good start in their education.
28. The school actively seeks pupils' views and, wherever possible, acts upon them. Pupils complete a questionnaire and an analysis of their responses is prominently displayed on a notice board for all to see. A buddy system has recently been introduced and, once this is established, the school would like to extend pupils' influence over school life by introducing a school council.



## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

### **The school has a very good partnership with parents, other schools and the community.**

29. Parents support their children very well and links between home and school are very good. Links with the local community are similarly close; they enrich the pupils' education and extend their breadth of experience. Links with other schools and the pre-school playgroup are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The partnership between the school and parents is very effective; parents support their children's learning very well.
- Parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Detailed information about the curriculum and day-to-day events is sent home regularly.
- The school actively seeks parents' views through an annual survey and deals with their suggestions or concerns at other times very promptly.
- A few parents told inspectors that last year they thought that their children could be doing better but put it down to the high staff turnover. They are pleased with the start made this year.
- Links with the community are very well forged and enrich the quality of education provided.
- Very effective links with other schools help pupils' transfer at key times.
- Pupils' annual reports do not always include clear information on whether they are making the expected amount of progress or how they can improve the standard of their work.

### **Commentary**

30. The partnership between the school and parents is close and mutually supportive. Parents are very interested in their children's education; they try to avoid term time holidays and do their best to ensure that their children have regular and prompt attendance. Each year, they receive a detailed welcome pack and this contains lots of useful information about school life and the work the pupils will undertake. Parents provide very good support for homework and ensure that it is completed on time. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are especially close and their attendance at review meetings is very good. Activities organised by the school's 'friends' association are well supported and parents willingly provide practical help with extra curricular sporting activities and clubs.
31. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements, however, they vary in quality and usefulness from class to class. They do not always include targets for improvement and do not consistently give a clear idea as to whether the progress made by pupils is good, bad or indifferent. The school actively seeks parents' views and provides an annual questionnaire for them to complete. Great importance is placed upon the results of the analysis and parents are very pleased with the way the school responds to their views.
32. Links with the local community are very close. A wide range of visitors help in school and links with local churches are strong. The local vicar takes assembly once a week and also helps with religious education lessons. The school is keen to be a key focal point in the village and pupils have benefited from talks given by local historians as well as working with the local country park staff to make willow sculptures. In addition, links with local businesses are good and for example, have helped the school to obtain chairs suitable for use in the ICT suite.
33. Liaison with other schools and the local playgroup are close and mutually supportive. Children from the pre-school group attend special events, such as Christmas nativity plays and assemblies. Bridgnorth College uses the school's facilities for community computer courses and the school is a member of the local development group. Curricular links and sporting

events involving other primary and the main receiving secondary school help widen the opportunities for pupils considerably.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Leadership and management are very good.**

34. The headteacher who joined the school three years ago, is a strong and decisive leader. With very good support from the governing body, she has managed a period of great change with a crystal clear plan of action that is showing very good impact. Fifty per cent of the teaching staff is new this term, but there is a sense of unity and purpose and a strong synergy amongst the newly built team. The senior manager is one of the new appointments and she is very keen to share leadership and management tasks; her skills very much complement those of the headteacher. The ethos in the school is vibrant and all stakeholders are committed to assisting the school go from strength to strength.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is a very good leader and manager.
- Governors are very good at their jobs and give support and challenge as appropriate.
- There is a well-conceived school improvement plan detailing clear strategies for improving teaching, learning and standards.
- Staff professional development is given high priority and there are clear ties to the very effective performance management programme.
- There is very good leadership of the Foundation Stage.
- School managers look critically at the quality of education provided and make very good use of a range of information to highlight areas for improvement.
- The next steps are to ensure that all staff are fully involved in tracking pupils' progress and to widening target setting systems.

### **Commentary**

35. The instability caused by staffing problems has been managed very well by senior managers. Parents told inspectors that they had some concerns about the impact this had on some pupils' achievements but equally recognised the support systems that were put in place to ensure their children's education did not suffer. The very good leadership and management provided by the headteacher is viewed extremely positively by stakeholders. Indeed, all staff and governors have a shared sense of purpose and a genuine commitment towards making things even better for pupils. Their successful approach towards promoting equality of opportunity for all individuals is a very good feature of provision. The school was accredited with Investors in People in 2002.
36. Planning for future development is good. The school improvement plan provides a well-structured programme for making the school more effective. It takes careful account of cost implications within tight budget restrictions and defines clear guidelines for measuring success. The school's monitoring and evaluation systems are of the same high standard, and self-evaluation is rigorous. The headteacher has taken the lead here with good input from the local education authority who have confirmed her evaluations about quality and effectiveness across the school's provision. Staff new to the school are keen to play a full part in leading improvements and will need time and opportunity for this to happen. However, their current job descriptions do not flag clearly enough the leadership and management roles they want to pursue.
37. The headteacher has been the key player in monitoring the school's effectiveness and has not shied away from tough decisions in the pursuit of excellence. The school's monitoring and evaluation systems are of a high standard, and self-evaluation is rigorous. The headteacher is

confident to use a range of data to check what value the school adds to pupils' education and to use this to target advancement for year groups. Thus far she has been the guardian of target setting and keeps a very comprehensive *blue-book* too that enables an *at a glance view* of how well different pupils have achieved at key points, for example 6+ and 8+. Together, with the Year 5/6 teacher she has set targets in English aimed at accelerating learning. This is proving successful and provides a good platform on which to extend target setting to other subjects and to engage all teachers in the process. However, teachers' recording of pupils' achievements is not yet uniform and needs to be closer matched to the outcomes from lessons and to link back to the objectives identified in planning.

38. The governors make a very purposeful contribution to the work of the school. They are very well organised and highly efficient. Governors are evolving their roles successfully under a very well structured plan of training and development and the strong guidance of the Chair. Governors oversee the management of resources successfully and are both supportive and challenging in their pursuit of best value. They manage finances with good expertise. They have clear criteria in place to assess the quality of their decisions, for example in enabling the headteacher to be released from a full-time class teaching role. Governors have usefully considered what problems might arise in the face of a very tight budget and potential shortfall should the number of pupils on roll declines, and have usefully set out clear plans for the different scenarios they may face.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	303,011	Balance from previous year	15,408
Total expenditure	298,344	Balance carried forward to the next	20,904
Expenditure per pupil	2,617		

39. The school spends a little more than most schools on each pupil but adds clear value to their education and gives good value for money.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

**Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good provision enables children to achieve well from their different starting points.
- Teaching is good and results in good learning taking place with the children on track to reach the goals set for them.
- A very good induction programme, together with well-forged links with the local pre-school group enables children to settle quickly and happily into school.
- The programme of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum well.
- Very good leadership and management ensure children receive a flying start to their education.

#### **Commentary**

40. Achievement is good because children are keen to learn and their needs are met well through an exciting and enriching curriculum and good teaching. The fruitful liaison with the pre-school and good relationships results in the youngest children in school transferring happily and securely. The play-school children join the reception class weekly for story and for an assembly, and these are very positive features in the induction process. These, together with the good partnership with parents and highly effective leadership and management helps children to get off to a flying start to their education.

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

**Provision is good.**

41. Children achieve well because teachers place great emphasis on developing their personal, social and emotional skills. Good teaching promotes a high level of independence and positive self-esteem. Parents rate this aspect of the children's education highly. They gain pleasure from seeing the prominently displayed *someone special* chart that shows off the awards their children have gained for being good, helping others and trying their best. The curriculum provides a good balance of adult-initiated and child-selected activities that enable the children to have appropriate opportunities to choose what they do and in this way helps their decision-making. There are clear expectations for good behaviour and children adjust well to the carefully organised routines.
42. The adults provide very good role models. The very good relationships promote trust and confidence. Children are happy to come to school and enjoy the activities provided. They listen carefully to instructions such as to line up, or get into a circle and engage well with others in the class, taking turns and sharing for example, when using the computers in the ICT suite, where they work well in pairs and begin to help each other. The children reach above average standards in this aspect of their education by the time they are ready for Year 1.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

### **Provision is good.**

43. Achievement is good because children are well challenged by a good range of appropriate activities. The staff have put very good strategies in place for parents to support their children in developing a love of books. Teachers' expectations are high and children respond positively. Personal targets for literacy are given a high profile in display and the children know about them. The children enjoy a wide range of stories, which are read by staff with good expression and encourage them to join in where appropriate. For example, they commented about the illustrations and appreciated the humour in the story of *Funny bones*, engaging in good discussion about the characters and events. Speaking skills are well developed because there are regular opportunities for children to engage in conversations with an adult or each other, such as in the problem solving activities held out of doors when children contribute good ideas and share their strategies. Writing is taught effectively. Many opportunities are provided for children to write for a good reason. For instance they listen to stories and then sequence what they have heard and try *to write their own ending*. They scribe and copy write labels and lists and have a go at writing their own names correctly with the appropriate use of capital letters.
44. Standards are above average overall in reading, writing and speaking by the end of the Foundation Stage. Paired reading with Year 6 pupils builds confidence for the youngest children. The teacher's on-going assessment effectively informs lesson planning and enables targets to be set in literacy to aid individual development.

## **Mathematical development**

### **Provision is good.**

45. Children achieve well because they are given many opportunities to develop these skills across all areas of learning. In music for example, children identify long and short sounds. The use of rhymes and songs reinforces counting and numbers well. Numeracy skills are further developed when children count their friends in the class or add the number of books on the computer screen. By the end of the Foundation Stage higher attainers can add together two numbers and record their number sentence in neat handwriting. Children recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and make symmetrical patterns linked to the creative area of learning. Children acquire a good mathematical vocabulary because the adults reinforce this well. Good opportunities for problem solving, strengthens this area of learning. Good resources contribute well to the good progress made and sound standards reached.

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

### **Provision is good.**

46. Achievement is good. Well-planned opportunities extend children's knowledge and understanding in a wide variety of areas. The adults use questioning effectively to build on what children already know. For example, they explore how they have changed from babies, using photographs, looking at baby clothes and foods and identifying what they can do now that they could not do as a baby. Visits, such as to Ray's farm, enrich the curriculum as children observe animals and their babies. The follow on work in the ICT suite has resulted in some good word-processed pieces that include digital images of the animals they saw. Adults extend the children's vocabulary well as when explaining the properties of materials, for example when as they learn about magnets. One child commented when using a magnet that *it made the iron filings look like a hedgehog*. Good use is made of the local environment to explore and investigate. Children learn about living things, their senses, different cultures and beliefs and changes over time through a well planned curriculum. Art-work based on *Eat more*

*fruit* helps the children develop a growing understanding about keeping healthy. The model village on display in the heart of the school, presented a great opportunity for the youngest children in school to add safety features following a road traffic survey. The children are well on track to reach the goals set for them in this aspect of their education.

## **Physical development**

### **Provision is good.**

47. Overall, children achieve well. A recently developed outdoor area provides good opportunities for children to run, jump, skip and balance. In addition, children have regular access to the hall for dance and gymnastics. At present there is no provision for climbing. Good teaching and well-planned activities, enable the children to have plenty of opportunities to practice moving with increasing control and coordination. In a music lesson, for example, children joined in with the actions to songs and moved in sudden and sustained ways in response to short and long sounds, showing good control and expression in their actions. There are many good opportunities for the development of fine control of tools and materials. For example, when they designed and made musical instruments. The children show good dexterity as they mould animals from play dough and use pencils and brushes with confidence. The children are well on track to reach the goals set for them in their physical development.

## **Creative development**

### **Provision is good.**

48. Children achieve well in creative aspects because they are highly motivated by a wide range of interesting tasks. There are good opportunities for children to select activities such as construction, materials and puzzles which they work on with sustained concentration. They experience a wide range of media in their art-work such as paint, collage, crayons, glue and malleable materials such as clay and dough. Practical opportunities enable them to experiment with shadows and paint firework pictures when exploring sources of light. Creativity and imagination are stimulated as when they paint pictures in the style of Monet's *Poppy Fields*. They enjoy role play in the *Alveley Medical Centre* and are confident to re-enact realistic scenarios. Children sing with enjoyment and enthusiasm and listen attentively to musical excerpts such as *War of the Worlds*. In all of these activities they show good control and confidence and learn well as a result of the good teaching.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

#### **The Provision in English is good.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Use of key questioning is leading to good speaking and listening skills and impacting positively on achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported in their learning.
- Good use of target setting and pupils' self-evaluation promotes independence and pupils have good knowledge of their own learning.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and pupils make good progress as a result.
- An over-reliance on worksheets adversely affects the quality of some work.
- Handwriting and presentation skills are not good enough in some classes.

- Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to improve writing in other subjects or to use information and communication technology to help with presenting work in English.

## Commentary

49. Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards dipped in 2002 in national tests but not as much in English as in the other two tested subjects. Standards showed a significant improvement in the 2003 national tests across the board, reflecting the school's effective improvement strategies. The trend is upwards. Girls tend to do better than boys in writing in national tests, particularly at the higher level 5. The school has reviewed the resources being used to support pupils' skills development in writing and widened the materials to support reading. Inspectors saw lesson content being equally appealing to girls and boys who were learning at a similarly good rate and achieving well. The next step is to target boys' writing quality and length with more precision.
50. Achievement is good. Pupils across the school achieve well because planning is carefully matched to differing capabilities and needs. Pupils of all ages are well challenged and teachers have high expectations. Good use is made of assessment information results in setting purposeful targets which moves learning on well. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because of well-organised support in literacy lessons and because of effective additional strategies that are enabling pupils to catch up on things they did not learn so well in the past. Some good work is going on in supporting lower attaining pupils' spellings and comprehension in Years 3 and 4.
51. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average in all years. Use of key questions is evident in all planning and pursued consistently in lessons. The approach promotes pupils' thinking skills and discursive skills well. Pupils put forward well-reasoned arguments with clarity and confidence. The school's strategy is having a positive impact on developing pupils' speaking skills and their personal and social skills. In a Year 4/5 literacy lesson the teacher actively engaged pupils in contributing ideas to an opening paragraph for a myth. Their suggestions included imaginative vocabulary such as *trembled with fear* and *blood-curdling*.
52. Standards in reading are above average. At the end of Year 2 higher attainers read with fluency and accuracy. They are confident in giving opinions about the book they are enjoying. Lower attainers also read accurately, making good use of picture clues and basic phonic skills, although their reading lacks fluency and expression.
53. In the juniors, pupils demonstrate good dictionary skills and use the library with confidence. Older pupils use inference and deduction with increasing skill and express their preferences for favourite authors and genres. All pupils enjoy reading and are very well supported in their reading at home. A strength is the very effective reading diary system which provides quality guidance to pupils, is diagnostic and involves a weekly sharing of information on progress. Parents, pupils, teachers and support staff contribute well to the maintenance of them and this encourages pupils to read widely.
54. Standards in writing are above average throughout the school. Higher attainers in Year 2 write for a wide range of purposes. They use basic punctuation including speech marks accurately and writing is often extended. Choice of vocabulary is lively and descriptive.
55. In the juniors, pupils are well challenged and encouraged to use powerful language, such as in a Year 6 pupil's work on active verbs, *The sky was inky black. In the distance, thunder bellowed. A menacing wind roared. It whipped the flags along the sea-front and savaged the sails of yachts....* The range of writing is well extended to include explanatory and instructional text, reports and arguments. Handwriting skills are not as good as they should be in some years however, and this results in untidy presentation particularly in the upper infants and lower juniors. The use of too many worksheets left loose in books also detracts from the standards

being attained. The best marking is very effective in helping pupils to improve their work but marking is inconsistent across the school and seldom identifies targets for improvement.

56. The quality of teaching in English is good. Teachers' expectations are high and they plan carefully, matching work to the range of pupils' capabilities in their class, ensuring pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and that higher attaining pupils are well challenged. Relationships are very good and this is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. The provision for homework is very good and this has resulted in some good quality work being produced, for example the creative stories based on *Someone* by Walter-de-la Mare.
57. Assessment information is used effectively to set appropriate targets that are set out in pupils' books. This is contributing to the improving standards, as is the very effective involvement of pupils in self-evaluation. The school has been successful in its strategies to improve standards in English and has set challenging targets for the coming year.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

**Language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory overall but with strengths.**

58. Pupils' spoken English is good and extended in all subjects via a *key questioning* approach taken by teachers that seeks to engage everyone in very early responses in all lessons. The school has identified plans for improving writing across the curriculum but it is early days. To some extent planning identifies opportunities for writing, such as in Year 5/6 where pupils have done some good work in history about World War 2. At present there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in a structured way. The targets set in English for example, are not pursued in other subjects. The overuse of worksheets also inhibits writing in some subjects such as science, history and geography; more so in the infants, than the juniors.

## **MATHEMATICS**

**Provision in mathematics is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6
- Boys and girls of all capabilities tend to make similar progress over their time in school, those with special educational needs do particularly well because of the good support they receive.
- Achievement is good overall but has been variable in the recent past due to staffing problems.
- Challenging targets were met in 2003 and have been set at a high level for 2004.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good.
- Recent improvements in assessment procedures, including the analysis of national test results, have given the school a more accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses that teachers now need to take more ownership of in setting targets with pupils.
- The use of teaching assistants during the initial part of mathematics lessons needs greater focus to make this valuable resource even more effective.
- Final plenary sessions are too often rushed, failing to consolidate learning in sufficient detail.
- There are missed opportunities for developing pupils' numeracy skills across other subjects.



## Commentary

59. The provision in mathematics is good, currently meeting the needs of all pupils well. With a stabilised staffing picture there are very positive signs that standards are on an upward trend, fully supported by the good implementation of national strategies which have positively influenced continuity of learning and teachers' planning. The small size of groups means that standards vary year-from-year, however pupils' achievement is good overall.
60. The scrutiny of pupils' work saved from last year clearly reflects standards achieved at the end of Year 6 to be above the national average. These standards are clearly reflected in the 2003 national tests. The scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken in Year 2 last year indicates average standards overall. There was an over reliance on worksheets and a basic diet of addition and subtraction that held back higher achievements last year and the school is aware that this will need attention for those pupils currently in Year 3.
61. In lessons observed during this inspection, and from the limited amount of work recorded in current pupils' books, inspectors judge that standards are nearer the national average in Year 6. The increased proportion of pupils requiring additional support for special educational needs in the current Year 6 will have a direct influence on the overall standards achieved in 2004 national tests. In contrast, the current Year 2 are a high attaining group and the standards they reach in the national tests should reflect this. There is clear evidence from the inspection that the standards achieved have the potential to be above the national average in Year 2, reflecting the good quality teaching observed.
62. Evidence from previous years' work clearly shows that pupils have made uneven progress in the past. Years 3 and 4 have been most affected by staffing changes and their achievement, though satisfactory, reflects this. The provision being made for them this year, by direct contrast, is of high quality and consistently good achievement was observed in lessons. The indications for better achievement and raised standards are very positive. Greater enthusiasm and improved staffing stability are major factors in allowing current pupils to achieve at a higher level across the school.
63. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers clearly transmit their enthusiasm for the subject and activities capture pupils' interest well. The teaching of basic skills is another strength, and support staff play a valuable role in helping groups of pupils and individuals such as those with special educational needs to improve their levels of mathematical knowledge and skill. However, during the initial introductory sessions more effective use could be made of their presence for example, by assessing individual pupil's contributions together with the class teacher. Work to develop target setting and tracking systems to ensure all pupils make systematic advances in their work is at an early stage of development. The next step is to set targets for pupils in mathematics in all years and to establish a programme of timely review that can support pupils' accelerated learning. In a number of lessons the final session, during which there is further consolidation of skills, is too often rushed due to limited time and so pupils do not get chance to share what they have learned. ICT does not yet make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, which was clearly reflected in the scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom displays where it is noticeable by its absence. The regular use of homework to underpin work in lessons is good.
64. The school is now well placed to achieve greater effectiveness in future years and has good capacity for improvement, given the very positive leadership and management of the subject. The school has set very challenging targets for 2004. These targets reflect well on the school's ambition to drive forward continued improvement in mathematics.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in all classes. Nevertheless more focus is required in enabling pupils to have planned opportunities to use their wider mathematical skills and accelerate learning. An earlier focus on numeracy skills would be beneficial to the accuracy and speed with which infant pupils work. Although there is use of graphs in science topics related to room temperature or the plotting of boiling water cooling, such opportunities are not yet developed sufficiently rigorously across the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

**Provision in science is good.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above at the end of Year 6.
- Science is an improving subject because of the very good support from specialist teaching in Year 6.
- Good teaching is driving good learning throughout the school.
- Good guidance has been provided for planning and assessment and this is having a positive impact on supporting effective teaching.
- The consistent use of ICT to underpin pupils' skills in science requires a higher profile.
- The use of well-defined assessment procedures to ensure planned work challenges all pupils continues to be an area for continued development.

### Commentary

66. The provision in science is good and currently meets the needs of lower attaining, average and higher attaining pupils well, especially in the juniors. Now that staffing has been stabilised, there are very encouraging signs that standards are on an upward trend and the school is well placed to achieve similar success in 2004 to that seen in 2003. Considering the composition of the present Year 6 with its fairly high proportion of pupils requiring additional support for their learning difficulties, the school has set challenging targets that reflect well on its ambitions to continue to drive standards upwards in science.
67. Standards achieved in science show a bright and improving picture from the blip in performance in 2002. The scrutiny of past pupils' work reflects standards above the national average at the end of Year 6. However standards achieved at the end of Year 2 continue to be an area for improvement. The small number of lessons observed during the inspection and the limited work in pupils' books since the start of the new term indicates standards to be broadly average at the end of Year 2 and to be potentially above by the end of Year 6. The specialist teaching undertaken previously in the Year 5/6 class certainly put the *icing on the cake* in terms of pupils' investigations and opportunities to individually record observations of experiments. The scrutiny of previous work undertaken in Year 2 indicates an over reliance on worksheets in science with a same-ness about the tasks set; which resulted in pupils with special educational needs failing to complete given work in sufficient depth.
68. The school has rightly placed greater emphasis on the need to develop pupils' skills in using and applying science through a range of interesting topics. Scrutiny of pupils' work clearly illustrates this positive approach in most classes throughout the school. This is due to a range of well planned practical activities for pupils to undertake and record their own scientific investigations, predictions and conclusions that clearly reflect an understanding in scientific terms of what has taken place and why. However, there is still a need for the school to place greater focus on final conclusions as often they fail to reflect a deep scientific understanding why a certain event happens.

69. Overall the teaching of science is good throughout the school. Teachers consolidate pupils' learning well; work given is both appropriate and interesting. As observed in Year 3, teachers use supporting adults effectively to support both higher attaining and lower attaining pupils. Teaching is good where learning objectives are well focused and shared with pupils at the start of the lesson, along with a range of appropriate vocabulary. Revisiting the lesson objectives at the end of the lesson consolidates well new scientific knowledge gained. The scrutiny of pupils' work reflects a wide coverage of the subject. The quality of pupils' scientific illustrations is generally good throughout the school, with handwriting and correct labelling of diagrams both neat and accurate. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate numeracy skills within science lessons, such as when recording cooling water temperatures at specific intervals. The planned use of ICT to support recording skills and investigations is rather patchy and, at best, satisfactory.
70. Subject leadership and management are good. The school has made a productive start at analysing scores achieved in statutory assessment tests, taking stock of the strengths and areas for further targeted teaching. The next step is to build on the good start seen in English by setting targets in science and sharing these with pupils and parents. Science has a bright prospect for the future and there is good determination to strive for improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Provision in ICT is satisfactory and is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has made good improvement to ICT since the previous inspection when it failed to meet statutory requirements.
- Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The new ICT suite is a good quality resource.
- Assessment and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and standards are the next priorities for improvement.
- The curriculum is satisfactory overall; however elements of control and monitoring technology require further development in the upper juniors.
- The use of ICT to enhance cross-curricular skills requires improvement.

### **Commentary**

71. Since the previous inspection in 1999 the quality of provision has improved significantly in ICT. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has done a good job to improve the accommodation and resources for ICT in recent years. The ICT suite is well equipped with good quality hardware and there are similarly good quality resources in most classrooms. This gives teachers and pupils every opportunity to use ICT at the centre of their learning; however its potential has yet to be fully exploited to support skills development across the curriculum.
72. The school has rightly identified the urgent need to develop the use of ICT to underpin pupils' learning across the subjects they study in the well-conceived action plan. Appropriately the subject leader has identified aspects such as control and monitoring and part of the work on data handling for improvement, particularly for older pupils. At present the work undertaken in these areas is barely satisfactory. Additionally, a virus present in the system at County Council level has made Internet access very difficult and only limited use has been made of this so far this term.

73. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff are confident in ICT and are growing in their resolve to make still more effective use of it. Together, they make a worthwhile contribution to pupils' learning, as seen when a group of pupils from Years 3 and 4 worked well using *Roamer*, a programmable toy, to plot coordinates. Under the well-judged support of a teaching assistant the pupils gave accurate instructions to the *Roamer* to enable it to move in the right direction. Similarly, in a science lesson, a group of pupils were well supported in searching out information about the distances between various planets in the Earth's solar system. However, on this occasion a shortage of time for the activity resulted in too much direction being given and at the expense of pupils following their own lines of enquiry.
74. The planning for ICT shows clearly that all strands of the subject are covered appropriately, however the opportunities for assessing pupils achievements are not as comprehensive. There is now a need to enhance the opportunities that both teachers and pupils have to evaluate progress at the end of lessons so that pupils' achievement can be supported systematically and skills developed incrementally. The subject leader recognises these priorities and intends to make the necessary improvements. Leadership and management are effective and the subject leader is working well to refine and develop provision to make it even more effective in helping pupils in their studies of other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

**Provision in religious education is good and significantly improved since the previous inspection.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has made good improvement to religious education provision since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching, leadership and management, though assessment relies too heavily on informal systems.
- Standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- A weakness in writing in religious education books is the use of secretarial skills; particularly spelling.
- A very inclusive approach ensures good support for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to do well.
- The use of visitors enhances the curriculum as do the good resources and artefacts.
- ICT is not used well enough to promote pupils' research skills.

#### **Commentary**

75. Standards in religious education are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because they are well supported in lessons and are given suitable work.
76. The school enables pupils to learn effectively about Christianity and a range of other world faiths and to develop good insights. Over the year they learn about Diwali, Chinese New Year, Eid, Harvest and Christmas for example. The school's approaches are successful in enabling pupils to *learn about* religion and also *draw from it*. For example, pupils have looked at stories from different sacred books, and they know about the Creation from both Christian and Hindu perspectives. Such opportunities enable them to think about, and appreciate different beliefs.
77. Through well-chosen topics pupils build up their knowledge and understanding. Infant pupils have thought about what is special to them. They have written thank you prayers for friendships and family. During one lesson in Year 2 pupils were seen to be confident in expressing their

views about the meaning of *faith*. One boy described it as *trust* as he recounted his experience of getting lost in Tesco's when he was small and his feelings of fear and then relief as he found his mum. Speaking skills are promoted well in religious education lessons, through *hot seating* for example, in Year 2 when pupils questioned Abraham about his feelings about God. Teachers build well on these skills in the juniors, making good use of artefacts and displays to enhance learning. In Year 6 pupils' books there are some good quality pieces that show empathy for the journeys some people make because of their faith. Pupils have written their own stories to a Hindu child. Good questioning builds effectively on what pupils have learnt before and takes the learning forward from a secure base. The tasks set and well prepared resources in a Year 5/6 lesson on Judaism enabled pupils to draw links between faith and its impact on everyday lives. Pupils were very respectful of each other's views as they re-enacted small cameos to depict one of the *melachots*, the activities that Jews are forbidden to do on the Sabbath, without fear of ridicule.

78. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good use is made of assemblies to extend pupils' learning as was seen in an assembly based on being special. Assembly themes often take a moral and social theme, for example in considering the troubles in Iraq and Northern Ireland. Visiting speakers have talked about Diwali and Anne Frank's life; all of them helping to enrich pupils' appreciation of the diverse world to which they belong. Writing in religious education in some classes show some good achievement last year and was better than in other subjects. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' books, writing was lucid, with well-organised thoughts, and a fluent style, let down only by a weakness in the secretarial skills of grammar and punctuation, particularly spelling. Little use appears to be made of ICT in religious education. These are areas for improvement.
79. The good teaching, leadership and management ensure an inclusive approach to religious education. However, the lack of assessment procedures means that there is only partial oversight of the quality and standards in different years.

## Geography and History

**Provision in geography and history is satisfactory. The strong cross-curricular focus enables pupils to have worthwhile experiences in these subjects.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in history and geography is satisfactory.
- History work is of a better standard than geography work; more is covered and recorded in pupils' books.
- Pupils identify history as one of their favourite subjects.
- Parents told inspectors that the Roman topic had made a lasting positive impression on the pupils because it had stimulated detailed research at home as well as school.
- Display is used very well to show some good quality work that pupils have done, for example a topic about the Tudors, and the building of a model of Alveley village that draws on local environmental studies.
- Work provided in history and geography is not always matched to pupils' different capabilities however, and too many worksheets are used that limit independent and creative writing.

### Commentary

80. Standards in history are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a similar picture to the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Judgements are based on analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers, examining teachers' planning and a single lesson observation in history.

81. In history, infant pupils have studied Victorian times and visited the local Avoncroft museum to see various relics from the past contained in the old Toll house. Their work shows a sound understanding about some of the changes that have taken place to people's lives since then. For example, pupils have written about modern and old irons. Older pupils have studied about a range of civilisations including the Greeks, Tudors and Victorians. A visit from the Ermine Street Guard fired Year 2/3 pupils' imagination and stimulated some good topic work about aspects of Roman life. Year 6 pupils have produced some empathic pieces, for example what it might of felt like to be poor in Victorian times. Current work is focusing on World War 2 and there are indications that pupils will gain a lot from these experiences provided. Boys and girls were observed to find learning about the Blitz, equally appealing.
82. Geography planning shows reasonable coverage of the full geography curriculum. The scrutiny of a sample of work from last year indicates that infant pupils of all ages are given exactly the same work, which limits overall achievement. It is not possible to make reliable judgement about current standards as no lessons were observed.
83. Topics in the infants have involved pupils using mapping skills as they plot their journey to school, and sought to increase their knowledge about different countries as they find out about *Barnaby Bear's* travels. Many of the tasks set use photocopied materials that require very limited responses and no personal research and this caps achievement. Year 3 and 4 pupils have learnt about rivers for example, but teachers' marking is cursory and does not show how pupils can improve their work. Work is of higher standard in the Year 5/6 sample. Pupils have investigated coastlines in England and researched information about the Caribbean island of St Lucia. They have recorded their findings in their own words, thereby developing their literacy skills. One pupil chose to use ICT to present a series of information pamphlets about St Lucia to a very high standard.
84. Although the school offers worthwhile experiences in geography, they are not sufficiently planned to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills development is systematic and incremental. The status of geography in the school's improvement plan is not strong enough for achievement to be raised further without a more concerted effort. There is very limited assessment taking place to assess pupils' progress with accuracy.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

**Provision in art and design is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good.
- The standards being achieved are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- There are good links between art and design and other areas of the curriculum that enhance good learning.
- Art and design displays have a high profile around the school, successfully celebrating pupils' achievements.
- There is a need to develop an assessment system by which pupils know the levels at which they are working.
- The use of sketchbooks is not consistent and this limits the opportunity for monitoring achievement.

### **Commentary**

85. The provision in art and design is good, currently meeting the needs of lower and higher attaining pupils well. Standards achieved in art and design are also reflecting good improvement since the previous inspection. Basic art skills are developed well. However, the

consistent use of sketchbooks to enable pupils to refine their drawing skills to improve technique is an area for development and a whole school approach. This is a missed opportunity. From Year 1 upwards pupils are given well planned opportunities to experience colour mixing to produce shades and tones to create mixed colours. Pupils are given good opportunities to undertake printing activities in the style of *William Morris* or develop patterns in paintings in the style of *Mondrian*. Working in patterns is further developed, linking mathematics to art where pupils study a range of symmetrical and rotational patterns to create pieces in the style of *Escher*. In history pupils' self portraits are painted in the Tudor style and add value to both historical and cultural awareness. Older pupils chalk drawings entitled *Flights of fancy* are imaginative and inspirational and of high quality.

86. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is clearly evident in the good range of art and design work on display from the collage of village life created by infant pupils to the Bridget Riley inspired *Op-art* paintings aided by computer design in the juniors. The best displays show that teachers value pupils' work and make clear to pupils that teachers appreciate their efforts. Pupils say they enjoy art and design because lessons are interesting and challenging. The school has rightly encouraged the role of an Artist in Residence to add even greater value to the good subject expertise already on the staff. Her involvement has enabled pupils to successfully create large birds from willow withies and paper that were displayed in Shrewsbury art gallery. A separate project involving pupils working with two national artists based at Alveley country park resulted in art-work that showed different interpretations of what the environment might look like in the future as a result of climate change. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development. Pupils learn to value themselves because teachers value their work.
87. The subject is well led and managed. The school is aware of the need to clearly identify skills to be taught in each lesson and link this more closely to ongoing assessment. The use of sketch books is not consistent and this is a missed opportunity for the school to monitor the effectiveness of provision and check on skills development.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a happy and caring community in which all pupils are given equal status and show tolerance and respect for one another.
- Pupils are making gains in their knowledge about how to keep safe and healthy because of the school's good approaches.
- Governors award a medal for good citizenship which pupils aspire to receive.
- The school has identified the development of a school council in its action plan for this year.

### **Commentary**

88. Personal, social and health education is very well provided for, the very good role models provided by staff and governors support positively the very good relationships so evident in school. Assemblies often focus upon a theme that supports pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, what it means to be special and how everyone is special in some way. Circle times are used effectively for pupils to explore their own feelings, listen to the views of others and share experiences openly and honestly.
- 89 *Buddies* take their jobs very seriously as someone always available to offer friendship and help sort out any squabbles in the playground. Weekly paired reading sessions enable pupils to read with a partner from a different class and this helps develop wider friendships. Pupils have been

instrumental in drawing up the school rules and the very good behaviour is testament to the way they are upheld.

90. The school pays good attention to health awareness aspects. Younger pupils benefit from fruit provided daily and are learning about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and mentally alert. Older pupils have created posters with digital images and text that encourage everyone to *Keep Safe in Alveley*.
91. The governors acknowledge the pupil who has achieved the highest accolade of being a *good citizen* within the school community by awarding them a certificate and displaying this prominently in school. This sets the standard for others to reach and much sort after by pupils.



## PART D SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average; 5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low*