

INSPECTION REPORT

Belgrave CE Primary School

Longton, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke on Trent

Unique reference number: 132730

Headteacher: Mr Chris Brislen

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Huard

Dates of inspection: 6th - 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 255479

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	483
School address:	Sussex Place Longton Stoke-on-Trent
Postcode:	ST3 4TP
Telephone number:	01782 235523
Fax number:	01782 232525
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joan Bell
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Belgrave is the result of the amalgamation of two local primary schools with falling rolls. It is situated in Longton on the outskirts of Stoke-on-Trent. The school has retained the Church of England status of one of the schools, but it provides an education for a highly diverse community of which a large proportion is Muslim. It caters for pupils between the ages of 3 and 11 and nearly all attend from the local area. The area is below average in socio-economic terms. There are 483 pupils on roll and broadly similar numbers of boys and girls. Children join the Nursery class when they are three. When they join the school their attainment is well below average particularly in the areas of language, literacy communication, mathematics and personal and social development. It is difficult to judge the rate of mobility as the school has been established for only a short time, but already during its first year 30 pupils left and 21 others joined. A high percentage of pupils, about 35 per cent, come from ethnic minority groups, with 170 pupils receiving some support with learning English. Ethnic groups represented in the school include Pakistani, Asian or Asian British, mixed White/Asian, Black or Black British and Chinese. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. About 15 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs or are on the school's concern register, which is about average. Five pupils, about one per cent, have a statement of special educational needs, which is about average. These pupils have moderate learning and physical difficulties. Extra support is provided for pupils who have difficulties with learning, as well as those with hearing and visual impairment, emotional and behavioural problems.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27290	Mrs Chris Huard	Lead inspector	Science
19693	Mrs Sally Hall	Lay inspector	
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum History Geography Religious education English as an additional language
32595	Mrs Gill Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team Inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Criterion School Inspections

*Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Belgrave provides a good education for its pupils and provides good value for money.

Although standards are currently below average, pupils have made good progress and achieved well in relation to the standards they were attaining when the school first opened last year. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. The leadership and management of the school are good, with an appropriate emphasis on identifying and taking positive action about areas which need improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:¹

- The very good leadership of the headteacher and the positive ethos of the school.
- Standards in English and science which are currently below those expected.
- Good teaching resulting in good learning and achievement over time.
- The very good provision for children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The very good inclusion of, and support for, pupils who use English as an additional language, those with special educational needs, and those who are gifted and talented.
- The role of the governors, who do not yet contribute sufficiently to the strategic planning of the school.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators of non-core subjects², who have had too few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects in order to identify areas for development.
- Pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their good attitudes and relationships.
- The very good links which have been established with the local community, which are having a positive impact on the pupils' education.

The school has not been inspected previously. Since it opened, it has made good progress in identifying areas for development and has quickly instilled an ethos, based firmly on its status as a Church school, but embracing, within this, a respect and tolerance for all faiths and cultures. The school has identified particular areas for development, including standards and achievement, the underachievement of Pakistani pupils, and the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is clear from studying the work in pupils' books that the rigorous monitoring programme introduced has led to a significant improvement in teaching and learning over the last year, although the results in tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average. Effective action has been taken to improve the provision for pupils who use English as an additional language, particularly with regard to bi-lingual reinforcement where appropriate. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with focused targets in pupils' individual education plans that are relevant to their individual needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	N/A	N/A	E	E
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	E
Science	N/A	N/A	E	E

*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.*

¹ The strengths and weaknesses are listed in order of significance.

² The non-core subjects are those other than English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' achievement is good overall, given their well below average standards of attainment on entering the school.

Children do not meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year although they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 attained standards in tests that were well below those seen nationally but they achieve well. Standards overall in reading, writing and mathematics in 2003 showed a significant improvement over the year given their attainment when the school opened.

The results of tests at the end of Year 6 showed standards to be well below average in English mathematics and science. However the inspection found that, although standards in Years 3 to 6 are below average in English and science, they are broadly average in mathematics. The work seen in pupils' books is better than the results achieved in national tests, although still below average. Science is improving considerably and pupils' ability to think round a problem is more evident as is their ability to predict logically and explain their reasons when writing up an investigation. Pupils' work in information and communication technology is good and meets the standards expected.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are good. Pupils concentrate and persevere in lessons. They behave well and have good relationships with each other and adults. Their spiritual development is very good. Their moral, social and cultural development is good and they have a good awareness of the cultural diversity of the society in which they are growing up.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features. Children in the nursery and reception classes receive a very good start to their education. Teaching is consistently good and focused on developing social, speaking and listening skills in order that children can be more involved in their learning. In the rest of the school, teachers plan carefully, promote speaking and listening well, and question pupils skilfully to ensure that they understand and gain from what they are being taught. Support staff are well deployed by teachers and are highly effective in assisting pupils' learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers pay good attention to pupils' targets and ensure that that they use appropriate strategies to help meet them. This enables pupils to understand what they are learning. The teaching for pupils who use English as an additional language is good and care is taken to ensure they understand and can fully participate in all lesson; often through the very good support from bi-lingual classroom assistants.

Pupils' good attitudes to their work assist their learning; they are generally attentive and behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and persevere in class. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from challenging tasks well matched to their abilities.

The school offers a broad curriculum, although the time allocated to some non-core subjects requires adjustment in order to ensure all subjects are covered sufficiently. A wide range of visits and visitors enriches pupils' learning. The very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances this further.

There is good provision for the care and welfare of the pupils. The school works closely and effectively with parents and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has shown that he is clearly focused on what he wants the school to achieve and has very high, but realistic, aspirations for pupils' academic and social development. There is a positive emphasis on improvement, which is pursued relentlessly by the headteacher, and staff alike. Actions taken are rigorously monitored to ensure success and adjustments and amendments made where necessary. The school has a very positive approach to inclusion, and the aims and values, which were formulated at a very early stage, are firmly embedded in the school and are adhered to closely, for example, in the school's strong response in dealing with any racial issues that have arisen. The governors have been instrumental to the successful establishment of the school. They have provided very good support for the headteacher and staff. However, although some challenge the school appropriately they are not all fully involved in its strategic development. Spending is appropriately focused on actions taken to raise standards. The emphasis has been, rightly, on the development and improvement of English and mathematics and these subjects are managed well by the subject coordinators who monitor lessons and pupils' work appropriately. However, there has been little monitoring of science and the non-core subjects by the relevant co-ordinators, and this is an area for development that has already been identified by the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the work of school and the majority are happy with its ethos, aims and values. The pupils enjoy school. They say they are expected to work hard and behave well. Nearly all enjoy their lessons and think they have good relationships with their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Raise standards in English and science.
- Fully include the governors in the strategic development of the school.
- Ensure that all subject co-ordinators have sufficient opportunities to monitor standards, teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good, based on the improvement observed and progress made in pupils' work over the last year. Standards are, however, below average in English, and science, although they are average in mathematics and information and communication technology at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good throughout the school.
- Standards, although improving, are still too low in English, science and geography.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 exceeded the targets set.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003³

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (N/A)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.2 (N/A)	27.0 (26.7)
Science	25.1 (N/A)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The school's results at the end of Year 6 showed that standards were well below average in all three subjects at the end of Year 6 and did not meet the ambitious targets set by the school. This was not surprising, taking into account the disruption caused to pupils' learning by them having to adapt to a new regime and learning environment right at the end of their primary school career. However, although the work in pupils' books showed them to have achieved well during the year, it was also evident that many pupils had far too much to catch up on to enable them to reach the average standards expected. In the tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 the results were encouraging, with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in English mathematics and science exceeding the targets set. However, again, despite good achievement from a low starting point, many pupils had too much catching up to do to enable them to perform to the average standards. Although children in the Foundation Stage⁴ achieved well, they did not meet the Early Learning Goals⁵ in all areas of learning by the time they reached Year 1, except in their personal social and emotional development.
2. At the time of the inspection the children in the nursery were still relatively new to the school and getting to know their teachers and classmates. They were settling well and beginning to take a full part in all activities. Children in the reception classes achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and creative development. They do well in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world. Although there are many opportunities for physical development, these are not always exploited as fully as they might be, so children's development remains satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average and children's individual achievements are tracked and recorded regularly, showing that most are making good progress.

³ **Average Points Scores.** The average points scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

⁴ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

⁵ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.6 (N/A)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	13.0 (N/A)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.4 (N/A)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress. Standards in speaking and listening, although below what is expected overall, are steadily improving because of the success of strategies used by teachers in the classroom. Standards in reading and writing are also generally below what is expected. However, rapid improvement is taking place, because of good opportunities to read at home and in class, and because teachers show what is meant by good writing, by actually demonstrating how it should be done. In mathematics, pupils are making rapid progress and standards are in line with what is expected. In science, pupils benefit from a good deal of 'hands-on' experience and make good progress, so that standards are now close to what they should be. In information and communication technology, pupils are confident and reach the required standard, as they do in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and music. In religious education pupils meet the standards required by the locally agreed syllabus.
4. In Years 3 to 6, standards show signs of good improvement, from a low starting point, although they are still below average in English and science. In Year 6, this is mainly due to the fact that written recording is still not of a high enough standard, although they are doing well and catching up fast with much of the ground they have not covered in the past. In mathematics the work examined showed good achievement mainly because of the good implementation and teaching of a structured scheme. In Years 3 and 4, standards are broadly in line with what is expected in all areas, and pupils have made very good progress with the quality of their written work. Pupils meet the required standards in all of the non-core subjects, except geography, where it was not possible to make a judgement, and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education are also met.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Individual targets set for pupils are focused and made clear to pupils and parents. Teachers know the targets for their pupils and make appropriate provision for them often with specialised, good support. A high percentage of pupils use English as an additional language and they receive good quality support and make good progress. The school's higher-attaining pupils make good progress because they are appropriately challenged in class and this is supplemented by their attendance at appropriate courses arranged by the school.
6. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well, because the teaching is directed to redressing the identified areas of weakness. Work is pitched at an appropriate level ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged to improve their skills, whilst providing enough reinforcement of knowledge and understanding. Appropriate support has been provided in the form of training, and through well qualified staff, to enable this to happen.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development, including that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are good; they are positive about their school and their work. The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons, around the school and in the playground and there are good relationships between all members of the school community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils.
- The school's positive actions to promote punctuality and good attendance.

7. Since the school opened, the headteacher, supported well by teachers, administration staff and the school's community liaison officer, has worked hard and made good progress to promote positive attitudes among parents and pupils towards recognising the importance of attending school regularly and arriving on time. To this end, a number of very effective strategies have been evolved for informing parents promptly and directly about continued absence or lateness on the one hand, and celebrating and rewarding good attendance and punctuality on the other. Parents and pupils have responded well, overall, to the school's inclusive curriculum and positive approach to relationships with the community. Consequently, both attendance and punctuality have risen to satisfactory levels in the past year. Nevertheless, the school's efforts and opportunities for further improvement are hindered by the continuing lack of cooperation from a minority of parents who condone their children's prolonged absences from school, or who continue to send them in late, which is having a negative impact on their progress.

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	208	7	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	149	8	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

8. In order to reinforce the new school's policies regarding behaviour and discipline it was necessary to take decisive action during last year which meant that a small number of older pupils were excluded from the school for a short while. As a result of this the behaviour improved rapidly over the year and at the time of the inspection behaviour was good.
9. The development of pupils' personal qualities underpins the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils are fully engaged in a rich curriculum and have the confidence to achieve well. Consequently, the school sets high expectations for pupils' participation in all aspects of school life, of their behaviour and, most significantly, their awareness of their own contribution and value to the school community. These efforts to establish high standards have had a very positive impact on the ethos of the school in a very short time. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their relations with adults and each other are good. This is because adults throughout the school are very good role models and clearly demonstrate that they value the contribution made by each pupil. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, enjoy the extra help they are given, particularly in small groups, and form very good relationships with the adults who support them. Incidences of racial intolerance on the part of individuals or groups towards others are rare and are dealt with fairly and properly when they arise. Pupils are happy to come to school, polite, friendly and keen to learn, and there is strong potential for these

standards to rise still further, as the school's reputation and high expectations become even more firmly established in the community.

10. The school's determination to enable all its pupils to achieve well is most clearly reflected through its strategies for ensuring their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These have very quickly become woven into the fabric of day-to-day life and are a particular strength of the school. The carefully planned themes for assemblies provide the most powerful vehicle for development. During the week of the inspection, for example, discussion about the musical 'Oliver' helped pupils to consider the plight of others, the nature of giving and the value of the individual. The headteacher's commitment to raising self-esteem, through the use of specialist support, also has significant impact on pupils' ability to consider their individual qualities and the effect of their behaviour on others. This has been achieved through the work of 'SMILE', a support group which visits school to help pupils to explore ways of solving problems and resolving issues through mediation. This initiative is having a positive impact on pupils understanding and appreciation of the school's behaviour code. The training of pupils in Year 6 as playground mediators is especially helpful in creating a sense of self-confidence and security and contributes strongly to social development and the good relationships that permeate the school. Similarly, the hard work carried out by teachers to provide stimulating learning experiences, through the use of visits and visitors, is steadily building pupils' appreciation of the arts. Typical examples of this are visits to the school by musicians from Africa, China and the local Asian community as well as trips to the Stoke repertory theatre. The art curriculum is an area which does not yet offer this level of diversity and is in need of review.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good, overall, with considerable strengths in the nursery and reception classes and Year 6. The school offers a broad curriculum which is well supported by a wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities. The strong ethos ensures that good care support and guidance are provided for all pupils. The school has established strong links with parents, partner schools and the local community and these have a positive impact on the learning of the pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning and learning are good. Assessment is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality planning which ensures good provision for all pupils.
- Good subject knowledge and the very good utilisation of teachers' specific skills.
- Very good classroom organisation and behaviour management.
- Very good use of teaching and support assistants.
- Comprehensive assessment and marking procedures which are used well to plan future work.
- Some inconsistencies in teaching practice in Year 2.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	13 (24%)	24 (46%)	15 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

11. One of the headteacher's first priorities was to establish a monitoring structure to enable him to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning in the new school. As a result he quickly discovered that provision for pupils who use English as an additional language was unsatisfactory and leading to significant under-achievement by, in particular, the Pakistani pupils in the school. By providing appropriate training, and supporting with careful monitoring, teachers' planning and teaching now takes into account all groups of pupils. The examination of work from the last year shows that, as a result, the achievement of all pupils is improving and standards are rising rapidly. The planning for all lessons is comprehensive and identifies clearly what all pupils should learn. The work for pupils is carefully matched to their individual needs and, in addition, the roles of all support staff are clearly identified.
12. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. This enables them to bring their own specific subjects to life and make the pupils buzz with enthusiasm. They help to instil a real eagerness to learn. In particular, the teaching of English and mathematics is particularly good throughout the school. This was especially evident in Year 6, where the work of Shakespeare was brought to life through dramatisation and role play, and mathematics through exciting and challenging problems. Teachers in the school have an eagerness to improve their own knowledge and show a great willingness to take on board new skills which has a direct and positive impact on pupils' achievement. This is particularly obvious in the field of information and communication technology, where the school installed interactive whiteboards shortly before the inspection, and, such was the enthusiasm of the staff, all were being competently used during the inspection and making a good contribution to pupils' learning.
13. Teachers organise their classrooms appropriately. In some classes, for example, there are specific arrangements for the teaching of mathematics which are more conducive to the strategy being used. Pupils move around with the minimum of fuss and are eager and keen to learn, which means that no time is wasted. Pupils behave well. They listen carefully and respond eagerly to questions. Teachers encourage them to have short, snappy discussions with their buddy partners to help them sort out specific problems and this is enabling pupils to develop their independent learning skills effectively.
14. Throughout the school teaching and learning support assistants are deployed very effectively. In particular the bi-lingual assistants are having a particularly positive effect on the learning of the pupils who use English as an additional language. They explain, where necessary, what needs to be done in the pupils' mother tongue, but encourage the pupils to use English, wherever possible, and take special care to encourage them to repeat words and use correct terminology in subjects such as science. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. This is because their individual education plans, particularly those for language development, are very carefully planned to meet their specific needs and teachers and teaching assistants provide sharply focused and effective support.
15. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly on a regular basis. At the end of last year the school identified, through its monitoring procedures, the need for marking to be more informative if it was to help pupils move forward with their learning. This need was also noted by inspectors when examining pupils' previous work. However, it is noticeable that, since September, staff have taken this requirement on board and pupils now receive good feedback on their work which identifies clearly what they need to do to improve. In addition, the skilful use of questions in class is allowing teachers to assess how far pupils have gone in their learning and what they have understood, enabling teachers to accurately identify what is to be taught in the next lesson.
16. In most classes there is consistency between what is being taught and the progress that pupils are making. However, in one Year 2 class it was evident that some pupils do not benefit from the same high quality teaching as others in their year group. The lesson content, whilst satisfactory, was often mundane and pupils became restless and fidgety because they were kept too long on the carpet. The tasks set were appropriate, but rather dull, and the quality of work produced, whilst adequate, was not inspiring or very original in content. The quality of work produced during the inspection echoed that seen in the pupils' books from the previous

year which was of a decidedly lower standard than that produced by pupils in the other classes.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements. Very good extra-curricular provision enriches the opportunities offered to pupils. The new accommodation is very good, as are the resources available to teachers to support their lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of specialist teaching.
 - Very good curriculum enrichment through extra-curricular activities.
 - The school's efforts to ensure good provision for all its pupils.
 - Too little time is allocated to geography.
17. The school provides a broad curriculum of good quality to support the academic and personal development of its pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The time allocated for teaching geography is less than in other subjects and requires adjustment. The resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects are of high quality and the accommodation, which is very well maintained by the site manager and cleaning staff, provides a very stimulating learning environment meeting the needs of the curriculum very well.
18. There are two specific aspects of the curriculum which have the potential to ensure strong future development and rising achievement. Firstly, the school's high expectations of pupils' participation in all aspects of the curriculum, both during and after school hours, ensure that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are fully included. In order to successfully achieve this aim, the headteacher has assembled a team of colleagues whose skills and experience are well matched to the subjects which they manage. He has also appointed a very good number of support staff who are very clear about their roles and ensure that pupils with special needs and those who are in the early stages of learning English have full access to the curriculum. Secondly, he has successfully brought about innovations, directly linked to the school aims, which are helping to raise self-esteem, achievement and standards. This has been achieved by making the best use of specialist teachers, both from the school and through outside agencies, to teach particular subjects. For example, teachers from the school staff take classes of other colleagues for subjects such as English, music and physical education, whilst specialists from elsewhere are invited in to teach tennis, gymnastics, football and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' involvement in the school's work is very good. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good, and the school gives its pupils good guidance and support.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school has established strong and trusting relationships between pupils and staff.
 - The school values the views of pupils.
 - Teachers track the progress of the pupils' personal development and celebrate their achievements.
 - There are good procedures for health, safety and care.
19. Governors and staff have successfully laid firm foundations to create a very inclusive ethos from the school's conception. Members of the school community show care and concern for each other and adults working in the school know and value the pupils. The results of the pupils' questionnaires clearly show that nearly all pupils feel that they can turn to staff if they need help.

20. The school council successfully brings about improvements to school life. The school values their views on issues such as playground equipment, giving them a budget and implementing their suggestions. A recent survey about behaviour in school revealed that most of the pupils' concerns were about behaviour in the playground. This resulted in class discussions and the introduction of peer mediators. The school has invested heavily in these volunteers giving them specialist training and placing confidence in their abilities to resolve conflicts.
21. Teachers track the progress of the pupils' personal, social and emotional development through listening to pupils, especially through the use of 'circle time'⁶. Support staff, midday supervisors, and outside agencies, work alongside teachers so that all adults working in school make significant contributions in raising pupils' self-esteem and encouraging independence. Teachers make helpful comments about personal development in the pupils' annual reports and celebrate the pupils' achievements in weekly assemblies and at prize giving.
22. Staff and governors ensure that pupils work in a healthy and secure environment and risk assessments are in place. Staff understand the child protection procedures and they know to report any concerns to the head teacher. The arrangements for first-aid are good and pupils who are ill or injured receive good care and attention.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's support programmes for parents and pupils are very good, and its links with parents are good. The school's links with the community are very good and it has good links with other schools.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school.
 - The school embraces the rich diversity of culture found in the local community.
 - The school works closely with outside agencies to provide very good learning opportunities for parents and pupils.
23. The school is committed to reaching out to parents and making them feel welcome in school. Throughout the amalgamation process, the school worked hard to keep parents well informed and to allay their fears and concerns. The parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive about many aspects of school life. Parents feel that the school is led and managed well, and the vast majority feel that staff are approachable if they have concerns. The school conducts annual surveys of parents and acts on their concerns. It seeks their views, for example, regarding setting up a breakfast club. Parents are provided with good information about the school through the prospectus. The community and family liaison officer makes beneficial home visits to families whose Mother tongue is not English. Signs around the school and important letters are translated into Urdu. Newsletters inform parents about future events, but do not always celebrate the school's successes. The pupils' annual reports are generally satisfactory, but not all of them contain clear targets about how pupils can improve their work.
 24. The school has established a very good partnership with the local community and these links enrich the curriculum. The school is proud to be a 'faith' school, serving the whole community, and addresses issues of race and religion, for example, through the multi-cultural celebration week. There are very good links with the Islamic community and a shared commitment to improving parents' involvement in their children's education. There are beneficial links with the Staffordshire Business Partnership and pupils gain valuable insights into the world of work.

⁶ 'Circle time' is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters, as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

For example, through 'People who Help Us', children in the Foundation Stage met members of local services and learnt about their jobs. Older pupils visited a local museum and power station. Others took part in a 'media challenge' and gained understanding of the pressures to meet production deadlines. Local heritage is celebrated through links with local potteries and the school supports a wide range of local and overseas charities.

25. The school works successfully with the 'College in the Community', with the aim of raising pupils' achievement through increasing parental involvement in their children's education. Both adults and children benefit from the 'Keeping up with the Children' courses where parents work with their children focusing on information and communication technology and literacy. There are also swimming lessons for Asian mothers. The school has made very good use of funding from The Children's Fund to pilot a conflict resolution programme within the school. Support workers train staff in developing whole-class discussion and provide high quality courses for pupils to become peer mediators. Pupils take their duties very seriously and the scheme is valued by staff and parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of key stage and subject managers is good, and the school is managed well. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Dynamic leadership and high aspirations from the headteacher providing clear direction for the school.
- The school has clear aims and values which are reflected in the school's ethos and learning environment.
- Management is good; there is a good understanding of the needs of the school and a willingness to take action in order to improve standards.
- Funds are well managed and have been carefully directed to areas where they will have greatest impact on raising standards.
- The governors are not yet fully involved in the strategic development of the school.
- The role of the co-ordinators of non-core subjects has not yet been fully developed.

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He was appointed well in advance of the opening of the new school, which enabled him to familiarise himself with the area and the two very diverse communities of the schools to be amalgamated. During this time he worked very closely with the temporary governing body and staff, and a whole-team approach was quickly established. The aims and values of the new school were the first major decisions to be taken. These place a high priority on the provision of a stimulating and inspiring education for all within the ethos of a Church of England school which respects the tenets and beliefs of other faiths. All that the school does closely reflects these ideals and the headteacher, staff and governors defended these stoutly particularly in its firm stand against racism.
27. The school at the time of the inspection was in a period of transition between the dissolving of the temporary governing body and the new board of governors for the new school. The temporary governors have been instrumental in the effective amalgamation of the two schools. They have been strongly supportive of the headteacher and of the new policies and procedures for the new school. However, they did not play a strong role in the development planning of the school and tended to rely heavily on the headteacher and staff for guidance in this area. Although most have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, they are not yet so aware about the weaknesses. They receive good information on the curriculum through reports from the headteacher and operate effectively in committees that deal with issues relating to staffing, curriculum, finance and premises. Although some governors visit the school, they do not yet have a good understanding of their monitoring role. As yet, governors

are insufficiently involved in school development planning and reviewing progress made towards targets.

28. On a practical front the headteacher carried out extensive monitoring and planning prior to the opening of the new school identifying strengths and weaknesses and identifying the major areas of focus. Academic standards were generally too low, the provision for pupils with special educational needs in one of the schools was particularly poor, and the provision for pupils with English as an additional language was inadequate and leading to considerable underachievement. The areas identified then as needing improvement have been tackled systematically, and other priorities have been addressed. He has a very clear vision for the further development of the school and has successfully blended the staff into a stable and cohesive team that has a strongly shared commitment to raising the quality of education still further. All work very hard to achieve this. As a result, the school has made a good improvement overall since its opening. Its commitment to and capacity for further improvement are excellent.
29. The headteacher has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and uses monitoring effectively to target action plans for development. There is a shared desire for pupils to achieve high standards, but this does not compromise the broad curriculum and wide range of learning opportunities provided by the school, and the development of all children as individuals. A highly positive environment has been developed and maintained. This, combined with pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, makes a significant contribution to their learning. The headteacher receives good support from the senior management team. The school, quite rightly, has concentrated its initial efforts on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. These areas have been monitored particularly well. This includes examining teachers' planning, regular lesson observations, and the systematic examination of pupils' written work. These activities have contributed to the on-going improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching and learning as well as enabling the school to identify priorities for future development. Teachers receive good quality feedback on their work and are able to develop their practice through a well-structured programme of staff development. However, the role of subject leaders in other areas has not yet been fully developed and they have not had the chance to carry out lesson observations, although they have monitored planning, and examined the quality of pupils' work.

Financial information

Financial information for September 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	689,722	Balance from previous year	None
Total expenditure	693,793	Balance carried forward to the next	-4,070
Expenditure per pupil	1,436 (2,462 over year)		

30. The school's financial planning arrangements are well organised. The budget is properly considered and approved by the full governing body. The specific funds element of the school's finances is very well targeted. The funds are used effectively to raise the attainment of those pupils with special needs and those who use English as an additional language. The school ensures that the financial resources available to it are properly targeted to improving standards. The four principles of best value; challenge, compare, consult and competition, are adhered to well. The school's overall administrative arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances are very good, as is the use made by the school of new technology in support of its management systems. Although there was a small overspend last year this was accounted for appropriately. The school secretary, bursar and clerical assistant undertake their administrative and financial monitoring duties very conscientiously and well. They provide very good support to the school community, liaising well with the pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children enter the nursery with attainment well below average in all areas of learning, except physical development, where they are below average. They achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and leave the reception classes broadly in line with what is expected for their age in this area of learning. Achievement in most other areas is good, but children are still not reaching the expected standards by the time they leave the reception classes. The children achieve well because the curriculum is very well planned, and teaching is good in both the nursery and reception classes. The very strong, visionary leadership has, in a short time, created a very effective team, ensured that teaching time is exceptionally well organised and built up an impressive range of resources to stimulate children's learning. Effective systems are in place to record children's achievements and these are regularly transferred to individual records so that overall progress can be monitored and individual learning carefully tracked. The large numbers of children who use English as an additional language make good progress because of the high quality support provided by bilingual staff.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and become self-confident because of the very good organisation and daily routines, which are established as soon as they start in the nursery, and the warm, caring relationships and high expectations of good behaviour.
- Children with English as an additional language achieve well because of the high quality bilingual support which they receive.

Commentary

32. When the children start in the nursery their personal, social and emotional skills are well below what is expected for their age. To help ensure a smooth transition from home to school this year the entry of children into the nursery was staggered over five weeks. This very careful organisation ensured that all the children had individual support, older children became good role models for the younger ones and daily routines were quickly established. The rich variety of activities, provided in both the nursery and reception classes, ensure children are purposefully employed and enables them to move confidently from task to task. Staff engage with the children very well, helping them to take turns and encouraging sharing. The way in which adults talk with and show respect for the children sets a very good example. Children make very good progress and by the time they move into Year 1 are well behaved, show appropriate levels of concentration, and happily share toys and equipment.
33. A significant number of children start in the nursery with very little understanding of English. Bilingual staff give very good support to most of these children by conversing in home language and English. This enables the children to understand what is expected of them, to follow routines and generally settle very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan and organise activities well so that the children can practise and develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Adults' skilled interaction with the children ensures that they learn to reason and use language with increasing expertise to tell, explain and describe.

Commentary

34. When they first come into nursery, many children have very low speaking skills and are not used to listening carefully. In both the nursery and reception the very good organisation and breadth of stimulating activities provide plenty of opportunities for the children to speak and listen. They are expected to listen to adults and to each other, reinforcing social skills as well as learning how to communicate. For example in the nursery, four children at a time played 'sound lotto', expertly led by a member of staff. The children were encouraged to listen to the recorded sounds of familiar noises and talk about what they thought they heard, as well as helping each other find the right picture on their cards. Throughout the Foundation Stage children learn to listen to stories with enjoyment and talk about what they have heard. The availability of a good range of books encourages children in reception to begin to enjoy 'reading' by themselves, many choosing to sit and talk about the story with whoever will listen.
35. Staff in the nursery engage in meaningful conversations with the children, whenever possible in both English and Panjabi, asking them open-ended questions which demand answers, not just a 'yes' or a 'no'. For instance in a group activity in the nursery, the children were encouraged to identify shapes using the correct mathematical words, as well as saying the colour. As they get older, children in reception have further demands made on them. In an activity where the children were creating autumn pictures the children were being asked to describe what else they had seen on their recent walk. By the time the children move into Year 1 they have made good progress but standards are still below what is expected for this age group.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's mathematical language and is included as an integral part of many other activities.
- Teachers use assessment well to ensure tasks are appropriately matched to children's abilities and that they provide good challenge.

Commentary

36. Adults working with the children reinforce counting skills, whenever possible, and number rhymes are used frequently, making mathematical development fun. Children are encouraged to use their fingers for counting and those in reception are encouraged to use a variety of equipment, including number lines to reinforce learning. Specifically planned group activities ensure that the breadth of mathematical development is covered. In the nursery, for example, children were learning the names of triangles, rectangles and circles. Children in reception were learning to describe which groups had more, less or were the same. Adults reinforce learning by questioning the children, whilst engaged in a variety of tasks, constantly encouraging mathematical language and understanding.

37. Teachers carefully plan activities based on the good assessments that they make of where the children are at in their learning reinforcing and extending this. Most of the children start in nursery with very low mathematical skills and, although a few count to five, they cannot match this to the number of objects being counted. In reception, a group of children were being well challenged to count to six by using dice, selecting the correct number of conkers and placing them on a number line. Good reinforcement of language was encouraged, as the children discussed with the teacher who had the most, the least or the same number of conkers. Very few children confidently count beyond ten. Despite making good progress through the Foundation Stage, by the time they leave reception children are still below the standard expected in their mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' very good planning and organisation ensures that this wide area of learning is thoroughly covered.
- The opportunities provided for the children to share their own, and learn about other people's, life-styles enable the children to develop positive attitudes to people around them.

Commentary

38. Good planning by the teachers, based on half-termly topics, ensures that children enjoy a wide range of experiences, which help them discover and understand about simple science, technology, history, geography and religious education. On starting in the nursery, the majority of children have had very limited experiences, and their knowledge and understanding is well below expectations overall. The richly planned curriculum means that by the time children move into Year 1 they have made good progress, but overall are still not achieving the early learning goals. In the nursery, the children were seen playing 'sound lotto' were also learning the names of animals, electrical devices and talking about a range of experiences. Children in reception had great fun outside discovering the effect of the wind on balloons and paper windmills. Provision for information and communication technology is particularly strong. The staff in the nursery make good of their own 'smart board', using it to help the children operate animated pictures, which in turn generates real excitement and opportunity for language development. The children also have constant access to a box full of apparatus labelled 'How does it work?' Children in the reception classes have a weekly session in the computer suite, where they are being systematically taught 'mouse' skills and how to use simple menus. Walks and visits around the local area are also an integral part of the reception programme, helping the children begin to experience aspects of history and geography.
39. From their first day in the nursery, the children are exposed to hearing at least two languages spoken, thus learning to accept and respect differences. Resources, including bilingual storybooks, reflect different cultures and backgrounds and children are encouraged to talk about and share their own cultural heritage.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strength and weakness

- The provision of high quality resources means that there are good opportunities for learning.
- Opportunities are missed to maximise learning and challenge all children.

Commentary

40. When children start in the nursery their physical skills are generally better than their attainment in other areas of learning, but they are still below what is expected for their age. During their time in the Foundation Stage they make satisfactory progress because of the high quality resources and good opportunities to use them. Children have the opportunity to practice using small implements, such as paintbrushes, scissors, jig-saws and small construction toys, every day. This helps them develop fine control and hand-eye co-ordination. Opportunities are equally good for developing control of their limbs. Daily outdoor sessions for all the children provide them with the chance to run, climb and operate a very good range of wheeled toys such as tricycles, cars and scooters. Children in reception also have a weekly session in the hall, for which they undress and dress themselves competently.
41. Despite the good opportunities, teaching in this area is not as strong as in all the others. Although teaching was satisfactory, opportunities were missed to increase the pace of learning and encourage the use of language. For example, children in reception were not helped to hold pencils correctly and, in the hall, higher-achieving children were not sufficiently challenged and motivated to work really hard.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a good range of activities, which provide the children with opportunities to explore and experiment.

Commentary

42. Each day children in the Foundation Stage experience a wide range of activities, many of which provide good opportunities for them to use their imagination in a variety of ways. In the nursery, paint and 'small world' play equipment, such as farm and zoo animals, are always available and there are areas for role-play, including a good range of dressing-up clothes. Specifically planned activities, such as one seen using different types of paper, enabled the teacher to engage with the children as they explored colour, texture and pattern and reinforce the names of the colours. In reception, opportunities are extended and the children use different ways to paint and create images. For instance, by using corrugated cardboard and finger painting to create the trunk and leaves of very effective autumn trees. Singing sessions are planned as a regular feature in both the nursery and reception. Children really enjoy these sessions and join in enthusiastically.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are still too low.
- The good achievement of the pupils, from a very low starting point at the start of last year.
- The high quality of teaching and learning.
- The very good planning of work for pupils of different abilities enables them to achieve well.
- The quality of presentation of work is not always high enough.

43. Standards are below average overall by the end of Years 2 and 6, but this represents good improvement since the school opened. The results in the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed an improvement over those from the previous year from both former schools. Pupils in Year 6 did not achieve as well as expected, but the work seen during the inspection indicates that the current group of pupils in Year 6 is on track to perform much better, and standards in reading, for example, are now similar to those found in most schools. In addition, the work seen in Years 3, 4 and 5 indicates clearly that the pupils are achieving well, the school's strategies are working and standards are continuing to improve. This has been achieved by the thorough analysis of pupils' performance in optional and national tests, the setting of clear targets for improvement for all pupils and the provision of sharply focused support for individuals and groups of different abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language receive very good additional support, and appropriately challenging work is provided for more able pupils. Consequently, pupils throughout the school are now achieving well and the school has created a strong platform for further improvement.
44. Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers in the vast majority of lessons provide good opportunities for developing these skills, either through sharply focused question and answer techniques or by encouraging pupils to talk in pairs or in 'friendly fours'. In a very good lesson seen in Year 1, for example, the class teacher did this particularly well, regularly asking her class to talk about the stimulating toys she had brought in to add further interest to the 'Big Book' story, 'Shark in the Park'. As a result, her class learned a lot of new and useful words in a short time. In Year 2 the vast majority of pupils listen well, are eager to speak and will use clear phrases or short sentences in their answers to questions. A minority of more confident speakers talk confidently and at greater length, for example, about the book they are reading, reflecting standards above expectations for their age, while many at this stage use single-word answers and need regular support, which is below expectations. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 clearly benefit from the continued emphasis placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and are keen to contribute to discussions. Although the quality of speaking does not always meet the expectations for their age group the pupils achieve well. This is because very many lessons, particularly in Year 6, are consistently lively and interesting and capture pupils' imagination and attention. For example, the whole year group was captivated by a visit to the theatre and brimming with eagerness to talk about it. Some more able pupils gave detailed accounts, better than expected at their age, of how the revolving stage worked. Many, on the other hand, had difficulty in communicating ideas clearly, and at length.
45. Standards of reading are below expectations in Year 2 and are similar to those seen in most schools by Year 6. The school quickly establishes good reading habits and has successfully enlisted the cooperation of many parents in listening to their children at home. This is well supported by guided reading sessions in school, with additional help ensured for pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English. Most pupils in Year 2 read familiar stories confidently without help. A minority of more capable pupils achieve above the expected level because they read with expression and are beginning to take an interest in a favourite author. Some, on the other hand, need regular help from adults because they do not have the skills to tackle new words and do not read at the expected level for their age. The majority of pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards typical for their age group and this is chiefly because of the healthy and enthusiastic attitudes they are developing towards reading. Consequently, the majority discuss at least one work by Dickens or Shakespeare with some authority and even those whose skills do not reach expected levels enjoy listening to, enacting or reading stories and read aloud with expression. Some higher-attaining pupils make clear and sophisticated comparisons between the styles of writing employed by, for instance Roald Dahl and JK Rowling, which are clearly above expectations for their age group. Research skills are well developed at this stage and pupils are used to finding information on the internet or from reference books.
46. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Many pupils in Year 2 place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops. A minority of higher attaining pupils write imaginative stories of

their own. One pupil, for example, writing as though she were her own dad, explains, 'I walked into the kitchen expecting to find my dinner on the stove, but did I? No'. Some, on the other hand, still need regular help from teaching assistants or their teachers to space words correctly and build sentences in order to achieve the expected standards of writing. By Year 6, many pupils write stories independently, organising their work into paragraphs and are familiar with writing for different audiences through book reviews, play scripts, or biographical prose. Less able pupils write about their own lives with limited support from adults, achieving standards just below the expected level for their age group, whilst some higher attainers exceed the standards seen in most schools, writing accurately and at length for a wide range of purposes, both in English lessons and in subjects across the curriculum.

47. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school, is often very good and is of a consistently high standard in Year 6. The most significant strength of teaching is the quality of planning in all year groups. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to plan lively and carefully structured lessons. More significantly, they work very closely with teaching assistants to provide work at precisely the right level of difficulty to meet the different needs of individuals and groups within the class. The best features of teaching were clearly demonstrated in lessons seen in Year 6, where teachers made excellent use of technology to fire pupils' enthusiasm for literature and engage the interest and attention of the whole class. Their efforts were rewarded by seeing boys and girls from a wide range of cultural backgrounds enjoying, understanding and using challenging dialogue from Shakespeare and wielding imaginary swords as they played as the Capulets against the Montagues in 'Romeo and Juliet'. Teaching is only occasionally less successful where teachers capture pupils' interest less consistently. In a Year 2 lesson seen, for example, the planning of work for pupils of different ability was typically thorough, ensuring satisfactory teaching and achievement overall. However, opportunities were missed to engage the class more fully in constructive discussion. This led to some loss of concentration and interest and had a negative impact on the rate of achievement.
48. Teachers' use of assessment is good overall, particularly the way in which it is used to set targets for improvement. Teachers mark work regularly and add useful comments which help pupils to understand how well they have done against the objectives for the lesson. Teachers throughout the school discuss pupils' work with them after lessons, which also makes a good contribution to standards. However, teachers do not always monitor the accuracy of pupils' day-to-day work and teachers' overall expectations of the quality of handwriting and presentation of work, are inconsistent.
49. Leadership and management in the subject is good overall because of the strength of management for Years 3 to 6. This is because the curriculum in these classes is considerably enriched by the addition of drama and the planning of numerous initiatives to improve standards and foster pupils' enjoyment for theatre and literature as they grow older. These include successful school productions such as 'Joseph', visits by theatre groups and authors and trips out to theatre workshops, all of which make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The use of pupils' own writing is often planned in subjects such as science, where pupils record the results of their investigations and this is having a positive impact on standards. There is now a need to ensure that opportunities are securely embedded in teachers' planning for subjects across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving standards and the good progress made by pupils.
- Good teaching leading to good achievement over time.
- Very strong leadership and management by the two subject coordinators.

- Strong focus on oral/mental work which is enabling pupils to explore their thinking and to understand their mathematics.
- In some classes, pupils' work in books is poorly presented.
- Teachers do not always mark work taking into account the pupils' targets.

Commentary

50. Results from national testing and pupils' work in books show that pupils at the end of Year 2 have made good progress, and standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average. However, pupils are making good progress in lessons and work in pupils' books shows that achievement over time has been good. Standards are now in line with national average, particularly in numeracy skills. A recognised mathematics scheme has been introduced into Years 1 to 5 after successful trialling last year. In Year 2, pupils can add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers using simple methods of working. They can count, read, write and order numbers up to 100. Pupils can collect and interpret data and construct simple bar and block graphs. In one lesson, pupils in Year 2 collected information about the different ways that pupils came to school and worked together to show the information in the form of a pictogram. In Year 6, pupils can use the four operations with large numbers, negative numbers, decimals and fractions. They explain what they have done in their calculations and why, some often finding different routes to solve the same problem. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within the classroom by learning support assistants. Pupils are grouped for ability within each class and teachers use differentiated questioning enabling all pupils to be fully included in the lesson.
51. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are making good progress and are well supported either by bi-lingual teachers or bi-lingual support assistants.
52. The teaching observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and was often good, very good, or excellent. There were many strengths in the lessons observed, which included clear and thorough planning, lesson objectives shared with the pupils, good explanations and effective questioning adjusted to pupils' abilities and responses. A good emphasis was placed on encouraging pupils to find their own methods to solve problems and to explain their thinking as well as very good use of the peer 'buddy' system which develops pupils' understanding and contributes towards their social development. The good use of support staff ensured that all pupils were included in lessons. These qualities ensured that pupils worked with enthusiasm and made good progress usually achieving well. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils, and most lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good humour. Pupils settle quickly, eager to start their tasks. They seldom need prompting to concentrate.
53. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. There has been a focus on teaching and learning to raise standards and the two coordinators have monitored the subject with a programme of observing lessons in consultation with the county mathematics adviser. Resources are good and used well.
54. Assessment systems are in place and are used to guide planning. The coordinators have closely analysed test results and are tracking pupils' progress. The mathematics action plan identifies appropriate priorities such as the need for more consistent target setting and greater use of information and communication technology in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are still too low.

- Pupils made good progress and achieved well last year although standards are still below average.
- In the lessons observed teachers questioned pupils effectively enabling them to think round problems and make sensible predictions.
- There has been insufficient monitoring of lessons and pupils' work.
- The curriculum is based around a good range of investigative and experimental activities.
- Information and communication technology is not used to its full potential to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

55. Although the results of the national tests, taken in 2003 by pupils at the end of Year 6, were well below average, an examination of pupils' work showed that they had made tremendous strides forward during the year. There was evidence that many pupils had had little experience of investigative activities and the quality of recorded work was poor at the start of last year. The quality of pupils' work rapidly improved, and pupils were encouraged to think round a problem and make appropriate predictions. Initially these were safe guesses or wildly wrong. As the year progressed, older pupils also began to set out the reasons for their predictions. The use of scientific terminology improved and the quality of presentation, recording, diagrams and labelling all showed good development. Overall, the quality of work by the end of the year showed that achievement was good.
56. During the inspection it was clear that these improvements are being steadily built upon. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and work that is well matched to their individual needs. The expectations for higher-attaining pupils are usually appropriate. Both these groups make sound progress.
57. Throughout the school pupils are taught the elements of fair testing. In Years 5 and 6 they are aware that accurate measurement is essential and that one part of the test has to be varied whilst others remain the same. The emphasis on discussion to enable pupils to gain a greater understanding of what they are learning is showing positive benefit and pupils are better able to express their ideas and conclusions when writing; although the poor writing skills of a minority still hampers their progress. Work is neatly presented and there is an appropriate emphasis on the careful drawing of diagrams. Younger pupils enjoy hands-on experiences and cheerfully label bodies of friends and identify the functions of some parts of the body.
58. The quality of teaching overall is good. During the inspection lesson planning ensured a clear structure to lessons with a good emphasis, in all classes, on the development of scientific vocabulary. All classes have a good scientific word bank and there are in addition dual language labels for the benefit of pupils who use English as an additional language. A particular strength was the quality of teachers' questioning. They asked for ideas, and valued pupils' responses. They helped take pupils on a step further through the use of 'Why?' questions and made useful suggestions to help them. Teachers review previous lessons well to ensure that pupils are clear before moving on to the next stage. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were investigating how the pitch of a note changed. The teacher established that the pupils understood that the higher the water in the test tube the lower the note was pitched.
59. During the inspection there was good evidence of information and communication technology being used during science lessons; particularly in the use of the interactive white boards. For example, pupils in Year 1 used these confidently when labelling the body parts of a human. In addition it is used to support learning, for example in analysing and recording results.
60. The actions taken by the subject leader are having a positive impact on pupils' achievements in science. She has a good understanding of most of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has a good focus on raising standards. The school has appropriate assessment tasks built in which enable teachers to accurately assess the levels pupils are at. However, as yet she has had insufficient time to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom, and only a limited amount of time to examine pupils' work. This means that some weaknesses were not identified quickly enough.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good planning of lessons for use in the computer suite.
 - The high quality of resources.
 - The planning for the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, which is still rather limited in some subjects.
61. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in most schools. The quality of teaching is good. This is because teachers make good use of the very good resources in the computer suite to provide maximum opportunity for pupils to develop the necessary skills and confidence to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. This was clearly reflected in the lessons seen, one of which was good, and two of which were very good. Consequently, pupils throughout the school are achieving well. Discussions with pupils with special educational needs, and those in the early stages of learning to use English, indicate that they are supported well and make good progress and this was also confirmed in the lessons seen.
62. Observation of a very good lesson in Year 1, where pupils made their own name labels showed that the vast majority of pupils log on to computers without help and save or print their finished work. By Year 2, more able pupils find their way quickly through instructions for loading and operating programs, which is above average for their age. However a small minority have not yet mastered the appropriate keyboard skills well enough and look for help from work partners or grown ups. By Year 6, most pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the wider uses of technology, for example in order to access the Globe Theatre website, and they use digital cameras regularly in the course of their work. More able pupils are quick to see alternative solutions or try different ways of completing a task and are not afraid to try new approaches. This was seen in the Year 5 lesson, where the teacher was quick to realise that a capable member of his class had found a more efficient way of adding colour to objects in his classroom plan and brought him out to demonstrate it on the interactive whiteboard. This helped the rest of the class to improve more quickly and there were gasps of excitement from the class, and the teacher, who were fascinated by the capability of the technology they were using.
63. There has been good progress in the development of the subject since the school opened and the headteacher is providing good temporary leadership prior to the appointment of a permanent coordinator. Teachers throughout the school are encouraged to make frequent use of the very good resources available to them in the classroom, such as listening sets and interactive whiteboards. Most teachers are positive and adventurous in their use of technology, which has a positive impact on teaching and learning. They also plan opportunities for pupils to use classroom computers in the course of their day-to-day work, although the strategic use of technology is not fully embedded in the planning of all subjects and this is an area in need of development.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching enables the pupils to achieve well.
- The knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership and has established good management procedures.

Commentary

64. From the lessons seen and from looking at pupils' work from all year groups, it is evident that teaching is consistently good and ensures pupils steadily acquire skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. In lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge, careful planning and very effective use of probing questions helps the pupils build on learning from previous work. Both in Year 4 and Year 6 the teachers carefully selected methods and resources which promoted and reinforced speaking and listening skills, adding significantly to the pupils' literacy development. In the Year 4 lesson the teacher used '*Friendship Fours*' and a range of pictures and texts to stimulate discussion and help pupils deduce facts about life in Ancient Egypt. Pupils in Year 6, working in pairs, were given the opportunity to role play a conversation between two pupils, one from a Victorian school and one from their own school. The pupils became very involved in exploring similarities and differences and showed genuine enthusiasm for recording their dialogue as 'play-script', a form they were working on in literacy lessons. Many took their work home to complete.
65. The co-ordinator's experience and expertise has been instrumental in setting up good systems to monitor teachers' planning and evaluate pupils' work. This is significant in promoting good teaching and helping to improve pupils' achievement. However, she has not had time, as yet, to observe lessons and evaluate teaching and learning. Already, procedures for assessing pupils' work have been set up, but their usefulness has not had time to impact on standards. Infectious enthusiasm provides a good role model for colleagues and ensures that good resources are available. This positive leadership and management are important factors in ensuring good teaching and learning take place.

Geography

It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision, because geography is not taught in Years 3 to 6 until next half term and there was a very limited amount of recorded evidence from last year which implied that the time allocated to the subject was insufficient in these year groups. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are broadly in line with expectations and pupils achieve well because the quality of their work indicates that teaching is good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The religious ethos of the school, including assemblies, greatly enhances and supports pupils' learning.

Commentary

66. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is good and this gives them the confidence to plan lessons well and use interesting methods to motivate and enthuse the pupils. This enables all pupils to achieve well in lessons and over time. Teachers show great sensitivity in encouraging pupils to share and talk about their own faiths and this encourages mutual respect between the pupils. In a very effective Year 6 lesson, the teacher's excellent relationships with the class created the right atmosphere for Muslim pupils to confidently show their prayer mats and demonstrate how they pray. The rest of the class was enthralled and keen to question their classmates for further information. The teacher very effectively extended the pupils' learning by providing a challenging task, involving using a complex mathematical table relating to prayer times and sunsets, to be completed at home.

67. Throughout the school there are effective displays and messages which clearly show that the school is a religious institution. The daily acts of worship include Bible and other religious stories, opportunities for prayer and songs of praise to God. These significantly focus pupils' thinking about religious, personal and moral issues as well as promoting a clear code of ethics. Very good links already established with local places of worship further enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding of faith communities, as does the regular visits to the school by Christian and Muslim clergymen.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good.
- The new subject coordinator has good subject knowledge.
- There are good opportunities to study the work of different artists.
- There is insufficient work involving the use of clay and textiles at present.
- There are insufficient assessment procedures.

Commentary

68. Only one art lesson in Year 2 was observed during the inspection and no lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. However, the evidence of the displays around the school and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress throughout the school.
69. The school has forged good links with the four local potteries of Gladstone, Spode, Wedgewood and Aynsley, naming the school "houses" after them. Excellent examples of the ceramics produced at the potteries are displayed in the school foyer.
70. Planning for art shows good curriculum coverage, including studying the work of established artists, for example, Claude Monet, whose work inspired pupils in Year 1 to make a well constructed three-dimensional representation of his garden at Giverny. This incorporated a delightful blue bridge over a lake of paper water lilies. In addition, younger pupils investigated the life of Vincent Van Gogh and studied some of his portraits in order to produce their own self portraits. Pupils in Year 5 visited the Lowry museum to make sketches of the artist's work. Back at school, pupils worked collaboratively to produce a large Lowry-style picture. Pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented in art are given opportunities to extend their artistic ability.
71. The range of work displayed in the school was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The colourful Egyptian displays from work of pupils in Years 3 and 4, studying Egyptians, are especially good. On a visit to the Hanley museum, pupils in Year 4 made sketches of friezes and sculptures so that they could build a model of an 'Egyptian' frieze in plasticine back in the classroom. They used clay to make 'Shabtis'; copying the clay figures put into the Egyptian tombs. Pupils in Year 3 painted vivid posters of Egyptian face masks.
72. The new subject coordinator is currently shadowing the present coordinator. Both have a clear vision of the direction for the subject and have made a good start by providing teachers with a two year rolling programme and schemes of work linked to the humanities. As yet, there has been no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom but this, together with assessment are part of the Art action plan.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good cross-curricular links with the humanities, science and music.
- There is a secure two-year rolling programme.
- The provision of good quality 'topic' boxes for each design and technology project containing the scheme of work and resources.
- The creation of a good design and technology website linked to the school's main website which enables digital photographs of projects to be displayed.
- The coordinator has not been able to monitor teaching and learning in order to evaluate pupils' achievement over time.

Commentary

73. Only one lesson in Years 3 to 6 was seen during the inspection and no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. However, discussions with pupils, and an examination of the work and photographic records, indicate that pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement in Years 1 and 2.
74. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson seen during inspection was good and pupils achieved well. The lesson in Year 5 was well structured and pupils knew what was expected of them. Pupils were working on a design sheet, drawing the musical instrument they would be making and writing step-by-step instructions. They also drew up a 'shopping list' of materials they would need. Pupils were able to describe the suitability of the materials chosen and explain the methods they would use to join materials together. Pupils were able to explain the cross-curricular links; the production of sound was being studied in science; musical instruments were being made in design and technology; and the instruments would be played in music. Pupils with special educational needs were supported by their peer 'buddies' and had one-to-one help from the teacher; the effectiveness of this support enabled them to achieve well.
75. The subject coordinator has modified the two-year rolling programme to accommodate more appropriate cross-curricular links and provides teachers with resourced topic boxes. A good way of sharing pupils' work has been identified by the creation of an area on the county's design and technology web site, linked to the school website, which enables photographic records of topics to be displayed. The subject coordinator has begun to monitor and evaluate the schemes of work but has not yet had the opportunity to focus on the monitoring of teaching and learning so that she can evaluate pupils' progress over time.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and management are given by the subject coordinator.
- Pupils benefit from specialist music teaching in class music lessons.
- Cross-curricular links with humanities, science and design and technology are good.
- The provision of extra-curricular and peripatetic music opportunities is very good.

Commentary

76. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in music meet the required standards. Pupils make good progress and they achieve well. They enjoy music, listen and concentrate well in games and activities. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to appraise and perform music.

77. Pupils in Year 5 enjoyed listening to a piece of music by a present day composer. Having discussed the way the composer built up the music layer by layer to create a texture, pupils then composed their own piece of music each playing single notes on different instruments to imitate the original piece.
78. Teachers with music as a specialism teach class music. They are supported by an appropriate scheme of work. The music coordinator has developed a two year rolling programme which has cross curricular links with the humanities, science and design and technology. Evaluations of the first year are that the programme is providing pupils with a rich diet of musical opportunities.
79. The quality of the teaching and learning in music seen during the inspection was good. The lessons were well structured and pupils listened to pieces of music and every child had an instrument to play. Pupils take part enthusiastically and make good progress. Pupils in Year 1 responded very well to the introduction of a green and red 'paddle', which was used by the teacher as a way of conducting the music. Pupils played with gusto, when the conductor showed them the green side, but they stopped immediately when the red side was shown and kept absolutely silent until the green side was shown again.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management of the subject.
 - The very good use of specialist teaching.
 - The good inclusion of all pupils in all areas of the curriculum.
 - Some teachers' are not as confident teaching physical education as they should be.
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80. Standards in physical education in Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those found in most schools for those age groups. The prominence given to the subject as a vehicle for supporting pupils' personal development strongly and successfully echoes the school's aims and values. Pupils' full participation in physical activity, both in lessons and after school, is both expected and achieved, the quality of teaching is good and pupils throughout the school are achieving well.
 81. The subject is very well resourced and the scheme of work provides pupils with opportunities to develop skills in a wide range of games and disciplines. By Year 2, most pupils show an awareness of the space around them, have reasonable balance and coordination and are beginning to acquire the skills to play team games. The best performers in gymnastics exceed the expectation for their age and demonstrate strength, suppleness and control, particularly when using apparatus, whilst a minority are not as well coordinated and have difficulty, for example holding shape or mounting a piece of equipment without support. By Year 6, the vast majority of pupils take part in team games and appreciate the need for fairness and rules in sport. More able pupils, for example some of those taking part in after school sports such as football, are becoming increasingly aware of tactics in competitive sport. Most pupils develop the ability to evaluate and improve the quality of their own performance as they grow older. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 5 lesson where pupils were encouraged to comment on how well they and their classmates performed bounce and chest passes and the vast majority quickly got better at using these skills in the course of the lesson. Most pupils are expected to be competent swimmers by the time they leave the school. This is the result of considerable effort on the school's part over the past year to ensure maximum participation in swimming, through initiatives such as family swimming sessions.
 82. The quality of teaching is good, overall throughout the school. This is achieved through the school's policy of providing specialist expertise where possible. Consequently, much of the

teaching in Years 5 and 6 is carried out by the coordinator, is of high quality and results in good achievement across those year groups. Similarly, members of Port Vale Football Club provide very effective coaching on a regular basis and a specialist gymnast is having significant impact on standards in Year 2. In one excellent session seen, for example, the high expectations which she set in terms of pupils' participation and effort resulted in rapid improvement in skills. Additionally, the vast majority of the class rose to the challenge by giving maximum effort and emerged tired but having thoroughly enjoyed the session. The quality of specialist teaching is having a positive impact on teaching through the school and class teachers are also planning varied and interesting lessons. On the other hand, some aspects of teaching are in need of monitoring and support. In a Year 2 lesson seen, for example, opportunities were missed to use good performers to demonstrate high standards and groups of pupils were sometimes too far away from the teacher to hear instructions or receive guidance.

83. The coordinator provides very good leadership and has created a very positive ethos for learning with very good support from the headteacher. As yet, there have been insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning because of the school's focus on core subjects in its first year. A very good curriculum is in place which is having a significant impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence throughout the school. This is achieved through good communication with parents resulting in widespread participation in extra-curricular activities including a residential outdoor-pursuits week for pupils in Year 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area of the curriculum is led well.

Commentary

84. Personal, social and health education plays a successful role in the school's aim to raise pupils' achievement by building confidence and self-esteem and has a positive impact on pupils' personal development overall. This is because the coordinator leads this area well and has introduced and adapted a scheme of work best suited to the school's particular needs. Consequently, pupils are given opportunities through 'circle time', closely linked to assembly themes, to explore moral and social issues such as friendship, resolving conflict, bullying and drugs awareness. To this end, the school has enlisted the capable support of the North Staffordshire mediation team. The school nurse also comes into school to enable older pupils to discuss and understand their own sexual development. The coordinator has also been instrumental in developing the school council, which has quickly become a genuine platform for enabling all pupils to influence the future direction of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of responsibility and citizenship.

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher established very good relationships and an excellent work ethic.

The lesson immediately took up a cracking pace. Lower-attaining pupils were challenged to round decimals to the nearest ten and, once this was done, the remainder of the class were challenged to find the number needed to get to a hundred. The teacher entered into a lively dialogue with the pupils. "Come on, come on, this is a 100% question!" The teacher encouraged, urging pupils to discuss the answer with their peer 'buddy' and then give the answer. The air buzzed as pupils quickly shared their thoughts and their hands shot up! Without a break in the pace, the teacher introduced the main part of the lesson. This involved the completion of a multiplication grid. Showing the first example, the teacher had the pupils totally involved. Everyone joined in with suggestions, including two support assistants who made contributions in an atmosphere of good humoured banter. Spontaneous cheers arose as each solution was found. Then it was the pupils' turn. Each group had their own grid to complete; challenging their capabilities. The task was tackled eagerly, as they all knew what to do. Examples were shared at the end of the session and good reference was made to the theatre visit the day before, looking at real life uses of multiplication in a theatre Box Office.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).