

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LAWRENCE C of E (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gnosall, Stafford

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124303

Headteacher: Mr R Cadman

Lead inspector: Mr J Plumb

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th July 2004

Inspection number: 257770

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 282

School address: Lowfield Lane
Gnosall
Stafford
Staffordshire
Postcode: ST20 0ET

Telephone number: 01785 822391
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs B Henderson

Date of previous February 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a slightly above average size for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 284 pupils on roll, including fifty-seven children in reception (16 of who attend part time). There are significantly more boys than girls and there is a noticeable gender imbalance in some classes. In recent years, the school has experienced a falling roll, due to a drop in the birth rate in the village and surrounding area served by the school. There are very few minority ethnic pupils and none are at an early stage of learning English. The level of mobility in the current Year 2 is high with a significant proportion of pupils joining school other than at the normal time. The proportion of pupils' eligible for free school meals, at 6.8 per cent, is below the national average. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are average, but a proportion of pupils come from a poorer part of the village. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including those with a statement of special educational needs, at 18.3 per cent, is broadly average, but there are more pupils with SEN in the current Year 2 group than any other group within the school. Attainment on entry is average. The school has gone through a recent period of turbulence with three headteachers in the space of four years, including a lengthy period of the deputy head acting up as headteacher. Both the current headteacher and chair of governors have taken up their positions recently.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16930	Mr J L Plumb	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography Religious education
32698	Mr S W Barker	Lay inspector	
2377	Mr D C Courtney	Team inspector	English Design and technology History Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
21090	Mr Benson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Art and design Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Although this school provides a satisfactory quality of education, there are a number of significant weaknesses. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but there is significant under-achievement in writing throughout the school and in religious education by Year 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the failure to formally track pupils' progress results in a significant number not doing as well as they ought. The new headteacher provides good leadership, but there are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of other key staff. The headteacher has the capacity to turn this problem around. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in writing is poor across the school.
- Standards in mathematics by Year 2 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Attainment in mathematics by Year 6 is well above average.
- Standards in science are above average by Year 2.
- Attainment in swimming is well above average.
- Achievement in religious education by Year 6 is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership of the new headteacher is good.
- Leadership and management of other key staff, including subject co-ordinators, are unsatisfactory.
- Attendance is very good.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.

Although improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, under the new leadership, capacity to improve is at least satisfactory. The headteacher requires a mandate from the governing body to turn this school around and raise achievement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	D	B	E
mathematics	C	C	A	C
science	B	C	B	D

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.

Although achievement is **satisfactory** overall, there is significant **under-achievement** in writing throughout the school, in mathematics by Year 2 and in religious education by Year 6. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, except in mathematics, where they do not have specific number targets on their individual education plans. The achievement of minority ethnic pupils is satisfactory.

Test results in 2003 for Year 6 pupils show that attainment in English and science was above average, and in mathematics it was well above average. Compared to similar schools, attainment was well below the national average in English, in line in mathematics and below in science. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2003, attainment in reading and mathematics was well above the national average compared with all schools and also similar schools. In writing, standards were above all schools and in line when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments in science in 2003 were in line with the national average.

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good and the children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning by the time that they enter Year 1. Inspection findings indicate that standards attained in speaking and listening and reading are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment in science is above average by Year 2 and average by Year 6. This demonstrates satisfactory achievement, except in science by Year 2, where achievement is good. In writing, attainment is below the national average by Year 2 and Year 6. In mathematics, attainment is below average by Year 2 and well above by Year 6. Achievement in mathematics by Year 6 is satisfactory.

Attainment in ICT, history, geography and physical education is average by Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good in ICT and satisfactory in physical education, except in swimming where achievement is very good and attainment exceeds the national expectation. In religious education, achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected by Year 6. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses. There is insufficient challenge in the teaching of writing, pupils with SEN do not have specific number targets to work to and a number of teachers are not confident about teaching religious education. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not set individual targets and their progress over time is not rigorously monitored. The curriculum is satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory level of support and guidance and satisfactorily ensures the pupils' welfare, health and safety, but systems for seeking the views of pupils could be better. Links with parents, other schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. The headteacher provides good leadership and requires a mandate from the governing body to ensure that the other key managers in the school are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are seen to fulfil them. Although governance is satisfactory overall, there are significant deficiencies. Statutory responsibilities in respect of race and disability legislation are not met, but, under the direction of a newly appointed chairperson, there is an action plan to address these important statutory infringements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

A significant proportion of parents expressed concerns about a number of issues, as did pupils through the Ofsted questionnaires before the inspection began. These were investigated thoroughly. Inspection findings confirm that links with parents are good, but there is room for improving the information provided for parents about pupil progress. Pupils are keen to come to school and mostly find their lessons enjoyable. However, there are not clear mechanisms for ensuring that all pupils' views are heard, but the headteacher is working very hard to ensure that robust systems are put in place to make this happen.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards in writing throughout the school;
- improve standards in mathematics by Year 2;
- improve the quality of provision for religious education;
- develop a consistent assessment system and ensure that pupils are set targets and that their progress against these targets is monitored;
- ensure that members of the senior management team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and that they fulfil them;
- develop the role of the subject co-ordinator, particularly in respect of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject for which she / he has a lead responsibility,

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- governors must meet statutory responsibilities in respect of race and disability legislation as it impacts on education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** in the Foundation Stage and the vast majority of children exceed the Early Learning Goals. Achievement throughout Years 1 to 6 is **satisfactory** overall. However, there is significant **underachievement** in mathematics by Year 2, in writing throughout the school and in religious education by Year 6. By Year 2, standards are above average in reading and science but below average in writing and mathematics. By Year 6, standards are average in science, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics, but below average in writing. Standards in RE by Year 6 are below those expected according to the agreed syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Standards in speaking and listening and reading are above the national average throughout the school.
- Achievement in writing is poor and standards are below average by Year 2 and by Year 6.
- By Year 6, standards in mathematics are well above the national average.
- Achievement in mathematics by Year 2 is unsatisfactory and standards are below average.
- Achievement by Year 6 in religious education is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected by the agreed syllabus.
- Pupils with SEN do not achieve well enough in mathematics.
- Achievement in swimming is very good and standards exceed those expected nationally by Year 6.

Commentary

1. Standards have improved in science and reading by Year 2 and in mathematics by Year 6 since the last inspection. In writing throughout the school and in RE by Year 6, achievement is very significantly worse than at the time of the last inspection. Although achievement for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall, a significant proportion underachieve in mathematics because they do not have specific number targets to aspire to and on occasions there is confusion between the teacher and the teaching assistant working with them in class. Achievement of minority ethnic pupils is satisfactory. Inspection findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the achievement between boys and girls.

The Foundation Stage

2. Children achieve well from an average starting point. By the time they reach Year 1, nearly all of the children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. Consistently good teaching and the fact that children enjoy learning contribute to their achieving well.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. On the basis of the 2003 national tests for Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was well above the national average compared with all schools and also with similar schools. In writing, standards were above all schools and in line when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments in science in 2003 indicate that standards were in line with the national average.
4. Inspection findings indicate that standards in writing and mathematics are below the national average. These findings are supported by the unvalidated test results for 2004. This suggests significant underachievement throughout Years 1 and 2 put together. There are more pupils with SEN in the current Year 2 than usual for the school and a higher proportion of pupils than normal joined the school during Year 2. This partly explains the below average standards, but evidence points to deficiencies in teaching when these pupils were in Year 1, and the failure to set targets and monitor pupil progress are also contributory factors to these outcomes in writing and mathematics. Pupils with SEN do not have specific number targets on their individual educational plans and the school currently flounders when it comes to a pupil operating below Level 1 in mathematics. Standards attained are above average in speaking and listening and reading and achievement is satisfactory. In science, standards are above average and achievement is good, due to the emphasis the school places on investigative activities.
5. In ICT, pupils' achievement is good, and by Year 2, they attain the nationally expected level. Insufficient evidence could be gathered to make a secure judgement about standards in RE. Attainment in geography and history is broadly in line with national expectations. In physical education, standards are in line with those expected nationally, except in swimming, where they are above those usually found for seven-year-olds. Insufficient evidence was gathered during the inspection to make secure judgements about pupils' achievement in other subjects, but they do have rich and exciting learning experiences in these subjects.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (26.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.3 (27.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. On the basis of the 2003 national tests for Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and science was above average and in mathematics it was well above average. Based on

their prior attainment, the pupils' performance was well below in English; in line in mathematics; and below the national average in science.

7. The inspection findings indicate that standards in reading by Year 6 are above the national average, but below in writing. Achievement in writing is poor. Although standards in mathematics are well above average with more pupils attaining the higher level than in 2003, and achievement is satisfactory overall, there is evidence of a hard core of pupils underachieving, measured against their prior attainment. Standards by Year 6 in science are average and achievement is satisfactory.
8. In ICT, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is good. Their skills of control and data handling are particularly good. Achievement in RE is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected in accordance with the agreed syllabus. In geography and history, standards by Year 6 are broadly average. Achievement in swimming is very good and, by Year 6, the majority of pupils exceed the nationally expected distance of 25 metres, using well developed strokes and good breathing technique. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about standards in the other subjects, but it is evident that these subjects make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality at the school are **very good**. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are both **very good**. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to school are evidenced by very strong attendance and punctuality.
- Strong relationships and high expectations result in very high standards of behaviour.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of living in a multi-cultural society.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are very happy to come to school and are enthusiastic and positive about life in their school. Enjoyment of lessons, the wide range of enrichment activities and being with their friends were all reasons pupils gave for wanting to come to school and these result in very high attendance and punctuality which make a strong contribution to their achievement.
10. Good relationships, built upon high expectations, exist between all staff and pupils and this results in very good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and show respect for each other and their school. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are limited but Year 6 pupils are responsible for preparing the school hall for assembly, by ensuring equipment is ready and in place. Year 6 pupils volunteering to tend the school's memorial garden take their responsibilities very seriously, showing great care and pride in their work. Children in the Foundation Stage take initiative and make good gains in independence.

11. There are only limited opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity, which prevent pupils from having a greater awareness of other cultures' values and beliefs. The school has recently introduced initiatives to address this issue, such as the reception class celebrating Chinese New Year and visits to the school from a Chinese dance workshop, Greek Theatre Company and an Asian percussion group, but lessons do not routinely focus on opportunities to raise multi-cultural awareness amongst pupils.
12. Strong links with local pre-school providers ensure a smooth transition into nursery and reception classes, where expectations are high and children are helped to develop positive attitudes to school and behave well. Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to ensure that all children feel welcomed, safe and secure in school and, as a consequence, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides a **good** range of enrichment activities. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory**. The school has **satisfactory** systems for seeking the views of pupils. Links with parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. In the Foundation Stage, they are **good**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are deficiencies in the teaching of writing. Opportunities are too often missed to develop writing skills and expectations are too low.
- Pupils with SEN do not have specific number targets and this impedes their progress.
- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are exciting and fun.
- Too many teachers lack subject confidence in the teaching of religious education.
- Over time, the teaching of mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.
- The teaching of swimming is very good.
- Science teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (21%)	12 (33%)	14 (38%)	2 (8%)	0	0

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A significant proportion of teaching and learning is good, but there is a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This is not as good as that found at the time of the last inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be mostly good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory. In Year 2, teaching is good, but the class teacher has had to work very hard to make up for some of the deficiencies in teaching and learning that these pupils experienced last year, when they were in Year 1. Despite her commitment, she has not been able to make good sufficiently the gaps they had with their writing and in mathematics at the start of Year 2 and so achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory and in writing it is poor by Year 2. Lack of challenge in the teaching of writing has resulted in significant underachievement throughout the school. This weakness has been identified by the new headteacher and there is an urgent plan to address this deficiency.
14. The teaching and learning of pupils with SEN are satisfactory overall. For the most part, an effective working relationship and planning between teachers and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with SEN. However, breakdown in communication between teachers and assistants sometimes impedes the learning as evidenced in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. Poor communication between the co-ordinator for mathematics and the school's SENCO has left pupils in Year 2 operating at Level 1 and below, without specific number targets on their individual educational plans and this has adversely impacted on their achievement in this subject.
15. Because of consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage, which makes learning fun, children make good gains in their confidence and begin to develop speaking and listening, early reading and number skills well. Although the quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall, there are deficiencies in the teaching of writing. Pupils are not given a wide enough range of opportunities or purposes for writing. Teaching observed in mathematics during the inspection was satisfactory, but evidence suggests that, over time, teaching has been unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because pupils have not been set demanding targets and their progress over time has not been rigorously monitored. Teaching and learning in science are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The emphasis on practical activities and hands on investigations in Years 1 and 2 make learning exciting and fun.
16. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and a zappy pace as seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson for higher attaining pupils. In such lessons, a range of strategies is used effectively to motivate pupils to learn and the skills developed enable pupils to solve relevant problems. In these good lessons, behaviour is skilfully managed and so all pupils are fully included in the activities. In a Year 2 English lesson, challenging behaviour was so well managed that all pupils achieved the planned learning outcomes by the end of the lesson. Relationships between teachers and pupils are now for the most part good and contribute to good learning because pupils are confident to

take risks in a safe environment, as evidenced in a very good swimming lesson in a mixed Year 3 / 4 class.

17. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their speaking and listening, reading and ICT skills across a range of subjects. However, important opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills across subjects and this is a significant weakness in the teaching. There is not a co-ordinated approach to develop pupils' numeracy skills across subjects and where it happens at all, at present, it is on an ad hoc rather than planned basis. These deficiencies have an adverse impact on the development of pupils' writing and numeracy skills.
18. Where teaching is unsatisfactory and where otherwise satisfactory teaching has shortcomings, teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge, planning is weak and the pace of teaching is pedestrian. This was seen in a Year 5/6 lesson where the teacher was not confident in using the plan. Consequently, he floundered in his teaching, and the pupils' learning suffered as a result. Unsatisfactory teaching in writing is characterized by low expectations.
19. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Most pupils do not have individual targets in English and mathematics and this is a significant contributory factor to the underachievement of a significant proportion of pupils, particularly in writing. Although achievement in mathematics by Year 6 is satisfactory overall, those pupils who did not reach the standard expected of them measured against their starting point did not have targets to keep them on track along the way. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In the core subject of religious education, there is not a consistent approach to assessment and this contributes to the underachievement in the subject. The new headteacher recognizes that assessment is unsatisfactory and that it is a key priority to improve assessment as the means to raising standards throughout the school. The literacy needs of pupils with SEN are identified, but not their numeracy needs and this is a weakness which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory**, broad and balanced level of curriculum opportunities. There are **good** opportunities for the personal enrichment of pupils. Staffing, accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Opportunities provided for the pupils to actively participate in sport and other extra-curricular activities are good.
- Provision for the most able pupils does not always match their ability.
- The support staff in the Foundation Stage are well qualified and make a very good contribution to the teaching and learning of the children.
- The schools grounds are very good and there is a good-sized pool on site. Provision for swimming is very good.
- There are too few resources to support teaching and learning in religious education.

Commentary

20. The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teachers plan effectively from the Foundation Stage curriculum documents and use the assessment profile well to record what skills, knowledge and understanding each child has acquired throughout the year. There are good opportunities for children to explore all areas of learning, including the exploration of sand and water.
21. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory. They are identified as early as possible in their school life and action is taken after a settling in period. This early identification of special needs is aided by the close relationship between the school and the local support services. The individual education plans provided for the pupils are well maintained and used to inform classroom provision because of the identification of clear targets that are easy to understand and interpret. The individual plans are reviewed regularly and parents are kept informed about the progress of their children during parents' evenings or when they request an interview with their child's teacher. Outside agencies are used well and a well-qualified and experienced special needs support teacher provides very good guidance and help. Inspection evidence indicates that the individual education plans do not provide sufficient support for special needs pupils in numeracy and these pupils sometimes miss their regular class lessons due to being withdrawn for one-to-one or small group work. The school needs to review these arrangements to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum.
22. The curriculum is well planned and takes account of the mixed age classes so that there is no unnecessary repetition. All statutory requirements are met. However, the current planning does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils and this is leading to some under achievement, especially in English. Teachers use links between subjects well to help pupils learn. For example, pupils design, make and evaluate Greek masks in design and technology when studying Ancient Greece in history and use ICT to undertake research when studying the Tudors. The school extends the physical education curriculum by offering pupils swimming from an early age and this, along with a good range of extra-curricular activities, contributes to an effective curriculum for personal, social and health education.
23. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. A particularly important element in the school's provision is the close links with the local secondary school and the opportunities provided to undertake joint projects and a series of visits prior to transferring. This ensures that there are familiar faces and already established relationships with pupils at their new school.
24. The support staff in the Foundation Stage are well qualified. They have a very good understanding of the needs of this age group. As a result of this, they make a very positive contribution to the achievement of children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs. They work closely in partnership with the class teacher, making a very constructive contribution to the assessment of the children.
25. Resources in the school are adequate to support learning in nearly all subjects. In religious education, there is some shortfall. The lack of artefacts from other faiths makes it more difficult for the pupils to understand their importance. In ICT, some updating is now due. This is planned in detail for the near future. The school has exceptionally good fields for sport and a good swimming pool. As a result, all the pupils are able to take part in an

extensive swimming programme. This accounts, along with good teaching, for high achievement throughout the school in this aspect of physical education.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **satisfactory** care for its pupils. The school provides **satisfactory** guidance and support for pupils' learning and personal development and takes **satisfactory** care to ensure pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is vigilant in ensuring that pupils work in a safe and secure environment.
- There are good procedures in place for welcoming new pupils to the school.
- Not all staff are aware of the correct child protection procedures.
- The school council is beginning to demonstrate to pupils that their views are taken seriously by the school.

Commentary

26. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. Governors and staff take part in regular inspections and the school has procedures in place to respond to any concerns as they arise. Security and health and safety procedures and practices are closely monitored by the school and are regularly reviewed by the governing body, and initiatives, such as the installation of CCTV to monitor the playground areas, have enhanced provision. Lunchtime supervisory staff know the pupils well and are trained to take care of any first aid needs.
27. Several of the pupil questionnaires completed prior to the inspection implied that bullying might have been an issue at the school. The inspection team found no evidence of this during the inspection. Discussions with pupils showed that, although some felt bullying may have been a problem in the past, the provision of supervised games, footballs and playground games equipment has resulted in the very good behaviour that was seen at all times during the inspection.
28. Very good links with local pre-school providers provide many opportunities for children to visit the school before they join. These contribute to the good induction procedures for children joining both the nursery and reception classes, which enable them to quickly settle at the school and feel happy, safe and secure. The school has good arrangements in place for new pupils joining the school in other year groups. Great care is taken to match children up with appropriate networks of peers who act as buddies to new pupils and often they result in the development of strong friendships. Parents were very appreciative of the lengths that the school goes to in welcoming new children and ensuring that they quickly settle, are happy and able to continue their learning with as little disruption as possible.
29. Whilst the school's child protection policy is accessible to all, kept up to date and regularly reviewed by the teaching staff, induction procedures for new staff do not routinely ensure that everyone is fully aware of the correct child protection procedures. Informal structures and systems have served the school well until now, but all new staff should routinely receive induction training in key areas of child protection and health and safety.

30. The developing school council is valued by pupils in the school. Pupils can clearly demonstrate how their opinions have influenced what happens in school. Playground games equipment, supervised games and the redecoration and refurbishment of girls' and boys' toilets are strong indications to pupils that their voices are heard in the school. There are not yet clear mechanisms for ensuring that all pupils' views are heard, or for consistently ensuring that the whole school receives feedback on discussions and decisions made by the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and is well regarded by them. Links with the community and those with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school regularly and effectively communicates with parents.
- There are strong curriculum and transfer links with the local secondary school.
- Reports do not consistently provide parents or pupils with good quality information.

Commentary

31. The school works well in partnership with parents to support pupils' learning. Regular information is provided to parents on aspects of the curriculum and school life. The school provides a good range of opportunities for parents to come into the school and discuss their child's progress. The School in Action Day invites parents and other members of the community to visit the school and see it and the children working and playing. The school sends all books home each half term so that parents can look at the work and read the teachers' comments. Parents are then invited to comment on what they have seen. Reports to parents are detailed, but do not consistently contain satisfactory guidance or information on pupils' progress and the steps they need to take in order to improve their learning.
32. The new headteacher has consulted parents on a range of issues and the school continues to respond to the feedback it has received from them.
33. Discussions took place with many parents during the inspection and, whilst pre-inspection questionnaires and the parent's meeting may have suggested bullying is an issue in the school, all parents spoken to felt that where there had been incidents, as soon as the school had been made aware, appropriate action was taken and no recurrence had been reported.
34. The school has a strong partnership with the local secondary school, which has led to improved transition arrangements and enhanced curricular provision for Year 6 pupils. Curriculum sampling days for French and textile technology have become regular and exciting features of school life for Year 6 pupils. The school has secured grants to fund transport to the school in Stafford so that science investigations day, history field trips and similar projects can take place at no cost to parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. Governance, although now satisfactory, has significant deficiencies. The capacity for improvement is at least satisfactory as a result of very recent changes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of whole school assessment is unsatisfactory.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is unsatisfactory.
- Communication between the school's special educational needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for mathematics is ineffective and this has resulted in underachievement for some pupils.
- Governors do not meet statutory responsibilities in respect of important race and disability legislation.
- The recently introduced self-evaluation of governance has led to action plans to bring about improvements.
- The lack of a management system for curriculum planning between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has resulted in underachievement.
- Performance management is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

35. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Governance, although satisfactory, has significant deficiencies. However, the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher is good, but he requires a firm mandate to move the school forward and to bring about the improvements required. The newly appointed chair of governors, through a recently initiated self-evaluation of governance, has recognised a number of the significant deficiencies and there are now robust action plans to address them. The headteacher, who has already identified most of the weaknesses found by the inspection team, working in partnership with the governors and with the committed support from the local education authority, has at least a satisfactory capacity to bring about improvement.
36. The headteacher took up post following a lengthy period of sickness by his predecessor and was the third headteacher in a space of four years. In the words of the new chair of governors: 'much fell through a hole during this period of turbulence'. The headteacher started in a situation where key staff felt low about their capabilities. Although he has made a good start to bring about improvements, he has had to tackle a number of barriers to bring about change. In reviewing the school's aims, he recognises with hindsight that it was a mistake not to involve the pupils and parents and recognises now the importance of bringing all stakeholders on board in respect of clarity of vision and sense of purpose for the school. Because of low morale and in some cases an unmanageable workload, the leadership of other key staff is unsatisfactory. It is now recognised that the first priority must be about ensuring that members of the senior management team are clear about their roles and responsibilities, begin to believe in their capability, and have the confidence to manage change to raise standards of achievement.
37. Management is unsatisfactory. Through his self-evaluation, the headteacher has recognised that there is a lack of robust management systems to bring about change. There are plans to manage change, carefully outlined in a satisfactory school improvement plan, but they have not had sufficient time to bring about improvement and the pace of change has been too slow. The headteacher requires urgent support to manage the improvements he has recognised as being so necessary in the school. The

lack of a systematic approach to the management of the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 curriculum has contributed to the underachievement of the highest attainers. There are significant weaknesses in the role of subject co-ordinators. There is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the co-ordinators for mathematics and religious education, and there is evidence of significant underachievement in both subjects. There is not a robust assessment system for setting individual pupils targets and for monitoring their progress over time and so a proportion of pupils under-perform. Communication and partnership between key managers are sometimes poor. A lack of effective communication between the mathematics co-ordinator and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator has resulted in a proportion of pupils with special educational needs not having important and specific number targets on their individual education plans. Only very recently has the school had to manage some pupils with very complex special educational needs and consideration of the use of a suitable assessment procedure to demonstrate small stepped progress is not yet part of the school's culture.

38. Financial planning is satisfactory. The headteacher has skilfully managed a falling roll situation and has successfully got the budget under control. He has been ably supported by the chair of finance. The teaching force is long-standing and so is, of course, very costly and after staff costs, there is little funding left to support improvements. However, the school has not engaged in any kind of benchmarking / cost analysis type exercise against similar schools. It knows that its resources to support religious education are poor but it has not seen how it can develop these whilst having to make cuts.

39. Governance is satisfactory, but there are significant deficiencies. However, as the result of the self-evaluation programme put in place very recently by the governors, the statutory infringements in respect of important race and disability legislation have been identified and there are immediate plans to bring about change and ensure that they meet their statutory responsibilities. They recognise their need to support and challenge the school and are putting in place systems to hold senior and middle managers to account. The inspection ran ahead of some very significant changes. Nevertheless, the inspection team judged that there is satisfactory capacity for improvement.

40. Performance management is unsatisfactory. The headteacher took up post after teachers' targets had been set for a whole year. At present, performance management is not sufficiently linked to pupils' progress and the headteacher has a detailed plan to bring about significant changes to the process of setting new targets for teachers. The induction of new staff in the recent past has been a weakness. At the end of her first year of teaching, for example, a teacher was given a new class with insufficient information about the pupils' prior attainment or about what had gone on with them in the previous year. This sapped her morale and the headteacher is determined that systems are put in place to ensure that this never happens again. Continued professional development is not yet securely linked to performance management and this is unsatisfactory. Issues such as the lack of confidence in teaching religious education and the use of ICT to support teaching across the range of subjects remain to be addressed.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	789,425
Total expenditure	774,420
Expenditure per pupil	2,933

Balance from previous year	34,415
Balance carried forward to the next	49,420

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** because teaching is a strength, as are leadership and management. As a result, children achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all of the children will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning and most will be working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Provision has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage is well organised and there is a clear focus on providing interesting and stimulating activities that engage the children's interest and motivate them well. Class teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together. Teaching assistants are very well qualified and they use their very good knowledge of children of this age to good effect. Good leadership and management and the commitment of the Foundation Stage team has meant that this part of the school has continued to develop and improve. Assessments are used directly to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with SEN.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because the good teaching and learning enable them to use their initiative and encourage them to think for themselves.
- Very good relationships between children and adults create a safe and productive atmosphere where they have high expectations of the pupils.

Commentary

41. This area of learning is always incorporated into all activities in the Foundation Stage through good planning. For example, in the pre-reception, well read stories engage the children's interest and in responding, the children understand they must take turns and listen to what the others say. They make good progress and, even when they are very excited, behave well and listen to what their teachers are saying. Staff take every opportunity to build the children's self-confidence. In the reception class and mixed reception and Year 1 class, the children can concentrate for good periods of time. They know what is expected of them and want to do well. They are considerate of each other, for example, making sure that there is room for a child to join their group or by passing paints when another asks. The factor that is making the biggest contribution to this area is the good quality of teaching. Staff share a common understanding of how young children learn effectively, so they have planned a very good range of activities, which lead to sustained interest and concentration from the children and a strong desire to learn. Attainment in this area of learning exceeds that expected of children of this age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because teachers have high expectations.
- The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully adapted for this age group.
- Phonics are taught well by all staff.
- Every opportunity is seized upon to enhance children's communication skills.

Commentary

42. The staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills, which are weak when they start school. A good example of this was the conversation that took place between a teaching assistant and children painting aliens following a well-read story. This encouraged the children to think imaginatively, extended by the teaching assistant's thoughtful responses. This allowed the children to lead the dialogue most productively. As a result of this, the children achieve well and, by the time they reach Year 1, their skills in communication, language and literacy are above average. The children are taught to listen to one another as soon as they start school. A good example of this is in the pre-reception class where short, very well read stories enable the children to concentrate intensely for short periods, so learning effective classroom routines. This is reinforced in many activities throughout the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining children in the pre-reception class write their own names and most are making marks in their free writing. Stories, games and activities are carefully planned so that the children learn letter sounds in a structured way. In the reception class and the mixed reception / Year 1 class, the National Literacy Strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of the children, including those with special educational needs. Lessons are well planned and work is carefully matched to the children. In particular, the attention given to this is detailed and very good use is made of the teaching assistant to make sure that this works well in practice. Throughout the Foundation Stage, phonics are taught consistently well with all teachers following a common format. Many children are already reading simple stories and a good number of parents take an interest in helping their children with reading at home. Because of the good teaching and learning, achievement is good and most children exceed expectations in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully adapted for these children.
- Teaching is good and involves the children throughout the lesson.
- Mental warm-up activities are well taught. The children find these enjoyable.

Commentary

43. Work is well planned, closely matched to all the children's needs, and ensures that children have a secure foundation on which they can build as they grow older. Most will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time that they start in Year 1. They are achieving well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planned activities encourage children to use mathematical language confidently throughout the session. When working with a whole class, teachers are skilled at asking challenging questions that are different for different groups of children. This was particularly effective in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. This accounts for the good quality of provision for different groups of children. Good use is made of the time available for lessons and none is wasted. Class teachers make use of a range of methods to make sure that the children are thinking mathematically throughout the lesson. The most successful teaching involved children using individual whiteboards to record their answers and show them to the teacher. The class teacher used the results to assess the children's understanding and, as a result,

modify the subsequent work. Opportunities to use mathematics skills in other areas of learning are used whenever possible, taking opportunities to count or discuss order. The children thoroughly enjoy mathematics. A very good example of this was the tremendous enthusiasm with which the children in the reception class successfully set about using balances to determine the relative weight of different objects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Teaching is good and provides children with a good range of opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Staff make good use of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good and help to ensure that all children achieve well. Children exceed the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. They are provided with many opportunities to learn about the world around them. They have been carrying out simple science investigations to find out what daffodils need to grow. The illustrations they have drawn have been simply annotated and they can explain in simple terms what they need to do to keep plants alive. They use simple computer programs, for example, games where they must click and drag on room furniture to make a room tidy. They move the mouse confidently. They have also studied the differences between things that are old and compared them with newer versions. This was successfully done with bicycles. Many of the drawings they did are accurate and again labelled clearly. The imaginative play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and to stimulate discussion and collaboration. In religious education, the children celebrate many of the important festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. No sessions were observed, so no judgements can be made about teaching or the overall provision in this area of learning. However, evidence indicates that most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are at least at the expected levels. This is because staff notice when this is being done incorrectly and correct it. In particular, in the pre-reception class, good attention is paid to this area. An outdoor area has now been created, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. This is well resourced with outside equipment, such as tricycles and building blocks.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good because the children are provided with a good balance of adult and child initiated activities.
- Opportunities for imaginative play are well planned.

Commentary

46. Staff plan a good range of stimulating activities. Many of these activities are linked with stories that children have heard as part of their mathematical or communication,

language and literacy work. This works very well and accounts for the enthusiasm with which they involve themselves. A very good example of this was seen in the Bear Hunt carried out by reception class children in the outdoor area. The class teacher took every opportunity to enable the children to use their imagination, taking different roles and often following their play rather than leading it. Children painting aliens, or making some out of play dough, similarly benefited from sensitive leadership by the teaching assistant. These activities allowed the children to give full expression to their lively imaginations, whilst the adults made the most of the opportunities that presented themselves. These activities made a very good contribution to the children's personal development. Most will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. There are also opportunities for imaginative play in the classroom through small book bags and in role play areas, such as Travel Agents. The children also take part in planned music making sessions with adults. They enjoy this area of the curriculum very much.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school develops the speaking and listening skills of its pupils well.
- The reading skills of the pupils are above average.
- There is no effective system for target setting or the tracking of individual pupil progress.
- Standard in writing are below average and achievement is poor.

Commentary

47. The 2003 test results in reading were well above the national average, and in writing above the national average for pupils in Year 2. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening and in reading, but below average in writing. These lower results reflect to a degree the higher proportion of pupils with SEN than usual in the current Year 2 group and also the larger than normal number of pupils who joined the school late during Key Stage 1. However, deficiencies in teaching when these pupils were in Year 1 and limited opportunities to develop their writing skills across subjects are also contributory factors to these lower standards. The pupils in Year 6 in 2003 attained above average standards in the national tests for English, but measured against their prior attainment, standards were well below the national average. The 2004 results are similar overall, but there is a decline in the percentage reaching the higher levels in reading and writing. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but there are deficiencies in the teaching of writing. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall, achievement is satisfactory in English. Achievement throughout the school in speaking and listening and reading is satisfactory. Achievement is poor in writing as pupils in the current Year 6, entered with average attainment in writing, attained above average by Year 2 but have failed to maintain this level of improvement to the end of Year 6. The school provides a satisfactory level of support for pupils with SEN and currently they achieve satisfactorily.
48. The speaking and listening skills are above average. Most teachers use a good range of questions during lessons, including questions requiring pupils to come up with the correct

answer, and some probing questions that require them to think and explain or give their opinions. This is very effective in leading and developing pupils' understanding and learning. Pupils have a good variety of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, such as when they work in pairs or groups, and when they report back at the end of lessons. Year 6 pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills that demonstrate their good levels of vocabulary and their confidence. They are well able to listen attentively, ask questions to develop their ideas, and adapt their speech to the purpose and context.

49. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards in reading that are above those expected nationally. By the time they leave the school, pupils read fluently and with obvious enjoyment. All those spoken with said they enjoyed reading and enjoyed the guided reading period at the beginning of each day. They are able to discuss books and know about their favourite authors. They understand how to use glossaries, indexes and contents pages to find information. The school provides a good range of fiction, and the non-fiction section of the library is well set out and books are easily accessible. However, during the inspection, very little evidence was seen of pupils using the library.
50. Attainment in writing is below average this year in Year 2, but has been above average in recent years. The current Year 2 group includes a higher than usual percentage of pupils with SEN and a number of pupils who joined the school in Year 2. The group also experienced an unsettled year in Year 1. In Year 6, the standard is also below that expected nationally and the percentage reaching the higher level is very low. From the lessons observed, and the scrutiny of pupils' work, it is clear that pupils are not presented with a wide enough range of opportunities or purposes for writing. There is no clear development of the skills of writing and insufficient coverage of the range of different types of writing. The low standard in Year 6 is also linked to a lack of formal systems for setting targets for individual pupils and systematically monitoring their progress from year to year to ensure that there is sufficient achievement. Teachers in most classes do not expect, or demand enough of pupils when it comes to writing activities and, as a result, pupils are producing work that is below that of which they are capable.
51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is aware of the need to review the methods by which the results of the assessment of pupils' work are recorded and the need for an easily accessible method of tracking their progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Pupils' language and literacy skills are used well to support work in other areas of the curriculum. Their well developed speaking and listening skills allow them to participate in class and group discussions and drama, and this has an impact on their personal development. The school council is also beginning to have an impact on the work and life of the school and this is due to pupils' good communication skills. Reading is widely used for enjoyment and fact-finding, including researching topics through ICT. Opportunities for writing are limited and need to be developed further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement by Year 2 is unsatisfactory and standards of attainment are below the national average.
- Attainment by Year 6 is well above the national average.
- Although achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory overall, a significant proportion of pupils in Year 6 have underachieved as they have moved through the key stage.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of provision for pupils with SEN.
- Monitoring of progress over time is weak.
- When teaching is good pupils enjoy the subject.
- The co-ordination of the subject is poor.
- There is not a co-ordinated approach to developing mathematical skills across subjects.

Commentary

53. On the basis of the 2003 national test results, pupils' attainment is well above the national average by Year 2 and also well above the national average in comparison with similar schools. Test results for the current Year 2 in 2004 are very significantly worse than the pleasing outcomes in 2003. For the pupils in Year 6, in 2003, test results were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. This reflects the test results for the current Year 6 in 2004, but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level has increased.
54. Attainment for the current Year 2 is below the national average. Throughout Year 1, achievement was unsatisfactory for this group of pupils. Although most of these pupils have made satisfactory gains in their learning in Year 2, they have not made up sufficient lost ground to reach the nationally expected standard for seven-year-olds. This finding is supported by the unvalidated national test results for seven-year-olds in 2004 which are very significantly worse than in 2003. Although the proportion of pupils with SEN and the fact that a number of pupils in the current Year 2 joined the school after the usual age of entry are contributory factors to these significantly lower results, poor management is also a factor. The Year 2 teacher, new to this class at the beginning of the current year, did not know what the entry attainment at the beginning of Year 1 was for these pupils and the quality of teaching and learning has not been monitored by the co-ordinator throughout the key stage. Liaison between the co-ordinator and the SENCO has not been robust over the pupils functioning at Level 1 and below in this year group. They do not have mathematical targets on their individual educational plans and the school does not measure the small stepped progress made by the pupil operating below Level 1. However, the current Year 1 pupils are operating above the level expected for their age, but they do not have targets against which to measure their progress.
55. Although achievement for the current Year 6 is satisfactory overall, there is evidence that a significant proportion of pupils in this year group have underachieved when measured against their starting point in mathematics when they entered Year 3. None of the pupils in this year group have individual mathematical targets to aspire to. Overall though, attainment by Year 6 is well above the national average, with more pupils operating at Level 5 than was the case in the national tests in 2003. These findings are supported by the unvalidated test results for eleven-year-olds in 2004.
56. Too many pupils in Year 2 are not confident at solving number problems and yet they do not have specific targets to help them improve. Higher attaining pupils make accurate paper calculations and explain their methods of working out solutions. Too little use is made of computers to support their development of data handling skills. Work analysis

indicates that, throughout Year 2, pupils' achievement has been satisfactory in their understanding of shape, space and measure and they have developed important life skills, such as telling the time and understanding how a compass is used. However, many are not at the standard expected nationally because of deficiencies in the mathematical provision for them in Year 1. By Year 6, the majority of pupils have an above average grasp of number and place value. Their calculations are carried out quickly and they enjoy unravelling problems and finding the correct mathematical operation with which to solve them. However, a significant proportion of pupils have underachieved throughout the key stage and they have not been challenged along the way.

57. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection is satisfactory. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. However, evidence suggests that, over time, teaching has been unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because pupils have not been set challenging targets and their progress has not been monitored. This unsatisfactory teaching has resulted in underachievement in mathematics in the current Year 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. The best teaching, based on good subject knowledge and characterised by cracking pace and high expectations, results in good achievement in lessons. In these lessons, learning is fun and exciting and pupils use and apply mathematical skills to everyday situations. Where teaching has shortcomings, planning between the teacher and the teaching assistant is weak and it is not clear how pupils with special educational needs should be supported. In the worse lessons, pupils are asked to try a new method without having experienced a demonstration from the teacher and, consequently, they flounder and, as the pace drops, very little learning takes place.
58. For the reasons outlined above, the leadership and management of the subject are poor. The co-ordinator is a talented mathematician and has now recognised the importance of developing his role as a co-ordinator and of setting targets for all pupils. Despite the fact that he has not been fulfilling what is expected of a subject co-ordinator, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory because he recognises the deficiencies and has the qualities to address them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. There is not a co-ordinated plan for mathematics across the curriculum and this is unsatisfactory. At the moment, it happens on an ad hoc basis. There is some data handling work in science and there is some work on distance and direction in geography. Many opportunities to develop mathematical skills across subjects are currently missed and, as a result, pupils' skills in using mathematics in other relevant areas are underdeveloped.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are above average.
- Too little attention is given to scientific enquiry in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment of what pupils know, can do or understand in science is unsatisfactory overall.

Commentary

60. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and are average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Achievement by Year 6 is only satisfactory because, when this group of pupils entered Year 3, their attainment was average. The emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to above average standards by Year 2. This aspect of provision has improved since the last inspection. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils had to decide on their own criteria to sort different sorts of animals. Some groups encountered further difficulty when deciding that some criteria they were using such as 'big animal' were imprecise, as a donkey was big compared to a mouse but not compared to a whale. Most pupils realised that they had to use more precisely observable characteristics to sort the animals into groups. In Year 6, pupils were studying the effects of acid rain and gained a satisfactory understanding of this phenomenon. However, many could have done better because insufficient attention was paid to scientific enquiry and the opportunity to extend and deepen their understanding was missed since they were not encouraged to find out more or to question what they already knew.
61. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The attention given to investigative science is better in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6 and accounts for the difference in the pupils' performance. In Years 1 and 2, lessons have very clear objectives, communicated to the pupils, and they are reflected on at the end of the lesson. The clarity of this focus enables the pupils to concentrate totally on what the point of each lesson is meant to be. As a result, they understand why they are doing the work. In these lessons, work is well matched to different groups of pupils. This is why all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is not as clearly focused on investigative science and the pursuit of objectives is less rigorous. Nevertheless, some challenging work was seen. For example, in a Year 3/4 class studying what plants need in order to grow, the pupils made predictions about what would happen and made observations of the results. Although they discussed what they were measuring, most did not understand the significance of controlling variables or the impact that this could have on the results. The resources for this investigation, however, were very good and well prepared by the class teacher.
62. Although satisfactory arrangements exist for the assessment of pupils, these are not being applied consistently. For example, assessment sheets produced by the school are not being completed and passed onto the next teacher. As a result, pupils do not know what they must do to improve and do not have targets with which they are familiar.
63. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has not been able to monitor any lessons during the year. Long-term sickness amongst other staff has necessitated her deployment in the school as a class teacher instead of being the specialist science teacher in the school. This has meant that science has been taught in Year 5/6 by class teachers for the first time. This transition has been managed well and standards from previous years have been maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT curriculum contains all elements of the required curriculum. Data handling and control are being taught well. Skills are being taught systematically.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff use interactive whiteboards very well.
- Effective use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is now planned systematically.
- Despite the long-term absence of the co-ordinator, the school has made sure that shortcomings identified in the previous inspection have been dealt with efficiently.

Commentary

64. Attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement because of the low starting point in the subject for both of these groups of pupils. The significant improvements in ICT are recent and have had a noticeable impact on raising standards. Pupils throughout the school have a satisfactory range of ICT skills. They are developing a good understanding of control and data handling in particular. A group of Year 2 pupils, for example, were able to control a floor robot very well. They understood that they had to program it, using the correct sequence of inputs and knew that they had to make accurate estimates of the distance set to travel. They enjoyed this activity tremendously. They wanted to be accurate and precise in their instructions. In other aspects of the subject, they are becoming confident. They alter the appearance of their work, changing the size of the font or the colour and know how to save, with some prompting, their work in their own work folder. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils using a data base created by a parent realised that they had to be very precise in the questions they asked to get the information they wanted. These pupils have also completed simple Power Point presentations that include short animations. They understand how to use this application well.
65. Achievement in ICT is good because teaching and learning are good overall, although some very good teaching was seen in Year 2. Here, the lesson was very well introduced and made sure that pupils understood the importance of accuracy when programming a floor robot. The class teacher had invented a saying to help pupils remember that they must clear the memory before starting. As a result, throughout the lesson, pupils could be heard saying, 'history roamer, high' as they pressed the correct buttons to clear the memory. The lesson was set in the dining hall with large sheets of paper on the floor, with routes marked up. This captured the pupils' interest right from the start so they listened intently. The pupils were engrossed in the introduction because they knew that they would participate in small groups later. During this, the teaching assistant worked very effectively with two pupils with special educational needs. These pupils achieved well because the task was well adapted to their needs. This enabled them to make progress on the same clearly identified objectives as the rest of the class. Staff use interactive whiteboards well to support learning in a range of subjects. Good examples of this were seen in science, geography and literacy lessons.
66. Despite the long-term sickness of the co-ordinator, the school has made sure that ICT provision has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and mathematics co-ordinator have led and managed this well. They have ensured that all aspects of ICT skills are now taught throughout the school by establishing a good scheme of work. As a result, previously weak areas, such as data handling and control, are now starting to emerge as strengths. Good progress has also been made in systematically planning the use of ICT to support other subject areas. This work is helping staff to realise good links with other subject areas.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Systematic planning of opportunity to use ICT is now in place. As a result, pupils are beginning to use this resource efficiently to support their learning in other subjects. Good examples to date include using the Internet as a research tool in a history project on the Tudors and using a geography database to produce graphical data about country populations or to produce a short Power Point presentation comparing localities. A wide variety of work on display shows that the pupils also use different art applications. Good examples of this were seen throughout the school. Similarly, pupils use word-processing skills in English to write stories, although more use could be made of computers to draft and improve their work.

HUMANITIES

68. **Religious education** was inspected in depth. Insufficient evidence was collected to make secure judgements about provision in **geography** and **history**. From the evidence gathered, through looking at pupils' work and the school's planning, there are indications that standards are broadly in line with expected levels in **history**. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, although the subject has suffered from lack of leadership. The school now has a plan to address this. There are good links with other subjects, in particular, with literacy, design and technology and with ICT. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 design and make Greek masks, Victorian carriages and peg dolls and Viking purses and brooches. Pupils in Year 5 make Tudor houses as part of their study into life in Tudor times. The main areas for improvement are in developing a sense of chronology, as this is not apparent at present in the work of either key stage, and in further emphasis on development of the skills of history. One lesson was observed in **geography**. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall, but there was insufficient challenge for higher attainers. Evidence from analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly in line with national expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. However, improvements in leadership and management of geography since the last inspection have been unsatisfactory. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to research information for themselves, the co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning and assessment remains weak.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement by Year 6 is unsatisfactory and attainment falls short of the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Leadership and management are poor.
- There is not a detailed scheme of work.
- Not all teachers have ownership of their lesson plans and so lack confidence about teaching the subject. Consequently, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is lacking.
- Assessment is inconsistent.
- The subject does not do enough to raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
- Resources are insufficient and inadequate.

Commentary

69. There is no detailed scheme of work to ensure that the locally agreed syllabus is delivered. Not all teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. They have not received training in the subject. Resources are unsatisfactory. There has not been an audit to determine what is needed to teach the subject. The subject co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Currently, each teacher has his / her own form of assessment and there is no consistency across the school. The school's self-evaluation has identified significant weaknesses in the subject but has been too slow in managing change to bring about improvement. Barriers to improvement include the excessive workload of the co-ordinator and the sickness of a key person involved in developing the subject.
70. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Only three lessons could be observed because of the way the subject is timetabled. In the Year reception / 1 lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was barely satisfactory. Teaching in the Year 3 / 4 lesson was satisfactory. In the Year 5 / 6 lesson, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. In the Year Reception / 1 lesson, neither the teacher nor the teaching assistant got down amongst the pupils on the carpet whilst they were discussing their ideas in pairs, and so missed a number of very valuable ideas that they shared with each other. Although the teacher attempted to gather the ideas generated by the pupils, only the more confident pupils spoke out and so a number of gems were missed. The pace dropped when the pupils were given a worksheet because a number did not understand what it was they had to do. Although satisfactory overall, learning in the Year 3 / 4 lesson about Creation Stories was impeded by the fact that the teacher did not have artefacts and picture cues to bring her teaching alive. In the unsatisfactory lesson in Year 5 / 6, the pace was pedestrian, the teacher had no ownership of the plan he had been given and his subject knowledge was poor. These weak factors resulted in the achievement not being as good as it could have been and, although bored, the pupils did their very best to gain something out of the lesson.
71. Insufficient evidence could be gathered to make a secure judgement on achievement by Year 2. The attainment of the few Year 2 pupils interviewed met the expectations of the local agreed syllabus for 7-year-olds but this is insufficient evidence on which to base an overall secure attainment judgement by Year 2. There was not enough work in their books to make a secure attainment judgement. Achievement by Year 6 is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected by age 11 in accordance with expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. Year 6 pupils are muddled in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Sikhism and Islam. A very significant weakness is that they have not connected with the fact that the United Kingdom is a pluralist society. One Year 6 pupil came out with a gem, 'We learn about Muslims so that we can respect them', but then went on to say, 'so that we can respect them if ever we went to their country!'
72. Overall, the provision for religious education and standards attained are very significantly worse than at the time of the previous inspection. It is very important that the emerging planning ensures that the requirements of the local agreed syllabus are fully covered. It is equally important that the co-ordinator has quality time to fulfil her vision of what has to be done to make the subject relevant and interesting for the pupils. It is recognised that there is considerable good will and intent to bring about improvement and that there is a documented plan to bring about the required improvements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

73. No lessons of **art and design** could be seen, but evidence of pupils' work was studied, discussions held with the co-ordinator and schemes of work were examined. It is not possible to make secure judgements about standards, teaching or learning. Nevertheless, the quality of display throughout the school is good. The pupils' work is very well presented and demonstrates that they make good progress in developing a good range of skills, especially in drawing and painting. In particular, the portrait work in the school is good. A good example of the way in which the pupils have successfully used their skills to explore the world around them was seen in a Year 3 and 4 class, where they had produced some finely observed landscapes. Later in the term, the same pupils, using a different medium, charcoal, have produced revealing portraits of each other. All this work shows care and sensitivity in its execution. A strong feature of all the work seen was the very individual nature of each pupil's response to the idea or starting point of the lesson. Leadership in the subject has been effective in enabling class teachers to develop the pupils' skills and to interpret the scheme of work imaginatively. Overall, this subject makes a good contribution to the life of the school and to the pupils' personal development. It allows the pupils to reflect sensitively on the world they live in.

Design and technology

74. **Design and technology** was only sampled during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make a secure statement about the adequacy of provision. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school shows that design and technology work is being carried out. There is an up-to-date policy and scheme of work, and the subject leader monitors planning and undertakes evaluations of completed projects. The scrutiny shows that a range of topics is covered, often linked to work in history, and that pupils have experiences of designing, making and evaluating their finished products. For example, pupils in Year 1 have designed and made Mothers' Day and Easter cards, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 have studied food technology, including making pancakes and Easter cakes, as well as designing and making sandwiches. Pupils in Year 4 have made Victorian carriages and peg dolls, Greek masks and Viking ships. In Year 6, pupils have been given opportunities to design, make and evaluate a slipper and a musical instrument.

Music

75. No lessons of **music** could be seen and, as a result, it is not possible to make secure judgements about standards, teaching or learning. However, evidence of pupils' work was studied, discussions were held with the co-ordinator and schemes of work were examined. There are many examples where music enriches the curriculum, for example, in concerts, performances and outside visits with the community and local festivals. During the inspection, two pupils played their brass instruments in assembly. They were confident and tuneful and added to the positive ethos of a celebratory assembly. Many pupils participate in the peripatetic music programme, supported effectively by the local education authority. Instruments learned include flute, clarinet, guitar and various brass instruments. Overall, these activities make a good contribution to the life of the school and to the pupils' personal development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards in swimming are well above average and achievement is very good.
- The facilities available for physical education are very good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and employ strategies and tactics in games, and to evaluate their own and others' performances.
- The skills of throwing and catching are under-developed.

Commentary

76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some examples of very good teaching. As a result, standards attained by Years 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally, except in swimming, where standards are well above average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teachers' subject knowledge, their management of the class, their understanding of the health and safety implications of their work and effective planning are all significant factors in helping pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their work.
77. In a very good swimming lesson in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class, the specialist swimming teacher led the group through a range of activities in the water that were fun for the pupils as well as being challenging and developmental. During the lesson, all the pupils managed to swim a number of widths of the pool with good arm, leg and breathing technique and acquired a good understanding of basic survival in water. The teacher used clear instructions, mixed with humour, to good effect and gave continuous support and coaching to individuals in order that they all might make good progress. As a result, all pupils achieved well, with some achieving very well. The standards seen in a Year 2 lesson were also well above expectation for pupils of that age.
78. In the games lessons seen, teachers demonstrated the skills of throwing and catching very effectively, but pupils were not given sufficient time to practise the skills or to undertake an evaluation of their performances before going into a games situation. As a result, the standard of throwing and catching in the game was low and pupils did not make clear connections between the skills section of the lesson and the game itself. There is also a need to provide pupils with more opportunities to plan and employ tactics and strategies in games situations. This was a weakness in the lessons seen.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and works hard to develop the subject in all its aspects. At the time of the previous inspection, he used to teach all physical education lessons to junior classes and this had contributed to the high standards seen at that time. This is no longer the case and, as a result, the overall standard has fallen but is still satisfactory. He still produces all the planning and ensures that the curriculum is well organised with a clear balance of time to ensure coverage of the units of work. However, he does not have sufficient opportunity to monitor standards in other classes. The range and quality of equipment available to teachers and pupils are good and the accommodation, including a large hall, swimming pool and large field, is used effectively to provide a wide range of sporting opportunities, both in and out of school hours.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. Work in this area was sampled, so it was not possible to make judgements about teaching, learning and standards. However, an examination of the school timetables and discussions with pupils and key staff show that this area is planned, and a structured programme is in place. Every class has a dedicated personal, social and health education lesson each week that is used to follow a planned curriculum. Aspects like healthy living and sex and relationships education are approached in a sensitive way and a recently established school council is beginning to make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Each class in Years 1 to 6 elects councillors to represent them and this group elects their own chair and vice chair. The council meets regularly and has regular meetings with the headteacher. Good use is made of visits and visitors to help develop pupils' understanding of citizenship. Recent visitors to the school included an Asian percussion group, a Greek theatre company and a Chinese dance group. The evidence from a range of lesson observations in other subjects, and discussions with pupils, indicates that teachers are not making the most of opportunities to give pupils responsibility in class or to take on greater ownership of their learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
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	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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