

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MODWEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Burton-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124326

Headteacher: James Emery

Reporting inspector: Raymond Jardine
7428

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 June 2003

Inspection number: 259499

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Belvoir Road
Burton-on-Trent
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr P Bowen

Date of previous inspection: 2 - 5 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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7428	Raymond Jardine	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Education inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
10965	Patricia Edwards	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22157	Mike Roussel	Team inspector	English Art Music Physical education Special educational needs	
7336	Lindsay Howard	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Modwen's is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school situated in Shobnall on the west side of Burton-on-Trent. The school is about average in size, having 238 pupils. The proportion of boys and girls in each year varies considerably, with many more boys in Years 5 and 6, and overall there are 20 more boys than girls on roll. A substantial number of pupils come from wider afield than the immediate area, mainly because parents choose a Catholic education for their children. Most pupils are of white UK heritage, but almost a fifth are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds that include Caribbean, African and Asian. Five pupils have English as an additional language, none at an early stage of language acquisition. The socio-economic circumstances of families served by the school are about average; thirty pupils (12.6 per cent) are entitled to free school meals. There are currently thirty pupils (12.6 per cent) on the register of special educational needs, which is below average. Of these, eight receive additional support from outside agencies, including three that have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Most have moderate learning difficulties and one has physical disability. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging but broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths and high expectations. The school's aims, Christian values and caring ethos are reflected very well in its work. Pupils' form very good attitudes and relationships, and achieve well in most subjects. The teaching is good and pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds are supported well through close teamwork between teachers and support staff. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction, ably supported by his deputy, and this has led to substantial improvements in recent years. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve good standards in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Consequently, relationships throughout the school and pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- The teaching is good. Teachers assess pupils' progress in key areas closely and plan challenging and interesting lessons that take account of their different needs and capabilities.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership that has united the staff in close teamwork and led to substantial improvements.
- The school's partnership with parents is very strong and, as a result, they are able to make a substantial contribution to their children's learning and progress.

What could be improved

- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to help raise standards in most subjects (*This is a priority in the school's development plan*).
- The role of some subject co-ordinators in reviewing strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements and in monitoring and supporting teaching is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' standards in geography and history, particularly their basic skills, are not as good as in other subjects and this also adversely affects their cultural development.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997, when pupils' standards were judged to be broadly average. Good progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified, particularly in the school's evaluation of its performance. Pupils are assessed rigorously in literacy and numeracy. Their progress is monitored and used well to guide teaching. The school's development plan is much improved and the staff and governors more involved in shaping the school's direction. Above all, pupils' standards have improved substantially in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, although provision for their cultural education has not improved enough. Much of these improvements are the result of very good leadership by the headteacher since his appointment two years ago and the close teamwork he and his deputy have inspired amongst staff. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	B	B
mathematics	B	A	B	A
science	B	B	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that in 2002, eleven-year-olds achieved standards above the national average in English and mathematics, while in science they were well above. In relation to those in similar schools, pupils' standards were well above average in both mathematics and science, and above in English. Pupils achieved broadly as expected in mathematics, while in science they achieved well, especially the more able. In English, pupils' overall achievements were lower than expected and some boys underachieved in their writing. In other respects there are no patterns of difference between boys' and girls' achievements and those nationally. Standards have been consistently above or well above the national average in all these subjects in recent years. The school came close to achieving its targets for both English and mathematics, and those for 2003 are slightly higher. In 2002, seven year olds achieved standards well above both the national average and that for similar schools in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. A good proportion achieved higher levels in all these subjects, especially in writing. Seven-year-olds' standards have been consistently well above average or high compared to those nationally in recent years.

Inspection findings confirm that the above and sometimes well above average standards are being maintained. Eleven year olds' standards are above the national average in English and science and well above in mathematics. Pupils' writing has improved as a result of the close attention given to this relative weakness since last year. Seven year olds reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and above in science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their education plans. The more able, gifted and talented pupils make very good progress, particularly in reception and infant classes and in mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage generally make

good progress and the great majority meet or exceed the goals for learning by the end of the reception year in all areas. Pupils achieve well in design and technology, art and physical education, and music standards are high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school life, work hard and try their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils are willing to take responsibility, but have insufficient scope to do so.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils arrive punctually in school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching and its impact on pupils' learning is good throughout the school, some is very good or excellent and there is none that is unsatisfactory. There are particular strengths in the teaching of music. The teaching of English and mathematics are good and some is very good. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been fully implemented and their impact monitored very well. Consequently, pupils develop good skills in both these areas, especially numeracy. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They build on pupils' prior learning by assessing what they know through skilful questioning and assessment. Teachers' knowledge of most subjects is good. Their expectations and the challenge in lessons are usually high. However, some teachers are less confident in using information and communication technology and this affects their ability to teach basic skills and pupils' learning in some subjects. Relationships throughout the school are very good; teachers know their pupils very well and behaviour is almost always very good. Occasionally class discussions extend for too long, and pupils become restless and less involved. Their work is regularly marked and good feedback is provided to help them improve. Homework when set is appropriate, but it is given unevenly over time.

Teachers work very closely with their assistants in lessons to adapt teaching approaches to pupils' needs, and as a result the lower attainers and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils are usually grouped or set according to their capabilities, and teachers use the school's register of more able, gifted and talented pupils very effectively so that they often progress very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, speakers and visitors, but there are too few planned visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual education plans are detailed, used well and regularly reviewed. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership, support and guidance. Teaching assistants are very effective when working with these pupils in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is very good and features prominently in the school's ethos and values, enabling pupils to develop very good standards of behaviour and respect for others. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school provides a secure and caring environment where teachers know their pupils very well. Arrangements for assessing their attainment and monitoring their progress in literacy and numeracy are very good but much less developed in some other subjects.

Parents make a very good contribution to children's learning because the school's partnership with them is very effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by his deputy. Staff work closely and are fully consulted and involved in the school's development by the senior management team, but the role of some subject co-ordinators needs developing further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The governing body works efficiently and is very well led. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very supportive and play an important part in shaping its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's standards are rigorously compared with those nationally and action is taken where necessary. Staff performance is monitored, particularly teaching, and training provided where necessary. The school's development plan is very well structured and its priorities soundly based.

The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's budget is well managed and closely monitored. Governors plan well for contingencies such as changing pupil numbers. Resources are directed to appropriate priorities and those designated for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively.
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Teachers and support staff are adequate in number, strongly committed and well trained. The accommodation is adequate to meet curriculum demands, although the ICT suite is quite small. Resources for most areas of the curriculum are sufficient. The inadequate stock of library books and limited outdoor play facilities for pupils in the Foundation Stage are currently being improved, but there are very limited resources and artefacts to support the teaching of history and geography. The school is implementing the principles of best value well. It consults staff, governors and parents about its provision, compares its standards with those in other schools and challenges what it does, particularly the quality of teaching. The school seeks good value for major purchases by approaching several suppliers.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and behave well. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress. • The staff are approachable and work closely with parents. • The school is well led. • The school helps their children to mature. • The range of extra-curricular activities is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework is not provided consistently. • A small minority would like more information provided about their children's progress.

Inspectors strongly agree with parents' positive views about the school. They also agree that homework for older pupils is set inconsistently over time. However, they think that parents are provided with very good information about their children's progress through reports, meetings and informal approaches.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception year in the September following their fourth birthday and within weeks become full time pupils. Most have benefited from pre-school experience. Their family's socio-economic backgrounds are broadly average and, while the range of attainment on entry is quite wide, overall it is broadly in line with expectations for children of this age.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in almost all of the six areas of learning so that most reach the Early Learning Goals. Some exceed them and are beginning to work within the early levels of the National Curriculum towards the end of their reception year. There are particular strengths in mathematics, language, communication and literacy. Children make good progress in their personal, emotional and social skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They attain the standards expected in their physical development.
3. Eleven year olds' standards have been consistently above the national average in English, mathematics and science in recent years and sometimes well above. In the 2002 national tests for 11 year olds, standards were well above the average for schools in similar socio-economic circumstances in mathematics and science, while in English they were above. Even so, the results in English and mathematics dipped compared to the previous year. However, in contrast, standards in science rose. The overall trend in recent years is in line with the national situation. In science in particular there have been good proportions of pupils achieving higher levels in these tests. In relation to their standards four years previously, pupils achieved broadly as expected in mathematics and well in science, including the more able. However, in English, pupils did not achieve as well. There were many more boys than girls in this particular year group and the dip in 2002 partly reflected a national difference between boys' and girls' achievements. Even so, some underachieved in their writing, particularly boys, and consequently the school has made improving writing a priority in its current development plan. In other respects there have been no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls and those nationally in recent years. The school was very close to achieving its targets for both English and mathematics in 2002, and its targets for 2003 are slightly higher.
4. The standards of seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics have been mainly well above the national average and sometimes in the top five per cent of schools nationally in recent years. The 2002 results show standards well above both the national average and that of similar schools in reading and writing, while in mathematics they were above. In relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1, pupils achieved well. A good proportion also achieved higher levels in all these subjects and particularly so in writing.
5. Inspection findings confirm that the good standards of recent years are being maintained and there has been a recovery in writing standards as a result of the close attention given to addressing this relative weakness. By the age of 11, pupils' standards are above those nationally in English and science, and a good proportion achieve well above those expected for pupils of their age. In mathematics, standards are well above average and pupils achieve well. Seven year olds also achieve well in

- science and very well in English and mathematics, attaining standards that are well above average.
6. The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy very well and closely monitored teaching and pupils' progress towards targets in both subjects. As a result, weaknesses; for example, in writing, were quickly diagnosed and remedial action was taken through a variety of strategies. The school is also focussing more attention on improving pupils' scientific enquiry skills, although these are not yet as well developed by Year 6 as other aspects of science amongst the more able pupils. By the age of eleven, pupils' attain the standards expected in their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, their progress is quite variable from year to year, reflecting the considerable variation in teacher's own knowledge and skills in the subject. Pupils' use of ICT in other subjects to help raise standards is also underdeveloped.
 7. Reading standards are well above average, particularly by the age of seven, and most pupils achieve very well. They read a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and are encouraged and supported both at school and at home, especially lower attainers and those with special educational needs. By the age of seven the majority read fluently and accurately, and about a third achieve above average standards. Shared and group reading has helped develop pupils' confidence and expression. Many 11 year olds show higher skills, explaining their preferences and expressing views, but their library skills are underdeveloped; for example, using the classification system.
 8. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well throughout the school so that by Year 6 most are confident speakers. Pupils acquire a wide vocabulary, including technical terms within subjects, as a result of the attention teachers give to new vocabulary in their planning and teaching. Pupils discuss and share ideas in groups very well and listen carefully to other pupils' views. Their writing skills have improved and are above average. They write in a variety of styles and develop their punctuation and spelling so that by Year 6 most write extendedly for different purposes and audiences, and their work is presented well.
 9. Pupils' achieve very well in their numeracy skills throughout the school. By Year 2 many can explore relationships and number patterns, and identify fractions such as quarters and thirds. Most understand place values to 100, about a third do so to 1000, and many describe features of two- and three-dimensional shapes accurately. By Year 6 most are competent in applying all four basic number operations and many can devise their own strategy to solve problems in everyday contexts and explain their reasoning. The more able pupils interpret data from lists and graphs well.
 10. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school in music as a result of very knowledgeable and effective teaching from the specialist music co-ordinator and good provision from visiting peripatetic music staff. Their achievements are also above those expected for 11 year olds in design and technology, art and physical education. There are no subjects where standards are unsatisfactory, but pupils' basic skills in geography and history are underdeveloped compared to those in other subjects because insufficient attention has been focussed on these in recent years and resources for them are insufficient.
 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEP) as a result of careful monitoring and reviews undertaken by the co-ordinator and effective support provided by teaching assistants. The school's register of more able, gifted and talented pupils is used very effectively to ensure that they achieve well, especially in Years 1 and 2, where extra support is

often provided by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Those few pupils in Reception and the infants who have English as an additional language have been assessed, do not require additional tuition and are making good progress. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. The relative weakness identified in previous years in boys writing is being effectively addressed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. This is in line with the findings of the previous report. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, respond very well and show interest in the activities provided. For instance, pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson were eager to take part in practical activities using co-ordinates. Pupils' concentration is very good. Most work hard and try to do their best. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy school, have very good attitudes to learning and settle quickly to the activities provided. Parents expressed strong agreement with the positive attitudes and values promoted by the school.
13. Standards of behaviour are very good in classes and around the school. Pupils are courteous and treat staff, parents and visitors politely. They demonstrate acceptance of a clear moral code and show care for one another, their belongings and school property. They know whom to approach when incidents of bullying occur. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Pupils know that all the teachers want what is best for them. Teachers and pupils have a high regard and respect for one another. This has a positive impact on the way pupils treat each other and adults. Pupils throughout the school are very willing to accept responsibility when given the opportunity. They enjoy assisting as classroom helpers and register monitors, and pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 elect school-council representatives. However, most roles of responsibility, such as playground friends, prefects and answering the school phone, are held by Year 6. Opportunities provided by teachers for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning are limited.
14. Attendance during the last reporting year was well above the national average. Almost all pupils arrive within the time allowed for registration, allowing lessons to start promptly and continue without interruption. This good use of time contributes to pupils' good achievements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage, are good and some is very good or excellent. Over four fifths of lessons are good or better and over a third very good, with a few excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when about a tenth was unsatisfactory. These improvements are mainly due to closer monitoring and support by the headteacher and the successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy have been thoroughly analysed and the strategies adapted to address weaknesses; for example, to improve the quality of writing in recent years, especially amongst boys. There is some very good teaching in English and mathematics, and the teaching of music is often excellent.
16. Teachers in the Foundation Stage plan lessons with well chosen, challenging and imaginative activities that help children acquire the skills they need, particularly to develop their literacy and numeracy. The adults work closely as a team, employ a

good range of teaching methods and manage pupils very well. They assess children's progress regularly through careful observation and recording based on 'Stepping Stones' towards the Early Learning Goals, and this information is used effectively to ensure that children of different capabilities are appropriately challenged and supported.

17. Teachers throughout the school plan lessons carefully around clear objectives for pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Most introductions are lively and include skilful questioning so that pupils recall their prior learning, predict and explain. Pupils are generally confident and enthusiastic to respond to their teachers' questions. In one Year 6 science lesson the teacher challenged them to examine the quality of data they had collected on the growth of daisies in different localities and the patterns found. Pupils were given two or three minutes to discuss and argue the issues within their groups before giving their considered responses. Teachers employ strategies like these successfully to ensure that pupils of different capabilities and social and ethnic backgrounds make a full contribution and are fully integrated in lessons.
18. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of most subjects, particularly English, mathematics, science and music, and this is reflected in the level of challenge and expectations they convey to pupils. The high quality of music teaching by the specialist co-ordinator, especially her knowledge and use of the available resources, is a major reason for the very good standards pupils achieve. However, there are weaknesses. Teachers' ICT skills vary considerably across the school. The more confident use ICT regularly to teach basic skills and enhance discussions through demonstration and effective guidance. But others are much less confident, resulting in less effective teaching methods being employed; for example, worksheet-based activities instead of first-hand experience. There are also weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills in both history and geography.
19. A particular strength in teaching quality is the use made of assessment information to ensure that lessons are appropriately challenging and adapted for pupils of different capabilities and needs. For example, teaching assistants keep records of pupils' responses in lessons, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers closely monitor progress towards pupils' targets for literacy and numeracy and these are used to help adapt the pitch of the work and focus of support provided by teaching and support assistants. In most lessons pupils are grouped according to their capabilities, and in Years 5 and 6 setting arrangements are in place for a number of key subjects to help ensure that all are appropriately challenged. The teacher of a Year 5 English upper set conveyed high expectations of her pupils and they responded very well as they constructed arguments about animal rights, taking account of different intended audiences; for example, by including slogans involving the use of alliteration.
20. Teachers work closely with their assistants to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teaching assistants achieve a good balance between guidance and questioning when working with individuals. In Years 1 and 2 those on the school's register of able, gifted and talented pupils are often grouped together for more-challenging work, as when Year 1 pupils learning about forces carried out an investigation to compare the distance cars travel along different surfaces. As a result of careful questioning from the support teacher these pupils progressed very well in their enquiry skills.
21. Pupils find most lessons stimulating and interesting. Relationships are very good and pupils managed very well by teachers and support staff so that little time is wasted,

the pace of learning is good and pupils almost always behave very well. Most resources are used effectively; for example, to give pupils first-hand experience of how pneumatics can be used to control movement in a very well organised Year 3 design and technology lesson. However, ICT is not used sufficiently to raise standards. The school's new computer projector is not yet being used confidently by all staff to enrich class discussions, and computers in classrooms are also under-used. Occasionally, class discussions are too long and pupils lose concentration, particularly when lessons are not brought to life through lively demonstration. The school's library is also inadequately stocked and not being used sufficiently to promote reading.

22. Marking is good. Pupils' work is regularly checked and corrected where necessary, and useful comments, both written and verbal, are given to help them to improve. Sometimes teachers provide time in lessons for pupils to respond, when books are returned, to the comments they have made, as when Year 6 pupils were expected to act on their teacher's comments about their science investigation so far. Homework is set in a number of subjects, but a minority of parents have commented that it tends to be uneven in frequency over time, especially in Years 5 and 6. Inspectors agree. Pupils' homework diaries suggest varying levels of homework being set.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

23. The curriculum in the school is good overall. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The statutory curriculum is in place. It is broad and balanced, with teaching time allocated appropriately to each subject. However, the total time calculated for actual teaching in Years 3 to 6 is shorter than the recommended minimum time. The school plans to remedy this soon. There has rightly been an emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics to raise standards, and literacy and numeracy lessons follow the national strategies. Most subjects are planned and adapted from national guidelines, while others have a scheme of work planned by the school, for example, in music where it is of good quality. Information and communication technology provision is satisfactory and pupils acquire sound basic skills but they are not using them sufficiently within subjects to help raise standards. A good feature of provision is the planned programme for personal, social and health education that takes place in 'circle time', assemblies, specific lessons and some subject lessons. It is planned and co-ordinated across the curriculum well and contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sex education for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is included partly within this programme and partly in the science curriculum.
24. The quality of the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is planned through the six areas of development, each of which is given appropriate time. The well-planned activities in the reception class enable the children to work through the 'stepping stones' towards, and at times to exceed, the Early Learning Goals.
25. The school has very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. It has prioritised these two subjects, with the result that pupils of all capabilities progress well throughout the school. However, too little attention has been given to other subjects, notably history and geography and consequently, pupils are not acquiring sufficient basic skills in these subjects.

26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Their needs are well met and there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils in all areas of the curriculum through well-matched work, extra resources and appropriate support in lessons. In Years 5 and 6, where pupils are taught in ability sets for half of each day, extra support is targeted appropriately at both more able and less able pupils. Support classes have been provided for pupils in Years 2 and 6 taking national tests, and have helped to raise attainment. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) spends two days a week in the school. She provides good advice for teaching staff and teaching assistants who work with children with special educational needs. The policy for special education needs has been reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of the New Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, and all staff has received training. Pupils' specific needs are identified, with a programme of support drawn up on an IEP. These IEP's are of good quality and used effectively to guide planning and raise standards for these pupils.
27. The provision for the few pupils in school who have English as an additional language (EAL) is good. They are fully integrated into lessons and school life, and their progress monitored. The local education authority has provided support for and advice about those who are at earlier stages of learning English, assessed them and found that they do not need additional help from external agencies.
28. The programme for curriculum enrichment is good. The Breakfast Club caters for about 30 pupils who enjoy breakfast and quiet activities in the company of their friends. There is a range of clubs for sport and music. More unusual clubs such as chess, a bank, a newspaper and first aid, are also offered. Most of these clubs are for pupils in Years 3 to 6, although French is available to all pupils and recently a football club for Year 2 classes has started. A residential visit to an outdoor education centre is arranged for pupils in Year 6 and supports their social development.
29. The school is closely involved in the work of the community of the parish of St Mary and St Modwen. The priest from the local church regularly takes assemblies and celebrates mass in school. Members of the faith community support pupils in school masses and in the celebrations of First Communion and Confirmation. Pupils support the wider local community by performing at Lichfield Cathedral and nearby nursing homes, and distributing Harvest parcels to local residents. The school is involved with the services in the local community such as fire fighters, police and hospital staff. Visitors include an African Steel Band and local footballers. Pupils are made aware of the needs of other communities through supporting the work of CAFOD in the Third World, sending parcels to Romanian children and collecting money for mosquito nets in the Gambia. Involvement in these activities promotes pupils' social and moral development very well.
30. While pupils are involved in a range of educational visits, few of these are an integral part of the taught curriculum over time. For example, visits to the theatre at Christmas, though giving pupils an opportunity to see live drama, are not linked directly to the curriculum. Other visits, such as that to London by Year 6 when they had finished their national tests, widen pupils' horizons, but are primarily social rather than directly linked to the curriculum. Visits such as that made to Ashend House Farm by the reception class enhance learning and deepen understanding. However, there are too few visits to museums, historic buildings and geographical sites both locally and further afield to support the history and geography curriculum. This is unsatisfactory and prevents pupils deepening their knowledge and understanding of these subjects.

31. The school has a good working relationship with the local Catholic secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Teachers in Year 7 teach in the school, and bridging units of work are taught. There are suitable links with the local cluster of primary schools and good links with the nearby nurseries.
32. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. However, the provision for pupils' cultural development remains satisfactory.
33. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. They are encouraged to be proud of their own religious beliefs and there is good provision for them to learn about the beliefs and celebrations of other faiths in assemblies, religious education lessons and planned activities in the school's multicultural week. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect on their experiences, and many of the poems and prayers written by them reveal a spiritual dimension. Displays such as the art in the school entrance are used to encourage them to consider the wonder of nature.
34. Pupils' moral development is very good and pervades school life. They discuss and agree the school code of conduct. They are clearly taught the principles of right and wrong, and are expected to care for property and the school environment. The teachers actively promote opportunities for discussion on moral issues, such as in a Year 4 science lesson when pupils were studying habitat using the school pond area.
35. Pupils' social development is very good. The school provides opportunities through extra-curricular activities, the school council and roles of responsibility for Year 6 pupils to development social skills to allow them to relate effectively to others. Staff work hard to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem through a system of rewards for good work and behaviour. Pupils raise money for charities and learn about caring for others less fortunate than themselves.
36. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have visited the theatre and taken part in a school production of Macbeth. Visitors to the school include musicians, and visits by pupils include those to Birmingham's Sea Life Centre, London and the local mosque. The school also organises a multicultural week each year with a planned programme of activities mainly related to other faiths. However, pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures present in Britain today remains limited, partly because there are few opportunities to make visits to local museums and other places of interest.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school works very hard to provide a caring, Catholic environment. As reported at the time of the previous inspection, adults treat pupils with respect and value them as individuals. They monitor pupils' personal development very well through circle time, class discussion and assemblies where achievement outside school is celebrated as well as good work and behaviour in school. Staff place very good emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and making them aware of their individual achievements. This gives them confidence in their own ability and encourages them to respond positively to new challenges and to try their best. Parents are very pleased with the care and support the school provides.
38. Staff consistently and very effectively use the agreed procedures for promoting good behaviour and as a result, behaviour throughout the school is very good. There are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour and staff deal promptly with any

reported concerns. The home-school agreement supports these procedures very well.

39. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are very good. Registers are called at the beginning of each session and absence is followed up. A record of all holidays taken in term time is kept and parents are informed that any holidays over ten school days will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The close attention given to monitoring attendance helps ensure attendance levels remain high and that pupils build consistently on their learning.
40. Staff are well aware of child-protection procedures, which comply with and are agreed by the area child-protection committee. Training has recently been undertaken. The school very effectively looks after pupils' health, safety and general well-being and is well supported by outside agencies. It follows very effective procedures for first aid and the recording of accidents and informing parents. There is a detailed health-and-safety policy agreed by the governing body, which undertakes risk assessments regularly.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic achievement and progress, especially in English and mathematics, are very good. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection, when this was identified as a key area for improvement. The deputy headteacher, who has particular knowledge and expertise in the area of assessment, has led developments in this area very well. The focus has been on using assessment for learning in the classroom and alongside this a pilot project with pupils engaged in their own self-assessment. Evidence of their impact can be seen in all classrooms through a 'traffic light system' that helps focus pupils' attention on their learning. Green means they are happy with their learning, amber when they are not sure and red when they do not know or understand. This system of self-assessment is beginning to have a positive impact upon pupils' knowledge of their own learning.
42. Very good procedures are in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, and targets for their achievements are used as benchmarks of their success. A range of standardised tests, including the non-statutory national tests, are used for Years 3, 4 and 5, and standardised tests are used for reading and spelling throughout the school. Baseline assessment is undertaken in the reception class. The school monitors pupil progress each term through the use of a Profile Book for each pupil in number, writing, religious education and science. Very good use is made of this assessment information to monitor progress and take action where necessary; for example, to guide teaching. This has been particularly successful in the recent focus on improving pupils' writing. The headteacher and the assessment manager also make good use of national comparative information to compare pupils' achievements in key subjects. There is a register of gifted and talented pupils (MABLE) in place and this register is particularly effective in the infants in guiding the focus of extra support given by the SENCo. However, subject co-ordinators in some subjects such as ICT, history and geography are less involved in gathering and using assessment information to guide the focus of their planning and developments in their subjects so that improvements are not fully focussed on addressing weaknesses in pupils' achievements. Key assessment information is now increasingly retained centrally in the school's computer database and this helps improve the school's analysis of patterns and trends.
43. The school has a good system of assessment and early intervention from the Foundation Stage to support pupils with special educational needs. In the infant and

junior years class teachers and their assistants assess pupils who may be a cause for concern in their learning, and their progress towards their targets is reviewed regularly. Where necessary, further advice and support are available through other agencies, such as the speech and language therapy service. The educational psychologist also advises and has provided training, such as the six-week circle-time training undertaken with Year 5 pupils and their teacher. Annual progress reviews are undertaken effectively with parents, led by the SENCO and headteacher, with relevant outside agencies in support where necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school continues to have very strong links with parents. Most indicate that they are pleased with what it provides. Parents are proud of the caring Catholic ethos and have confidence in the school's ability to meet the needs of their children.
45. The school provides useful information for parents. Most parents who replied to the parents' questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the quality and quantity of information they receive through regular newsletters and half-termly curriculum letters that inform them of what their children will be doing and how they can help. The school also holds workshops for parents which enable them, to support their children's learning at home more effectively. As a result, many parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are well presented and informative. Parents know they are welcome in school and can talk to teachers about concerns at any reasonable time. Most parents feel they are given a clear picture of how their children are progressing at the termly parent-teacher consultation meetings and in annual progress reports. These contain information on work covered, progress being made and areas for development. Parents were pleased that they were consulted about the change in the school's reporting format.
46. Pupils IEP targets are discussed with parents at the time of review and they sign the IEP to agree the new targets set. The school sees the link with parents of pupils with special educational needs as crucial to their welfare. Parents are very supportive and attend all reviews and parental discussions. To support parents' involvement, the SENCO has time set aside each week for administrative duties and to meet parents and discuss any matters of concern.
47. Parents are supportive of homework, and inspectors agree with their view that it is given inconsistently. A considerable number of parents help in school and with extra-curricular activities. This help is much appreciated by staff. The Parent Teacher Association is open to all. It is active in arranging events which raise considerable amounts of money to assist with school resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher, appointed two years ago, is providing very good leadership and direction that has united the staff in a common purpose of raising standards. He is ably supported by his deputy and together, they form an effective and consultative leadership team. The school's aims and values, expressed in its mission statement and summarised as Achievement, Belief and Care, are strongly reflected in its work. Pupils are expected to work hard within a warm and caring climate. The school's strong Catholic values pervade its life and work with pupils, parents and the wider community.

49. The headteacher has rightly focussed attention on improving the rigour with which the school evaluates its performance (a weakness at the time of the last inspection) and, in particular, improving assessment procedures and their use to raise standards. Good progress has been made in both these areas and systems for monitoring the school's performance are now good, although the role of some subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped. Teaching is monitored and supported with a focus on improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The headteacher and deputy rigorously analyse and compare the school's standards and act on their findings; for example, to address weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school, and that of boys in particular. More recently they have analysed pupils' progress by ethnicity and for patterns amongst pupils of different capabilities, and a register of gifted and talented pupils has been compiled. As a result, the impact of the school's commitment to social inclusion and equality of opportunity is being more robustly monitored and action is being taken. This approach needs extending to include class teachers when reviewing their pupils' progress towards their targets. The school is implementing the governor's policy on social and racial tolerance through its ethos and the planned curriculum, for example within pupils' personal, social and health education provision.
50. The senior management team is broadly based and includes representation from all key areas of the school. There is close teamwork and a fully consultative climate to the school's management that is focussed on implementing priorities in the development plan. Team leaders for the Foundation Year and infants join the lower-junior team leader to meet with the deputy and headteacher weekly. Each has clear roles and responsibilities in monitoring and developing curriculum planning and delivery in their areas. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed to improving their subjects, and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been particularly effective, leading to much-improved standards in recent years. However, the role of most other subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped. In particular, they are less experienced in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in their subjects; for example, by analysing patterns in pupils' achievements, and monitoring and supporting teaching.
51. The management of special educational needs is good. All confidential documentation, including the register of pupils with special educational needs and the register of gifted and talented pupils, are kept in a securely-locked filing cabinet. Good progress has been made to bringing the procedures in line with the new SEN Code of Practice. The governors are very committed to special educational needs provision and have provided extra funding for support assistants. At present the governor for special educational needs is also a teacher in the school and works alongside the SENCO in developing the provision for the more able pupils. The teaching assistants and learning-support assistants are very effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs, and they work as a co-ordinated team. Resources for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs are sufficient, although the range of ICT software applications is limited. However, the school is working with Derby University on a project to develop the software resources in the school.
52. The headteacher consults widely and has involved all staff, governors and parents in deciding school priorities; for example, by surveying parental views of the school. The development plan is consequently well founded and contains appropriate priorities for improvement. It is well structured with clear strategies and criteria for success focussed on meeting targets for pupils' achievements. However, the school's longer-term goals and aspirations have not been articulated so clearly; for example, about promoting more creativity in the curriculum and developing its role in the community.

53. The governing body is effective in carrying out its statutory duties and is led very well. The committee structure works efficiently and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are fully committed to the school's welfare, regularly visit to learn more about aspects of its provision and report back their findings. They are provided with regular reports from key staff and the headteacher; for example, on its standards and how they compare with others nationally. They play an important role in shaping the school's development, particularly its priorities focussed on raising standards. Their role in monitoring the school's actions to address priorities in its development plan and major spending decisions should be developed further.
54. The Finance Committee monitors school spending closely, and financial controls are good. The minor issues identified in the last auditor's report have been implemented. The relatively large carry-over of funds in April 2001 was due to unexpected savings made when the headteacher and deputy both left and a new deputy was not appointed for some time. Financial reserves have since fallen to more appropriate levels. Governors plan the use of resources strategically; for example, to take account of falling rolls in recent years, and they direct resources appropriately to key priorities. A good example is the spending approved last year for extra staffing to ensure that teaching quality was not undermined by larger numbers of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
55. The school is implementing the principles of best value well. Staff, governors and parents are all consulted and their views taken account of in key decisions. The school is increasingly challenging the quality of its provision, for example, by monitoring teaching and learning in key subjects, and standards are carefully analysed in relation to national benchmarks. The school also seeks good value by researching several suppliers for major purchases. Overall, it is effective in providing a good education for its pupils, particularly good teaching. Standards are consistently above average, and well above in some areas. Expenditure per pupil and the school's socio-economic circumstances are broadly average. Taking account of these factors, it provides good value for money.
56. Arrangements for the professional development and monitoring of staff performance are well developed. The headteacher and staff have agreed objectives in relation to both their own professional development and school priorities, including pupils' achievements. These are monitored and reviewed and all staff regularly receive feedback on their teaching. The deputy plans training and professional development to address both individual needs and school priorities. Teachers disseminate their learning from courses to relevant staff, and the quality of training providers is evaluated to help guide future spending. A number of new teachers have been appointed in the past two years and induction arrangements for them have been effective. Very good provision is also made for trainee teachers. The school has well-developed links with two initial-teacher-training institutions, whose students speak highly of the support, guidance and training they receive at the school.
57. Teachers and support staff work hard and are committed to their pupils. There is close teamwork and support throughout the staff and relationships are very good. The school secretaries are very experienced and well trained. They manage the school's systems and databases very well and provide a welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors.
58. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Classrooms are of an adequate size for the delivery of the National Curriculum. The school is clean, tidy and well maintained by

the hard-working caretaker and her staff. The playground and field are generous, with a secure play area for children under five years of age. There is a useful and well-used environmental area which adds to pupils' learning.

59. There is a wide range of provision for learning resources within subjects, which is satisfactory overall. Resources for music and physical education are very good, contribute well to pupils' learning and enable them to attain highly in these subjects. Resources for English, mathematics, art and design are good. Overall the resources for the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. However, there is too little storage space to allow easy access, and facilities within the outdoor area for physical development are unsatisfactory, although funding has been found to address this weakness. There are also too few resources, especially artefacts, for history and geography, and this limits the progress pupils make within these subjects. The library stock is also limited, but the school is taking steps to address this.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. To raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
(paragraph numbers relating to these issues are provided in brackets)
- (1) improve the provision for ICT by:
 - providing training to improve some teachers' knowledge and skills;
 - making more-effective use of ICT to help raise standards in some subjects;
 - addressing gaps in resources such as sensors and data-loggers in science;
(6, 79, 88, 98, 108, 118, 122, 123, 124, 125)
 - (2) develop the role of some subject co-ordinators in evaluating pupils' achievements and in monitoring and supporting teaching and learning;
(50, 100, 110, 114, 119, 125)
 - (3) take steps to improve history and geography, particularly pupils' basic skills in these subjects and the contribution they make to their cultural development.
(25, 36, 111, 113, 118)
61. Minor issues the governors may wish to take account of:
- Review the length of the taught week for pupils in Year 3 – 6. *(23)*
 - Improve the provision for pupils' cultural and multicultural understanding. *(36)*
 - Extend further the school's analysis of pupils' achievements by ethnicity, gender and capability by class teachers in their termly reviews. *(49)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	15	20	8	0	0	0
Percentage	7	33	43	17	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	14	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	28	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	97 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	29	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	93 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	22	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	21
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	34	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (94)	87 (89)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	33	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (83)	89 (86)	89 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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	176	0	0
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001- 2
	£
Total income	479,439
Total expenditure	466,018
Expenditure per pupil	1,864
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,160
Balance carried forward to next year	42,581

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	141

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	39	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	40	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	53	9	1	2
The teaching is good.	62	37	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	46	6	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	30	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	48	2	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	62	37	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	35	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	46	6	1	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. The Foundation Stage comprises the children in the reception class. Children enter the school in the September after their fourth birthday and become full-time within the first few weeks. They enter the school from a wide variety of pre-school settings, with about half coming from a local nursery.
63. Most of the children enter the school with levels of attainment in line with those expected for their age in many aspects of the six areas of learning of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. They make good progress through the 'stepping stones' and are beginning to work within the early levels of the National Curriculum for personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They make good progress in mathematics, many exceed the Early Learning Goals for these areas and some are already working in the early levels of the National Curriculum. By the end of the reception year the majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, some exceed them in aspects of reading and writing and most exceed them in speaking and listening. In these two subjects more-able children are working well above expectations, especially in reading, writing and number. In physical development, children meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class.
64. As at the time of the last inspection teaching is good overall in all the areas of learning, with some that is very good. Teachers provide a range of appropriate activities that help the children learn the skills they need. They teach the basic skills needed for literacy and numeracy very well. Medium-term planning to meet the Early Learning Goals is good. Weekly and daily planning is also good. The adults plan well together and work very well as a team. This is a particular strength of the class. Staff employ a good range of teaching methods: they work with large and small groups and individuals on planned tasks, they interact with children working on self-chosen tasks and they move children on in their learning through skilful questioning. All adults have high expectations of the children's behaviour and learning, and manage them very well. Children are taught the rules and systems of the class, which they quickly learn and to which they are eager to conform.
65. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good. Each child has an individual profile containing all the 'stepping stones'. Observations and evaluations made during the day are used to inform children's profiles. All this information is used to inform curriculum planning that meets the needs of all the children, including the more and less able, and those for whom English is an additional language, enabling them to make good progress and attain well. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The adults provide a good education in a well-planned setting than enables all the children to reach their potential. Resources for most areas of the curriculum are good. The safe area for outdoor learning is a welcome addition but is too small. Unsuitable access to the area through the cloakroom, the lack of a full-time nursery nurse to provide adequate supervision and too few resources to support children's physical development prevent its consistent use as an outdoor classroom to promote all areas of learning.

66. Children have very good attitudes to learning. They achieve well and make good progress overall. They quickly acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. Children make lots of effort to learn. They are very interested in all the activities, learn to concentrate for increasing lengths of time and become independent. Many children work unsupervised at self-chosen tasks while the teacher works with one group. For example, when the teacher is teaching a literacy or numeracy group, the remainder of the children are able to make models, role-play in the 'corner shop' or use the computer. They concentrate on their chosen task and interact well with each other.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Children rapidly feel safe and secure in their new school as a result of the caring and supportive atmosphere created by the adults. Children make good progress and soon gain the confidence to relate to adults and to cooperate with one another. Children learn to take turns and share through playing together in the shop and with construction toys. They wait patiently for their turn with the technology toys, such as the programmable ladybird, and have made a rota to ensure that everyone has a turn with the controlled car. One child who was trying to help organise this said, 'An excellent idea, so we can all have a go, is to all line up.' Most children listen carefully to adults and try to comply with instructions. They can dress and undress themselves with help and reminders. They go to the toilet independently and remember to wash their hands afterwards.

Communication, language and literacy

68. The majority of the children will attain the goals for communication, language and literacy. About two-thirds of them are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals, with a small group achieving some aspects of National Curriculum Levels 1 and 2. Children develop their skills in listening and speaking through planned opportunities in lessons and a range of role-play activities. They are able to listen to stories with understanding and enjoyment. They retell the adventures of Barnaby Bear when he has gone home with them. They interact well with adults and other children, using appropriate language. Most children enjoy looking at print, pictures and books. All are aware that print goes from left to right and recognise familiar words, such as their name. Most children know all the phonemes and some high-frequency words. Some can read simple repetitive texts and are keen to practise their skills. They use both contextual and picture clues to decode new words. A minority are fluent readers of simple texts and are able to anticipate story endings, talk about the plot and ask questions about the text. For example, one pupil reading a story set in the past asked, 'Why is she called 'cook'?' Many children write simple sentences, spelling many of the regular words correctly and making recognizable attempts at irregular ones. More-able children can write sentences unaided. For example, one wrote, 'I come to school by my ford car. My brother sees his freinds.' (sic)

Mathematical development

69. Most of the children will exceed the goals in mathematical development and some will achieve a large proportion of the requirements of the National Curriculum Level 1, especially in number. Children who are secure within the goals can sequence the numbers to 15. They accurately count written objects and write the number symbol correctly. Children who are exceeding the goals can count backwards and forwards in twos to 20. Most able mathematicians are beginning to know the number bonds of seven and use appropriate mathematical language in everyday situations. A

significant number know the names of two and three-dimensional shapes, know which line is longer or shorter and which parcel is heavier or lighter, and use prepositions such as 'above', 'behind', 'right' and 'left' when describing where a frog is in a pond.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Children come to school with some experience of the natural world and places near and far, and have an idea of the past. This is built upon by the topics that form the basis of their work in this area of the curriculum. Before the inspection, children had learnt about mini-beasts in the school grounds. They were able to recall this knowledge and showed great sensitivity when finding spiders in the classroom. They begin to learn about types of transport and relate their own experiences using correct vocabulary such as 'helicopter' and 'ferry'. One child said, 'There's a bullet train in Japan.' Another, who made a model aeroplane, pointed out, 'That's the wings and that's the fins.' Children learn about how machines work by playing with such working toys as a washing machine, a microwave and a shop till. They had been asked to find out which appliances at home had switches. One had drawn pictures and talked about them. Another drew pictures that an adult had labelled. A third had written and numbered a list using correct spellings. They enjoy using the computers, are skilled at moving the mouse and are able to use simple programs, such as My World, that require them to select and click on icons.

Physical development

71. The class uses the hall twice a week for more-formal lessons. These provide them with opportunities to move in time to music. They use space well, avoiding contact with other children. They can use different levels; some spin on the floor and some walk tall on tiptoes. They develop a short dance sequence, repeating one or two moves, but find it harder to remember and perform three moves. Children do not have enough access to appropriate equipment in the outside area to continue to develop their gross motor skills as well as they should. Children are aware of their bodies and their mobility by using a range of equipment such as tricycles and scooters. They can make these vehicles move very fast and some are able to pedal backwards. Almost all children have good manipulative skills, handling small objects with skill and care. They use scissors, pencils and brushes well, although a small minority hold pencils and brushes wrongly.

Creative development

72. Children enjoy drawing and painting, and demonstrate care in such activities. They use scissors well, trying to cut carefully along the lines, and are able to glue small pieces of paper accurately onto card. They make recognisable models using glue and sticky tape. They enjoy music lessons. They build up a repertoire of simple songs and learn the names of a range of tuned and untuned instruments. They are able to play these instruments properly and understand the terms 'high' and 'low'. When one child played down the scale on a xylophone the class spontaneously sang down the scale too – mostly in tune!

ENGLISH

73. Standards attained by pupils are well above average by the age of seven and they are above average by the age of 11. These findings broadly reflect the results of the 2002 national tests. The school's analysis of them revealed weaknesses in pupils' writing

that became a focus for improvement for the school. There has since been a significant rise in pupils' standards in writing across the school. Pupils generally make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment. This reflects the good and often very good quality of teaching in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and those few with English as an additional language make good progress. This is the result of early intervention procedures and the very good support pupils receive from the SENCO, teaching assistants and learning-support assistants, who work as a co-ordinated team. Pupils' standards show good improvement since the last inspection.

74. By the ages of seven and 11, standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully in lessons, are interested in what others have to say and are keen to contribute themselves. Pupils are encouraged to extend the length of their replies to questions, develop their own ideas and explain them to others in the class. Teachers make good use of praise and encouragement, valuing individual pupils' responses and increasing their confidence in speaking in class. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils identified the main characters in the book 'Big Bad Bill'. They discussed possible main characters for their own stories where they could use 'alliteration' for a title, prompted by suggestions from the teacher; for example, 'Cool Clever Clara' and 'Hopeless Helpless Harry.' In all year groups, teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to speak during all parts of lessons, in both whole class and group discussions. Teachers successfully extend pupils' spoken vocabulary and the clarity of their responses by encouraging them to use appropriate vocabulary when explaining their answers. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and constantly remind them of the need to listen attentively to instructions and the views of others.
75. By the time pupils are 11 they listen well and are confident speakers who make use of a wide vocabulary when explaining their ideas or the reasons for their answers. They take turns to speak and listen to other pupils' replies, and enthusiastically join together in reading aloud passages from books or poems. For example, Year 5 pupils were into their second week of 'performance poetry,' having studied the work of contemporary poets such as Roger McGough, and were in this lesson looking at examples of older poetry. The poem chosen was 'From a Railway Carriage' by Robert Louis Stevenson, and pupils rehearsed the poem, concentrating on the rhythm pattern and effect on the rhythm of the phrases. The phrases, 'Faster than fairies, faster than witches, bridges and houses, hedges and ditches,' quickly focused pupils' minds on the rhythm of a train passing through the countryside. This enthusiasm was transferred to composing their own versions, such as 'Fast as a fly, quick as a flash' and so on. Teachers' planning identifies the key vocabulary they want pupils to learn in a particular lesson. These words are given good emphasis in lessons and ensure that pupils begin to make use of them when talking about their work. For example, Year 4 pupils viewed a 'Frosties' advert on television and studied the choices of vocabulary used in persuasive writing, such as that found in advertisements.
76. Standards in reading are well above average by the time pupils are seven and 11. Most pupils read simple, known texts confidently and use a range of strategies, such as pictures, context and the sound-to-symbol relationship, to read unfamiliar words. Average and above-average pupils respond equally to fiction and non-fiction books, knowing the difference between the two, and usually read a variety of texts accurately and fluently. They are keen to talk about their favourite books, describing with clarity the title, author and content and why they like it. Most pupils take books home in order to practise reading, which enables them to make better progress. The National

Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of shared and group reading, and has helped develop confidence in reading aloud to others. Some higher-attaining pupils say which books they have enjoyed reading and which ones they have not enjoyed, but many do not have a particular favourite book or author, with the exception of J K Rowling. Generally they say that the last book they have read is their favourite. They correct their own mistakes when their reading does not make sense. Lower-attaining pupils enjoy reading and read confidently simple, familiar texts that are well matched to their ability. However, when reading new material they need a lot of support, which is readily available from the adults in the classes. All pupils are aware of how to use the contents, index pages and glossaries when finding information, and by the end of Year 6 pupils understand and can use the higher-order skills of skimming and scanning to research information from books. Higher-achieving pupils read confidently and fluently, and a good proportion achieve above national expectations. They express strong preferences for certain authors or books, and can explain their views.

77. The school library provision is at present unsatisfactory, with an insufficient range and balance between reading schemes, fiction and non-fiction texts for the number of pupils on roll in the school. The library is not used well by pupils to get books or to practise and refine their library skills. For example, although some pupils interviewed have had experience in visiting local libraries, their library skills are at present underdeveloped and many do not yet have a clear understanding of the library classification system. The storage of books on shelves outside the library is poor and lacks care in the way they are displayed. However, the school is aware of this and is currently working to improve book stocks and library access for next term. Teachers and teaching assistants generally manage reading well, but not all classes have consistent daily reading sessions. Where this occurs pupils say they are not developing their love of reading and tend to be negative in their attitudes to it. However, throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well when reading texts so that they can take a full part in activities.
78. Pupils' standards in writing have improved in the past year as a result of close monitoring and the emphasis on it last year. Throughout all years pupils make good progress and achieve well in writing. By Year 2, pupils of all capabilities make good progress and achieve well. They experience a wide range of writing formats, and the high expectations of their teachers are evident in the amount of work they have completed so far this year. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in extending their stories by greater use of description and a developing vocabulary to interest the reader and develop the plot. They make consistent use of a range of punctuation, including speech marks, and their spelling of familiar words is accurate. More-difficult words are generally spelt phonetically. Pupils' work is presented well, but many do not join their letters. A majority are working at the expected level, although a significant number are achieving above expectations. Work is marked well and pupils' targets are clearly indicated on the front covers of their books. Teachers are always supportive in their comments and frequently inform pupils of what they need to do to improve their work. The school has a register of gifted and talented pupils, and the SENCo works with them in the infants to extend their learning through more-challenging activities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the more able pupils chose a non-fiction book, composed questions they thought the book would answer, and used higher-order skills of skimming to find the answers.
79. Pupils' progress in writing in Years 3 and 4 is good. They can write more-extended pieces of work, and their writing is more structured. They have had experience of

writing in a wide range of different formats, such as extended stories and a description of an Ostrich gained from researching for information in books and on the internet. By the end of Year 6 most pupils write extendedly in a range of different forms, including character studies, reports, formal and informal invitations, their own curriculum vitae and a letter to the Archbishop of Birmingham. However, there is little evidence of pupils writing play scripts and diaries, or of making good use of cross-curricular writing, such as historical writing. Their work is generally well presented and makes good use of imagery, alliteration and personification. They structure their work through paragraphs and use a mixture of complex and simple sentences to create atmosphere and engage the reader. However, there are too few opportunities for them to re-draft their work, correct their mistakes and present their work in an improved form. The use of ICT; for example, to help pupils draft, edit and present their work, is generally underdeveloped, but there was one good example of a word-processed story entitled 'The Bicycle' and an example of word-processed instructions on 'How to make a Puppet', with good use made of bullet points for emphasis.

80. Standards of handwriting vary across the school but are generally satisfactory, with some examples of good and very good presentation from some individual pupils. Handwriting standards are improving slowly, but practice examples are not transferring skills sufficiently into the regular handwriting which pupils undertake. Standards of spelling are generally satisfactory, but disappointing among a number of older more-able pupils. Practice in the correction of spellings varies across the school; some spelling mistakes are corrected, but pupils are not necessarily required to practise or correct their mistakes.
81. Teaching and learning are mainly very good across the school. Most teachers have high expectations, plan well, show a very good understanding and knowledge of the subject, and assess pupils' work thoroughly. They know what their pupils are capable of and use challenging questions to encourage them to think and explain. Pupils show positive attitudes, and the pace of work is good. The tasks given to pupils with special educational needs take appropriate account of their individual education plans, and teachers' assistants are provided with clear guidance on their work with individuals and groups. As a result their support is very effective and these pupils progress well in their learning. However, unsatisfactory areas remain. For example, marking varies in quality; the best is good and includes appropriate comments to help pupils to improve. But some is not rigorous enough, especially in attending to spelling, punctuation and standards of presentation, and the codes agreed for marking within the policy are not used consistently. Homework is also inconsistently applied across the school, especially as pupils get older and where it is expected that homework will become more frequent each week.
82. The quality and use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning are very good and much improved since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has begun to track pupils' achievements by collecting work samples, at present from Year 6, and interviewing pupils to assess their attitudes to the subject. Targets are set for writing, and most pupils know their individual targets. Pupils are assessed regularly, especially in their writing, and their progress is reviewed in relation to these targets.
83. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has undertaken the role for three years. The policy was recently audited and she has just started to monitor teaching and learning across the school. An audit of literacy provision has been undertaken and an appropriate action plan written. Resource provision is very good, with a variety of resources for teachers to use in classrooms. However, library resources are currently unsatisfactory and have been identified for development.

MATHEMATICS

84. In the 2002 national tests, 11 year old pupils' attained standards above the national average and well above those of similar schools. The proportion achieving the higher levels was also above the national average. The school almost reached its targets. Seven-year-olds attained standards above both the national average and that for similar schools. The proportion achieving higher levels was also good. The trend in standards in recent years is above the national average. Standards seen during the inspection are well above the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
85. By the end of Year 2 many of the pupils can identify odd and even numbers, explore relationships in number patterns, add and subtract, measure using metres and centimetres, and identify halves, quarters and thirds. They know that odd numbers cannot be shared equally. Some of the higher-attaining pupils understand the value of hundreds, tens and units, and are developing an awareness of the passage of time. By the end of Year 2, average pupils can understand place value to tens and read and write the numerals to 100. They know the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They collect data in tally marks and convert it into a bar graph. They understand simple line symmetry and can identify two lines of symmetry on regular shapes. Pupils are beginning to develop simple mental strategies for solving problems such as 'If a quarter of the class have school dinners, how many have sandwiches?' They are able to calculate mentally and to explain how they arrived at the answer. Some children can explain how to do a calculation in more than one way.
86. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils use the four rules of number competently. They can express fractions as percentages, find fractions of whole numbers and cancel down to the simplest fraction. They understand how to construct a bar chart, which shapes have reflective symmetry and how to calculate the radius, diameter and circumference of a circle. They solve problems, selecting the correct operation and using all four rules of number. They understand and correctly use terms such as 'mean', 'median', 'mode' and 'range'. Less able pupils work with numbers to 1000 for addition and subtraction and to 100 for multiplication and division. They understand co-ordinates, line, reflective symmetry and rotation. The more able pupils can use data, graphs and lists to work out what the information is telling them. They plot co-ordinates on a grid with four quadrants. They know which of the four rules of number is needed to solve a problem and when a mixture of them is needed.
87. In lessons pupils are keen to do well. This is reflected in very good levels of sustained concentration, active listening for long periods, active involvement in the answering of questions and good co-operation in group activities. Pupils' very good attitudes to work and their very good behaviour have a positive effect upon the progress they make in lessons throughout the school.
88. There are some opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other areas of curriculum. In science, pupils compile data and display it in graphs, and in geography they use their knowledge of co-ordinates in map work. There were few examples seen of pupils using information and communication technology during the inspection or in previous work. However, they have used databases and spreadsheets to sort data, derive information from it using formulae and display it graphically; for example, calculating the costs and profit from selling sweets in a shop over time.

89. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and there is some that is very good, particularly in Years 2 and 4, and some in Year 5. This is why pupils make such good progress and standards are well above expectations. The very good teaching is characterised by a clear understanding of pupils' needs, effective behaviour management and high expectations. A common feature of the teaching is the use of good questioning skills to ensure that pupils fully understand the work, and the close match of tasks to pupils' capabilities. This ensures an appropriate degree of challenge for pupils of all abilities. For example, in a Year 5 lesson for less able pupils the teacher, through challenging and supportive questioning, helped them to understand the difference between area and perimeter while challenging them to find patterns in the answers.
90. The good pace and teachers' high expectations in lessons help pupils to learn more quickly and to attain more highly. Pupils are managed very well and many lessons are made fun for them through interesting activities. The rigorous ethos in Year 6 ensured that all pupils worked hard to use their learning of the rules of data interpretation to complete their tasks. In Year 2 the teacher has very high expectations of pupils' attainment. In one lesson observed the introduction was brisk and the amount of work to be completed was large, but pupils rose to the challenge. They produced accurate, neatly-presented work that they could clearly explain. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are seen in almost all lessons and help pupils to make at least good progress. Teachers use praise constructively so that pupils know how and why they have done well. Tasks are well matched to the wide ability range within the classes, and pupils are therefore able to make good progress within lessons and to feel successful.
91. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and try hard to improve their skills. They like practical activities and learn well through them. Generally in group work pupils work well together and remain on task, even when it is difficult. All pupils make good progress over time and some make very good progress within lessons. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress due to the good quality of support they receive.
92. Whilst the pupils' work is marked frequently, the marking rarely indicates what they need to do to improve. Their progress in mathematics is assessed using end-of-year tests as well as regular assessments that are an integral part of the mathematics scheme of work. In some classes the results of end-of-lesson assessments are used to adjust the planning for the following lesson to take account of the pupils' progress. Homework, when set, extends the learning in lessons appropriately but is not given consistently over time.
93. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about mathematics, provides good leadership and has tried very hard to raise its profile in the school. She has analysed data from national and end-of-year tests for patterns in standards and coverage of all aspects of mathematics. Areas where pupils have particular difficulties in interim tests at the end of units of work are noted and discussed with other staff so that they can take account of them. The co-ordinator also observes lessons, guides teachers and reviews pupils' work. Resources for the subject are very good.

SCIENCE

94. Standards in the 2002 national tests for 11 year olds were well above both the national average and that for similar schools. The results were an improvement on previous years when they were above average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher

levels was also well above average. Inspection findings confirm that the good standards are being sustained throughout the school. Almost all pupils reach at least the expected standard by the age of 11 and almost half are above it. Pupils with special educational needs progress well towards the targets in the education plans as a result of careful planning and adapting of work by their teachers and very good support from teaching assistants. The more able, gifted and talented also achieve well as a result of effective setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 and the focussed support given to them in Years 1 and 2. Seven year olds reach above average standards and achieve well, including those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language.

95. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to observe and record carefully and develop new knowledge and understanding through well chosen and stimulating activities. By Year 2 they learn about and investigate factors affecting growth in plants such as light, water and temperature, and tabulate their results. They describe similarities and differences between living things, including themselves, graphically recording and comparing things such as eye colour, facial features and hand-spans. The more able pupils link features of materials such as metals, plastics and glass to their uses in everyday life. One group of more able and gifted pupils in Year 1 learned about the effects of forces such as pushes, pulls and friction. They made very good progress in their knowledge and skills as they compared the distance a car ran down a slope and across different surfaces. With skilful questioning and guidance from their teacher they considered how to make their tests fair, measured and recorded distances in correct units, and compared their predictions with their results.
96. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 progress well in their knowledge, understanding and skills so that, by year 6, many are secure in their understanding of key concepts. For example, Year 4 pupils compare animals and plants within different habitats, identify mini-beasts using keys and think about the feeding relationships involved. By Year 6 most pupils understand features of light and sound, such as sound travelling as a vibration, light reflection and the effect the apparent motion of the Sun has on shadows. They investigate dissolving and solutions, and know the differences between solids, liquids and gases in terms of particles.
97. Pupils' scientific enquiry skills are not as well developed for a number of reasons, although more emphasis is being placed on teaching these skills to improve them this year. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are guided well through effective questioning from support teachers and assistants; for example, as they investigate animals and plants in different locations in Year 4. By Year 6 almost all pupils are competent in carrying out a fair test and many are acquiring some higher scientific enquiry skills. However, teachers tend mainly to guide pupils in planning their scientific methods through class discussion and questioning. Insufficient opportunity is given for pupils to trial their strategy, solve problems and refine their methods for themselves; for example when investigating which materials are best for making string telephones in Year 5. Year 6 pupils learn to take more account of the quality of their data as they investigate; for example, when looking for patterns in the growth of daisies in different locations. Many more-able pupils understood the need to make several measures of frequency in each area and averaged their results. However, fewer are secure in interpreting what variations in their results tell them about the reliability of their data, how this may affect their conclusion and what they could do to improve their experiments. Such skills need well-chosen examples to help pupils to progress.

98. Pupils' literacy skills are applied and developed well. Technical vocabulary is identified early in topic work and emphasised by teachers in a variety of ways, through devising a glossary of terms, displaying key words prominently and encouraging pupils to apply them in spoken and written language. Numeracy skills are used very well to estimate, measure in a variety of units, and order, calculate and display data graphically. However, information and communication technology is not yet used sufficiently to help promote pupils' scientific enquiry skills. They sometimes research information from the Internet and process experimental data using spreadsheets. However, there are no sensors and data-loggers in school that enable pupils to gather, process and display data; for example, from experiments on sound and light, or when comparing the effectiveness of different insulation materials.
99. Teaching and learning are good throughout and there are some very good features. None is less than satisfactory. Lessons are stimulating and planned well, particularly to take account of pupils' different capabilities. For example, in most years pupils are organised into ability groups for their activities so that support teachers and assistants build on their prior learning and skills more effectively. Teachers retain detailed assessment information to guide the focus of their teaching and provide valuable feedback for pupils on their next steps through their marking. Relationships are very good and pupils managed very well. As a result, little time is wasted and lessons progress at a good pace and with much enthusiasm from pupils. Lessons are structured well to build on previous learning and to develop new ideas through well-chosen activities. Occasionally, class discussions are too long and not brought to life through demonstration and illustration; for example, with a computer projector. The result is that some pupils lose concentration and interest. Homework is usually set but is not consistent over time, particularly for older pupils in Years 5 and 6.
100. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, when pupils' standards were about average. The subject co-ordinator, who has been in charge for a year, is providing sound leadership. Resources have been improved to match planned activities, and some evaluation of pupils' written work is undertaken. However, the co-ordinator's role in monitoring the subject is under-developed. For example, pupils are assessed regularly and systematically by class teachers, but patterns in their achievements are not yet analysed to help guide the focus of improvements, nor has she yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching quality, although this is planned for later in the year.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Standards in art and design are above those expected by the ages of seven and 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
102. In the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe teaching and learning directly, partly because of timetable constraints. Judgements are based on an analysis of sketchbooks, displays around the school, photographic evidence and talking to pupils. The younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a 'Mother Nature' display in the school hall with coloured designs in the style of William Morris, Christmas cards based on nature designs and information about famous artists such as Georgia O'Keefe. Other displays demonstrate the variety of work pupils undertake and include drawings of book front covers, poster designs promoting good manners and some computer art used to make class birthday displays with illustrations of themselves. The school provides visitors with a very good display in the entrance foyer that includes leaf prints, patterns, moving figures and landscapes, all produced to a very

high standard. These are mounted in frames and have exhibited locally. These examples demonstrate the value the school places on pupils' art. Their sculptures also show a good standard of work. (Inspectors were also given photographic evidence of Year 3 pupils engaged in making their models.)

103. A large and impressive wall hanging for the Millennium celebrations that involved pupils from all years, showing scenes in stitching of the periods from 1900 –2000, is displayed in the school hall. Pupils' first-hand observational sketches; for example, of the school and local environment, are produced to a good standard. Pupils are taught a range of skills and techniques such as colour mixing to create a wash effect and ways of bringing out facial features and movement when sketching. A very good example of their pencil sketches is that of 'Journeys in Stone' designs of pebble patterns. There are also examples of pupils working in the style of artists such as Picasso and computer art in the style of Mondrian. However, this is limited and pupils have not yet built up a range of skills and techniques through studying a range of famous artists. Year 6 pupils learn to use a digital camera to take images and then manipulate them to create a change in the mood of the picture. The range of three-dimensional work on display in sculpture, papier mâché masks and collages does not include mouldable materials such as clay.
104. The evidence of pupils' work suggests that the quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject and are keen to talk about what they have done in art and design. The high profile that is placed on art and design in the school and through exhibitions of pupils' work in the community demonstrates a good quality of leadership and management in the subject. The scheme of work is sound and based on national guidance. Some monitoring of standards is undertaken through the displays of work around the school and reviewing pupils' sketchbooks and this helps the co-ordinator shape developments in the subject. Resources for the subject are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils reach standards above those expected and their progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and some gifted and talented pupils make very good progress. Pupils' evaluation skills are not developed as well as their skills in designing and assembling.
106. By Year 2, pupils acquire good skills in cutting, shaping and assembling their products and begin to evaluate their work; for example, when designing and making puppets. Pupils in Year 1 examine books with moving parts operated by levers before making their own. One group that included a new pupil from a minority ethnic background worked very well together and used tools safely to cut and assemble a lever movement using a butterfly clip, guided effectively by a teaching assistant. In Year 2, pupils develop ideas about mechanisms further as they make toys with winding mechanisms based on a nursery rhyme. Those finished products on display were robust and assembled to a good standard.
107. Pupils develop their knowledge of mechanisms in later years and also draw on their knowledge of science to design and make more-elaborate products. For example, those in Year 3 explore some basic principles of pneumatics through some exciting and very well planned activities. One very able pupil explained why syringes of two different sizes linked by tubes resulted in the smaller plunger moving much further. The teacher encouraged all pupils to speculate about how such movements could be used to control moving parts in their toy monster. Year 4 pupils draw on the

knowledge of electricity and materials to design burglar alarms, showing a variety of types of switch for different situations, such as detecting movement on a floor mat.

108. By Year 6 many pupils show good knowledge and skills when solving problems in their design tasks; for example, as they assemble electrical circuits that include a switch and motor to provide rotational movement as part of their theme of 'Fairground Rides'. Some very talented pupils, inspired by this theme, made their own working, electrically operated and geared Ferris wheels from a Connect kit to a very high standard. However, evaluation skills are not as well developed. Teachers are sometimes not using a wide range of commercially-produced products to help stimulate pupils' own ideas and to consider fitness for purpose when designing their own. In Years 5 and 6, teachers do not do enough to help pupils evaluate their work as it develops by encouraging them to work to design criteria that take account of their intended users and situations where their products may be used. Information and communication technology is used to a limited extent to develop pupils' understanding of control systems; for example, when controlling traffic light sequences in Years 5 and 6, but insufficient use is made of graphics applications to aid pupils' designs.
109. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection week, but judged on an analysis of pupils' work, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons carefully and use tools and other resources effectively to enable pupils to develop their skills in shaping and assembling their designs. The design themes chosen are very interesting to pupils so that all are enthusiastic towards work. They are managed very well and relationships are very good. As a result, group work is purposeful and little time is wasted. Most teachers have good subject knowledge that guides their questioning and the level of challenge for pupils of different capabilities, especially the more able. For example, Year 3 pupils exploring pneumatics thought about the need for a valve to control the direction of air movement as a result of their teacher's questioning.
110. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, when provision was very weak. The subject leader, in charge following the last inspection, has worked very hard to improve both curriculum plans and resources. She provides good leadership, support and guidance for other staff. However, her role in assessing and evaluating pupils' standards to help guide the focus for further improvement is underdeveloped and she has not been able to monitor teaching quality directly. Consequently, developments in the subject are not yet sufficiently focussed on addressing weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievements. Resources such as tools and consumables are adequate, but there is an insufficient range of finished products in some topics that could help teachers stimulate pupils' own ideas for their designs.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Standards overall are in line with what is expected nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. This is similar to standards at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils throughout, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding, but their acquisition of basic skills in the subject as they move through the school is underdeveloped. The overall standard of work in books is satisfactory, although its scope is limited and it is sometimes untidy, with poor punctuation and handwriting.

112. Pupils in Year 2 know the countries of the United Kingdom and where they live within England. They learn about the geographical features of the immediate area around their school. They undertake traffic surveys and know what common road signs mean. They study Kenya as a contrasting locality. Pupils in Year 3 learn to interpret a map and some know the symbols for common landmarks. They know what geographical features are needed for people to settle in an area and draw maps of imaginary villages incorporating them. In Year 4, pupils study the climate in London and Chembakoli, and compare housing, farming and daily life in these places. They also learn about the importance of the region in India as a tea producer. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop their map-reading skills, using maps of a variety of scales. Most pupils cope well with four-figure co-ordinates. They study the effects of traffic on people's lives and plan a route for a bypass to Burton on Trent. One pupil wrote, 'I would build a flyover going right over the town so you can miss the town's traffic.' They discuss the reasons why different groups of people would have different reasons for wanting a bypass or not.
113. No specific geography lessons were seen during the inspection, though there were elements of geography in the Year 2 lesson about the seaside. The work in books shows that pupils cover the main content of the geography programmes of study but that key skills such as field work, the ability to produce maps and routes, and an understanding of patterns and processes are underdeveloped. This is partly because there are insufficient resources for many of these aspects and because there is no planned programme of visits to support the curriculum.
114. Geography has not been the focus of development for the school for a considerable time. Consequently no time has been given to staff development or, until recently, for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, and little money has been allocated to purchase resources. Neither is the curriculum enriched and brought to life by a well-planned programme of visits and visitors. These weaknesses are resulting in some underachievement, especially in pupils' acquisition of basic skills in the subject. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and is well aware of the weaknesses within the subject but has had only limited success in rectifying them so far.

HISTORY

115. Most pupils attain standards in history that are broadly in line with those found nationally by the ages of both seven and eleven. Very few attain higher standards for their respective ages. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their mother tongue, make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and skills.
116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their knowledge about the passage of time. They understand that events happened recently, long ago or very long ago. Year 2 pupils use the terms 'modern', 'in the past' and 'long ago' with accuracy and confidence. They know that different materials were used in the past. One child wrote, 'I think the pot doll is very old and dollies now don't look like that.' They can recall information about events and people; for example, the Great Fire of London, Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale.
117. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a sense of chronology, having experienced coverage of all the historical periods required in the National Curriculum. They develop skills of comparison when studying education in the city states of Ancient Greece. They also develop their research skills through the use of a range of

reference books and the Internet. They are able to devise questions to which they research an answer, and work well in small groups for these activities.

118. It was only possible to observe one lesson in the infants and two in later years. Judging from pupils' books, teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory. In one effective lesson in Year 3, well-prepared resources such as newspaper articles, appropriate books, photocopied question sheets and templates for making a sarcophagus were used well to bring the subject to life. These resources inspired pupils to learn and helped to keep them focussed throughout the lesson. However, resources and artefacts to help teach history are generally unsatisfactory and this adversely affects the quality of teaching in some lessons in a number of ways. For example, there are too few appropriate pictures or artefacts for infant pupils to look at while learning about the seaside long ago and nowadays. The pictures used are too small for them to see easily as a class. Pupils are also not fired with enthusiasm for the subject and cannot talk knowledgably about artefacts. In the juniors, pupils research Ancient Greece using the Internet and books. However, the impact of one lesson was undermined by the unreliability of some computers. Neither is the curriculum supported sufficiently by a well-planned programme of visits and visitors. Weaknesses such as this adversely affect the subject's contribution to pupils' cultural development.
119. History has not been a recent focus in the school development plan. As a result no time has been given to staff development or, until recently, to monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. Little money has been allocated to purchase resources and the wider community is not used sufficiently as resource to help bring the subject to life. Many pupils are not achieving as well as they could as a result and opportunities to develop their cultural awareness and understanding are being missed. The co-ordinator is well aware of the weaknesses within the subject but has had limited success in addressing them so far.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Pupils' overall standards are broadly in line with those expected for 11 year olds. They acquire sound basic skills in most aspects of information and communication technology. However, they are not being provided with sufficient opportunities to apply these skills to help raise their standards in some subjects. By the age of seven most pupils achieve at least satisfactory standards and some are above average in their knowledge and skills as a result of good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make reasonable progress, but the more able, gifted and talented pupils are not being challenged enough.
121. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn basic skills in using computers to enable them to save, retrieve, amend and present their work in different styles and fonts; for example, to create labels for presentations. They use CD-ROMs to research information about other countries and cultures. They acquire a good grounding in the use of control technology and databases. Year 2 pupils progressed well in their knowledge and skills as they learned to sequence a set of instructions to move a floor turtle along a route, with very effective teaching from a teaching assistant. Others learned to create a 'decision tree' that helped sort different fruits. By the end of the lesson most were able to devise questions of their own to create a basis for sorting, and others controlled the floor turtle with increasing accuracy.
122. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build their ICT skills further, particularly to research and communicate information in a variety of forms. By Year 6 almost all are competent in

using the Internet to research information and they use e-mail routinely. Pupils learn to combine text with images to create presentations and acquire good skills in using spreadsheets to analyse and present data graphically. Many are able to use formulae within spreadsheets to derive further information; for example, to calculate costs and sales of sweets sold in a shop over time. They also use spreadsheets to explore relationships such as that between their height and the distance they can jump. They build on their learning of control technology to control sequences such as traffic lights, using a control box. However, there are gaps in the school's resources that prevent pupils from using sensors for temperature, light and sound with data-loggers in their scientific enquiry work.

123. Although pupils acquire sound skills in a range of contexts and applications, these are not being used sufficiently within most subjects to help promote better standards; for example, in English, science, geography and history. This is because some teachers are quite competent in their own ICT skills while others are much less so and this variation is reflected in the frequency and quality of pupils' learning experiences. A Year 3 class progressed well in their writing skills as their teacher skilfully used a projector linked to a computer to enhance her class discussion and engage pupils directly in making decisions about the shared text. But some teachers lack such skills and confidence and this can adversely affect their choice of teaching methods. For example, in one Year 6 class, most pupils used a rather limited worksheet activity to consider how text and images can be combined in a slide presentation rather than a class discussion to develop an example and engage pupils directly in key decisions.
124. The quality of teaching and learning varies considerably but is mainly sound. Lessons are planned around clear objectives, pupils are managed very well and relationships are very good. As a result pupils co-operate well in paired tasks in the rather cramped ICT suite. In the better lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to teach basic skills well and encourage those able pupils to move on to more-challenging work, as when Year 4 pupils devising instructions for a screen turtle to move along a route went on to steer it around obstacles. However, some teachers lack sufficient knowledge and skills in key areas and this adversely affects the challenge of the work, especially for more-able pupils. Sometimes activities from the published scheme are used to teach new skills, but opportunities to link and apply them to current work in subjects and to the wider world are missed; for example, when combining text, graphics and motion to make presentations without using a current theme as the context. Worksheets are also sometimes used inappropriately; for example, when Year 5 pupils consider the advantages of using sensors to gather information without having first-hand experience of using them.
125. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, when the provision for ICT was weak. But there is still much to do. The subject co-ordinator is providing good leadership and direction for the subject. Curriculum plans have improved in recent years and a scheme is currently being introduced to enable teachers and pupils to assess their skills as they progress. The co-ordinator understands the weaknesses in some teachers' skills and has provided training and support in some key areas; for example, on using spreadsheets, and there is evidence of its positive impact on pupils' learning experiences. However, the co-ordinator's role in monitoring and developing the subject is under-developed, particularly in analysing pupils' achievements to help guide the focus of improvements and in monitoring and supporting teaching.
126. The school has acquired a new computer projector, but its potential has not yet been fully explored, particularly to enhance class discussions and to teach new skills and

techniques. While the number of computers available is adequate, they sometimes fail to work properly in the ICT suite, adversely affecting pupils' learning.

MUSIC

127. Standards in music are well above those expected at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils with special educational needs and those few with English as an additional language make very good progress. This is very good improvement since the last inspection that is due in large measure to the excellent leadership and management of the music co-ordinator since taking over the post two years ago. The music co-ordinator leads by example and teaches every class for the first of a series of three lessons while the class teacher observes and then follows up the next two lessons. This is proving to be an excellent way of developing other teachers' skills and confidence in teaching music and a model of in-house staff development.
128. Music is a high-profile subject in the school's life. This was shown very well during the inspection week through the Corpus Christi Mass, led by the parish priest. All pupils and a large group of parents attended it. The standard of music and pupils' singing for the mass, accompanied by the school orchestra, was of high quality. The music co-ordinator provided a very encouraging role-model, playing guitar and piano, with the headteacher also playing the guitar. Music is played on entry to school assemblies and this helps create a reflective atmosphere and a good setting for school worship through the singing of hymns and choruses. The quality of singing in the school is very good and pupils sing with a warm tone, well pitched and with very good diction.
129. The school has very good links with the local community. The choir has taken part in concerts in Burton Town Hall and was also chosen to sing in Lichfield Cathedral with the Staffordshire Youth Orchestra. The school has also made its own CD. The performances on this recording are very good and demonstrate the diverse range of music played in the school from reception year to Year 6. For example, the CD includes a performance by pupils of Tudor music, inspired by a visit to the school by Staffordshire Performing Arts, who play authentic Tudor music and who joined in with them.
130. There are over 40 pupils learning to play musical instruments with visiting instrumental teachers, including the violin, cello, trumpet, trombone, clarinet and flute. A number of other pupils are also learning to play recorders. It is very clear that many of these musicians are quite proficient. When the music co-ordinator brought a new piece of music to the lunchtime wind- band rehearsal, they were able to sight-read the music and produce a competent performance at their first attempt.
131. Pupils have very good attitudes to music, both in the lessons observed and in school performances. In lessons, pupils are engaged in a variety of activities involving investigating sounds and rhythms, and putting them together to create their own musical scores. For example, in one very good lesson Year 2 pupils clapped the rhythm of the syllables in people's names. This was extended further to join a group of names together to create a rhythmical musical pattern. Pupils then used tuned and untuned percussion to create melodic and rhythmical phrases. Another very good Year 2 lesson provided a very good example of a graphic score being developed as the teacher read a children's story and pupils used the instruments to create sound effects to enhance the story. The graphic score was created on a flip chart to record the sounds developed. Good links are made with literacy as pupils learned the 'London Underground' Rap, maintaining a steady rhythm to imitate the sounds of the train passing over the rails. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have also composed their own musical scores with a computer program.

132. The quality of teaching is outstanding. The music coordinator has excellent musical expertise. As well as demonstrating music lessons, she advises and supports staff in planning and organising their musical activities. The music policy has recently been reviewed and the scheme of work is based on a published music scheme and closely matched to national guidance in the teaching and learning of music. Resources for music are good and the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' standards in physical education are above expectations. Those with special educational needs make good progress over time. This constitutes an improvement since the previous inspection.
134. The physical education curriculum is broadly based and includes gymnastics, indoor and outdoor athletics, dance, net and wall games, dance and swimming. Swimming is undertaken by Year 4 pupils weekly for a whole academic year and they all achieve or exceed the national expectations.
135. Pupils learn new bat and ball skills, starting in the infants and gradually developing as they get older through a variety of team games. The school has boys and girls football teams that have both reached the finals in their local school league. Pupils also play hockey, netball and cricket. However, opportunities for them to take part in outdoor pursuits are limited.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan effectively and ensure that pupils understand the importance of warm up and cooling-down exercises and safety, such as awareness of others around them and how to move and set up equipment safely. Teachers plan lessons with clear objectives for knowledge and skills, and develop them through stimulating activities. Year 3 pupils developed their batting and bowling skills for team games such as quick-cricket and rounders. They practised basic skills of throwing, catching and striking the ball with increasing dexterity, and their teacher modelled such skills effectively to guide their work. Pupils were managed very well so that little time was wasted and their behaviour was good throughout. Some lessons observed concentrated on preparing them for the school sports day; a high-profile event in the school calendar. Younger pupils practised starting races and running competitively in a short race, while older pupils practised hurdling skills and sprinting to take part in a team relay.
137. The subject co-ordinator has been in charge for a year and is a qualified football, athletics and rugby coach. He leads developments in the subject well, having sought the views of pupils and staff to highlight areas for development, and led training for staff that has increased their confidence and skills. Areas identified for development have included netball and assessment, and are currently being addressed. Resources for the subject are good.