

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS BARNES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tamworth, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124087

Headteacher: Mr P Ralley

Lead inspector: Mrs Elisabeth de Lancey

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 December 2003

Inspection number: 258181

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	82
School address:	School Lane Hopwas Tamworth Staffordshire
Postcode:	B78 3AD
Telephone number:	01827 475683
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Colin Beeson
Date of previous inspection:	16 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thomas Barnes Primary School is a rural smaller than average school for pupils from the ages of four to eleven. There were 82 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. They are taught in three classes. The school serves the village of Hopwas but some pupils come from further afield. At present it is over-subscribed. The school draws on an area where the socio-economic circumstances are relatively favourable and pupils' attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year. It is average overall. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. Almost all pupils are from white English speaking families. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups and none is at an early stage of learning English. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mostly for moderate learning difficulties, and three have a statement of special educational need.

The school gained Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2003 for its good performance in the National tests at the end of Year 6. A notable feature of the school is its membership of the 'North South Network', which comprises 12 small schools in Staffordshire. This is a three-year project that is funded by the DfEE and focuses on collaboration between schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22272	Elisabeth de Lancey	Lead inspector	Art and design Geography English History Music Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
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21100	Alan Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design technology Physical education English as an additional language Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Pupils make a very good start in the reception class. Most pupils make good progress and, by the time they leave the school, they attain standards that are better than those expected for their age. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. The school is soundly led and managed. Although, in common with most small schools, costs are relatively high the school offers **satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The provision for children in the reception class is very good.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support.
- The school's curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' creative and aesthetic development.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good and there are examples of very good teaching.
- ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum.
- Not enough pupils reach a higher than average level of attainment in writing.
- Subject leadership and the monitoring and evaluation of school development planning are unsatisfactory.
- Some teaching in a few lessons in Years 2 and 3 does not consistently expect enough of all pupils.
- Consultation with and information for parents are unsatisfactory.
- The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Since the school was last inspected in March 1998, improvement has been satisfactory. Most of the key issues from the last report have been addressed satisfactorily, with the exception of the effectiveness of the governors' role in strategic planning and evaluation of the school's work. The co-ordination for the provision for pupils with special educational needs is now satisfactory. The school now meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Health and safety issues have been attended to. Standards of writing have improved but are still not as high as they should be. Teaching and learning are better and standards in mathematics have improved, particularly for the older pupils. In science, too, standards are higher than those reported at the time of the last inspection. A significant investment in ICT resources and training has raised pupils' achievement in the subject.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

In 2003 pupils achieved very well in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics and science. Overall standards in English were not as high because writing standards did not match the high standards in reading. The number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests is small and there are wide variations in the test results between years. Currently, most pupils in Years 3 to 6 are working at above average standards in reading, mathematics and science, and make good

progress. In writing, their work is average and their progress is satisfactory. Most children in the reception year make good progress along the stepping stones and are likely to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning¹ and some exceed them. A small minority of pupils in Years 2 and 3 do not achieve the standards of which they are capable because teaching does not always demand enough of them. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because they receive good support.

The school encourages pupils' personal qualities well, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school promotes pupils' sense of community well and the school council is beginning to make a positive contribution to this aspect of the school's work. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and form positive relationships with one another. Their behaviour is good. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This is because **teaching overall is good** and pupils learn well. Teaching in the reception class is very good. Not enough teaching in Years 2 and 3 is of a sufficiently high quality to raise all pupils' achievement. All staff foster very good relationships with their pupils, and those who are new to the school settle in very quickly. Pupils practise their numeracy and ICT skills well in other subjects but their application of literacy skills is often weak. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to plan suitable work and set targets for individual pupils. The school plans a broad curriculum and there are good opportunities for pupils' aesthetic and creative development. A good programme of additional activities extends pupils' learning opportunities. The accommodation is restricted in some areas, but the school makes best use of it. Resources for ICT are good and those for other subjects are satisfactory. The school provides sound care for its pupils and monitors their progress satisfactorily.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has made a distinctive contribution to pupils' learning through his joint leadership of the North South Network, a group of rural schools who have joined together to broaden pupils' learning experiences. Provision for special educational needs is soundly led. Subject management is unsatisfactory and not based on secure monitoring and evaluation. There are weaknesses in development planning. Governors support the school well but their involvement in monitoring and long-term planning is unsatisfactory. The role of the governors is unsatisfactory. It has not improved since the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are pleased with most aspects of the school. A significant minority of parents would like greater involvement in the work of the school, better information about their children's progress, and they would like to be consulted about their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards further in writing and ensure that pupils use their writing skills well in other subjects;
- increase the role of monitoring, particularly by subject co-ordinators;
- review procedures for consulting with parents; and provide better information about how well their children are doing;

¹ Each area of learning has stages of achievement called stepping stones which lead to the early learning goals. When children start in the nursery they are expected to achieve the yellow stepping stones, then blue, green and grey. By the time they leave the reception class in the primary school they are expected to have reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

- strengthen the governance of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, and subjects

Early assessments of children's learning show that when they start school their overall attainment on entry is average. By the end of the reception year, some children are likely to reach the expectations in all areas of learning and some will exceed them. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2 and reach average standards in most subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain well in reading, mathematics, science and ICT. Achievement in Year 6 is good and a high proportion of pupils are working at above average levels. Standards in writing are satisfactory but a minority of pupils are not reaching the standard of which they are capable. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. The school has reached its targets for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics in recent years. Currently, the school is making good progress towards its targets.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school.
- Standards in science are high by the end of Year 6.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 in ICT have improved since the last inspection.
- The good achievement of pupils with special educational needs is due to well-trained teaching assistants, who work closely with class teachers to provide guidance and support.
- Pupils use of writing skills in other subjects is not raising standards sufficiently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.2 (17.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.4 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (27.9)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	29.2 (29.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	32.5 (30.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. The number of children taking the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is too small for valid comparisons to be made with other schools. It is similarly difficult to interpret data about trends, particularly in view of the variation in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in different year groups. For example, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, over the last three years, pupils' results have varied from well below average, in the lowest 5 per cent of similar schools, to above or well above average and in the highest 5 per cent of similar schools.

2. By Year 2, most pupils reach above average standards in speaking and listening. In reading and writing, they attain average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make good use of their speaking and listening skills when talking at the end of lessons about their work. They read and write for a range of purposes and use these skills satisfactorily to enable them to achieve soundly in other subjects. In mathematics and science, standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to use their mathematics skills in other subjects, particularly to measure in science and design and technology. By Year 2, standards in ICT are average and pupils gain confidence in using their skills in other subjects.
3. In English, by Year 6, most pupils reach at least average standards and achieve soundly. Their speaking and listening skills are above average. Their literacy skills are satisfactory, but not better because they are not developing their writing skills well enough in other subjects. The quality of their handwriting and presentation is not as good as that observed in their English books. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science. A high proportion reach above average standards because of the teacher's good subject knowledge and high expectations. Standards in ICT are good and the pupils achieve well because they benefit from enthusiastic and expert support, and they are developing their skills well in other subjects.
4. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are given good support, which enables them to be fully included in all lessons. They make good progress towards their individual targets.
5. There is not enough evidence to report on standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography and history, music and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their work. Their good behaviour assists their learning and contributes to the standards achieved. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains good. Attendance is good and punctuality at the start of the day is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's personal development is very well promoted in the reception class.
- Pupils have very good relationships with staff and one another.
- Behaviour is good both in class and around the school.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well through involvement in assemblies, the school council and extra-curriculum activities.

Commentary

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are better than those reported at the last inspection. They are now very good. Their positive attitudes towards their work are evident from the earliest age. Children in the reception class are happy and settled. Staff help them to feel secure, proud of themselves and aware of others. Their enthusiasm for learning is developed well and they become increasingly independent as they move through the school. They are likely to exceed the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year.
7. Nearly all the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school. They report that their children are keen to attend and enjoy the good range of activities they are offered. All pupils feel equally valued and included, irrespective of their differences.

8. Most pupils respond extremely well in lessons and are attentive, confident and motivated learners. They demonstrate good listening skills and are enthusiastic and willing participants. They report that they are expected to work hard and are trusted to do things on their own. Most pupils take a pride in their work and are eager to do their best. It is evident that pupils are proud of their school, and show respect for the materials and resources made available to them.
9. Behaviour is good. A new policy for behaviour was introduced in 2002 and pupils are fully aware of the school's code of conduct. During playtime, boys and girls are at ease with each other and, although naturally boisterous at times, there was no evidence of oppressive behaviour. Parents agree that should any incidents arise they would be dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	72	0	0

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

10. The personal development of pupils is good. Spiritual development is promoted through regular school and class assemblies that offer pupils a formal time for reflection. Pupils also discuss their ideas and feelings during circle time, a teaching and learning strategy that enables pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings. This encourages them to consider things from others' point of view. The quality of relationships established in school is very good. From the reception class onwards, where they are encouraged to share equipment and take turns, staff give pupils good opportunities to work co-operatively, and they respond well. They quickly distinguish right from wrong and have a good understanding of the effect their actions have on others. Pupils are keen to assume responsibility, and carry out tasks of an appropriately challenging nature for their age. All Year 6 pupils are prefects and are fully aware of their responsibilities of supervising younger pupils. They carry out more specific duties such as preparing the hall for assembly and controlling the overhead projector during presentations sensibly. They are polite and considerate. In these and other ways, older pupils show they grow in maturity and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school council, which includes pupils from Year 2 upwards, discuss and agree various initiatives to improve school life. They learn to assess and respect the views of others before making democratic decisions. Pupils are encouraged to think about others less fortunate than themselves, and support a number of local and overseas charities. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is developed through music and video presentations that reflect a variety of cultures, pupils' work in geography and a wider book choice. Pupils have opportunities to meet people from other faiths and cultures during visits to local places of interest and through having people visit the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

11. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is very low. The school follows up absences promptly. A minority of pupils arrive after the commencement of lessons. Although in most cases they are only a few minutes late, it does disrupt an otherwise smooth start to the school day. The method of recording attendance fully conforms to the statutory requirements of the local authority.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Although this equates with conclusions in the last report, there is now a higher proportion of very good teaching. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 enables pupils to achieve well and attain high standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive strong support which helps them to make good progress.
- ICT skills are taught well, and applied effectively to extend learning in other subjects.
- Some teaching in Years 2 and 3 does not consistently expect enough of a small minority of pupils, and their progress is slowed.
- The quality of marking varies across the school and this leads to uncertainty in pupils' understanding of how well they are doing.

Commentary

12. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants relate very well with all their pupils. Staff encourage pupils' participation in lessons and value the contributions they make. In turn, this motivates pupils, engages their interest and promotes their self-confidence. This is further enhanced by teachers' command of the curriculum subjects and, in many lessons, by their sheer enthusiasm for teaching and learning. These factors are well illustrated in the staff's confident and effective use of ICT. This includes their own arresting use of interactive whiteboards to introduce and develop their lessons, and extends to pupils' own, informed use of ICT to enrich their learning. All of which helps to foster pupils' independence and their effective working in co-operation with others. Teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour, and good teamwork between themselves and teaching assistants, ensures pupils understand what is expected of them and helps them to respond positively to the opportunities presented to them. These are significant factors in most lessons in the school.
13. Where teaching and learning are of high quality, lessons are carefully structured with a variety of stimulating activities, some teacher directed and others pupil led. The brisk pace of these lessons is maintained by teachers' consistent high expectations. They insist that pupils use their established knowledge to ask and answer questions, and to propose reasoned solutions to the challenges they meet. Teachers use their knowledge of their pupils well to ensure that work is matched appropriately to the level of their abilities.
14. Staff make effective use of national and commercially-produced assessments to compile useful profiles of pupils' attainments as they move through the school. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and maintain careful records of their findings. This includes almost all subjects of the curriculum; the exceptions being music and physical education, where more general assessments are maintained. The role of marking in the assessment process is more variable. At its best, marking offers written comments on the quality of pupils' work and helps them understand what they have achieved or need to do to improve their work. However, this is not consistent practice and, too often, marking is little more than monitoring to check that work has been done. Overall, the school's useful marking policy is not being followed. In less

successful lessons, those graded satisfactory, insufficient use is made of assessment findings to ensure all pupils benefit appropriately from their work. In these instances, a few pupils are not challenged consistently and, on other occasions, individual pupils do not receive specific support for their current difficulties. In each of these cases, learning slows and pupils do not sustain the steady progress they should.

15. Staff give effective support to pupils with special educational needs and they achieve well; their teaching and learning are good. Teachers integrate them well within class and plan their work carefully. Through sensitive questioning, staff guarantee that each of them contributes positively to lessons. When pupils are withdrawn from class for additional guidance, the expertise of teaching assistants and the effective links between staff ensures that pupils are well supported and undertake appropriate tasks related to the work of their class. Pupils' individual education plans have clear, measurable targets and provide a good basis for tracking their progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	7	5	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils well. The school's involvement in the North South Network has helped to provide good opportunities for enrichment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum.
- The school makes good links with subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils do not apply their writing skills in other subjects as well as they should.

Commentary

16. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good and meets the needs of the children very well. It is based securely on the early learning goals that children are expected to reach in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. It enables the children to make good progress in their development and ensures that they make a smooth transition into learning according to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The daily programme of purposeful activities is well planned to develop children's enthusiasm for school and to promote their growing independence.
17. In Years 1 to 6, the school provides the pupils with a broad and well-structured curriculum. It builds effectively on the early learning goals. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the teaching of religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum includes sex and relationships education, which is taught as part of the school's programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. The school participates successfully in the local authority's drugs education programme and is currently involved in the Healthy Schools Scheme. Pupils are well prepared for transfer into secondary school.
18. There have been good improvements in the planning of the curriculum since the last inspection; in particular, the innovation of the North South Network, which has helped to

develop pupils' ICT skills. Good links between the schools in the network have helped to enrich the curriculum through joint topics, such as the study of France. The school has adapted the nationally recommended guidelines for National Curriculum subjects to help ensure that pupils' learning opportunities cover the required ground. The planning and content of the curriculum generally takes appropriate account of the needs of pupils of different ages and backgrounds, and of their ethnicity and gender. The school has recently tried to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' attainment in English, with some success.

19. Teachers' planning is securely based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Pupils have developed a good skills base in ICT and they use these skills well in other subjects. Although pupils use their writing skills in other subjects, the quality of writing is not of a sufficiently high standard and they are not developing their skills well.
20. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school provides effective and caring provision for these pupils. The special needs co-ordinator deploys teaching assistants to support classes and individual pupils soundly. Teaching assistants have clearly defined roles, work well with teachers and have a good effect on pupils' learning. Older pupils who are mathematically gifted are well provided for. There are good opportunities for pupils who are talented in the use of ICT to develop their skills further.
21. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities and out-of-school learning is good. Extra-curricular clubs vary each term. They include sports and music. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to swim at the local leisure centre, and groups of pupils' learn to ski at the local snow dome. Football and netball clubs are very popular and successful. Educational and residential visits contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum as well as developing their social skills and independence. Qualified coaches are used on occasion and older pupils have a good opportunity to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities during an annual residential visit.
22. The school has invested well in its staffing provision. Each class has a full-time teaching assistant who makes a significant contribution to the pupils' achievement. The good level of resources for ICT provides for well for curriculum enrichment. Resources in other subjects are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school continues to provide a caring environment that satisfactorily supports the care, safety and welfare of its pupils. Adults know the pupils well and have a good understanding of their personal needs. The school provides pupils with satisfactory opportunities to express their views, and responds well to their ideas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for starting in the reception class are good and ensure that children settle into school well.
- Child protection procedures are good.
- Teachers and staff have good knowledge of the children and their needs.
- The school council is beginning to involve pupils in the work of the school.

Commentary

23. Relationships with children and their families are effectively developed before they start in the reception class and, as a result, the children are familiar with the class environment and with the adults with whom they will be working. This helps them settle quickly and they soon become confident members of the school community. The school provides a secure and happy environment in which their individual well-being is effectively promoted. Teacher's

knowledge of the pupils' individual personal requirements makes them sensitive to the needs of those in their charge. They are quick to respond to pupils' personal and social needs. This trusting relationship, which the pupils enjoy, gives them confidence to share any concerns and helps them cope with the problems that arise in everyday life.

24. The school fully complies with the local education authority child protection procedures. The teacher with overall responsibility for child protection is familiar with the services offered by the support agencies. All staff are kept up-to-date with training and know the procedures to follow if they have a concern. This is a strong feature of the provision for pupils' welfare in the school.
25. The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety and has adopted the guidelines provided by the local authority. Health and safety audits and risk assessments are carried out annually in conjunction with the local authority, and termly by governors, but there is insufficient attention given to health and safety matters to do with out-of-school activities. The safety issue from the last inspection has been attended to.
26. There is good support for the personal and academic development of pupils with special educational needs. For other pupils, the monitoring of their personal development is informal but effective because all the adults know the pupils well, and this helps them to take full account of the needs of individuals. The school monitors the progress of pupils in English and mathematics but monitoring in other subjects is less secure. As a result, pupils are not clear about their achievement and what they have to do to get better in these subjects. The school analyses the results of tests and assessments of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and tracks pupils' progress through the school. This helps staff to identify individual and groups of pupils' who would benefit from additional help. Pupils' achievements both in and out of school are celebrated during assemblies. This does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and awareness of the talents and skills of others.
27. The school council provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to influence the life of the school. They are proud of the playground facilities they have helped to provide for the youngest children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is generally unsatisfactory and a number of issues raised in the last inspection have not been resolved. Links with the community are satisfactory and there are good systems in place for pupils transferring to other schools at the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of information about school activities is good.
- The Parent and Friends' Association provides strong financial support.
- The school does not sufficiently involve parents by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- There are too few formal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress.
- Not enough information about the curriculum is given to parents.

Commentary

28. Many parents expressed their views to the inspection team through parent questionnaires, letters, discussions and the pre-inspection meeting.
29. The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire are very satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. For example, almost all parents agree that their children like coming to school and behave well. They like the arrangements for settling their children into school and the range of activities that the school offers. They consider that the teaching is good, their children are expected to work hard and they make good progress. They appreciate the help that their children are given to become mature and responsible. Most parents consider that the

staff treat their children fairly and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree with these positive views.

30. Parents appreciate the regular information they receive about various aspects of school life. However, some aspects of the school's communication and support provided does not meet their expectations. A significant minority of parents do not feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. They consider that the school does not provide sufficient formal opportunities for them to discuss their children's work, and they dislike the current format of the school's annual reports. They would like more information about the subjects that their children are studying and how they can help them at home. Some parents are concerned that the school does not seek their views and that they are not encouraged to help in the school.
31. The team agrees that there should be more formal occasions during the year for parents to meet with the class teachers. They also agree that the school does not provide sufficient information about the work their children are doing or how parents can help them improve. Although the school has changed the format of the annual written reports on pupils' attainment and progress, they are still unsatisfactory because they do not indicate the progress children have made, include areas for improvement or set targets for future work. The school has recognised the need to review during the coming year the format of pupils' reports. The inspection team found little evidence of the school consulting with parents and responding to their views. For carefully considered reasons, the school has recently decided not to ask parents to help in school.
32. Parents, however, are encouraged to support the school in a number of other ways. The Parents and Friends Association is a strong and active group that provides the school with valuable financial support. Barn dances, summer fairs and discos are a few of the fund raising events organised by the dedicated parents. The money raised has helped to re-stock the library, provide computers and purchase gifts for pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
33. The school has developed effective links with the community. Pupils participate in the village show and are actively involved in the best-kept village scheme. Two volunteers from the village regularly give recorder lessons to pupils at the school. Close links are established with the Methodist Chapel and St Chad's Church, which the school uses for productions and special assemblies. Children from Years 1 and 2 visit a local farm and supermarket, whilst the older pupils visit the Black Country Museum and Snibston Discovery Park to support the school's history and science curriculum. Successful partnership has been re-established with Derby University to provide teacher placements.
34. The school has good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs and keeps them well informed about the progress of their children. Parents are actively involved in both annual reviews and target setting in individual education plans.
35. The school prospectus does not meet statutory requirements. It does not include attendance data, the school's equal opportunity policy or arrangements for collective worship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory and the school is managed soundly. Subject leaders do not manage the development of their subjects effectively. The governors do not carry out their duties satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have a clear commitment to improvement.
- The headteacher's pupil tracking reflects the school's concern for each of its pupils.
- The staff work effectively together.

- Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

36. One of the important features of the leadership and management of the school is the staff's vision of an improving school. This includes gaining high standards in pupils' attainment and achievement, increasing the quality of teaching and learning, and improving the school's curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together in class teams, preparing individual lessons and sharing information about the performance of their pupils. The headteacher monitors classroom practice as part of the school's satisfactory performance management programme. He makes good use of test results to compile a record of pupils' attainments as they move through the school. This enables staff to track each pupil's development. These practices offer the school useful information about each of its pupils. However, there is a lack of consistency in the bringing together of this information so that it can be used effectively to identify specific issues for improvement. For example, the value added by the school to pupils' attainment is high by the time pupils reach eleven years of age compared with their attainment at seven, but the implications of this for the school's provision for pupils before they are seven has not been established. Subject leaders have not assembled, from the available class information, a school profile of their subject to illustrate the consistency or otherwise of pupils' progress as they move through the school. They do not monitor teaching and learning in their subjects to determine their quality. Relevant priorities are identified in the school annual improvement plan, but its format does not make clear how their implementation will be monitored or their progress evaluated. This plan is not set in the context of a programme of long-term planning. Monitoring is now a priority in the current annual plan.
37. The governors readily identify with the school and are very supportive of it, and the staff and pupils. The chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss current issues, and governors meet each term. At these meetings governors rely on the headteacher and the documentation he and the local authority provide to direct their business. This has led to an over-reliance on the headteacher, not only for information but also its interpretation. Consequently, governors are not monitoring the school's provision and the pupils' attainments effectively, and nor are they taking an active part in the school's long-term planning. They are not drawing usefully on the principles of best value to guide their practices or to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the school's provision, and the management of its finances. Governance of the school is therefore unsatisfactory.
38. The school is satisfactorily placed for improvement because the staff have recognised monitoring as a key priority for development, and that subject leaders have an important role to play in monitoring procedures. The school's significant involvement in the very recent initiative to establish a networked learning community of small schools increases its capacity for improvement. This is because one of the network's underlying principles is that 'collaboration is only as effective as the demonstrated improvements within each school in teaching and learning'. It is much too early to judge its effectiveness. Governance remains a key issue, as it was at the last inspection, and detracts from the school's capacity for improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	233,290
Total expenditure	218,248
Expenditure per pupil	2,662

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19,144
Balance carried forward to the next	15,041

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is better than reported at the last inspection. The children enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five. There is a wide range of attainment, and is average overall. Almost all the children have attended some sort of pre-school provision. The reception class is a vibrant and exciting learning environment. The curriculum is very well planned. A wide range of imaginative and stimulating opportunities is offered to children, supported by a variety of attractive resources. There is a very good balance between adult and child-initiated activities, direct teaching and opportunities for children to pursue their own interests. The quality of teaching is very good, and assessment procedures are thorough and used well to build on what children already know. The staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They work very well together as a team and successfully manage the inclusion of all children. As a result, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Because of this very good start, most children are on course to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class, and some will exceed them. Indoor accommodation is satisfactory, but outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory because there is no direct access to a secure outdoor area. However, the staff make the best use of the available accommodation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff place a high priority on this area of learning, and this has a very good impact on children's achievement.
- The very good relationships that staff maintain with children help them to settle quickly into the routines of the school.
- There are good opportunities for children to take responsibility.

Commentary

39. There is a very strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development. The children are each valued and cherished by the adults who work with them. Parents confirm that their children settle quickly into school and are very contented in the reception class. Children soon become familiar with the classroom routines. For example, they settle happily on the carpet after they have said 'goodbye' to their parents, confidently select their own activities and persevere well with those that adults ask them to do. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves in order to promote their growing independence. They enjoy taking responsibility. For example, they sign themselves in at the space station, select their name cards, place them in a badge holder then return the badges and sign themselves off at the end of the session. They play harmoniously and have very good relationships with the adults with whom they work. They show a growing awareness of the needs of others, for example in learning how to take turns, to share equipment fairly and to take pride in tidying away after themselves. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff have a consistent and sensitive approach that develops children's self esteem very well. They value children's contributions and use praise sensitively to reward effort, and encourage children to celebrate one another's success.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of role-play to develop children's speaking and listening skills.
- Displays are of a high standard. They value the children's contributions and the careful labelling gives children good support for their work.
- The teacher reads stories expressively and teaches early reading skills very well.
- There are very good opportunities for children to develop their independent writing skills.

Commentary

40. Children generally start school with good communication skills. The staff are very good at developing these skills in the language rich environment of the nursery. Great value is attached to talk. Adults are skilled at encouraging children to speak and to develop their vocabulary when they are involved in activities. During role play in the space station, for example, children are encouraged to plan their trips into space and make a list of what they will need for their space walk. More able children use space specific vocabulary effectively. They describe themselves as astronauts and talk about the satellites and stars they hope to see from their space ship. The children respond well to the sensitive interventions by staff, who constantly encourage them to talk about their activities and help them to extend their language so that they can share their ideas, thoughts and feelings. The children love listening to stories and rhymes, joining in with the parts they know and predicting what will come next. They remember the names of the characters and the main events in the stories and creatively recall them in their puppet plays. They enjoy looking at books, handle them carefully and understand that books are made up of words and pictures. They are enthusiastic about reading and eagerly select their favourite books. They know the letters of the alphabet and use their knowledge of letter sounds to read simple words. More able children recognise a number of words by sight and some read simple books. Parents reading with their children at home help to develop their enjoyment. The children write their names accurately. They hold a pencil correctly, writing letters with care. The staff instruct the children well, showing them how letters should be correctly formed. There are good opportunities for children to write in the role play areas and the writing area, where they are provided with a good range of paper and pens. Teaching and learning are very good and the children achieve very well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing children's understanding of mathematics through well-planned practical activities.
- Resources are well organised and used effectively to support learning.
- The teaching assistant makes a significant contribution to children's learning.

Commentary

41. Children make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. Most children are confident in dealing with numbers from zero to ten, and many work confidently with numbers to 20. More able children know that there are a number of ways of making 10 or 12, and know that addition is combining two sets of numbers. They understand mathematical terms such as 'more than' and 'less than'. For example, they count pieces of fruit and know if they need one or two pieces more. They read numbers on a clock face and identify the missing number when one of them is covered up. They are beginning to develop a sound understanding of the vocabulary of time. Children show good spatial awareness and confidently use language to describe size, shape and position, for instance in their role-play about a space journey. Staff create good opportunities to extend children's knowledge of

number, including counting games and songs. Teaching is good because the teacher and teaching assistant work well together. They plan interesting activities and use resources well to develop children's mathematical skills and, as a result, children show confidence and enjoyment in their mathematical work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The environment is used effectively to support learning.
- Good displays of books and artefacts around the room help to stimulate children's curiosity.
- Visitors to school enhance children's knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

42. There are many well-planned opportunities for children to extend their ability to find out about the many aspects of the environment and to develop an understanding of the wider world. They walk in the local woods and observe the features of the changing seasons. They plant bulbs in the orchard in autumn and watch them grow in the spring. They know that plants need light and water to live. More able children know that some animals and birds are nocturnal. They examine objects with shiny surfaces and identify those that reflect the light from their torches. They demonstrate a clear understanding of why traffic wardens and the 'lollypop' lady wear reflective clothing, and know that vehicles switch on lights at night. In discussion with a police officer, the children demonstrate a good understanding of safety procedures. They have examined road signs on a village walk, and build on their understanding of the importance of road safety when they set up crossings and road signs in the playground. Children's knowledge of the physical world is developed well. They explore and describe the properties of different materials, for example the difference between wet and dry sand. They show an interest in how things work and show one another how to do things. They use a range of construction kits and learn how to fit the parts together to make objects of their choice. Attractive displays of lights and toys through the ages help children to gain a good sense of the passage of time. Children become familiar with ICT by directing a programmable toy, and use the mouse confidently to move images across the computer screen. Teaching is very good because staff provide good opportunities for children to observe closely, to ask questions and to record what they have found. Children look forward to the many visitors who help to enrich and extend their knowledge and understanding.

PHYSICAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

43. It was not possible during the inspection to gather enough evidence to make a secure judgement about provision. The following points were noted, arising from an examination of photographic evidence, children's folders of work, and displays, and from discussions with the teacher and consideration of planning and assessments. Almost all aspects of these areas of learning are securely in place. The exception is in physical development because the school has no secure outdoor area and the hall is too small for some aspects of physical development. However, the school makes good use of the available outdoor accommodation. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling scissors, tools and modelling dough, and handle small toys and construction equipment with good control and co-ordination. Staff provide stimulating opportunities to develop children's creative development. A particular strength is the use of role-play. In both areas of learning the evidence provided indicates that standards by the end of the reception year are at least as high as expected.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are good.
- Standards in reading are above average by Year 6.
- Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to support their learning.
- Standards in writing are not as high as they should be.
- Pupils in the oldest class do not use their writing skills well enough to produce work of a sufficiently high quality in other subjects.
- Subject co-ordination is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

44. Most pupils reach good standards in speaking and listening and reading by the end of Year 6. Their achievement is good. Standards in reading are better than those in writing. Although the school identified a gap between the attainment of boys and girls, this gap is beginning to narrow and boys are achieving more highly. There is now little significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. They play a full part in discussions and are helped to make good progress in their reading and writing.
45. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. They listen attentively in lessons and contribute actively to group and class discussions. They make good progress as they move through the school. This is largely because teachers model language specific to the subject and ensure that the pupils follow suit. This helps pupils to widen their vocabulary so that they can present their ideas clearly. The youngest pupils participate confidently in role-play and present their findings well at the end of lessons. The oldest pupils benefit from good opportunities to use their ICT skills in English, for example to take part in video conferences with partner schools. They are confident participants who communicate effectively on a range of issues. Members of the school council listen thoughtfully to others and speak assuredly to different audiences.
46. Pupils make good progress in reading as they move through the school, and their achievement is good. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2, largely because the school has a systematic approach to the teaching of letter sounds, and pupils' knowledge of letter sounds (phonics) is good. Teachers model a good range of ways to help pupils read words that are new to them. They use a sound variety of fiction and non-fiction books, some of which are particularly popular with boys, to help develop pupils' reading skills. Group reading sessions, when children of similar ability read and discuss the same book, are helping to improve pupils' comprehension skills. This is because these sessions are carefully planned, with books selected at the right level of difficulty, and because questions develop pupils' understanding. By Year 6, pupils read fluently, confidently and with good expression. Many are enthusiastic readers who explain their preferences for certain books and authors. Most pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to locate information using the contents and index. The more able pupils in Year 6 understand glossaries and bibliographies.
47. After discussing features of different types of writing, such as stories, reports and playscripts, pupils use these as models in their own writing. For example, younger pupils use soundly the structure of well-known stories to develop their writing and to express their ideas. Their basic spelling and punctuation are usually correct. They are beginning to use dictionaries to check out their work. Standards of handwriting are good and pupils' work is well presented. However, there is little evidence of the more able pupils attaining at the higher than expected

level. Most pupils in Year 6 use basic punctuation correctly, and more able pupils organise their work in paragraphs. Most pupils spell the most frequently used words correctly and more able and average ability pupils use a range of appropriate strategies to spell unfamiliar ones. Lower ability pupils make satisfactory attempts to spell longer words based on the sounds letters make. Their knowledge of grammar is satisfactory. More able pupils use an imaginative vocabulary to enliven their work but there are generally too few examples of lively writing. The school has recently started to use assessment to set targets that are beginning to help pupils' improve their work.

48. Teaching and learning are good in Year 1. In Year 2, they are satisfactory. In Year 6 they are good and in one Year 6 lesson they were judged very good. Strengths include:
- Teachers' planning, which clearly identifies what they want pupils to learn;
 - The emphasis teachers place on developing pupils' vocabulary;
 - The main points of the lesson are reviewed at the end, which helps pupils' identify the gains they have made in their learning;
 - All contributions are valued and this encourages the younger and the more reticent pupils to offer their ideas;
 - The effective use of ICT to develop pupils' literacy skills.
49. In the less successful lessons in Year 2, teachers do not expect enough in writing, particularly of the more able pupils, and there is an overuse of exercises, which restrict creativity. Marking is supportive but does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
50. There is no systematic monitoring of the subject so the co-ordinator does not have a clear idea about the key tasks to bring about improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily across the curriculum. Pupils in the youngest classes have good opportunities to apply and improve them. There are some good examples of pupils using these skills well, such as when they write in history about Florence Nightingale. Although, in the oldest class, there are good opportunities of pupils using their writing skills, for example in reports in history and journals in geography, their handwriting and presentation is often unsatisfactory, and there is scope for further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, pupils achieve well because of consistent good teaching and learning.
- Throughout the school, there is an emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- In all classes, there is effective use of ICT to develop pupils' learning.
- In Years 2 and 3, there are instances of a few pupils receiving work that is inappropriate for them.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

52. Pupils make sound progress throughout Year 2 and, by the end of that year, attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily. They make good progress and achieve well during Year 6, and attain above average standards by its end. Since the last inspection, the school has improved pupils' achievement across the school. The adoption of the National Numeracy programme and the introduction of a new commercial scheme to teach it have made a significant contribution to this improvement. There is no significant difference between the

attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from their teachers and teaching assistants and, as a result, achieve as well as other pupils.

53. Across the school, pupils describe how much they enjoy mathematics. They respond enthusiastically to the challenges their teachers pose and readily explain how they have arrived at their answers. This is reflected in their competence across all aspects of mathematics. By the end of Year 2, they understand the number system and confidently recall basic number facts. They correctly name and describe some of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils compile and interpret simple block graphs successfully. As they move through the school, the speed and competence with which they solve mental mathematics improves and they display increasing confidence in tackling a greater range of such tasks. In addition, they undertake more complex problems, including those of their own devising. By the end of Year 6, pupils divide numbers correctly, and the more able express remainders as fractions. They calculate area and perimeter accurately, and measure length and angles precisely. Throughout the school, pupils' use of ICT is an integral part of their studies. They use it effectively to consolidate their learning, extend their mathematical understanding in new contexts or produce graphs from their tabulated surveys.
54. In Year 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Year 6, they are good. In one Year 6 lesson they were judged very good. Strengths include:
- Carefully structured lessons with clear, assessable learning objectives;
 - Effective use of questions to build lesson introductions based on pupils' understanding and recall of previous work;
 - Clear explanations of what pupils are to do;
 - Sensitive insistence on pupils using correct mathematical vocabulary;
 - Clear expectations that pupils will explain carefully how they have made their calculations;
 - Inviting and valuing pupils' contributions so they are not inhibited by concerns about making errors;
 - Effective and informed participation by well-prepared teaching assistants;
 - Good use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate tasks, maintain interest, promote quality presentations and sustain a brisk lesson pace;
 - Useful end-of-lesson sessions: to consolidate learning and assess pupils' understanding.
55. In less successful lessons, there are occasions where aspects of the work, for a few pupils, does not match their ability. In these few instances, not enough is asked of the more able pupils, or individuals' specific difficulties are not recognised immediately. In each case, this results in a slowing of pupils' rate of learning and, during that time, they do not make the progress they should.
56. The subject leader does not monitor teaching and learning and has not compiled a subject profile to identify progress and attainment across the school. Consequently, the comprehensive and rigorous monitoring of strengths and weaknesses throughout the school is not established. Assessment is satisfactory, but marking is inconsistent and does not follow the school's useful policy. Learning resources are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers successfully promote pupils' use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. This includes measurement in science and design and technology. It also extends to the use of formulae when older pupils use spreadsheets to tabulate their results from scientific investigations. The application and use of mathematics is an integral part of their enterprise study, 'Thomas Barnes plc'. This involves making and selling products and using all their mathematical skills in manufacturing their goods, and calculating costs, pricing and profit or loss.

SCIENCE

Although a range of work was examined from last year and the current term, only one lesson was seen. Therefore, an overall judgement about provision and teaching and learning cannot be made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' work in Year 6 is of a high standard.
- Effective use is made of ICT to support learning in science.
- A strong emphasis is placed, in Year 6, on investigations and the development of scientific skills.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

58. Analysis of work indicates that standards in Year 2 are average and that pupils make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. This equates with the findings of the previous inspection report. In Year 6, pupils attain standards that are well above average, they make very good progress and their achievement is high. This reflects the Year 6 results of the small age group who took the national tests in 2003. They were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Early indications suggest that the few pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to do well by the end of the year. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and their achievement is commensurate with their capabilities because of the good support they receive from their teacher and teaching assistants.
59. By Year 2, most of this small group work at appropriate levels for their age. They understand the lives of small animals and describe the life cycle of the frog. They recognise their own development and the contribution made by a healthy diet and the care of teeth. They are familiar with the changes in their bodies when they exercise. They identify the uses of electricity and the need for care when using mains electricity. As pupils move through the school their knowledge increases and their investigation skills are refined. Throughout the later years, teachers set a clear focus on developing pupils' understanding of and skills in scientific enquiry. Pupils make appropriate predictions, organise their investigations systematically and draw valid conclusions from the evidence they have assembled. In the lesson observed, pupils took careful measurements and, after questioning the emerging trends, took further measurements to confirm their findings. They bring these skills to bear in their exploration of forces, thermal insulators, habitats, and reversible and irreversible changes.
60. Pupils make good use of their English, mathematical and ICT skills to support their learning in science. Headings are clearly demarcated and diagrams carefully labelled. Measurements are accurately made and averaged appropriately. Findings are thoughtfully set out in tables, graphs and pie charts. In the lesson observed, a spreadsheet was used to record measurements and a computer-generated graph was examined to identify relationships and consider such questions as, 'If we continue, what is likely to happen next?'.
61. Assessment is satisfactory but marking is inconsistent across the school, ranging from ticks to guidance on how pupils might improve their work. Resources are satisfactory. There are no established, rigorous monitoring systems in place and the subject leader does not monitor classroom practice to build a picture of pupil performance and teaching and learning across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, there has been a significant improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
- ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62. Throughout Year 2, pupils make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. They are on target to attain average standards by its end. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Throughout Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well. They are on target to attain above average standards by its end. This is a clear improvement since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress, commensurate with their capabilities and achieve well.
63. The school's recent involvement with the North South Network has accelerated the progress of the older pupils. This networked learning community, the staff's effective use of interactive whiteboards and the general improvement in resources are raising the status of the subject and its benefits for supporting pupils' learning. However, it is too early to judge their overall effectiveness.
64. Across the school, pupils talk enthusiastically of their work with ICT. They readily display their confidence and competence in employing a range of facilities to support their learning in most subjects. This includes, computers, laptops, fax machines, audio recorders, video cameras, electronic toys, calculators and a digital camera. They use a range of programs to communicate their ideas in text and pictures. They compile and interrogate databases effectively. Recently acquired resources are used well to refine pupils' skills in control technology.
65. The teaching and learning in Year 2 are satisfactory. The pupils use ICT effectively to edit simple texts, and develop their understanding of numbers. The coming together of much of the school's work was graphically illustrated in a Year 6 lesson. Using email, fax and video conferencing, pupils communicated with another small school. The focus was instructional language, and the pupils used these facilities to support their English studies, and to help them in exchanging information and establishing its quality. This lesson also exemplified the high quality teaching of the subject in the later years. This effective teaching is supported well by the use of the 'buddy system' where pupils, competent in the use of computers, share their experience with others. This system gives recognition to the pupils' skills and confirms the positive value the school places on the pupils' contributions. Developing from this focus on pupils' own skills, teachers expect the older pupils to use those skills initially to experiment and solve their own problems before seeking help from adults. The teaching and learning in Year 6 are good overall, with examples of lessons where they are very good.
66. Assessment is satisfactory. Self-assessment procedures are being introduced for older pupils to give them a greater opportunity to understand how well they are doing. However, they are not yet established. Resources are good. Rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and standards across the school is not established, and differences in pupil performance and teaching and learning are not being used effectively to inform development planning.
67. The school's recent involvement with the networked learning community of small schools has accelerated the progress of older pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. ICT is used effectively to support work in other subjects. Staff model the use of ICT very well and demonstrate how ICT can be used to enrich pupils' learning. In Year 2 pupils consolidate their use of number by using their problem-solving skills to tackle computer-generated challenges. Pupils in Year 6 use CDs and the internet to access suitable information for their independent studies in geography and history. During the inspection, one Year 6 pupil drew successfully on the school's ICT resources to develop the performance of a model he had made in design and technology.

HUMANITIES

Religious education, geography and history

69. No lessons in religious education or geography were seen during the inspection, and only one lesson was seen in history. It is evident from teachers' planning that the teaching of geography and history meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the teaching of religious education is in line with the local authority's agreed syllabus. In their **religious education** lessons, pupils learn about Christianity and other major world faiths. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of some of the distinctive features of various religions, such as Hinduism, and can use appropriate terminology to explain aspects of belief and practice. **History** teaching in Year 1 is good because subject skills are well taught. For instance, the teacher helps pupils to look for historical clues in pictures and artefacts to find out how people used to light their homes and streets. Activities were imaginative and well organised and role play was used effectively to develop pupils' growing sense of the past. In Year 2, pupils are developing a good understanding of the work of Florence Nightingale. By Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress in learning historical facts and are aware of major events and significant people in British history. They have a sound knowledge of Tudor times and the Victorians. ICT is used well to widen the field of historical research. Examples of pupils' work in **geography** suggest that, as they move through the school, pupils extend their knowledge of the local area and are developing a wider knowledge of different locations. In these subjects, pupils' cultural development is supported well. Educational visits and visitors to school enhance learning opportunities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and personal, social and health education and citizenship

70. It was not possible during the inspection to observe any lessons in art and design, design and technology and music, and only one lesson was seen in physical education. Displays of pupils' **art and design** work are good and reflect the effective links that are made between subjects. They show a good range of art techniques and demonstrate pupils' skills in using a very good range of media to express their ideas. They reflect the way in which the school values the work of its pupils and celebrates their achievements. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities to be creative. They are proud of their achievements and eager to point out and talk about their work. In **design and technology**, pupils operate with a range of materials and develop an appropriate range of skills and techniques to make a variety of products. Design and evaluation are integral activities to the making of their models. This extends to discussions and demonstrations with other pupils to improve their products. For older pupils, their products include food, toys, models and equipment. Where possible, tasks include linking with ICT to control the performance of their product so that it fulfils a defined function, for example flashing lights and rotating shapes in advertising displays. In **music**, pupils sing familiar songs in tune and show a good sense of rhythm. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play the recorder. Pupils enhance their musical skills by practising their songs to perform to a wider audience. The accommodation and resources are inadequate for

gymnastics and, in this aspect of **physical education**, the school cannot meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. During the inspection, one dance lesson was observed. Good opportunities at a nearby pool are provided for pupils to learn to swim. Annual residential visits are arranged for older pupils and there are a number of after-school sporting clubs which make a good contribution to pupils' physical and social development.

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

71. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is sound, and includes work on health and safety, sex and relationships and drugs education. Circle time encourages pupils to consider the views of others. Assemblies foster well a sense of the school community. The school council seeks to involve pupils in the work of the school. Participation in the 'Young Enterprise' project has helped develop the older pupils' sense of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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