

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blythe Bridge

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124163

Headteacher: Mrs B Malvern

Lead inspector: Mr G S Nunn

Dates of inspection: January 19th – 21st 2004

Inspection number: 257531

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	211
School address:	Grindley Lane Blythe Bridge Stoke on Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST11 9JS
Telephone number:	01782 394793
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Hollins
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average size primary school with 211 pupils (115 boys, 96 girls) located in Blythe Bridge to the east of Stoke on Trent, an area with both local authority housing and private estates. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic groups. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is about average. Twenty-nine pupils are in the reception class. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and all are fluent in English. Eleven pupils have special educational needs, including three with a statement. This is below the national average. Their needs are related to speech and communication difficulties. The annual turnover of pupils is low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1185	Graham Nunn	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), English as an additional language.
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
17686	George Simpson	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs.
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, personal, social and health education, the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was :

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school, well respected and supported by the parents and the community. Standards are well above average, teaching is very good overall and the school is very effectively led and managed. Compared with schools of a similar size, it provides very good value for money.

The school's strengths and weaknesses

- ? Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is very good
- ? The high quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is supported by a very good curriculum.
- ? The governors, headteacher and senior staff lead and manage the school very well.
- ? Pupils are very well cared for.
- ? Behaviour is very good and pupils work productively and try to do their best.
- ? Standards in writing, which are above average, are not as high as in other aspects of English.
- ? Pupils achieve very well in personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- ? The very strong partnership that exists with parents who hold the school in high esteem.

Since the school was inspected in 1998 the rate of improvement has been very good. The school development plan is a high quality document, appropriately drawn together and well used to guide and evaluate the work of the school. Considerable progress has been made in assessing pupils' performance particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and currently all but a few subjects have very good systems. Opportunities are now provided to enable pupils to carry out personal study and work collaboratively with others.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Attainment on entry to the school is average. Children in the Foundation Stage are likely to achieve the early learning goals set for them in all areas of learning and many will exceed them. By the end of Year 2, all pupils, whatever their ability, achieve well and standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. There is a similar picture at the end of Year 6, although writing standards in English are not quite as good as the high standards found in the other aspects of the subject. The school is well aware of this and very good strategies have been adopted to address the issue.

Standards in religious education and in ICT are above average. In nearly all other subjects standards are above those expected for pupils' age. Particularly good work was seen in art and design, music, history and geography. Very good achievement is made in personal, social, health and citizenship education. **Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.**

At all stages, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behaviour is very good. There is a very strong sense of togetherness in the school and relationships are very good. Attendance is well

above the national average. **The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils is very good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Across the school teaching is very good and occasionally outstanding. This leads to considerable achievement and high standards. Classroom assistants provide very effective support. Teaching is at its best in mathematics, science and English. In general, pupils learn very well because relationships are very good and teachers make lessons interesting, expect all pupils to work hard and engage pupils in good discussions.

The overall curricular provision is very good. It is suitably broad and interesting and meets statutory requirements. More time needs to be allocated to giving pupils the opportunity to produce extended pieces of writing. The curriculum provides opportunities for enrichment through a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is also very good and helps these pupils achieve well. Apart from outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage, accommodation is satisfactory. New buildings to replace temporary ones are planned. There is a very good partnership with parents. The school provides most effective care for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision of what needs to be done and has high aspirations. Her calm, measured approach to the job encourages all members of staff, who work very well as a team. These qualities have led to improvements in standards and in the quality of education provided. **The school is also very well managed** and governors have a very good understanding of their role. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents hold the school in high regard. Pupils say they like their school and their teachers and enjoy the lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:-

- ? Raise standards further in writing to match the high standards found in other aspects of English.
- ? When possible, create a secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage class achieve well and reach standards overall that are above those expected for their age. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6 their standards are above or well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in nearly all the areas of learning.
- ? In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above average.
- ? Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well.
- ? Standards in Years 3 to 6 in writing are above average but are not as high as in the other aspects of English.

Commentary

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards similar to those normally expected for their age. Due to good teaching by the teacher and assistants, children reach the early learning goals in nearly all areas and many exceed them. The exception is in children's physical development where, due to lack of a designated outdoor play area and large wheeled toys, pupils' standards are about average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (17.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.3 (15.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.9 (18.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.3 (28.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.2 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and pupils of all abilities, including those who have SEN, achieve very well. This reflects the results attained in the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments, when standards were well above the national average and above those in similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. These very high standards have been maintained overall during the past three years and reflect the consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2.

3. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, pupils' standards in English were not as high as those in mathematics and science, with pupils being less successful in writing than in the other aspects of the subject. The school recognised this, devised a very good action plan and put it into practice. Consequently, standards have risen and now standards in writing are above average, making standards in English well above average overall. Standards in all three subjects have risen since the last inspection.
4. In English, pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening and reading and achieve well in writing. They speak confidently, express their ideas clearly and listen attentively to what others have to say. Pupils have good skills to help them read unfamiliar words successfully. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 and the high attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2, read both fiction and non-fiction books accurately and with good understanding. The school's recent emphasis on writing has paid dividends and pupils achieve very well in the development of punctuation, grammar and handwriting and are beginning to write well in a good range of styles. Pupils develop a good breadth of knowledge in mathematics and science as a result of the good match of work to their abilities. In addition, many opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their skills to independent investigative work. Targets are set for pupils in order to challenge them and help them gain an awareness of how well they are doing. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills offer good support to their work in other subjects.
5. Pupils who have SEN are well supported in English and mathematics and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and amended accordingly. This ensures that they achieve very well, particularly in English. Appropriate amounts of time are allocated to individuals and small groups to ensure that programmes in pupils' individual education plans are effectively administered.
6. Standards in religious education exceed the requirements of the local agreed syllabus and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology are above national expectation in Year 2 and in Year 6. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in this subject. There are also good examples of computers being used well to support learning in other subjects.
7. In all other subjects, except physical education where standards are similar to those expected of pupils' age, pupils' standards exceed the expected ones. Particularly good work was seen in art and design, music, geography and personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Their attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils mature very well due to the very good provision the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Pupils love coming to school and are very interested in lessons and activities.
- ? Supported by a very good provision for pupils' moral development, behaviour is very good.
- ? Relationships are very good.
- ? Very good provision for pupils' social development encourages them to become mature, confident and responsible.
- ? Attendance levels are well above average.

Commentary

8. Pupils and parents say how much they like and are proud of their school and this was seen in almost all lessons, in the very good relationships throughout the school and in the pupils' response to the very wide range of activities provided. Pupils in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into school routines and their very good levels of attention and interest in lessons help them learn very well. They concentrate very well, show a very good interest in their work and try hard to please their teachers. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 science lesson when, in a challenging session on testing pulse rates, pupils were very sensible as they ensured they measured their own rates accurately. They showed excitement as they compared measurements and their very inquisitive nature as they raised questions such as; "Why does our heartbeat increase because of exercise?"
9. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes is very good. Pupils know how to behave and follow and understand the reasons for rules very well. Pupils and parents say there is no serious bullying, racist or sexist behaviour. This is confirmed by the lack of any exclusions during the last two years. Pupils know what to do if minor squabbles or accidents happen and feel all members of staff deal with potential issues very promptly and effectively. The consistent, positive approach to behaviour management and very good provision for moral development ensures high standards. The use of praise and rewards has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes in almost all lessons. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils co-operate very well with each other, in pairs and in groups. This helps to develop their learning skills very well. They also display very good independence and show their initiative well. They undertake a very wide range of responsibilities such as acting as librarians, team captains and playground buddies with great enthusiasm and care. The School Council gives them very good opportunities to learn the values of being a good citizen. Members feel that without the Council there would be many more arguments in the playground as they are able to explain the reasons for rules to their classmates. Pupils are very polite and well mannered but not shy, as they show in their friendly, chatty, confident approach when talking to visitors. They demonstrate care and understanding for those less well off than themselves as their Christmas "show" with an emphasis on the homeless at Christmas indicates.
10. Attendance rates have been maintained at a very high level for the last four years because pupils love school. In addition, the school places significant emphasis on promoting attendance and very thorough systems record and monitor it. For example, the very strong line that governors have taken in setting a policy of not authorising absences in relation to pupils taking holidays at the start of the academic year has ensured that almost no pupils miss this important time in their education.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. There is a very good curriculum that provides a broad range of worthwhile and enjoyable experiences. Provision for pupils who have SEN is most effective and meets their needs successfully.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. During the inspection it was consistently good or very good right across the school. English, mathematics and science are taught very well across all year groups. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? There is a high level of consistency in the teaching of English, mathematics and science.
- ? At all stages, relationships are very good and motivate pupils who want to learn and do well.
- ? There is very good support and teaching for pupils who have SEN.
- ? Teachers' high expectations mean that pupils apply themselves to their work and work hard.
- ? Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	20 (48%)	15 (35%)	5 (12%)	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.

11. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are well taught and achieve well. The most effective teacher assistants and the teacher have a good knowledge of how young children learn. In the activities they provide, every opportunity is taken to develop speaking and listening and early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Routines are quickly established and ensure that children settle effectively in school and develop a love and desire to learn. Assessment is good and the information gained is used well to plan the next stage of learning.
12. At all stages, planning is very good and is securely linked to schemes of work that are based largely on national guidelines. Planning to the recommendations in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have given a high degree of consistency to the way in which English and mathematics are taught. Opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills are provided across the curriculum and reading and the mechanics of writing are taught very well. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching of mathematics and science was nearly always very good. Work set effectively met the needs of all the pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils. In both subjects many opportunities were provided for pupils to use their skills in independent investigative work. This was particularly noticeable in an excellent Year 6 science lesson with lower and middle ability pupils who were investigating how to separate gravel from flour and water. The teacher's constant, penetrative questioning challenged all pupils so that they achieved very well during the course of the lesson.
13. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and this allows them to introduce, consolidate and extend pupils' technical vocabulary effectively. The expertise of other teachers is used well in some subjects such as art and design, music and ICT and this helps to raise standards. All teachers attend in-service training in the subject and are quite confident using

computers to develop learning in other subjects. In all subjects, teachers ask good questions that initiate effective discussion and make pupils think more deeply about their responses. All teachers have high expectations of the pupils, as exemplified in an excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson where pupils were challenged consistently to recall number facts quickly when multiplying two digit numbers by other two digit numbers.

14. Pupils who have SEN are well taught. Teachers and classroom assistants support their learning well and help them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Teachers, together with the special educational needs coordinator, formulate individual education plans for their own pupils and have a clear understanding of individual needs. Targets are realistic and amended regularly to build on pupils' successes and take their learning to the next stage.
15. The excellent relationships that underpin all that happens in the school are key factors in the very good learning that takes place. Pupils work equally well as part of a large group, in small groups and independently. They show good levels of engagement in lessons and work productively. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, for example, following a quite heated debate about the right and wrongs of whale hunting, pupils worked diligently on a piece of writing, putting forward their arguments for or against the idea.
16. Assessment is good overall. Work is marked regularly and contains comments that praise pupils' efforts. Where it is best, comments also help pupils to see how their work might be improved. In lessons generally, teachers let pupils know how well they are doing and praise them when they respond well in question and answer sessions. Homework is used well to consolidate learning. Good use is made of information gained from tracking pupils' progress in compulsory national and optional testing. For example, this identified the need to improve pupils' writing and has led to clear improvement. In many instances pupils have their own targets and this gives them a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Whilst teachers plan to a common format in other subjects, there are one or two subjects where formal procedures to assess and record pupils' progress are not yet fully developed, although good plans are in hand to address this issue in the near future.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good overall with good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and very good provision for pupils with SEN. It is well supported by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits. Accommodation is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? All pupils benefit from a broad, relevant and very well planned curriculum.
- ? Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.
- ? They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Commentary

17. The quality of the curriculum has continued to improve since the last inspection. All pupils have full and equal access to it. Planning is very good and is linked effectively to national guidance. In the reception class, planning of the curriculum takes good account of the needs of all children, although, as a result of the lack of a secure outdoor play area and large wheeled toys, planning for children's physical development is not as comprehensive as it could be. Effective teamwork continually reinforces key skills in language, literacy and mathematics. The strong foundations developed in literacy and numeracy skills are built on very successfully in Years 1 to 6.
18. The school provides very effective personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex and relationships education and attention to drugs misuse. (This is reported more fully in # 80)

19. The very good provision for pupils having SEN is an example of the very good equality of access for all pupils. An effective early intervention programme ensures needs are identified and the flexible range of support meets the needs of such pupils very well. Very good quality individual education plans, with clearly defined targets, provide good working documents for teachers and support staff. Arrangements for withdrawing pupils for individual support are carefully managed, so that access to inclusion is a strength, with gifted and talented pupils identified and supported very well both in school and within the pyramid of local schools.
20. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 2 and 6 are very well prepared for the next stages of their education. The strong network of support within the local pyramid of schools provides many good opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the local secondary schools and engage in a good number of sporting and cultural activities with other feeder schools.
21. In the previous inspection, the absence of a designated, secure outdoor play area and the lack of large outside play equipment was identified as a weakness for children in the Foundation Stage. This has yet to be fully addressed, as there is still no appropriate area on the school site for such a play area.
22. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory, although the stairs prevent wheelchair access. Poor drainage on the school field restricts its use for games. Excellent resources from the life education centre are used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning in their personal, social, health and citizenship education. The ICT suite as a resource in its own right is very good and has a significant impact on pupils' achievement in that subject.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Very good support, advice and guidance are provided to each pupil. The school involves pupils very well in its work and development. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The care of pupils and the promotion of their personal development are excellent.
 - ? Pupils are helped to feel very well involved in the school and valued.
 - ? Induction arrangements are very good.
 - ? Child protection procedures and awareness are very good.
 - ? The school environment is very secure and safe.
 - ? Assessment procedures are not fully developed for all subjects.
23. All members of staff know the pupils very well. The strong family caring ethos ensures every pupil feels valued and cared for. Excellent records of personal development ensure all members of staff are very well informed and provide excellent support for each pupil. This has a most positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school and high standards of personal development.
 24. All members of staff listen to and value the opinions of pupils very well. This is enhanced considerably by the work of the School Council which the pupils feel gives them a very good say in the life of the school and how things may be improved. For example, following decisions by the School Council, measures were taken to improve playground facilities, such as establishing a "toy corner", and ensuring that toilets flush.
 25. There are very good induction arrangements for children, both as they join the reception class and for those who join later. This enables pupils to settle quickly, form very positive relationships and make good progress.

26. Close attention to health and safety, child protection, fire precautions and first aid procedures ensures pupils work in a safe and healthy environment. Parents and pupils agree that the school takes very good steps to provide a very safe and caring environment in which pupils flourish.
27. Educational support and guidance are good. Pupils are very confident about their move to secondary education. Advice and guidance is based on very good assessment information in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Links with the local community support pupils' learning well. Educational links with local schools are very good. The quality of the partnership has improved well since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Parents are successfully encouraged to become involved in their children's learning.
- ? Parents receive very good information on their children's progress.
- ? Links with local schools are very good

Commentary

28. The very good support of parents for their children's education and the way this is harnessed and encouraged by the school are strong factors in creating pupils' very positive attitudes to school and achievement. Parents ensure their children attend regularly and promptly. They encourage them by supporting homework and helping them read. They provide good help in the classroom, on trips and through financial contributions made by the Friends of the School Association. Parents receive very good information on how to help their children with their learning. Information on the curriculum and topics has been provided in newsletters and in the prospectus; reports give very good information on progress and achievement as well as targeting areas for improvement. In addition, consultation sessions give high quality individual information. The school is most welcoming to parents; teachers are available at the end of the day and issues are dealt with promptly and to a high level of parental satisfaction. The encouragement of parents to share their children's success in congratulation assemblies is a very positive feature. The school uses the local community well for visits and local visitors help in school.
29. Pupils are very well prepared for, and confident about, their move to secondary school. The school has very productive links with the local network of schools. For example, pupils get to know future friends very well through a wide range of joint activities such as swimming, athletics, science quizzes and French days. Liaison at all levels by members of staff has benefits in a wide range of areas, such as administration and behaviour management of difficult pupils. Very good links with pre-school providers help pupils to settle very well into the Foundation Stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good and effectively drive the school forward in all respects. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The headteacher provides very strong and purposeful leadership.
- ? All staff work together as a very effective team.
- ? The governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life.
- ? Management is very effective.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides calm and purposeful leadership, which is rooted in a clear sense of direction and purpose. She is committed to raising the standards of all aspects of school life and, to this end, is very successful. She leads a community which is at one in its philosophy, knows where it is going and is resolute in its efforts to improve. She has been very successful in creating a strong family ethos, which is appreciated and supported by everyone associated with the school. Everyone, including the pupils, are treated as individuals and made to feel valuable and worthwhile contributors.
31. The headteacher has welded her staff into a very strong team, led by an effective senior management team, but including all members of staff. All teachers and assistants relate well to one another, share their expertise and provide a whole school approach to their work. Standards have risen in all areas, thanks to well-organised procedures that are applied consistently. These include performance management, professional development and the effective monitoring of teaching and learning, the outcomes of which have resulted in improvements in standards.
32. A further strength of the school is the committed support provided by the governing body. All governors know the school well and are fully involved in its day-to-day life. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are active in promoting the school's endeavours to improve. Governors are well informed of developments by the headteacher and staff, and also participate in classroom activities, so that they fully understand the curriculum. They are both supportive and appreciative of the staff's work. The well-organised structure of the governing body ensures that financial, personnel and building matters are efficiently managed. Statutory requirements are fully met. The governors contribute to the much improved school development plan, which sets out appropriate priorities and targets for improvement. Progress is closely monitored and the effectiveness of spending decisions is measured. Financial matters are well supported by the efficient administrative staff.
33. All aspects of the school are very well managed, so that the school's progress is smoothly and efficiently developed. This includes the management of SEN, which follows the recommended Code of Practice. There are strong links with outside agencies. Performance management is fully implemented and is well used in supporting staff development in areas such as SEN and also in ICT. Day-to-day administration is very good and takes many of the routine management tasks away from the headteacher and staff. Financial planning is very good with prudent management of the school budget. There are clear links between the school development plan and the budget.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	495,566
Total expenditure	491,321
Expenditure per pupil	2,023

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10,609
Balance carried forward to the next	4,245

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. Children receive a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good overall and, on occasions, very good. Children benefit from a good, well-planned curriculum. There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities with a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Effective support from other adults makes a valuable contribution to children's learning. Good assessment procedures are used well to plan the next stages of learning. Children are prepared very well to transfer to Year 1.
35. Children enter the reception class in the September of the year in which they will be five. Pre-reception children enter on a termly basis, after their fourth birthday. There are currently 29 children in the reception class, and two in the pre-reception. Very good induction procedures ease the transition from home to school. Parents are very positive about the start children receive to their education. There are good links with the local nurseries. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision before they start school. Attainment on entry is broadly average. Progress is good in all areas of learning except physical development where it is satisfactory. Children are likely to achieve all the early learning goals and a significant number will exceed these except in their physical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching is consistently good and children achieve well as a result of excellent relationships and high expectations.
- ? Classroom routines are well established.
- ? Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development.
- ? Personal, social and emotional development is integral to all class activities.

Commentary

36. Children enter the school with the expected range of skills in personal, social and emotional development. These skills develop well and children make good progress as a result of the well-planned activities, good teaching, excellent relationships and high expectations of behaviour. Children soon know the routines well. In most cases they listen carefully to instructions and all participate enthusiastically in class activities. The good teamwork of the adults provides effective role models for co-operation, care and a calm but rigorous approach to work. Children are eager to learn. They are encouraged to share, take turns and put up their hands when responding to questions. They are expected to take responsibility for clearing their workspace at the end of activities, which they do sensibly.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- ? Children achieve well, particularly in speaking skills.

Commentary

37. Attainment is average when children start in the Foundation Stage. They achieve well and make good progress as a result of the well-planned activities. The excellent relationships with teaching and support staff enable children to quickly become involved in the larger class. The majority listen well and follow instructions carefully. All are confident when speaking to adults and other children. They seek help when required. They are given good opportunities to develop an appreciation of books, which they take home on a regular basis. They know a good number of initial sounds and a significant number are reading the early books in the reading scheme. In a well-planned lesson based on 'Elmer' they responded with clarity when asked what they thought Elmer said. 'I want to rattle the berries down!' and 'I want to roll in the berries,' were typical responses. Most could identify spoken words to put in a speech bubble. Children's language skills are developed well because activities are carefully matched to their needs. Well-focussed questions challenge children to use their language and extend their skills in a variety of classroom situations, such as the well structured puppet show of Elmer, where good intervention resulted in confident performances by many children. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1 and a significant proportion will exceed them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- ? Basic number skills are reinforced well.
- ? A wide range of activities are planned to support learning which ensures that children achieve well.

Commentary

38. Children enter the Foundation Stage with average mathematical skills. They achieve well as a result of good teaching with well-planned activities carefully matched to their abilities. A variety of number rhymes and songs support children's learning very well. They count a number of items accurately using a variety of resources. Good links are made to literacy with number stories, such as 'Snappy Six', when the children count how many times the dinosaur snaps his teeth together. They count and recognise numbers to 10 and understand one more/less than. They sequence and continue patterns of two and three shapes. They develop a good awareness of the concept and language of length. Children enjoy mathematics because the good range of practical activities, such as serving in the café, modelling with dough and using construction equipment, holds their interest well and provides many opportunities for sorting, ordering and counting. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning and a good number will exceed them by the time they start in Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching is good and helps children to achieve well.
- ? Good use is made of the resources available.
- ? Effective questioning by the adults enhances children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.

Commentary

39. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the expected level of attainment for their age. The teacher provides a good range of experiences that enable children to make good progress in their knowledge about the world. Lessons are well planned and there are good links to other areas of learning. For example, children learn about American Indians, making dream-catchers, jewellery and hats, and creating music. In the class café they count coins, organise a birthday party and count candles on the cake. They discuss a jungle environment and identify features of the natural world and consider the possible contents for their rucksack to travel through the jungle. They learn about the seasons, considering the buds in wintertime and using the computer to dress the teddy for winter. In the 'life van' they examine the bones in their body, locate their heart and name body parts. The excellent resources inspire very good learning and they bombard the teacher with purposeful questions using scientific vocabulary such as 'veins' and 'energy'. Well directed questioning by all the adults gives very good support to this area of learning. All are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and a significant number will exceed them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The adults help children to develop their control of small manipulative skills well through well-structured activities.
- ? The lack of a secure outside play area and lack of large wheeled toys limit opportunities for development.

Commentary

40. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the expected physical skills for their age. The adults help children to develop their control of small manipulative skills well because there are good opportunities for well-structured activities involving cutting, sticking, painting and pencil skills. They soon learn to control a pencil or paintbrush carefully and cut, stick and paste effectively. Children dress and undress themselves with a good level of independence when changing for physical education sessions in the hall. They develop an increasing awareness of pace in the hall as they move in different ways creating pathways. Most follow instructions and respond to a signal to stop. They jump in and out of hoops satisfactorily but a number of children do not have the expected coordination when jumping and balancing around the hoop. Overall control and coordination are satisfactory but the lack of experiences with large wheeled toys outside limits these skills. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Overall provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching is good and children achieve well as a result.
- ? The teacher provides a good range of experiences.
- ? Good opportunities are provided for role-play

Commentary

41. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the creative skills expected for their age. Good teaching ensures children experience a wide range of interesting activities through a variety of media. As a result, they develop good creative and imaginative skills. Role-play areas provide good opportunities for imaginative play. They are well structured in order to have a significant impact on literacy and mathematical skills, as well as promoting self-esteem and lively imaginations. Good use of music, songs and rhymes effectively enhances creative and mathematical understanding. Children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning and a significant number are likely to exceed them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Standards are well above average.
- ? The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- ? The subject is very well led and managed.
- ? Writing in Years 3 to 6 is weaker than other aspects of the subject.

Commentary

42. Standards in English have improved considerably since the previous inspection. A comparative weakness in writing, identified by analysis of the 2003 national tests results, has been addressed by the implementation of an effective action plan. This has resulted in rising standards, which are now above average. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well, including those pupil with SEN.
43. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Opportunities are provided in all lessons, and the quality of relationships established by the staff enables pupils to respond confidently when answering questions. They are also able to instigate discussion of their own accord, when they pose questions or ask for further clarification. Lively discussions take place, for example in a Year 6 lesson on whale hunting. During this discussion, pupils utilised the very good information available to express reasoned opinions of their own. Throughout the school, pupils listen respectfully to their peers' views, as well as to their teachers.
44. Reading standards are well above average because the skills of reading are systematically developed as pupils progress through the school. Early success is built on a thorough understanding of phonics, as well as guided reading, which develops an understanding of the text and a love of reading. The analysis of increasingly complex texts results in eleven-year-

olds who are able to read for underlying meaning and contextual understanding. Retrieval skills are secure and pupils are able to locate information in books, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Pupils willingly talk about their favourite authors and genre. They have definite opinions and express them clearly.

45. Writing standards are above average by the time pupils leave. The school has worked consistently to improve writing skills, and has produced a plan, which is having the desired effect. Hence, pupils are taught a wide range of writing styles and achieve much success. Writing is well used in all subjects, but opportunities for extended, imaginative writing are limited. When pupils do write at length, they show a good command of language and an understanding of structure. Technical skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are usually accurate. A very well taught lesson in Year 2 clarified the complexities of speech marks very effectively. Empathetic writing in Year 6, about children 150 years ago, enables pupils to write imaginatively and develop their skills as they write in the vernacular, for example 'Oh, I 'ate pullin' the carts. I 'av to be chained to 'em.'
46. Teaching is usually at least good and often very good. Teachers plan very well, use imaginative methods and design tasks to match all levels of ability. Consequently, pupils work at appropriate levels and make very good progress. High expectations challenge pupils to produce their best, which they usually do. Lessons have a good structure and a rigorous pace is maintained, which keeps pupils concentrating on their tasks. Teachers are careful to involve all pupils, so lessons are fully inclusive. SEN pupils receive very good support from classroom assistants and their contributions are clearly valued, which raises their self-esteem. Very good relationships are established, which result in well ordered lessons, where pupils behave well and gain maximum benefit.
47. The subject is very well managed by a coordinator who has a thorough knowledge and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. She is an exemplary teacher, which enhances the effectiveness of her leadership. Her monitoring of teaching and learning improves the qualities of both, and effectively raises standards. The collation and analysis of data is successful in informing planning and setting realistic, achievable targets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Literacy skills are well used to support work in other subjects. The skills of speaking and listening are extensively used in discussions and in question and answer sessions. Reading experiences abound, as pupils analyse texts in a range of subjects. Many opportunities are provided to write in a variety of forms, including word processing. Retrieval skills are used to collect and record information from a number of sources.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Standards are well above average in all areas of mathematics.
- ? Teaching and pupils' achievements are very good throughout the school.
- ? Very good leadership of the subject means pupils' achievements are well maintained.

Commentary

50. Standards have been rising to their present high level for the last few years and this represents very good achievement. Achievement is very good because the teaching of the subject is very good and consistently challenges pupils to achieve the very best they can. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

51. Teachers plan well using the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been carefully adapted to suit the needs of the school. Very good foundations in all aspects of mathematics are laid in Years 1 and 2. These are built on most successfully in Years 3 to 6. Pupils develop a very good understanding of number and a most secure knowledge of shape, space and measures as well as data handling. Throughout, there are good examples of investigative work, as seen in the problem solving work in Year 3, that help pupils to use and apply their mathematics. Work set is very well matched to pupils' abilities and lessons proceed at a rapid rate so that much work is covered.
52. Teachers use practical resources very well to support learning for all pupils. Mental skills are developed very well through excellent short, sharp, brisk opening sessions to lessons. Learning objectives are shared well with pupils. There is a very good whole school assessment system for monitoring and recording pupils' progress. Pupils' work is carefully marked.
53. Leadership of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator has a very good idea of what is required for its continued development and the maintenance of high standards. Some good examples of the use of computers to support work in mathematics were seen.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematical skills are used well in other subjects. For example, in science Year 4 pupils were measuring, in seconds, the time taken for objects to fall when using different types of parachutes. They then logged the results. Similarly in Year 6 geography the plotting of coordinates was being well developed as part of pupils' map reading skills. Work linked to time changes in historical periods was supported appropriately by pupils' numerical knowledge.

SCIENCE

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and standards are well above average.
- Pupils' achievement is very good right across the school.
- Investigative work is well used to support pupils' learning.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to set up investigations and carry them out.

Commentary

55. High standards have been consistently maintained over the last three years as a result of very good teaching and planning that is well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' achievement is very good right across the school. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.
56. Teaching and learning are very good throughout. Lessons are well planned and resources are used effectively. In Year 1, for example, pupils are encouraged to experiment in various ways as part of their understanding of the power of forces, such as wind, that cannot be seen. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 follow scientific methods and principles well when testing various ways of separating a variety of mixtures. They design experiments and measure their results carefully. A good balance is created between predicting, experimenting, recording and interpreting results which impacts well on pupils' understanding.
57. Teachers throughout the school have very high expectations of behaviour and appropriate health and safety principles are applied to all lessons. There is much evidence of very good

investigative activities. Overall, however, there are not enough opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to initiate their own investigations and follow their own lines of enquiry.

58. The subject co-ordinator is well aware of what is happening in the subject, has opportunities to monitor colleagues' work and has a very good vision for the subject's development. Whole school assessment systems are well used to analyse pupils' progress and plan new work for them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- ? Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- ? ICT is well used to support other areas of the curriculum.
- ? Pupils enjoy working with computers and apply themselves well to the work set.
- ? Standards continue to improve as resources and teachers' expertise improves.

Commentary

59. Since the previous inspection standards have been maintained and provision has improved. The school has made good progress that has been sufficient to keep it in front of the rapidly rising national expectation. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good.
60. Teaching is good throughout, particularly when lessons are carried out in the very good ICT suite. The provision of 18 computers ensures that there is at least one computer per two pupils and when half classes use the room each pupil has their own computer. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by ease of access. In Year 5, for example, all pupils are able to set up a trial spreadsheet with test numbers and then save the spreadsheet. They are able to load a CD-ROM and get to their 'heart beat' experiment. The very good pace of this activity indicates that pupils have been very well taught and are confident in their skills. The teacher and teaching assistant consistently challenge the pupils who respond with a great deal of enthusiasm and enjoyment.
61. Scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate that key issues are well built on from one year to the next. Good formal assessment indicates how well a pupil is learning and achieving.
62. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has a very good personal knowledge of the subject as well as a good understanding of the way in which the subject needs to develop. Regular in-service training is provided for staff, which helps to increase their expertise and confidence.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Computers are very well used to support work across the curriculum with good examples right across the school. In Year 1, for example, the 'Literacy Box' program is used to support work in English with 'My World Science' supporting work in art and science. Year 3 use the Internet to find pictures of Henry VIII, while in Year 6 very good use is made of a locally produced program on the River Trent to expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts such as meander and confluence.

HUMANITIES

64. No lessons were seen in geography and history, so judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' completed work and discussions with coordinators and pupils. Indications are that standards are above average in both subjects by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The subjects are consistently taught throughout the school, so that pupils successfully build on previous learning and make good progress. Achievement, by all pupils, is also good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
65. The essential skills in **geography** are consistently developed, for example mapping skills acquired in Year 2, when 'Going to the Seaside', lead to an understanding of map references and symbols in Year 6. A thorough study of rivers and their regimes give older pupils a good knowledge and understanding of local geography, as well as associated aspects, such as the water cycle. Very good, interactive displays support and develop learning by sustaining pupils' interest.
66. Pupils follow a scheme of work in **history** that develops an understanding of chronology and a knowledge of particular people and periods. They interpret evidence presented in a variety of ways, and communicate their learning in a range of formats. A Year 2 visit to Hanley Museum makes history come alive, as does a Year 6 visit to the Black Country Museum. The ability to make relevant comparisons is developed in a study of Florence Nightingale in Year 2, when similarities and differences with a modern nurse are identified. Very good opportunities are now taken throughout the school to develop the literacy skills of extended writing, labelling, annotations, sentence completion and comprehension. Very good displays also support learning in history.
67. The co-ordinators have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are developing assessment procedures, which will inform future planning and learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Standards are above average.
- ? Coverage is thorough and in line with that expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- ? The subject is well supported by well-planned assemblies and the general ethos of the school.

Commentary

69. Attainment has improved since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good knowledge of Christian traditions, as well as a knowledge of other world faiths. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed by learning about festivals, common to different faiths, such as Harvest and Sukkot. Notable features of Year 2 studies are the opportunities given to pupils to interpret stories, such as 'The Lost Sheep', as well as opportunities to evaluate their own work, as evidenced in 'The Sower.' The subject is well developed throughout the school, so that pupils build on previous learning. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of religious symbols and places of worship, supported by visits to the Methodist chapel and a mosque. The very good application of literacy skills encourages pupils to write their observations of visits, as well as their responses to religious artefacts, as they describe their feelings.
70. Only two lessons were seen and the quality of teaching and learning was very good in one, and satisfactory in the other. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher ensures that all pupils are

fully included, as they develop environmental awareness, when learning about 'Our World.' Very good teaching methods retain pupils' interest and inspire them to voice very relevant opinions about global and local environmental damage. They successfully learn about individual and collective responsibility towards the planet, in an appropriately spiritual atmosphere.

71. Assemblies successfully support the development of religious education. A very good family atmosphere fosters a community spirit and conscience. The systematic and thorough planning of assemblies ensures that there is coherence to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Owing to timetable arrangements, no lessons were seen in music. Only one lesson was seen in art and design and design and technology. Scrutiny of work and teachers' planning indicates that standards in art and design, design and technology and music are above average, being about average in physical education. The indications are that pupils' achievement is good.
73. Teachers' planning is based on national guidance in design and technology and physical education, and on a commercial scheme in art and design and music. All aspects of the subjects are covered well. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been updated, although there are no whole school assessment systems to track pupils' progress in music and physical education, other than for swimming. Assessment in design and technology and art and design has only recently been introduced. It is at an early stage of development and has not had time to make an impact on the subjects. Leadership and management of the subjects are very good.
74. Some work in **art and design** was of a better standard than that normally seen. Work by Year 2 pupils on observational drawings of fruits and vegetables and patterns, inspired by the work of Kandinsky for example, was good as were the effective African pastel designs by Year 6 and the work by Year 3 on the 'City at Night', inspired by the work of Louise Nevelson. Resources for art and design are good, contributing effectively to pupils' standards and achievement. Strong features of the lesson seen in art and design were good subject knowledge, very effective use of questioning, well deployed and effective support staff, well planned activities, careful use of sketchbooks and a very good range and use of resources.
75. **Music** observed in assemblies indicates lively and tuneful singing of a good standard. A good number of pupils belong to one of the three recorder groups who play very well, as do those pupils who receive outside specialist teaching for an instrument. These include violins, clarinets and flutes. Specialist teaching impacts well on the achievement of higher attaining pupils.
76. There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, although the available evidence indicates that it is good. Visits to theatres, museums and galleries and participation in concerts as well as visits, for example from steel bands, African drums and 'key strings', enhance pupils' cultural development well.
77. In the one **design and technology** lesson, standards were above average and teaching was very good. Pupils have good opportunities to plan and design their work before construction. In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils showed a good understanding of the ways that wheels and axles can be assembled in order to make a moving vehicle. They use tools safely and demonstrate a variety of methods to secure the axles.
78. In the Year 1 lesson seen in **physical education**, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The well-planned and carefully constructed lesson focussed on balance, shape and control, building effectively on previous learning. Achievement was satisfactory because high noise levels and the behaviour of a very small minority of boys impeded progress being better than

this. In the Year 3 lesson, teaching and learning were good. Pupils achieved well in this lesson, with higher attaining pupils demonstrating a wide range of imaginative ideas on the theme of 'rocking and rolling'. A positive feature of this lesson was the development of good self-evaluation skills by pupils.

79. Extra-curricular clubs contribute very well to the standards achieved in games and athletics, as well as to pupils' personal development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in PSHE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The very good foundations laid in the reception class are developed very well in Years 1 to 6.
- ? The excellent relationships and supportive ethos strongly support pupils' personal development.
- ? Pupils make very good progress in learning how to develop a healthier and safer lifestyle and to become a caring member of the community.

Commentary

80. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are taught to take personal responsibility for their body and health, to deal with feelings in a positive way and to build positive relationships with family and others. There are many opportunities for them to participate in discussions and learn social skills such as taking turns, sharing, playing together and helping each other. The caring and supportive ethos which underpins all that the school does, enables pupils to explore and discuss their feelings and develop a keen awareness of the impact of their actions on others. There were many examples of pupils willingly helping each other during lessons and at playtimes. Older pupils build very effectively on this learning. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn what makes a healthy lifestyle and the importance of diet and exercise, through the excellent cross-curricular links with science and physical education. They know of the dangers of drugs and alcohol and demonstrate a mature understanding in their articulate discussions. 'I want to be able to say no to drugs,' said one; 'I've learnt what to say to people who want you to take stuff and I'm going to be more confident,' said another, as they reflected on their learning. In Year 6, as a result of very good teaching, all had learnt to take more responsibility for their own learning, individually and as a group, to resist bullying and to develop an understanding of themselves, thus preparing them to take their place in the world as worthwhile citizens.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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