

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **LYDBURY NORTH CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lydbury North, Bishops' Castle

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123547

Headteacher: Mrs.J.Davies

Lead inspector: Jeffrey White

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 256803

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	30
School address:	Lydbury North Shropshire
Postcode:	SY7 8AU
Telephone number:	01588-680277
Fax number:	01588-680277
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. P. Peters
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 30 pupils (18 boys and 12 girls) the school is very small compared with other primary schools. Pupils are drawn from not only the local village but also from further afield and come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. There are no pupils of minority ethnic heritage. Eligibility for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Five pupils have special educational needs including a statemented pupil. Attainment on entry varies quite considerably from year to year and has ranged from above average to below average. The school is currently involved in the DfES workforce Pathfinder project and has received the Government's School Achievement Award for its improved results in the national tests for pupils aged eleven. There are only two classes and the headteacher, who has been at the school for less than a year, teaches the Years 3 to 6 class for four days a week. The teacher in the only other class started this term.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17242	Jeffrey White	Lead inspector	Special education needs; mathematics; science; art and design; design and technology; music; physical education
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English, information and communication technology; geography; history

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is effective** and has improved since its last inspection. Under the leadership of the new headteacher pupils' achievement has improved and is now good overall. Overall standards are as expected for pupils' ages but are mainly good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The quality of education and the school's ethos are good and the school is well led and managed. Governors are constructively supportive and take very good account of the school's work. Good value for money is provided.

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

- Leadership and management are effective and governors give strong support
- Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is very good
- Teaching and learning are good overall and support staff make a substantial contribution
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and they behave well
- Year 6 pupils' generally achieve well in lessons but, in writing, their progress over time has not been good enough
- Assessment is not rigorous enough

It is five years since the school was last inspected and there have been significant changes in the governing body, the leadership and staffing. These factors have contributed to the school's good progress. Importantly, improvements have been made in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6. Curricular planning is now more thorough. The trend in the national test results at age eleven has been well above the national trend. The last inspection's key issue have largely been addressed well. Assessment has improved satisfactorily but there is now scope to refine procedures and sharpen up the use of assessment.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Year group numbers are very small so any interpretation of results, especially between one year and another, must be treated with great caution. In 2002 the school's results were within the range of the top five percent of schools across the country.

**Achievement is good overall.** Children in the Foundation Stage are making good progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In Years 1 and 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils achieve well. There was not enough evidence to judge overall standards in science. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average in Years 3 to 6 and achievement is generally good. Standards in reading are above average. Over time, pupils in Year 6 have not always made enough progress in writing but in recent times their progress has accelerated because the teaching is more challenging. In many of the non-core subjects there was insufficient evidence to judge attainment and achievement. In the work seen in history and geography standards and achievement were good. Pupils with SEN achieve very well throughout the school because of very good teaching and support.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.** Pupils are very enthusiastic learners. Their attitudes are very good and they behave well. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are punctual.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good** and in some lessons are very good, for example, in the Foundation Stage and in the use of discussion in Years 3 to 6. Both classes include a wide age range and the teachers and support staff work very well together to meet the range of pupils' needs. Time is used productively to ensure that pupils develop key skills, knowledge and understanding. Homework extends pupils' learning well. The teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6 has certainly improved but there is room to do more. Assessment, including marking, is not consistently thorough.

The curriculum is sound overall but provision for SEN is very effective. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Pupils are well cared for and they are given very good guidance and support because the staff know them very well. Partnership with parents and links with the community are good. Communication with parents is very good. The school's involvement in the local schools cluster is a very positive feature.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good with some very effective features.** The headteacher is committed to raising standards and improving achievement, and in a short period of time has brought about important changes, for example, in enabling pupils to express their views. Staff are very well deployed. Governance is very good and governors are very well involved in strategic planning.

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

Parents are well satisfied with the school. They especially feel their children are making good progress and they are very comfortable about approaching the school for whatever reason. Pupils are generally happy and have welcomed the improved opportunities to have a say.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Broaden pupils' writing skills
- Ensure assessment, including marking, consistently helps pupils to improve

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. Standards are above average in the Foundation Stage and Year 2 and average in Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with SEN achieve very well
- Standards in reading are above average
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and attain good standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development
- Year 6 pupils' achievement in writing is improving but over time they have not made the progress they should have done

#### Commentary

1. The numbers of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are usually very small and therefore **any interpretation of national test results must be treated with considerable caution.** However, the schools' trend in performance has been well above the national trend and in 2002 Year 6 pupils' overall performance was very high compared with all schools. In relation to their prior attainment at age seven Year 6 pupils had made very good progress overall. Pupils in Year 2 have performed most consistently well in reading and least well in mathematics. However, the current Year 2 pupils are attaining above average standards in mathematics because the teaching is challenging.
2. At the time of the inspection there were only three pupils in the Foundation Stage and they are achieving well. They are making good progress towards exceeding the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 in the key areas of learning referred to in the main strengths. The key reason for their good achievement and above average standards is the good and often very good teaching and support.
3. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well in English and mathematics and standards are above average overall. In Years 3 to 6 standards are broadly average overall in the core subjects but there are variations between year groups and subjects and in the levels of achievement. Speaking and listening skills are mainly good throughout the school. Reading is given a high profile. The key skills are taught thoroughly in the reception and Years 1 and 2 and then built on well in Years 3 to 6 as pupils broaden their interest and enjoyment in a good range of non-fiction and fiction books. Pupils heard read in Year 6 were enthusiastic, read accurately and with good expression and talked well about their favourite authors. They also showed good understanding of how to use the library. Prior to the headteacher's arrival several different teachers had taught the Year 6 pupils, all of whom are boys, and it is likely that this negatively affected their standards and progress. Aspects of their writing have improved but they take insufficient care in spelling, presentation and grammar. In the lesson seen in science most of the Year 6 pupils achieved well as they attained at least above average standards.
4. In the non-core subjects there was not enough evidence to make overall judgements but in the available evidence the standards of work were never less than satisfactory and in some instances were good, for example, in design and technology, geography and history.
5. Very clear targets for learning and very effective teaching and support are the key reasons why pupils with SEN achieve very well. A pupil with a statement of SEN has made great strides and

the headteacher and support staff's very sensitive approach has helped him to boost his confidence and self-esteem. In the sample of work by pupils with SEN there was clear evidence of gains in learning in, for example, literacy. One pupil wrote confidently about their feelings as a new pupil.

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

The pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. The great majority maintain good levels of attendance. They value the friendships made within the small school community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners
- Pupils' respond very well in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.7
National data	5.9	National data	0.5

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

### **Commentary**

- Lessons are characterised by the lively and enthusiastic response of pupils to the consistently good teaching. Well-presented and interesting topics, and work set at an appropriate level of challenge, help to engage the interest and active involvement of pupils throughout the school. The high ratio of adults to pupils allows good support for the differing abilities within the mixed age classes. Pupils' views of the school are positive.
- Pupils in the reception and in Years 1 and 2 enjoy discussions at the start of lessons and then settle well to their subsequent work. Even the youngest are developing a sturdy independence and confidence and apply themselves to their work with a good level of concentration. Younger pupils in general enter their classroom with evident anticipation and enjoyment of what the day holds and are secure with the daily routines. The relationships being established between each other and with the staff are very good.
- Levels of attendance have fallen slightly over the last two years. The relatively small number of pupils adversely skews the figure, in that the absence of only one or two pupils can have a marked impact on the attendance figures. The great majority of the pupils have good levels of overall attendance.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Provision for SEN is very good and opportunities for enrichment are good. Care, guidance and support, and links with parents, the community and other schools are also good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good and ensure that generally pupils achieve well. The quality of assessment is sound overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective support and challenge help pupils to succeed in their learning
- Questioning is very effective and discussion is used productively
- Expectations are generally good but have not always been high enough in writing
- Assessment, including marking, is not consistently thorough

## Commentary

9. Teachers cope well with their mixed aged classes and, with the support of class assistants, meet the range of pupils' needs in most aspects of their work. Teamwork is a strong feature of the adult support across the school. Care is taken to ensure that children in the Foundation Stage have opportunities to develop the key learning skills of working independently and with others. These skills continue to be fostered as pupils become older, enabling them, for example, to engage in harmonious discussion with others and to undertake their own research in the use of books and the Internet. The very positive relationships, which are very salient features of the support, help pupils to gain in confidence, especially those with SEN. On several occasions during the inspection adults made sure that these pupils' efforts and successes were sufficiently praised.
10. Most lessons begin with the teachers and/or class assistants talking to the whole class or a group. Pupils are very well managed and participate well. Questions are usually challenging and help to establish what pupils can recall from previous work or are designed to make them think. Teaching is often at its very best on these occasions. For example, in a literacy lesson in the Year 3 to 6 class, the teacher asked; *"How does the language build up the tension?"* This question required pupils to look very carefully at their extracts from *"The Secret Garden"*. In an equally effective discussion in geography the teacher's well-focused questions encouraged Year 2 pupils to explain their observations clearly as they studied resources about people from other countries. The discussions usually have brisk pace because the questioning is varied to meet the range of pupils' needs. The teacher's make good use of the interactive whiteboards on these occasions to ensure that pupils do not lose interest and that time is well used, for instance, in sharpening up their mental arithmetic skills. In Year 6, where all the pupils are boys, the teacher consistently encourages them to participate in discussion.
11. In the lessons seen during the inspection expectation of pupils' performance was at least good and accounts for the teaching being judged as good and often very good. The headteacher quickly recognised that standards and achievement in writing needed to be improved especially at the top end of the school because pupils were not achieving as well as they should. Data on Year 6 pupils' performance supports this and indicates that over time the teaching could not have been good enough. Older pupils' work since the headteacher's arrival indicates that the teaching has helped them to become more confident writers, for example, when writing in different forms and for different purposes. Expectations now need to be higher in the development of basic skills where pupils are less confident and more careless.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	7	2	0	0	0

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

12. Pupils are known very well but there is scope to refine the use of assessment not only to improve pupils' achievement even further but also to help them become more aware of their own learning. The school is aware of what needs to be done, for example, in charting the progress of children in the Foundation Stage against the stepping stones for learning. Marking is often helpful to pupils and praises their efforts but is not always rigorous enough in indicating precisely how pupils could improve their performance.

## **The curriculum**

The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for SEN is very good
- Curricular planning is good
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good
- The deployment of support staff is very good
- Resources for ICT are in need of upgrading

## **Commentary**

13. The individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with SEN have precise targets with clear success criteria. They are well known by the staff and are used in the planning of pupils' work. The SEN policy is of good quality and up-to-date. Arrangements for assessment, reviews of pupils' progress and links with parents are all very thorough. The very good partnership between class teachers, the learning support teacher and class assistants results in pupils' achieving very well.
14. There is now a systematic whole school approach to the planning of the teaching and learning. In general, the teachers use nationally recommended schemes of work that have been adapted to help meet the particular needs of the mixed age classes. This provides the staff with an appropriate framework to promote continuity within the curriculum. Learning intentions are clearly identified and suitably challenging, enabling pupils to achieve well in lessons. Links with other subjects are evident and add interest and enrichment to pupils' learning, and there are suitable opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in other subjects.
15. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is planned effectively to provide challenging practical learning experiences that stimulate children's imagination and curiosity and develop their early personal and educational skills. It ensures that children make the progress of which they are capable. A whole school scheme for personal, social and health education (PHSE) is near completion and PHSE is a theme in the Schools for Health programme.
16. A good range of out of school clubs and visits extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of what they are being taught in school, and promotes their personal and social development well. Clubs include, art, games and football. All are well attended and all staff give very generously of their time to extend pupils' interests and skills. Well-planned residential trips with other small schools are available for the oldest pupils to deepen their learning as well as promoting independence and social skills. Pupils so enjoyed their visit to Arthog, which included climbing, gorge walking and canoeing, that they were reluctant to return home.
17. The schools involvement in the 'Pathfinder Project' has been very effective in providing funding to employ additional, well-qualified and skilled teaching assistants to support the teaching and learning. The teaching and support staff work well together for the benefit of the pupils and teaching assistants are very effective. The classroom computers are now inadequate to meet

the demands of the curriculum and there are insufficient resources to promote pupils' skills in control and modelling.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are well cared for within a secure, small school environment. They have ready access to support and advice when needed. Pupils' views are valued and opportunities to have an increased voice in the work of the school are improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Individuals are well known within a small school family
- Classroom assistants' support and guidance are very good

### **Commentary**

18. The small number of pupils within each year group makes it possible for the staff to gain a good awareness of the understanding and gains in knowledge of each child on a day-to-day basis. As a result, the teaching is usually pitched at an appropriate level, even taking into account the needs of classes with a wide age range. Staff are also well aware of pupils' emotional and developmental needs, particularly at the lower end of the school. Secure relationships between staff and pupils mean that the great majority of the pupils feel confident in approaching an adult with any worries or concerns.
19. The classroom assistants, largely funded by the local "Pathfinder" project, play a major part in the support and guidance of pupils. They are well trained and employed in the classrooms to very good effect, making a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and personal development. Their knowledge of individual pupils' needs means that their teaching role within small groups and with individuals is well matched both to the lesson objectives and to the need any pupil may have for additional support. Support for pupils with SEN is especially effective.
20. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the pupils are being given more formal structures within which to express their views. A school council has been started this year and the pupils are learning to raise concerns and to address them in a mature way. There are also plans to introduce a pupil-mentoring scheme, which will assist the pupils to resolve for themselves minor conflicts of interest. These, and other recognised opportunities for the pupils to initiate activities and discussions, are developing well.

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

Links with parents and other schools are good. The school plays an important part in the life of the local village community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the local cluster of schools enhances the quality of education
- Community involvement in a garden project has been very good
- Information for parents is very good

### **Commentary**

21. For a small village school, the links with other local schools, including the receiving secondary school, are an important benefit to both staff and pupils. One example of this is the way Year 6 pupils meet and share activities with similar aged pupils from the other local schools prior to moving up to the much larger secondary school. In this way, many of the pupils within the much

larger classes will already be friends. The staff also benefit from shared INSET training and mutual support.

22. The recently established garden project to make good use the school's forecourt has generated considerable support from parents, other community members and local business links. Working with the staff and pupils in its design, help has been forthcoming in the construction and filling of raised flowerbeds that greatly enhance both the school and the village environment. This shared venture has generated much goodwill within the community as well as enriching the curriculum for the pupils.
23. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the introduction of a regular weekly newsletter has given parents very good information about the life of the school generally and specific day-to-day events. This is greatly appreciated by the parent body. The attractive school entrance hall is another good source of general information for parents and visitors.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is very good and leadership and management are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have very good understanding of the school's development
- The headteacher promotes teamwork and a commitment to improving pupils' achievement
- The school runs smoothly and efficiently

### Commentary

24. The governing body has changed significantly since the last inspection and goes from strength to strength. Governors are constructively analytical of the school's work and give very good support, especially to the headteacher who carries a heavy load. They are kept very well informed about the school's work by a range of means, including the headteacher's reports, their visits to the school and discussion of the school's results in national tests. A wide range of committees oversees the school's work and governors monitor the school's progress towards meeting its targets. The school development plan now includes criteria for judging effectiveness. Many of the governors are parents and/or live locally and are well involved in the school's links with the community. Governors keep themselves up-to-date by attending training and as a body have attended a self-review course. Governors take performance management very seriously and objectives for the headteacher are entirely appropriate for the school's stage of development.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£187254	Balance from previous year	£12299
Total expenditure	£180308	Balance carried forward to the next	£19245
Expenditure per pupil	£4508		

25. The headteacher has been at the school for less than a year. However, she has quickly gained the confidence of parents, pupils and governors. She is managing the school's involvement in the Pathfinder project well and the deployment of the class assistants is very effective in contributing to pupils' achievements. The headteacher is concerned for the needs of individual pupils and has ensured that adults who work in the school liaise very well in order to ensure that the personal help and educational support given to pupils are consistent. This is especially noticeable in the support given to pupils with SEN, who as a result are achieving very well. It is also highly

apparent in the promotion of the good behaviour and very positive attitudes. Communication with parents has improved significantly and parents feel the school is well led and managed.

26. Procedures for the day-to-day running of the school work well, and it is a calm and harmonious community. The headteacher has been instrumental in improving the curricular planning. Funding is controlled efficiently. The headteacher has very wisely bought in help from a LEA finance officer to help her get to grips with managing the budget. Governors are sensibly planning ahead for the loss of funding when the Pathfinder project comes to an end, especially in considering how to sustain the considerable value provided by the class assistants. Pupils' performance data is monitored satisfactorily but the headteacher recognises that a more coherent and accessible system needs to be fully implemented.

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There were only three children in the Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection and only one in Year 1. It was not possible therefore to form judgements about every area of learning.

**Overall provision is good.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the quality of teaching and support is good and often very good
- Planning provides a good framework for learning
- Good progress is made in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development
- Assessment is not used effectively to inform future learning needs

### Commentary

27. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as pupils in Years 1 and 2. The class teacher and teaching assistant work very well together to ensure that work is suitably matched to the needs of the youngest children. Planning usually focuses very carefully on providing activities to enable children to achieve well and to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Occasionally, learning intentions are too broad and do not relate to the stepping stones for learning and as result there are missed opportunities to further children's learning.
28. **Personal, social and emotional development** is given a high priority and is effective in helping children to become settled, happy and eager learners. Children develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour and of what is right and wrong. They share resources and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play, model making and playing number games.
29. **Communication, language and literacy** are taught effectively. Children respond well to the encouragement of their teachers and use rich vocabulary and increasingly complex sentence structures. Very good attention is given to promoting children's early reading and writing skills and this has a positive effect on the progress they make in these areas. Children display a delight in reading and are beginning to understand the nuances and humour of the written word. Staff systematically introduce letter names and initial sounds and children are becoming confident in recognising individual sounds and are beginning to use them in their own writing. They are encouraged to make marks on paper as they work independently in the writing corners, in role-play or recount family and school events. They confidently work with their teachers to make up their own poems displaying a good understanding of rhyming words and initial sounds. The classroom is well organised to encourage children to become confident independent readers and writers. Resources are easily available and are stimulating, plentiful and of good quality.
30. **Mathematical development is taught effectively.** Teaching is lively and resources, interactions and activities are effective in developing children's understanding of number and shape. Adults introduce the vocabulary of addition and subtraction as children play with small world toys. Children are becoming confident in counting and recognising numbers to ten and with support eagerly count to thirty. They recognise and name two-dimensional shapes and create their own repeating patterns.
31. The teacher's planning and the good displays indicate good opportunities **for creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.** For example, children work with a range of media to produce interesting paintings with different textures; they use magnifying

glasses and microscopes to investigate natural materials and collect shiny and dull objects; ideas of past, present and future are developed as they make a time line of photographs of themselves as babies.

32. Staff know the children very well but assessment and recording of children's progress towards the learning goals has only recently been introduced. Staff are using the nationally agreed Early Years Profile and are introducing an LEA system of recording children's progress in each area of learning. Assessment is not yet an effective tool to identify what children know and understand or to track their progress through the stepping stones.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**

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

- Standards in reading are high
- Pupils achieve well in Year 2 and attain good standards
- Teaching and learning are good overall
- Year 6 pupils' progress in writing has not been good enough
- Marking and assessment are not thorough enough

#### **Commentary**

33. Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection and are above average across the school because the teaching of reading is good. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. A good range of high quality books that appeal to the varied interests of boys and girls are used in classrooms and in the comfortable and inviting library. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident readers of a wide range of stimulating texts. They are very good at reading in order to obtain information and competently extract relevant information using a range of skills and strategies. Well-structured guided reading sessions are very effective, for example, in helping younger pupils grasp the early skills of learning to read.
34. Pupils in Year 2 write independently using their knowledge and understanding of sounds and familiar words well to write their own poetry, recount events or record their investigations. They also listen attentively, talk confidently and use a good range of vocabulary. High expectations in the teaching ensure they work to their capacities.
35. An analysis of the school's record of Year 6 pupils' attainment over time, since Year 2, indicates that progress in writing has been erratic and pupils have not achieved as well as they should. The headteacher has worked hard to improve achievement in a relatively short period of time and is meeting with success. More remains to be done. Teaching is now focussed on developing pupils' skills in writing for different purposes. For example, in history pupils write interesting biographies about Boudicca using rich vocabulary, well-structured complex sentences and appropriate punctuation. However, presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not given a sufficient and consistent emphasis.
36. During the inspection teaching was never less than good, which is better than at the last inspection. As a result pupils are motivated, work hard and achieve well in lessons. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support different groups of pupils and keep them focused on their tasks and areas for improvement. Their skilled support for children with SEN enables them to reach the literacy targets in their IEPs. Teaching of English is well planned to meet the needs of different age groups. Effective use is made of the interactive white board to help

teachers introduce new learning and support discussion with the whole class. Questions and comments are challenging and very focussed on helping pupils gain new knowledge, skills and understanding.

37. Although staff know the pupils well, data on pupils' performance has not been used thoroughly to track individual progress in order to raise standards and to identify areas for improvement. However, there have been improvements in the past year. There are examples of some effective marking, which help pupils improve their work. However, much of the marking is too general and is not precise enough to help pupils be more aware of their own learning and to know what they need to do to advance to the next level of work.

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

38. The application of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is a contributory factor to their success in subjects such as science, history and geography. Staff encourage pupils to use their research skills well and the good standards achieved in reading contribute considerably. Pupils are very competent at extracting information from a variety of sources and assimilating evidence. They use a variety of methods to present written work. They use bullet points for effect and make pertinent notes in planning their science investigations.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school
- Teaching and learning are good overall

### **Commentary**

39. The amount of work available for scrutiny was small and dated only from the beginning of the current term. Much of it was in number and shape. There is only one pupil in Year 1. Standards in Year 2 are above average and in Year 6 standards are average. In both year groups pupils with SEN have made very good progress. The most significant improvement since the last inspection is in standards and teaching in Year 6. At the time of the last inspection they were unsatisfactory.
40. Most of the Year 2 pupils show good mental recall of number facts to 10 and sometimes beyond. They also accurately identify the place value of individual numbers. They use appropriate subject language when talking about their work. In a very good lesson they showed good knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They achieved very well in this lesson as they improved speedily their understanding of the differences between shapes.
41. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 undertake a good range of number work and work to their capabilities. The work regularly challenges their thinking and they make good progress in trying out methods of calculation and explaining their thinking. They use a good range of written methods for number calculations. Capable pupils' work in Year 6 shows good understanding of inverse operations including the use of decimals. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 6 achieved well in their knowledge and understanding of equivalent fractions. In the same lesson Year 3 pupils especially achieved well in their understanding of fractions.
42. Two lessons were seen and, although the overall teaching and learning were good, several elements of the teaching were very good. Both lessons began with a brisk session in mental arithmetic that engaged pupils' interest very well. Teachers' questioning at this stage was very effective and often carefully varied to meet the range of pupils' capabilities. The interactive whiteboards were used very effectively. Expectations were suitably high especially in the pace and challenge in the work. These dipped slightly when the older pupils worked independently.

Pupils in both classes worked very diligently and sustained their concentration. The quality of their learning and their progress were enhanced by the support of the class assistants who know what questions to ask to challenge pupils' thinking. Teachers and class assistants work very well together to ensure that pupils with SEN understand what they are to do and complete their work successfully.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

43. Although there was little evidence of the use of mathematics across the curriculum it is clear from the curricular planning that links are made with other subjects. In the work sample there were links with science in recording the results of experiments, for example, in charting the speed that sugar took to dissolve in different temperatures of water. There was not enough evidence to judge data handling and the use of ICT.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

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

- Achievement is good in Year 6
- Scientific enquiry is developed well

#### **Commentary**

44. Only one lesson was seen in science and the amount of work available for scrutiny was small. There was not enough evidence to judge overall standards and achievement in Year 2. In Year 6 standards are broadly average and pupils have made good progress.

45. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 undertake scientific enquiry regularly and their completed work indicates that they are developing firm knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and physical processes. No work was seen in life processes and living things. Year 6 pupils' diagrams of the solar system are clearly drawn and labelled and their understanding is good. Pupils have established a pattern for undertaking experiments that include prediction, explanations of why a test is fair and drawing scientific conclusions. Good progress has been made, often as a result of the teacher's prompting, in improving the pertinence and clarity of scientific conclusions, for example, in explaining why sugar dissolves faster in warm water than in cold.

46. In the lesson seen in the Years 3 to 6 class the inspector focused on the work of Year 6. Pupils showed good gains in their knowledge and understanding of fair testing, identified the key factors in an experiment on dissolving and made good scientific based predictions. The teaching was good overall and very suitable use was made of the class assistant to help with assessing pupils' performance. Provision for a pupil with SEN was very good and enabled him to work at a higher than expected level. Pupils collaborated well as they shared their ideas.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

47. Only one lesson was seen and very little work in ICT. Therefore there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision.

48. ICT is taught through well planned lessons which are timetabled each week to ensure pupils learn key skills, and through opportunities for pupils to use their skills across the curriculum. There are a good number of computers in each classroom and the school is linked to the Internet. However, much of the hardware is past its best and is in need of upgrading. Due to a lack of resources pupils are unable to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of control technology. The headteacher has fully recognised the need to develop ICT and is seeking means

of funding new computers and equipment. The headteacher has also bought into a technical support program to help solve problems with equipment more speedily. The development of ICT is a key target in the SDP.

49. In the one lesson seen teaching was good. Key skills were taught well through the effective use of the interactive white board and enabled pupils to make good gains in using a program to design repeating patterns. They quickly grasped the skills of using tools to copy, paste and rotate to produce interesting designs in the style of the different artist they had been studying in art and design.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

50. Pupils across the school use word processing to produce work in other subjects. Junior pupils use the Internet well to support their research in history as they search sites for information on the Roman invasion of Britain and the life of Boudicca.

### **HUMANITIES**

51. One lesson was seen in geography and one in history. Very little work was available to scrutinise in either subject. It is not possible, therefore, to form an overall judgement on provision. In the one lesson seen in **geography** Year 2 pupils were developing a good understanding of other people and places as they learned about life in a Mexican family. In **history**, the oldest pupils demonstrated above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of cause and effect and how different evidence can produce differing views on the same event as they studied Boudicca's revolt against the Romans. Their use of a range of resources including the Internet, books and artefacts deepened their skills and knowledge very effectively.

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

52. There was not enough evidence to judge overall provision in this curriculum area. No lessons were seen in art and design, music and physical education. One lesson was seen in design and technology. Inspectors looked at the work that was available in art and design.
53. In the lesson seen in **design and technology** in Years 1 and 2, pupils achieved well as they discussed their ideas for designing and making a puppet. The teaching was very enthusiastic and captured pupils' interest. The discussion was managed very well and pupils improved their understanding of a "mock up". In the work on display in **art and design** standards were mainly as expected for pupils' ages but some of the work was of a good standard. Pupils in Years 1 to 2 have used media well in creating textured surfaces and have drawn interesting pictures of themselves. Older pupils' paintings of churches show careful observation and good brushwork. Their designs for the planting at the front of the school are interesting. Pupils' sketchbooks that are also used in the school's art club contain occasional closely observed work but there is little progressive development of ideas and skills.
54. There are weaknesses in the school's facilities for **physical education**, for example, the playing field is some distance from the school and the school hall is very small. Nevertheless the school does what it can to provide a range of physical activity including participation in sporting events and extra-curricular clubs. Swimming is offered to pupils during one term in each academic year and pupils take part in a swimming gala. **Music** is mainly taught by a peripatetic music teacher. A governor gives tuition in playing the recorder. The school pays for the County Music Service to provide tuition in the playing of brass and woodwind instruments. Pupils regularly perform in concerts and a choir has recently been formed.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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