

INSPECTION REPORT

WORCESTER, CRANHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warndon, Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116750

Headteacher: Mrs V Holland

Lead inspector: Mrs O M Cooper

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th December 2003

Inspection number: 262801

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	443
School address:	Tetbury Drive Warndon Worcester Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR4 9LS
Telephone number:	(01905) 452 437
Fax number:	(01905) 759 526
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil McDonald
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The area served by the school consists of mixed privately owned and local authority housing, but there is a high level of social and economic deprivation among families. The pupils are predominantly white, mostly of United Kingdom heritage. The remaining pupils are of mixed race, or of Pakistani or Chinese origin, and eight speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average, although the school has a unit for pre-school pupils with speech and language difficulties drawing pupils from a wider area. Among the other pupils with special educational needs, moderate learning difficulties are the most prominent. The mobility of pupils is not a significant issue for the school. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is below average for the children's ages, with speaking, listening and social skills being underdeveloped for their age. The school is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools and has received several awards in recent years. It gained a School Achievement Award in 2000 for raising standards, Healthy School status in 2002 and the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People status in 2003, acknowledging the good practice in the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10859	Mrs O M Cooper	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Physical education English as an additional language
13895	Ms A Smith	Lay inspector	
12116	Mrs C Morgan	Team inspector	English Geography History
10120	Mr P Crookhall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music
29378	Mr K Watson	Team inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Design and technology Religious education The Foundation Stage
27424	Mr A Dobbins	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cranham is a good school, where pupils achieve well over time. Currently, overall standards are below average at the end of Year 2 but rise to being broadly average in Year 6. The school is successful in establishing good relationships with parents, but struggles to engage a significant number fully in supporting their children's learning at home. The leadership and management of the school, and the quality of teaching and the curriculum, are good. Pupils' personal development is good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and Years 4 to 6 because the teaching is good.
- The leadership and management of the school are good and focused on raising standards.
- The curriculum is good; most lessons are interesting for pupils, motivating them to want to learn.
- The good care and concern, along with the relationships that develop, help pupils to learn.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils are fully included in lessons.
- Provision in the 'I Can' speech and language unit is very good.
- Effective partnership with parents and good support for family learning.
- Standards in speaking and listening and writing throughout the school and in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 are not high enough.
- The teaching in Year 2 lacks sufficient stimulus.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Most of the key issues for improvement, identified in the previous inspection report, have been satisfactorily remedied. There is a clear curriculum map to show the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils have been raised successfully; assessment procedures have improved and pupil targets are now set. Monitoring of provision by key members of staff and subject co-ordinators has been extended, but this work is on-going due to changes of staff. The school is involved in a national Leadership Programme, which is helping to strengthen subject co-ordination and raise standards. The leadership and management of the school, and teaching in Years 1 and 2, have improved, but with further work to be done in Year 2. Standards have risen in line with the national trend at a time when there has been some loss of continuity in staffing, due to a high number of staff absences for maternity. Standards in history have declined since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The table above does not reflect the current situation in the school. The impact of the improved assessment procedures and a wider range of teaching methods is beginning to become evident and overall **achievement across the school is good**, although it is better in the reception classes and Years 4 to 6, than in other classes, where it is satisfactory. **Standards** on entry to the nursery are **below average**, particularly in language, literacy and social skills. By the end of their time in the nursery, children's language acquisition remains below average, because the teaching, although

otherwise satisfactory, does not concentrate on this area sufficiently. By the end of their year in reception, most reach the goals children are expected to reach in all areas of learning except language and literacy, where standards remain below average. Interesting activities are planned and so the children enjoy coming to school. In Year 2, **overall standards are below average**, because the teaching, although broadly satisfactory, has some weaknesses and does not give pupils the stimulation they need. There are weaknesses in the teaching of English and this affects pupils' learning in other subjects. **Overall standards in Year 6 are broadly average**. Standards are average in reading, mathematics and science, but remain below average in English because writing and speaking and listening skills are weaker. In all other subjects seen, standards are average in Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' personal development is good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils arrive punctually each day and most are keen to learn. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities and many take part. **Attendance is unsatisfactory** and is below the national average. Absences are followed up satisfactorily by the school and education welfare service.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, but there are weaknesses in Year 2, particularly in English. The teaching of basic skills in numeracy is good and the teaching of writing and speaking and listening skills is improving. This is because teachers have extended the range of teaching methods in use and also plan time for speaking and listening activities in many lessons. The use of multi media projectors and whiteboards has made lessons more interesting and enjoyable, which is necessary for some of the older junior pupils to sustain their concentration. Assessment procedures have improved and the information gained is being used to plan lessons more closely matched to pupils' learning needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good and clearly focused on raising standards. The headteacher leads by example in taking on additional responsibilities, she inspires staff to follow her lead. Staff morale is high. Senior managers provide good support and, through professional development, subject co-ordinators are playing an increasing role in influencing standards and developing teaching. The school has received several awards in recent years acknowledging its good practice, which is based on an ethos of care, concern and a valuing of achievement. Governance of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the school's provision.

Pupils are pleased with the school's provision, but are sometimes upset by the behaviour of a few pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in speaking and listening and writing throughout the school.
- Raise standards in mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Year 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. In the Foundation Stage, achievement is good in all the areas of learning. In Years 1 to 3, achievement is satisfactory and, in Years 4 to 6, it is good. Standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science, but remain below average in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain average standards in reading, which is creditable in view of their modest language skills on entry.
- Overall achievement is good; the large majority of pupils do as well as they can.
- Overall standards in Year 2 are below average and are not high enough.
- Standards in speaking and listening and writing throughout the school are not high enough.

Commentary

1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2003, as shown in the table below, were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. This indicates a decline from standards in 2002, but was in fact due to a year group with a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in writing was broadly in line with the national average, as the school had identified the attainment of higher attaining pupils as an issue and had concentrated on raising their attainment. The trend in the school's improvement in standards in the last five years is above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.5 (12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.5 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003, as shown in the table below, were below the national average in mathematics, and well below in English and science. The results in science were in the lowest five per cent for similar schools and were not high enough. However, when compared with schools whose results had been similar at the end of Year 2, the pupils had made better progress than in most schools in mathematics, similar progress in English, but less progress in science. Pupils' writing and language skills affect their ability to record their knowledge clearly and this may lead to lower results in national tests. The improved teaching methods and assessment procedures now implemented, along with better use of assessment information, is beginning to influence standards in science, which are higher than test results indicate.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0. (25.0)	26.8. (27.0)
mathematics	26.0. (25.0)	26.8. (26.7)

science	26.0. (25.4)	28.6. (28.3)
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There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Current standards of work in the Foundation Stage are broadly average. Most children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy, where skills on entry are at a low level of development. A small number exceed the expected goals.
- In Year 2, current standards are below average overall. In speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science, standards are below average. However, in reading, information and communication technology, religious education, art and design, history, physical education, music, and design and technology, standards are average. No judgement could be made in geography, as insufficient evidence was available. Achievement is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, as they are adequately supported in lessons.
- Standards in Year 6 show improvement and are average in reading, mathematics and science, but below average in speaking and listening and writing. The tracking of pupils' progress and the use of the assessment information to target pupils in need of additional support are beginning to show in pupils' attainment. Discussions with pupils show they have more knowledge than their test results indicate but they struggle to record their knowledge quickly and clearly enough. Their writing skills are hindering their overall attainment, an issue already identified by the school. The grouping arrangements in mathematics, where pupils work with others of similar attainment, are successfully supporting the drive to raise standards. In information and communication technology, religious education, physical education, history, music, art and design, and design and technology, standards are average. No judgement could be made in geography. Most pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, as they are well supported by their class teachers or receive additional support in small groups when appropriate. There are good opportunities for potentially talented musicians to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and some of these pupils make good progress and achieve well, exceeding the level expected by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls; however, the irregular attendance of a few pupils with special educational needs, mostly boys, hinders their progress.
- All pupils have targets for improvement in English and mathematics, and in junior classes in science, and, therefore, know what they need to do to move onto the next stage in their learning. Lesson plans usually include activities for pupils at different stages of development, including those with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties, and the deployment of teaching assistants has a good influence over the standards achieved by most of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **positive attitudes** to work and learning. Pupils' behaviour is **good**. There is **good** provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to work and learning, and relationships throughout the school are good.
- Pupils like coming to school and behave well.
- The school sets high expectations of pupils' conduct.
- The school successfully raises pupils' self-esteem and stimulates their desire to learn.
- The school helps pupils to become responsible through effective strategies for personal development.
- Attendance is below the national average.

Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. Most want to learn and tackle the work set for them with interest. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident in most lessons. Teachers effectively manage those pupils who find it difficult to behave well in lessons; as a consequence, there is very little disruption to classes. Most pupils learn well because the school helps them to become motivated, confident and responsible, and pupils respond well to encouragement and praise. Children in the nursery and reception classes settle happily into school routines and quickly adopt good attitudes to school and learning.
8. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school, and there are no exclusions for unacceptable behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and this leads to a better learning environment and progress in raising standards. Pupils work especially well when motivated by good teaching. Members of staff are consistent in their high expectations of good behaviour at all times and speak to pupils with respect and consideration. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds are made to feel included and very welcome. Any harassment or bullying is dealt with swiftly. Relationships between all staff and pupils are always warm and supportive. As a result, pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their abilities.
9. Pupils say they like their school and many are members of school clubs. All are keen to take up the opportunity offered to learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility provided by the school, for example, by becoming representatives on the school council. Pupils are given constant guidance to help them distinguish right from wrong and are encouraged to value each other's efforts. They take many opportunities to discuss and reflect on the impact of their actions and matters that are troubling them, and this helps to raise their self-esteem and respect for themselves and each other. Pupils are supportive of those in their school who have disabilities and help them join in with activities.
10. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and has a significant impact on their attitudes and behaviour. School rules are displayed in classrooms and are understood by pupils and applied fairly by staff. Teachers provide good role models, and moral messages are conveyed clearly. The school fosters the social development of its pupils by promoting feelings of self-worth and a sense of community with common and inclusive values.
11. The school is helping pupils to develop a range of beliefs and values, particularly those of care and respect. There is satisfactory provision for spiritual development, although specific opportunities to raise pupils' spiritual awareness are sometimes missed. For example, although the daily act of collective worship fulfils the statutory requirements, it does not regularly provide positive contributions to this aspect. Lessons in religious education give pupils good opportunities to reflect on both the beliefs and practices of their own religion and those of other world faiths. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and they are taught to appreciate their own cultural and religious traditions through religious education lessons and activities, although there is insufficient consideration given to cultures beyond the immediate area.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.6%	School data :	0.1%
National data:	5.4%	National data:	0.4%

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

12. Attendance rates, as shown in the table above, are unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The school works with parents and carers to encourage the regular

attendance of pupils. However, attendance has declined since the last inspection, mainly because a significant number of parents take holidays during term time. There is also a small minority of parents who find it difficult to ensure their pupils attend school regularly. Most pupils arrive in time for the beginning of the school day and are ready to begin lessons promptly. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The teaching is **good** and enables pupils to achieve well over time in the school. The curriculum provides a **wide range** of interesting, relevant experiences and good opportunities for learning in most year groups. The school's care for its pupils is **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall and has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with clear learning aims.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 4 to 6.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed in most lessons and support pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well managed.
- Pupils with special educational needs are usually well catered for.
- Examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen in English.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough in Year 2.

Commentary

13. The table below gives the overall picture of lessons seen during the inspection, but does not indicate where the best teaching was seen, or the pattern across the year groups.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 73 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	15 (21%)	29 (40%)	27 (37%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. Figures exceed 100% due to rounding.

14. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 4 to 6, where there is a significant proportion of very good lessons. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching is better in the reception classes, where it is consistently good, than in the nursery, where, although it is generally satisfactory, some opportunities to interact with the children and develop their vocabulary and knowledge are missed. The stronger aspect of teaching in the nursery is the emphasis on the children's personal development, which enables the children to make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning. Most of the very good lessons in the reception classes involve the development of children's literacy skills. This is because the teachers are very secure in their understanding of how young children learn and in how to teach early reading and writing skills. The activities planned link well to the National Literacy Strategy, are interesting and successfully motivate children to want to learn. On arrival each day, the children are particularly interested in investigating whether their toy teddy (Tricky Teddy) has moved things around overnight. This is very successful in developing the children's observational skills as they check the number line and the target words as well as other aspects of the classroom. The children are eager to return things to the correct place.

15. The good teaching in Years 4 to 6 results from the brisk pace and the level of challenge for all groups of pupils. In most lessons, tasks include activities for pupils at different stages in their learning and so all groups are able to make progress. When pupils' concentration begins to wane, teachers use 'brain gym' (mental exercises) successfully to refocus their attention. In these year groups, there was more evidence of teachers' understanding of how different pupils learn and building different strategies into their lessons. Computers were often used to provide challenge for higher attaining pupils, which was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection.
16. Overall strengths in the teaching are in the planning, the deployment of teaching assistants, the insistence on high standards of behaviour and the way all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn and make progress. Lesson plans identify the learning targets, which are usually explained to the pupils and frequently referred to. Time towards the end of lessons is then given to assessing pupils' progress towards meeting these learning targets. Sometimes, pupils assess for themselves how well they feel they have done and how confident they are in their understanding of new work. This gives them a good understanding of their rate of progress. The teaching assistants have received training in their roles and are responsible for the preparation of resources and for assessing the attainment of the children they work with. They provide valuable support for the teachers and pupils in most lessons, helping pupils to make better progress. The discipline policy is applied consistently throughout the school and this is effective in maintaining good behaviour. Teachers are quick to apply the sanctions should any pupil begin to behave in a way which is likely to disrupt the learning of others, but equally praise and reward those making good efforts to succeed. The use of interactive whiteboards in lessons is adding more interest, particularly for boys, which is helping to stimulate them and so raise their attainment.
17. In Years 1, 2 and 3, teaching is mostly satisfactory but is weaker in Year 2, where it is unsatisfactory in English. Overall teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection, when it was unsatisfactory, but a weakness remains in Year 2, in teachers' expectations of the pupils' written work, and this leads to pupils struggling on entry to Year 3, particularly with recording their work. The scrutiny of work in Years 1 and 2 revealed an over reliance on the use of worksheets that do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to develop literacy skills. There is some colouring in at the expense of writing and consolidating the words they have already learned to spell. The time is used less effectively for learning and the range of teaching methods is more limited than in other year groups. There are good features in the teaching of mathematics in Year 2, where brisk introductory sessions help pupils to develop their skills in mental arithmetic.
18. The teaching in the learning support base is very good. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by their class teachers in most year groups. They are fully included in lessons and make the same rate of progress as their peers. Good individual education plans are used to plan activities well matched to the learning needs of pupils. Teachers, pupils and parents are involved in the identification of targets for learning.
19. Assessment procedures are good and the use of the information to further pupils' learning and progress has improved since the previous inspection. Careful tracking of the progress of each pupil, from entry to the school to when they leave, shows clearly any pupil making insufficient progress and needing a boost to their performance. Some of the additional national strategies have been implemented to boost pupils' performance in English, and are helping pupils make better progress through working in small groups. In science, the school has started to assess attainment at the beginning and end of each unit of work, so as to gauge pupils' progress and evaluate how well a topic has been taught. This has the potential to be a very valuable resource when fully implemented.
20. Pupils make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding in the Foundation Stage and Years 4 to 6, where pupils apply themselves well to their tasks and most try hard to succeed. From an early stage, they learn to work independently and, in junior classes, work well

together and support each other, for example, when using certain computer programs. This is again less evident in Year 2, where pupils found it difficult to work together when testing how well different cars travelled down a ramp.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and is now **good**. A **good** range of activities enriches the curriculum beyond the school day. The quality and range of learning resources are **good** in Years 1 to 6 and **very good** in the Foundation Stage. Accommodation throughout is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Appropriate emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy, but there are inconsistencies in the promotion of writing skills across the curriculum.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning in other subjects, and computer resources are very good.
- Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- In the 'I Can' class, provision is very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional education.
- For pupils in Years 3 to 6, the range and quality of extra-curricular activities in the arts are very good, but opportunities to join in competitive sports are limited.
- The school provides very good opportunities for every pupil to learn to play a musical instrument, which have a positive effect on overall standards.

Commentary

21. There is good breadth and balance in the curriculum and statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship, are fully met. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its provision by introducing comprehensive long-term plans which promote the development of skills and knowledge in each subject from year to year through carefully organised topic work. As a result, pupils build steadily on what they already know.
22. The rich curriculum in the Foundation Stage is based on interesting first-hand experiences and provides a good balance of independent and teacher-directed activities that meet the children's needs well. The shared planning in the two reception classes is particularly effective in promoting a cohesive and consistent framework for learning.
23. Literacy and numeracy are given prominence in order to raise standards. Extended reading sessions outside the literacy hours are having a positive effect on progress. In Years 3 to 6, drama is used effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. The systematic promotion of writing skills across the curriculum is not well planned. Consequently, provision varies from class to class and good opportunities are missed to teach writing in other subjects. In Years 2 to 6, the grouping of pupils of similar attainment in numeracy enables the curriculum to be specifically focused to meet the needs of pupils of similar attainment in each set. This is instrumental in raising standards. The emphasis on mental strategies is improving pupils' abilities to work out problems in their heads. Information and communication technology is promoted effectively in specific information technology lessons and, particularly, by applying it in other subjects. Good use is made of the very good facilities in the computer suite and of computers in classrooms.
24. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are carefully drawn up and shared with pupils so that they know what their targets are. Learning goals are realistic, enabling pupils to succeed and move on. In the 'I Can' class, the curriculum is planned very carefully to successfully meet individual needs.

25. There are good arrangements to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals or groups of pupils, and different work or specialised support is usually provided when appropriate. All pupils are fully included and have access to the full curriculum.
26. The very good range and quality of extra-curricular and enrichment activities in the arts includes a choir, art clubs, and a wide range of peripatetic music lessons. There are theatre and other educational visits. Other good opportunities beyond the school day are gardening, cooking and chess clubs, a residential visit in Year 6, and homework and exercise clubs. Currently, the football club provides the only opportunity to engage in competitive sport. There is very good provision for all pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. In Year 4, the curriculum is enhanced by lessons in recorder playing for every pupil and, in Years 5 and 6, all pupils learn to play the steel pans. This exceptional commitment greatly enhances the musical life of the school and positively supports pupils' attainment.
27. There are sufficient teachers to meet the school's needs. The many teaching assistants are carefully trained by the school. They are efficiently deployed and make a significant contribution to children's learning. The accommodation is spacious and well kept, and supports the delivery of the curriculum effectively, both indoors and out. The adventure play area for the Foundation Stage children is a particularly good asset. The quantity and quality of resources are good overall and facilitate the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects.

Provision in the 'I Can' early years unit for children with speech and language difficulties

Provision in the unit is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management over all aspects of the unit's work.
- Children learn very well because the very good quality of teaching is supported by:
 - expert advice of the speech and language therapists in assessing children's needs and in developing and teaching specific programmes;
 - the teachers and support assistants, who have in-depth knowledge of the children and of their specific needs;
 - the highly effective planning of lessons; and
 - the very good relationships between staff and children, which make pupils confident as learners.
- The detailed, good quality information provided for children's mainstream provision, which prepares mainstream teachers most effectively to continue the work of the unit after the children have returned to them.

Commentary

28. The link between the 'I Can' charity, the local Health Trust and the Worcestershire education authority has helped establish provision that is highly effective in dealing with the specific speech and language needs of children at a very early age. In this, the expert help of the speech and language therapists, who spend much more time than is usual in most other equivalent units, is a major contribution. When they enter the unit, children are given a wide range of tests. The results are used well in developing individual programmes that allow teaching to be targeted to meet children's specific needs. Interesting activities are planned that excite the children. There is a high level of good quality interaction from all adults, who encourage the children to give correct answers and help to keep them stimulated. The children grow in confidence, influenced by the effective use of praise and the very good relationships. The unit is well resourced with specialist equipment and a wide range of books and materials. The teaching is purposeful and the children are confident as learners. They speak freely and listen well during their sessions at the unit and make very good progress in developing speech and language.

29. Three different groups of children attend the unit for part of each day. Most stay for two terms and some for three and all leave the unit by the time they are five years of age. For each child, the intent is to return them to mainstream provision without being disadvantaged by a delay or complications in their use of speech and language. This is achieved in full for many of the children. On return, they are helped by the good communication between the unit's staff and the mainstream teachers and the detailed information on the continuing development of their speech and language.
30. The day-to-day management of the unit by the teacher in charge is very good. Children quickly settle into the routines of the unit and recognise that they have to work hard to meet the high expectations of staff. They do this, both in their learning and in their behaviour.
31. The very good quality of the provision is recognised by the continuing endorsement of the 'I Can' charity, which annually formally validates the quality of the provision, and by the high regard headteachers of the receiving schools have for the work of the unit.
32. The teacher in charge of the unit reports to the steering committee, which is made up of personnel from education, the Health Trust and the 'I Can' charity. This has worked well to date in setting the aims of the unit and in achieving the very good quality of the provision. However, the speech and language therapists and the teaching staff of the unit have different line managers and the steering committee has no legislative authority for the governance of the unit. This hinders further development of the provision at times when the relevant source of funding for the planned development has to be checked and funding sought.

Care, guidance and support

The school has **good** provision for promoting the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school seeks and values the views of pupils and involves them in the development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- Relationships among pupils and between all members of staff are good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well and provide good support for them.
- The school listens to pupils' concerns, seeks their views and acts on them.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and build their confidence.
- Children in the 'I Can' unit are very well supported.

Commentary

33. The school has a positive, caring ethos and makes good provision for the personal support, welfare and guidance of pupils. The effective use of teachers and teaching assistants contributes significantly to the welfare and progress of all pupils. Members of staff know the pupils very well and work hard to develop and maintain the good relationships observed within the school community. Praise and encouragement for pupils' academic and personal achievements are a high priority in the school. For example, there is a weekly merit assembly. Teachers foster the development of personal and social skills and pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility offered by the school. The good procedures for the induction of new pupils take account of the individual needs of each child.
34. The headteacher is the designated person for ensuring effective child protection procedures in the school and she is ably aided by the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is a clear health and safety policy and fire drills are undertaken each term. Several members of staff receive appropriate first aid training and consideration is taken of pupils' safety around the school through regular inspections.

35. The school takes pupils' views seriously. The school council provides one effective mechanism for seeking and acting on their views whilst giving them opportunities to take responsibility. Decisions made by the school council have led to raising funds, for example, for the purchase of toys for the Children's Ward at the new hospital. Members of the school council are also responsible for projects such as the lunchtime 'bus stop' for pupils on the playground who have found no one to play with. Pupils say they are pleased with the school's provision, feel well supported by the school staff and are confident that they can rely on help and guidance when needed. Pupils' needs are supported by Circle Time, informal class discussions, and pupils are offered strategies to cope with a variety of situations and circumstances.
36. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from the local authority's Learning, Behaviour and Support Service. It provides appropriate specialist help in dealing with learning difficulties and in developing good behaviour. Children attending the 'I Can' unit are supported well when they return to their local mainstream school, due to the close liaison between all staff involved.
37. Overall, the good quality care and support offered helps pupils to feel secure in school and this enables them to concentrate during lessons with the aim of achieving higher standards.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and other schools and **satisfactory** links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good partnership with parents, and the headteacher promotes very good relationships with parents.
- There are good links with local schools and colleges.
- Useful information is provided for parents about the work of the school and pupils' progress.
- On site provision of Family Learning Programmes is very effective.

Commentary

38. The school provides clear and helpful information for parents, such as in the school prospectus, letters and newsletters. The school has an open door policy and parents are made very welcome in the school. Over time, the headteacher has fostered many very good relationships with parents and, together with the special needs co-ordinator, she is always accessible to parents and carers wishing to discuss personal matters that may affect their children. Annual reports and parents meetings twice a year also contribute to ensuring parents have clear information on their children's progress and what they need to do to improve. The school is keen to gain parents' views and engages in much informal dialogue with them whenever there is an opportunity. Parents are contacted immediately if there are any concerns about their children during the school day. Parents of pupils with special educational needs take a full part in reviews of their children's progress, which are well planned and informed by clear records of pupils' achievements and are effective in guiding provision for the next stage in learning.
39. Parental involvement with the pupils' work at home is satisfactory, although a significant number of parents do not regularly listen to their children reading. Parents are keen to support the many school activities and events, and a number of parents volunteer to receive training in school to help regularly in the classroom. The headteacher provides very good tuition and support for parents who offer to help pupils with reading in school through the 'Better Reading' programme.
40. The school has constructive links with the local community and neighbouring schools, including some curricular links with the local high school for those in Year 6. There are good arrangements for the smooth transition of pupils to secondary school. The school has shared numeracy and literacy weeks with four other local schools and has taken part in a joint Music

Festival. Pupils entertain and socialise with elderly people at Christmas and at harvest time they distribute harvest gifts to them. The Friends of Cranham School arranges social and fund raising activities for the school and has, for example, provided the school with carpeting in classrooms. There are many valuable links between parents and the school. The keenness of the majority of parents and carers to support the work of the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.

Educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community

41. The on site provision of a Family Learning Programme is very effective in raising the achievement, self-esteem, social skills and general development of targeted pupils. A tutor from Worcester College, together with the school's early years co-ordinator, runs well-planned weekly sessions in school for 12 parents over a period of several weeks. The course was devised and developed by the college. All parents are enrolled as students of Worcester College and enjoy the benefits of this status. They engage weekly in many educational and support activities, including spending some time each week working with their own children in school, to gain practical experience of ways in which they can support their children's learning. The outcome of this programme directly provides educational benefits to pupils enrolled at the school and they become more able to achieve at school as a result.
42. Parents clearly enjoy attending the sessions and gain much from the very good tutoring and opportunities the programme provides. They work and share together with enthusiasm and are keen to engage with activities. The Family Learning Programme is heavily oversubscribed and there remain a number of families who would welcome similar opportunities as they recognise the value of this provision and are keen to support their children more effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **good**, and have improved since the previous inspection. Governance of the school is **good**. The leadership provided by the headteacher is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strong leadership has a clear focus on raising standards.
- A management team is strong, with a common vision for the school's development.
- Governors support the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Because of staff changes, the role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning is not fully functional in all cases.
- The school makes good use of all available funding.

Commentary

43. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development, and has established a strong and supportive staff team who are fully committed to providing a high quality education for all pupils in order to raise standards further. This provision is underpinned by a clear focus on raising standards, shared by all staff and governors. The local education authority's inspectors also provide useful guidance and support for the school in its efforts to improve. The headteacher's open and inclusive style of leadership has gained the respect of all those connected with the school, including pupils and parents.
44. The senior management team has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the areas for development, as identified in the school improvement plan. It has been instrumental in enabling the school to achieve Investors in People status in 2003, and in collating the evidence that enabled the school to achieve the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Each member of

the senior management team is able to make a positive contribution to school development because roles are clearly defined. For example, the special educational needs co-ordinator meets with the teaching assistants each month to discuss issues, give in-house training and monitor their needs and concerns. The result is a highly skilled and committed group of teaching assistants who make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school.

45. The headteacher's philosophy of availability and openness gives the staff confidence and makes them feel part of a team. She is always available to deal with queries or problems, even in the early morning, and good systems are in place for communicating day-to-day information. She knows all the pupils well and parents feel they can trust her to listen to their worries sympathetically. Relationships between staff are positive and supportive, and this helps to create an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and secure and are able to give of their best.
46. The Chair of Governors has undertaken training to improve his effectiveness as a critical friend of the school. He knows the school well, and leads a governing body which understands the school's priorities and needs. A curriculum link system has been established to give each governor more insight into a particular curriculum area, and thus share more fully in the drive to raise attainment. Governors come into school regularly, and two work as voluntary helpers in the classroom. When important decisions have to be made, for instance, about levels of staffing or the development of the premises, governors are fully involved right through the process.
47. The last inspection found that the role of the subject co-ordinators was underdeveloped. This has been addressed, but due to a considerable number of recent staff changes there is still work to be done in this area. The co-ordinators all work to a subject action plan, and monitor the curriculum and planning, but systems for monitoring standards of teaching and learning are not sufficiently developed in a few subjects. If the proposed monitoring schedule is carried through, it has the potential to identify the weaker areas in teaching, and spread best practice throughout the school more effectively. The newsletters put out to staff by the mathematics co-ordinator are a good example of what can be achieved through careful monitoring of teaching.
48. The management of the school's finances is good. Funds are used effectively to support the main priorities identified in the school improvement plan. This document effectively targets time, money and resources towards the areas identified for development. The headteacher and secretary regularly track the budget, monitoring income against expenditure and making sure funds are directed towards school priorities. The school has been very successful in bidding for external grants, for example, to extend and enhance the teaching of music. Principles of best value are applied in the purchase of goods and services, and governors are closely involved in important financial decisions at all stages. For example, when the budget showed a deficit last year because of unavoidable staffing problems, the whole governing body were involved in agreeing a solution that would do least harm to the education of the children.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	939,280	Balance from previous year	7,611
Total expenditure	954,168	Balance carried forward to the next	-20,551
Expenditure per pupil	2,079		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the previous inspection.

49. In the nursery and in the reception classes, caring relationships promote a welcoming environment where children feel secure. Teachers and teaching assistants work successfully as a team so that all make significant contributions to children's learning. Staff monitor children's progress carefully, set clear targets and adjust the curriculum when necessary to meet individual needs. Leadership and management are good, especially in ensuring consistency and quality in the reception classes. However, the co-ordinator does not formally monitor standards of teaching and learning in the nursery regularly. Links with families are carefully nurtured through home visits and staged admission procedures. As a result, parents and children learn to approach the school with confidence and trust. The family learning sessions led by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator provide very good support for parents in helping their children to learn.
50. Children's attainment when they enter the nursery is below average with particular weaknesses in speaking and listening and in social skills. Children achieve well in all areas of learning due to the overall good quality of teaching. In the reception classes, teaching is consistently good and often very good; in the nursery, it is mostly satisfactory. Most of the children reach the nationally expected standards in each area of learning except communication, language and literacy by the time they start in Year 1. Standards in communication, language and literacy remain below average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement.
- High priority is appropriately given to personal and social skills throughout the Foundation Stage but especially in the nursery.
- Staff know children very well and relationships are very good.
- Children are becoming independent and developing positive attitudes to learning.

Commentary

51. When they start nursery, many children have poorly developed social skills. They move quickly from one activity to another and find it difficult to take turns and share. Personal development is therefore given particular emphasis. Staff make clear their high expectations and frequently reinforce the school's values throughout the day, as well as through discussion at Circle Time and through regular reference to the prominently displayed golden rules. They use praise and encouragement successfully to raise children's confidence and self-esteem. Reception children respond with enthusiasm and pride to the many good opportunities to take responsibility as monitors in class and are becoming independent in organising their own learning. They select activities for themselves and persevere to complete tasks. Frequent opportunities to work in pairs or play games in small groups promote co-operative skills very well and most reception children wait their turn and share with an awareness of the needs of others. Staff take care to listen carefully to children and to respect their ideas. Children's work is carefully displayed. Children respond with enthusiasm and are developing positive attitudes to learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well but do not reach all of the early learning goals in this area by the time they start in Year 1.
- Teaching of letters and their sounds, and provision for practising speaking and listening skills, are very good in the reception classes.
- In the nursery, opportunities are sometimes missed to promote speaking and listening skills through imaginative play and group activities.
- All staff foster positive attitudes to books and stories.

Commentary

52. Many children start nursery with indistinct speech, limited vocabulary, and poor listening skills. Most respond positively to attractively presented stories. Even so, their concentration spans are very short, and they are easily distracted. Children in the reception class enjoy stories. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time and join in, saying repeated words with enthusiasm. In their role-play, they link significant events in a story, for instance, their play in 'The Three Bears House' shows their understanding of how one event leads to another. In the nursery, staff do not intervene sufficiently in the imaginary play areas or in group activities, and opportunities are sometimes missed to extend children's vocabulary meaningfully. Overall, children's poor vocabulary and limited speaking skills hinder the development of literacy skills for a significant number, as they struggle to communicate their ideas. In the reception classes, the teaching of letters and their sounds is carried out successfully and skilfully. Lively group and class sessions are carefully directed, and followed up by interesting games and activities, which promote learning well. Many reception children recognise most letters by shape and sound. As a result, they are keen to be 'authors' when making labels for the pictures they have collected in their information books. There is a wide variety of attainment in writing with a few higher attainers beginning to spell simple words like 'rat' and 'cat' correctly, but there is still a significant minority who do not use letter shapes in their writing. Most children recognise their own written name but not all can write it correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well.
- Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to plan practical tasks, which promote understanding.
- Sessions are lively and brisk. Imaginative strategies, number games and rhymes make learning fun.
- Assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and plan work.
- Incidental opportunities are taken to teach counting skills throughout the day.

Commentary

53. Interesting practical activities are carefully and imaginatively planned to promote interest and understanding effectively. Children are alert and enthusiastic in spotting the teacher's deliberate mistake or in carefully counting the secret toys hidden in the bag. Nursery children join energetically in a good range of number rhymes. Higher attainers copy the teacher accurately to show the correct number of fingers (up to five) in the rhyme. Reception children correctly count

forwards and backwards along the number line to 20 and higher attainers are becoming confident in naming one more or one less. Most reception children share out toys accurately, one-for-one, and recognise and name numerals to 10 when playing a card game. They use mathematical language correctly to name a square and a triangle and to compare size. Staff make careful observations of children at work to monitor individual progress and plan work to build on what children already know. Incidental opportunities, like counting the number of children present, or checking the number of apples needed for snacks, are used purposely throughout the day to practise skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well.
- A good range of practical activities helps children learn through using their senses.
- Staff use questions effectively, and encourage children to think for themselves and to ask their own questions.
- Good use is made of computers and programmable toys.
- Some tasks in the nursery lack focus and do not promote purposeful learning.

Commentary

54. Nursery children display low levels of general knowledge. Teachers plan interesting and varied activities to develop this knowledge. When making toast for a snack, for example, the children were encouraged to predict the change in colour of the bread and then to observe at first hand. The children were unsure at first in predicting how the bread would look and feel when toasted, but could explain quite well by the end. In the reception class, staff use questions skilfully to extend the children's ideas on how toys work. Children handle toys carefully and share ideas about how they move. With adult help, they collect and assemble materials purposefully to build their own toys. Through valuable interaction, they explain what they have done and demonstrate how their toy works, using vocabulary such as push/pull, stop/start, appropriately. Computers and programmable toys are used effectively to promote learning and to make effective links between the areas of learning. Children are adept at using a mouse to move objects or draw pictures on screen. In pairs, reception children command a programmable toy to make simple manoeuvres with some accuracy. Some nursery activities are planned with insufficient focus and it is unclear what specific learning outcomes are intended.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and the children make good progress.
- Good use is made of the outdoor adventure play area to provide challenging activities.
- Staff manage children well, so that space and equipment are shared successfully and children are aware of safety considerations.
- Staff provide clear demonstrations of skills.

Commentary

55. The children's physical skills develop well because they have access to a good range of resources in a well-organised outdoor area. Nursery children move tentatively around the large play equipment with help from an adult. Reception children are confident. They enjoy exploring

the space and climb and balance skilfully. They move up and down and sideways, jump off and land safely. The resources are challenging for all ages and levels of attainment and, through clear demonstrations by the teacher, children are learning, for example, to balance and walk on simple stilts with good control of their bodies. When building with construction toys, threading beads or completing jigsaws, they show increasing control to complete their task successfully. They handle tools like paint brushes and scissors and pencils to complete their purposes satisfactorily. Staff organise equipment thoughtfully to provide appropriate challenge for different groups of children. Safety measures and class rules are clearly established so that the children know what is expected and usually use equipment sensibly and purposefully.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well.
- Children benefit from exploring a wide range of interesting creative media.
- Staff use their considerable expertise to teach a variety of techniques.
- Occasionally, tasks are over directed.

Commentary

56. Activities are carefully organised and resources accessible to children, and support their learning well. Staff provide clear demonstrations of specific techniques and encourage children through praise to take pride in their own work. Nursery children experiment carefully with colour and pattern, for example, when printing with potatoes, leaves or toy car tracks. Reception children explore the feel of clay and successfully manipulate a piece into a thumb pot after acquiring the right technique. Occasionally, activities are over directed and children follow instructions to assemble materials without the opportunity to explore their own ideas. Attractive imaginative play areas, like 'The Three Bears' House', are used purposefully in the reception classes and help to extend children's creative and language development through play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of reading across the school are in line with those expected nationally.
- Standards of speaking and listening and writing are below average across the school.
- In Year 2, too little attention is paid to providing good quality writing opportunities.
- The school makes good use of drama to develop pupils' understanding of language.
- There is a lack of consistency in the school's approach to the teaching of writing.
- The quality of marking and pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work is good in Years 4 to 6.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

57. Standards in reading are average across the school and have improved since the last inspection. The majority of pupils by Year 6 are independent readers of simple texts and a few are confident readers of a range of more demanding literature. More able readers have preferences for authors such as Jacqueline Wilson and J.K. Rowling, can describe different literary genres and read

regularly for pleasure. However, for most pupils, their technical reading skills exceed their comprehension of what they read. In most classes, the guided reading session is used well to develop pupils' interest in, and understanding of, what they read.

58. There is a lack of consistency in the teaching of writing and there is no whole school approach. As a result, standards of writing have not risen significantly since the last inspection. English has lacked strong and consistent leadership in the last two years and there has been insufficient innovation, evaluation and revision of the curriculum. For example, there is still an emphasis on simply covering the National Literacy Strategy rather than selecting those sections which most meet the needs of the pupils and then covering them in sufficient depth. There has been no consistent programme of monitoring teaching and learning by the co-ordinator, and the good practice evident in some classes has not been disseminated throughout the school.
59. Pupils enter the school with a restricted vocabulary. The school has developed specific initiatives, particularly the use of drama, to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, these are not consistently implemented across the school and pupils' understanding and ability to communicate confidently and effectively remain below average. This lack of ability to use language expressively and creatively is reflected in the quality of pupils' writing. Relatively few pupils use a wide ranging or imaginative vocabulary in their writing, despite regular opportunities in Years 4 to 6 to write for a range of different purposes.
60. Pupils develop a good understanding of basic reading skills in the reception class and in Year 1. However, these skills are not transferred to pupils' writing sufficiently in Years 1 and 2 and there are too few opportunities for pupils to experiment with writing across the curriculum. In Year 2, the opportunities for pupils to write are too narrow and restrictive and there is very little writing in pupils' exercise books.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but is good in Years 4 to 6. Most teachers have an awareness of the different ways in which pupils learn and make a conscious effort to stimulate pupils' interest in language and literacy. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 2 when teachers do not use appropriate strategies to help pupils extend their vocabulary or develop their independent writing skills.
62. Throughout the rest of the school, there are examples of innovative and interesting ideas to support pupils' writing, but there are no procedures for ensuring that all the school is aware of individual initiatives. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher provided a simple range of structured materials, which provided an effective framework for pupils' imaginative writing without limiting their individual creativity. In the same lesson, a class recitation of a simple repetitive story accompanied by actions was used successfully as a vehicle for work on enlivening writing through the use of adverbs.
63. In other classes, the established structure of the literacy hour is adapted in order to capture and maintain pupils' interest. For example, the introductory session of direct teaching is abandoned, pupils are launched straight into an activity and short bursts of concentrated teaching are inserted throughout the lesson. Frequent opportunities for drama are a feature of some lessons and these are valuable not only in helping develop pupils' speaking skills but also in motivating pupils who would rather be doing than listening. The school provides a range of curriculum enrichment opportunities through theatre visits, visits by theatre groups and children's writers, all of which widen pupils' literary horizons.
64. The quality of marking is generally good, but there is no consistency of approach across the school or even between classes in the same year group. Target setting is in place across the school and there is frequent reference to individual targets in teachers' marking. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of how to improve their work. Although there is evidence of pupils re-drafting their writing, there is no structure to ensure that this process improves the quality of individual pieces of work.

65. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. Teachers generally provide a range of tasks to meet the wide range of abilities in all classes. There is a range of assessment and recording procedures, which are used to identify those pupils in need of extra support and those who will benefit from the accelerated reading programme. Pupils are withdrawn for additional small group support, but without preventing them from having full access to the curriculum.
66. Resources, including the library, are satisfactory. There is a need for more interesting group readers to supplement the rather unstimulating reading scheme material currently in use. As a Year 6 pupil expressed it, she preferred books she could relate to.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Pupils use their language and literacy skills appropriately in other subjects of the curriculum, although the extent to which this is encouraged varies across the school. For example, there was good evidence of opportunities for extended writing in pupils' history books in Years 4 to 6. There were also good examples of opportunities for pupils to develop their subject vocabulary through 'hot seating' and drama in history lessons. However, there is too great an emphasis on worksheets to structure pupils' work in science in Years 1 and 2. This missed opportunities for developing pupils' writing skills. In conversations with pupils throughout the school, it was evident that many pupils had a better understanding of different subject areas than they were able to express either in discussion or in their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**. Achievement is **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and is **good** in Years 3 to 6. Overall pupils' achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Setting in Years 2 to 6 provides challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, where teaching is good.
- Good planning with clear learning targets in lessons.
- Good leadership of the subject is influencing the drive to raise standards.
- Small quantity of work recorded in some classes.
- Slow development of mathematical language in some classes.

Commentary

68. Standards in Year 6 rose to just below the national average for the first time in 2003 and the school exceeded its target in mathematics. This improving picture is continuing. Current standards are below average in Year 2 and are broadly average in Year 6, and are an improvement from those in national tests in 2003. An improvement in the quality of planning and the introduction of setting from Year 2 upwards has allowed teachers to focus more closely on the needs of individual pupils and prepare more challenging tasks for them. The school has worked hard to raise standards, especially in Years 5 and 6, and the action taken, along with the good leadership and management of the subject, is impacting on pupils' attainment and achievement. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels has risen as the quality of teaching has improved. The lesson objectives are now clearly stated in all lessons and explained to the pupils so that they know what to aim for. Progress towards meeting the objectives is often assessed towards the end of lessons to aid planning.
69. Most pupils enter the school with below average mathematical understanding. They reach the early learning goals for mathematical development by the end of the reception year, but do not reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Nevertheless, pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, where introductory activities in lessons help pupils to develop their mental

arithmetic skills satisfactorily. Pupils are able to recall number facts up to at least ten and can add and subtract small numbers. They are taught to recognise number patterns and use different strategies to solve number problems. For instance, pupils were helped to look for patterns in odd and even numbers and then to draw conclusions about their properties. This activity gave a challenge to the pupils, which they pursued with enthusiasm. Overall teaching is sound in Years 1 and 2. Pupils begin to use mathematical language satisfactorily in Year 1, but this is not continued as effectively in Year 2 classes.

70. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, where the teaching is good and sometimes very good. Higher teacher expectations are a key factor influencing pupils' attainment. These high expectations were evident in a Year 5 lesson, for example, where the brisk introductory oral session included questions at different levels of complexity to ensure sufficient challenge for all pupils. Good use of subject vocabulary, such as product, factor and multiple, checked pupils' levels of understanding, before the teacher changed the activity to ordering decimals in ascending or descending order within a given time. Pupils rise to the challenge, as they are interested and stimulated. By Year 6, many pupils confidently use positive and negative numbers, understand probability and make good use of computers to present data and solve problems. The Numeracy Strategy is implemented well and provides the basis for the good planning. Oral and mental skills are particularly well used with good pace and energy in introductory activities. Greater emphasis is now placed on investigations and strategies for solving number problems and pupils are making better progress. However, the use of whiteboards often continues for too long in lessons, leaving too little time for the pupils' work to be recorded in exercise books in many cases. With insufficient written work available, it is difficult for teachers to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress fully. Good use is made of work sheets for completion of work at home. Other areas of the curriculum, such as shapes, space and data handling, are adequately covered. Displays rely mainly on commercial posters with little to encourage interactive participation.
71. The subject is well led and managed. Detailed analysis of pupils' performance is made to identify areas of weakness and provide the basis for tracking pupils' progress throughout the school. Staff are encouraged to undertake training and are given full support with resources and guidance. Plans and pupils' books are kept under regular review.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Pupils make good use of their mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. Examples of this are found in the use of dates and number lines in history; designing tessellations and string patterns to produce curves in art; and using graphs and calculations in science and design and technology. The work on temperature conversion graphs, in particular, provided a strong challenge in applying mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' investigative skills.
- Pupils' use of scientific language is developing well.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 4 to 6 because of the good teaching.
- Assessment procedures are good and track the progress of individual pupils through all units of work.
- Pupils' progress is slower in Years 1 to 3, where there is an over reliance on the use of worksheets.

Commentary

73. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003 showed pupils' attainment to be below the national average and below the average for similar schools. At the end of Year 6, standards show some fluctuation due to the attainment profiles of different year groups and the level of mobility, but have remained well below the national average and the average for similar schools in the last three years. The mobility of pupils was above the national average for the Year 6 pupils in 2003 and, in addition, several pupils were on holiday at the time of the national tests. These factors adversely affected the schools results by several percentage points.
74. Current standards of work are still below average in Year 2, where the teaching is satisfactory, and insufficient emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to record independently what they have found out. Too often in Years 1 and 2, pupils are given worksheets to complete and colour in. In a more successful lesson on forces in Year 2, pupils were given a framework to support their writing, rather than a worksheet to fill in. The scrutiny of pupils' work contained very little written work to show what pupils have learned or understood. This is partly because most work is based on practical investigations, with too little opportunity for pupils to record their findings in a scientific format and so provide a good foundation for their work in Years 3 to 6. In order to provide a degree of continuity with Years 1 and 2, some worksheets are used in Year 3, but there is a move towards encouraging pupils to record their work for themselves, which is better.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but is best in Years 4 to 6. Standards are currently broadly average by Year 6, as pupils are achieving well. They are encouraged to devise their own experiments to solve problems. This approach to teaching the subject is proving successful in developing pupils' thinking and problem solving skills. In a very good Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were required to produce a plan to explore questions about whether different liquids evaporate at the same rate and find a practical way of measuring this. Pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding, gained from recent lessons, about materials, and build on this. The teaching methods now being used and the emphasis on practical investigations is leading to more interest in lessons and better learning as pupils remember what they found out. Relevant scientific language is introduced with each new topic of work and pupils are beginning to use the vocabulary accurately. The consistency in the use of a 'problem-solving wheel' to plan their investigations helps pupils get started on the task. Very good procedures have been implemented for assessing pupils' attainment at the beginning and end of each topic and are providing valuable information as to where further teaching and reinforcement is required. In one Year 6 class, the marking of pupils' work is of a very high standard, informing pupils clearly as to what they need to do to improve further. This is not as evident in all other classes, although all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have targets for improvement.
76. The progress and achievement of some pupils with special educational needs is hindered because of frequent absences from school. The scrutiny of work showed this clearly because teachers note where pupils have been absent. This affects the continuity in the learning for these pupils and teachers have to devote more time to them to help them to catch up when they return. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers because their teachers ensure they understand any specific vocabulary being used. Because of the investigative approach being used, higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged, often devising more complex investigations. From this approach to teaching, pupils develop a good understanding of fair testing.
77. The subject co-ordinator has been absent for several months. Prior to taking leave, the co-ordinator prepared files of the work to be covered in each year group, which has maintained the momentum in the development and improvement of the subject, and this is now beginning to show in the rising standards being achieved by Year 6. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**. At the end of Years 2 and 6, the overall standards are **average**. There have been useful developments since the previous inspection, which represent **satisfactory** improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in resources and staff expertise are helping to raise standards.
- Good planning incorporating the teaching of skills.
- Good leadership and management of the subject.
- Good use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Lack of resources to cover adequately control aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

78. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the computer to write short pieces of work. They practise keyboard skills and develop co-ordination in mouse control. They learn to use correct vocabulary with understanding. All strands of the National Curriculum are covered and there are strong links with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use a word processor to write simple stories and illustrate writing with pictures using clip art. Older pupils draw pictures on the screen illustrating events, such as firework displays, developing skills in using art tools. Spatial concepts and directions are reinforced by learning to control floor turtles. In Year 3, pupils progress to using different fonts and combine text with graphics taken from the Internet. As pupils gain in expertise, they explore more sophisticated techniques, for example, for portraying movement in art. Year 6 pupils combine these skills in their multimedia presentations, which incorporate sound and animation.
79. The quality of teaching in ICT is satisfactory overall and often good. It is based on secure subject knowledge and good lesson planning. Teachers use effective methods to achieve their objectives, making full use of the technology to project onto the classroom screen. All classes have a small suite of computers available linked by a network. The network allows the teacher to demonstrate teaching points on the 'active' screen. Planning in the lessons makes use of the software stored in the network and is selected for year groups, ensuring progression and continuity through the National Curriculum. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work well with their partners. Year 3 pupils, in particular, enjoyed the excitement and wonder of technology when a whole library of pictures of 'Santa Claus' appeared in response to an Internet search, which brought immediate 'oohs' and 'ahs' from the pupils.
80. Considerable progress has been made in the limited time that the facilities have been operating. Assessment sheets are used to record pupils' progress effectively. In addition, folders to contain pupils' work have been set up on the network to provide the basis of a continuous record of progress, together with a portfolio of work to compare appropriate levels. The current Year 6 pupils have not had the advantage of the good provision throughout their time in the school, which is why current standards are not higher.
81. Resources in hardware and software are good with the exception of the provision for control technology. Teaching resources include the facility to project the computer screen images onto the classroom board in order to demonstrate to the whole class. A technician is employed to maintain the computer network, which ensures teachers can give their time to teaching. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic subject co-ordinator. Good support is provided for colleagues and monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Information and communication technology is used well in subjects across the curriculum from the early stages. Links with art are forged in Year 2 with pictures created in the style of famous artists, such as Mondrian, making use of rectangular and triangular shapes, and in Year 3, the Internet is used to search for information, for instance, on Edward Elgar in music. Further examples of ICT in art occurred in work with older pupils using repeated images to convey the impression of movement and to carry out research into the work of William Morris. All class teachers include computer activities in planning their mathematics lessons and many literacy lessons provide opportunities for creative writing using word processors. In geography, pupils design classrooms and produce aerial plans successfully and, in science, the results of experiments are produced in charts and graphs.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in geography and limited work was available for scrutiny, and so secure judgements could not be made on standards or provision.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall due to good teaching.
- Good use is made of role-play, artefacts and music to bring the subject to life.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are good cross-curricular links, which promote speaking and listening skills, but opportunities to promote writing skills are not planned systematically.

Commentary

83. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in learning about the diversity and nature of religious belief through studying Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. They relate their knowledge to their own lives, attitudes and feelings. Pupils in Year 2 have sound knowledge of some of the main traditions and beliefs of Judaism and of the links with Christianity. Their understanding has been deepened by making and displaying their own mezuzahs. They are familiar with stories of Jesus' life and are beginning to develop concepts of good and bad actions. Pupils in Year 6 have sound knowledge about the central beliefs of Christianity and Islam. They realise how special books, such as the Bible and the Qur'an, are important. Through studying Bible stories, like the Prodigal Son, they explore moral, ethical and religious dilemmas and relate concepts, such as forgiveness, to their own lives. Opportunities for reflection ensure that the subject contributes effectively to pupils' personal development.

84. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are carefully planned, with clear and succinct learning objectives that are shared with pupils. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and work hard to succeed. Teachers use questions perceptively to ensure that all pupils are fully included, and to help pupils extend their own ideas. Lessons are usually lively with a good range of teaching methods to help pupils learn. Resources, such as religious artefacts and music, are prepared carefully and used imaginatively. The use of Handel's Messiah in Year 6, for example, heightens pupils' perceptions of the role of shepherds and angels in the nativity story. Good use is made of role-play like 'hot-seating' to increase understanding. For instance, pupils in Year 3 enthusiastically interrogated a 'shepherd' and a 'wise man' when exploring the Christmas story.

85. Activities, such as role-play, brainstorming, and discussion with a partner, are used effectively to promote understanding of religious concepts but also to improve pupils' speaking and listening

skills. Whilst there are good examples in Year 5, for instance, when pupils write in a persuasive style to promote Gandhi's point of view, the use of religious education topics to improve writing skills are not planned systemically. As a result, opportunities are missed for constructive cross-curricular work, which could raise standards in both subjects.

86. Assessment systems monitor progress successfully but are not used significantly in the preparation of new work. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator supports staff by organising and resourcing the long-term planning of the curriculum. The role of monitoring standards, teaching and learning is not well developed.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance between developing pupils' skills and the acquisition of knowledge.
- Good use is made of resources available to make lessons interesting.

Commentary

87. Standards are average in Years 2 and 6. There is a good balance in the curriculum between developing pupils' historical knowledge and understanding and developing specific subject skills. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to look at historical artefacts and primary sources for historical research. Pupils in Year 1 compared and contrasted toys from the past with their modern counterparts, making effective use of books from the library to help them. There was good revision of what pupils had learned previously, before exploring the similarities and differences between old and new toys. However, opportunities were missed to develop pupils' range of vocabulary and so help them to express their ideas more clearly.

88. In a particularly effective lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to compare maps of modern Worcester with a Victorian map of the city. They also had opportunities to look at the 1881 census returns for part of the city and discuss what these revealed of life at the time. Good use is made of the local area as a focus for history topics and appropriate links are made with geography in this respect. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have good opportunities for extended writing based on their history topics. The quality of teaching is generally good and pupils achieve well, although it is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 are lively and activities are chosen which capture pupils' interest and motivate them to want to learn. A good lesson about the Spanish Armada seen in Year 4 was well planned and prepared. Skilful questioning by the teacher challenged all pupils to think why Spain wanted to invade England. Interesting tasks were prepared at different levels of complexity and closely matched to the needs of all pupils, requiring them to use their knowledge to answer questions, such as why the Spanish were confident of success. Pupils learned much from the lesson and their own assessment of their understanding of events showed they felt more confident in their understanding of the chain of events.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of resources is readily accessible to pupils.
- Teaching is good in Year 6.

- There are good cross-curricular links.
- Sketchbooks are not used consistently in all year groups.
- Occasional lessons lack challenge for all pupils.

Commentary

89. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily; they have relevant opportunities to develop their drawing, painting and modelling skills, using the good range of resources available, including some natural materials. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the work of famous artists and of the techniques they used. Effective links with other subjects enhance pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills, for example, in information and communication technology, history and mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Year 6 because the teacher's expectations of pupils are higher and tasks set are more demanding. In a very good lesson seen, pupils created the feeling of movement in their eye-catching pictures through the use of different shades of colour and overlapping shapes. They then repeated the task using a computer program. The pupils had to organise themselves and work at speed to complete the task and all succeeded, and enjoyed the lesson. The teaching assistant was very well deployed, having been well briefed, and supported the large majority of pupils while the teacher focused on the group using the computers. This ensured the pace of the lesson was maintained.
90. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used templates to cut out their designs in felt and glue them onto a fabric background. This did not challenge pupils sufficiently and did not exploit the opportunity to develop other skills, such as embroidery stitches which could have been used to join the fabrics together. Sketchbooks are not used consistently in all year groups and classes and are rarely used effectively to show the progression in the development of pupils' skills. Consequently, there is no clear evidence to show how well pupils' skills and techniques develop over time, other than from displays of work and assessment records.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well due to good teaching.
- Investigative and exploratory aspects of the subject are effectively developed.
- Designing skills have improved since the previous inspection but links between designing and making things are not always well established.
- Pupils enjoy the practical elements of the subject and are enthusiastic about their work.

Commentary

91. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. In Year 2, pupils explore the way wheels and axles work on toy cars before producing detailed labelled drawings for their own wheeled vehicle. They select, assemble and join components successfully using simple tools with care. Their ability to talk about what works best is limited. In Year 6, pupils design and make controllable vehicles. They approach the task in an organised fashion, researching ideas and drawing up specifications with care. They use appropriate terms, such as chassis and axle, when labelling their plans. Designs show different elevations. Pupils use tools, such as glue guns and hacksaws, safely. They evaluate their work as they go and learn by trial and error what works and what does not. There are good cross-curricular links with science, for example, in the installing of an electrical circuit to control the vehicle.
92. Teachers plan lessons clearly to build on what pupils already know. Lessons start with a useful reminder of earlier work, which sets the scene purposefully for new learning. Appropriate

emphasis is put on initial research and pupils generate ideas successfully from examining a range of examples. Resources are well prepared and accessible to pupils. In Year 1, pupils make prototypes of their 'pop-up' mechanisms before making Christmas cards. Teachers do not give enough attention to linking the design and construction processes. Consequently, pupils do not use their designs effectively and opportunities to learn by modifying initial ideas in planning are lost. Teachers manage pupils well with praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils concentrate, persevere and are proud of their work. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Teachers take particular care to support pupils with special educational needs so that their talents are fully developed. In one class, a pupil with special educational needs is recognised as a 'star' in design and technology.

93. Assessment systems are in place but information gained is not used effectively to plan new work. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, systems to monitor standards, teaching and learning in the subject are not fully developed.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy their lessons in Years 3 to 6 and work hard to improve.
- Pupils in Year 2 take too long to change for lessons and valuable time for learning is lost.

Commentary

94. Only lessons in dance and gymnastics were observed, but planning shows all aspects of the subject are taught. Standards are broadly average in dance and gymnastics. The teaching and learning are satisfactory and are good in country dance. All pupils enjoyed the country dance lesson seen and worked hard to remember the different movements when working with a partner and then incorporated them into work with other pairs to perform the Cumberland Reel. The pupils were disappointed when the lesson came to an end. In Year 6, pupils rehearse and perform a sequence of movements including counterbalances and show satisfactory control and poise. They then successfully refine and adapt their movements to involve different levels when using apparatus. Pupils are well aware of the need for exercise and the effect it has on their bodies. High regard is given to safety issues in respect of the moving of apparatus and the wearing of jewellery in lessons. The time taken to get ready for a dance lesson in Year 2 was too long because clear routines and expectations have not been established. The lesson was based on a pre-recorded tape, which did not provide sufficient physical challenge for the more able pupils.

95. The weakness in the level of resources noted in the previous inspection report has been remedied. However, the good participation in competitive sports, noted in the previous report, has not been maintained, although there are satisfactory extra-curricular activities in sport and many pupils are involved in sporting clubs outside of school. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Weaknesses in teachers' skills are identified and training is provided, for example, the training planned in teaching dance.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good, wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Insufficient use is made of the expertise available within the school in teaching class lessons.

Commentary

96. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6 because a rich environment for music is successfully created by the employment of visiting instrumental teachers to teach a wide range of instruments, including steel pans, fifes, guitars, trumpets and African drums. All Year 5 and Year 6 pupils learn to play the steel pans, which they enjoy playing, and show pride in their performances. This was evident in a lesson observed when, at the end, a pupil commented 'that was good'. In addition, choir practice and groups learning to play keyboards and recorders take place after school for other year groups as well. These activities provide good opportunities for potentially talented musicians to experience playing different instruments. All pupils learn to play musical instruments when in junior classes, as additional funding has been secured by the school solely for this purpose. The teaching in these activities is good and most pupils are able to read musical notation. However, class lessons follow a published scheme, which is currently being trialled by all the staff. The teaching seen in class lessons was satisfactory overall and was good when the lessons were taken by teachers with secure subject knowledge and musical talent. The school has a number of musicians among the staff, who are underused in delivering a practical music curriculum. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection due to the experiences provided by visiting staff.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- External agencies make a significant contribution to the school's provision.

Commentary

97. There are regular lessons in personal, social and health education in all classes and further work in other subjects, such as science. Contributions from the school nurse and the police liaison officer enhance the school's sensitive provision for sex and drugs education. Healthy life styles are promoted successfully, for instance, through the 'fruit for snack' initiative. Carefully planned Circle Time in all classes provides an effective forum for discussing personal ideas and ethical dilemmas' as well as learning to respect the views of others. Many displays around the school emphasise the importance the school places on developing pupils' personal and social skills in order that they can become valuable citizens in the future. The school council plays an important part in the provision, helping pupils to understand the impact of their decisions on others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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