

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN OF ROLLESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burton-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124218

Headteacher: Mr George Arblaster

Lead inspector: Mrs Penny Parrish

Dates of inspection: 17–19 January 2005

Inspection number: 267117

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	378
School address:	Chapel Lane Rolleston-on-Dove Burton-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	DE13 9AG
Telephone number:	01283 239200
Fax number:	01283 239201
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Fraser
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

John of Rolleston Primary School is set in the village of Rolleston-on-Dove, just north of Burton-upon-Trent. The school is based on two sites, with classes for Reception and Years 1 and 2 housed in a Victorian building on School Lane and Years 3 to 6 based in a modern building, about 150 metres away, in Chapel Lane. The school is popular in the locality, with about a fifth of pupils travelling further than is usual to attend. There are 378 pupils on roll and very few vacancies. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. There are fourteen classes, all of single age group, with two for each year group from reception to Year 6. A privately run pre-school class is housed on site, and most children admitted to the school transfer from here. Families using the school represent mixed and wide-ranging social backgrounds but the socio-economic circumstances of most are above average. Very few pupils (about 2%) qualify for free school meals.

On admission to the reception classes, the attainments of the children are generally above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (13 per cent) is a little below average, and includes four pupils with formal statements of special educational need. Pupils' special needs include physical disabilities, moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia and speech and communication difficulties. Pupils are mostly of white British ethnic background, with a small number from minority ethnic heritages, such as Asian and Japanese. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning English. In addition to the statutory National Curriculum, French is taught to pupils in Year 6. On leaving the school, most pupils at the end of Year 6 transfer to the local high school, which has recently qualified for technology status.

The school was awarded a Schools' Achievement Award for a significant rise in test results in Year 6 in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22380	Mrs Penny Parrish	Lead inspector	English Art and design Music English as an additional language
31713	Mr Selwyn Roberts	Lay inspector	
29504	Mrs Shirley Herring	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology
18344	Mr David Earley	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
32159	Mrs Brenda Remond	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

John of Rolleston Primary is a good school. Pupils are confident, articulate and keen to learn. Good teaching ensures good achievement for the great majority of pupils, although there are instances where higher attaining pupils do not reach their full potential. Children's attainments as they are admitted to the Reception year are generally above average. These good skills are built on well and, by Year 6, standards are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The headteacher's good leadership promotes a strong ethos in which each individual pupil matters. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start.
- Pupils achieve well, reaching high standards in mathematics and science by Year 6, and above average standards in English.
- Very good personal development, behaviour and attitudes mean that by the time they leave the school, pupils are well mannered, confident and articulate.
- Good teaching enables good achievement for most pupils but the higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged, especially in mathematics in Year 2 and in writing through the school.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory overall but not always sufficiently linked to specific skills to provide a useful basis for future teaching plans.
- The provision the school makes for pupils to learn about other ethnic backgrounds and religions is a weaker aspect of the school's provision.

Since the last inspection in 1999, improvement has been satisfactory. The school has kept pace with improvements nationally, although the upgrading of resources for information and communication technology (ICT) is very recent. The curriculum is better planned and now focuses well on key skills. Higher attaining pupils are achieving more than at the time of the last inspection but there is still work to be done to provide a more consistent challenge.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	A	C	E
mathematics	B	A	A	B
science	A	C	A	C

*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.*

Pupils achieve well, overall, but standards are higher in Year 6 than in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number new to English get good support and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils do not always reach their full potential.

In English, results in national tests in 2004 were average for pupils in Year 6, showing a fallback from the above average standards of the previous two years. This fluctuation was caused by an insufficient number of higher attaining pupils reaching their full potential.

Evidence of the inspection indicates that standards in English are above average, overall, with strengths in reading and speaking but relative weaknesses in writing. The picture is similar in Year 2, where reading is above average but writing is average. Standards in writing in the school are improving but there is still more work to be done. In mathematics, the well above average test results in Year 6 in 2004 are consistent with the above average trend established over the past three years. Inspection evidence confirms these well above average standards in Year 6. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are average. In science, standards reflect the test results for 2004, being well above average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2. In other subjects, standards are average in both Year 2 and Year 6.

In Year 6, challenging targets set a firm focus on an upward trend in test results. Targets are usually exceeded in mathematics but not fully met at the higher level (level 5) in English. In Year 2, standards have coasted gently downward over the past four years. However, there has been a recent encouraging up-turn in standards in writing.

At the end of the reception year, learning goals set nationally are exceeded in all areas of learning except knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, where goals are met.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is consistently well above average. Relationships are very good, enabling very good personal development. **Social and moral development is very good, spiritual development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.** Pupils' have a limited understanding of cultures other than their own.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good, overall, with a significant proportion very good and, occasionally, excellent. A strong element of the teaching is the focus on good discussion and investigational work, which sets a good foundation for learning. The use of assessment is satisfactory and improving with the recent introduction of individual and group targets for writing. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, assessment is not sufficiently linked to specific skills to provide a useful basis for future plans for teaching and learning.

The curriculum is good, enriched well by French for pupils in Year 6 and a wide variety of activities made available outside lessons. Pupils find their work lively and interesting. The school cares for pupils' health, safety and welfare very well. Resources are generally satisfactory with good outdoor resources available for children in the Foundation Stage and for science and ICT in Years 3 to 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with strengths in the headteacher's strong role in creating a good staff team with high expectations for pupils. The checking of quality of provision through the school is moving forward but the development of systems and routines have been hampered by frequent changes in staff. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school enthusiastically but are not always closely enough involved in monitoring its performance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents strongly approve of the work of the school and contribute to its success through supporting their children's progress whenever possible. Pupils show by their confidence, very good attitudes and very good attendance that they enjoy school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- check that provision for higher attaining pupils is consistently good, paying particular attention to mathematics in Year 2 and writing throughout the school;
- link assessment systems closely to specific subject skills;
- improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are above average, overall, and pupils achieve well. Above average attainment on admission to the school is generally maintained well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science.
- Standards are not so high in Year 2; they are above average in reading and science and average in writing and mathematics.
- Children in the reception class get off to a good start and standards are above average in most areas of learning as they transfer to Year 1.

Commentary

1. Children's attainments are above average, generally, on admission to the reception year. Their achievement is good and they exceed the early learning goals set for the end of reception in all areas of learning except for knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, where the learning goals are met. The children are well prepared for transfer to Year 1 of the National Curriculum.
2. Pupils continue to achieve well, overall, in Years 1 and 2, although there is some lack of challenge evident in mathematics in Year 2, where standards fall back to average. In writing, teaching is generally not as skilled as in reading and, although most pupils achieve the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation, teachers are not so secure on leading them to higher levels of narrative writing. This is evident from Year 2 onward and, with some exceptions, continues to Year 6.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (16.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (13.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.2 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards in tests in Year 2 have been declining gently over the past four years. The school attributes this to changes in staffing and a decline in pupils' attainment on entry. No clear pattern could be identified during the inspection but pupils in Year 2 are capable of more. Recent staff changes and long term staff absence mean that current staff are in the process of adapting to the specific learning needs of the age group. As in the statutory assessments for 2004, standards at the time of the inspection are above average in reading and science and average in writing and mathematics.
4. Although teaching is good, overall, throughout the school, there is a higher incidence of good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. This means that standards pick up for the older pupils, and pupils' good achievement is more secure.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (28.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (28.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (29.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Results in national tests in 2004 for pupils in Year 6 were average in English, showing a fall from the generally above average results of the previous two years. This fluctuation was likely to be caused by insecure standards in writing. The school has worked to improve pupils' writing but the same borderline attainment at higher levels is still evident. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 in English are above average, overall, with significant strengths in reading and in speaking and listening but relative weaknesses in writing.
6. In mathematics, the well above average test results in 2004 in Year 6 were consistent with the rising trend established over the past three years. Inspection evidence confirmed the well above average standards in Year 6. The pace of learning improves in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and frequent good opportunities in using and applying mathematics secure the pupils' skills well. In science, standards are well above average by Year 6, reflecting the high test results in 2004. A strong programme of investigational science has an incremental effect on standards through the school.
7. Since the last inspection, results in Year 6 have improved, overall, especially in mathematics where they have exceeded the national trend. Results in science have fluctuated but now appear to be secure. Challenging targets have usually been exceeded in mathematics but not met at the higher level (level 5) in English. There is still more work to be done on raising standards in writing.
8. In all other subjects, in both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to judge overall standards in music and physical education. Standards are beginning to rise in Years 3 to 6 in ICT now that the new and well-equipped computer suite is in use. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported appropriately and, consequently, achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils arrive punctually at school and their attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is consistently well above the national average.
- Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.
- Pupils respond very well in lessons and are generally attentive, confident and highly motivated learners.
- Behaviour is very good because of high staff expectations and effective management.
- The school is very successful in developing pupils' moral awareness and social skills but less effective in providing for the development of their awareness of different cultures.

Commentary

9. Pupils are very keen to come to school, where they feel secure and confident. Attendance is consistently very good and is a further indication of pupils' enjoyment of school and of their very good attitudes to learning. In cases where a pupil is absent, parents are very clear about procedures to notify the school and there are no incidents of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good and lessons begin promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003-04

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. The pupils' positive attitudes towards their work are evident from the earliest stage. Children in the reception class are happy and settled. Staff help them to feel proud of themselves and aware of others. Their independence and enthusiasm for learning are developed well and they become increasingly more confident and motivated as they move through the school. When teachers inspire confidence and set challenging targets for them, pupils are willing to share their views and contribute extremely well. Throughout school, the interesting curriculum stimulates a good desire to learn and pupils work frequently and effectively together in pairs and in small groups. The many and varied extra-curricular clubs raise pupils' interest in extending their learning and are very well attended.
11. Relationships within the school are very good. All pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, respect their teachers and learn from them to be kind, polite and courteous to each other. Their self-esteem grows from the knowledge that their contributions will be valued. They work willingly together in an atmosphere of friendly and supportive collaboration. Overall, pupils are seen to benefit from the teamwork of the stable and well-organised teaching and support staff, who teach them to be helpful to others and respect others' viewpoints. In a geography lesson in Year 3, pupils worked in pairs giving guidance and advice to each other in an effort to refine and perfect their work on grid references.
12. Pupils behave very well in and around the school in response to the staff's high expectations and have a firm understanding of what is socially acceptable and what is not. Teaching staff apply reward and sanction procedures consistently but sensitively and, on the rare occasion when found necessary, take time to explain why a particular action is requested or not allowed. The school provides a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour and it is promoted consistently through all aspects of school life. Pupils with behavioural difficulties usually behave well because they are managed positively and are well supported by teaching assistants. The school's policy for good behaviour includes fixed-term exclusions as sanctions for poor behavioural but discipline rarely reaches this level. There have been no exclusions over the past year.
13. The pupils' awareness of social issues and the viewpoints of others are well promoted, generally, and relationships are secure and well established as a result. As individuals, pupils show concern and compassion for others, irrespective of gender, race and social background and this is evident in their willingness to offer help to all, both in and out of lessons. They listen attentively when their fellow pupils offer their

opinion, and appreciate how their actions may affect others. They understand that within their own community, and the wider world, people have different views and they understand the importance of showing respect for such views. This is evident in the many discussions that take place in lessons and in school assembly times. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds is limited, however, due to shortcomings in the school's provision for this aspect of their education.

14. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupil's spiritual development is well supported in school assemblies and in lessons. Through the positive ethos that pervades the school, pupils are encouraged to develop their self-awareness, empathise with others and to explore their thoughts. Confidence, self-esteem and inner feelings, about the wonders of nature, for example, are developed well and considered through scientific experiments, drama activities and role-play. Discussions in many subjects help pupils to develop an awareness of the less tangible things in life, such as friendship and families.
15. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school is very effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and building up their confidence as learners. This benefits especially the pupils with special educational needs and the small minority from different ethnic groups. Older pupils provide an opportunity for children from the reception year upward to contribute to school life by forwarding ideas through the school council. These openings develop pupils' maturity and promote consideration for others. Social development is promoted well in lessons where pupils successfully and frequently work collaboratively, taking turns in discussions and sharing ideas and resources.
16. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about their own culture through visits to museums, theatres and other places of local and historical interest. Opportunities to recognise and appreciate their own cultural heritage are also included in lessons in music and art, and when pupils read or listen to extracts from literacy or poetry. There are just a few pupils from a non-European cultural background in the school. These are welcomed warmly and there is an ethos of respect and tolerance for all. Pupils are introduced to other faiths and cultures in lessons, such as religious education and geography. However, the development of pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society and their awareness of other cultures is limited. Little use is made of visitors, displays and artefacts linked to non-European cultures and previous visits by pupils to places of worship linked to world faiths other than Christianity, such as to the mosque in Burton-upon-Trent, have not continued.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The school's aim of providing a happy, stimulating, safe and secure environment, through which children develop a love of learning that may last a lifetime, is met. Very good links with parents and good involvement of the local community help to ensure that children are given as much help as possible to achieve well.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good**, overall, often very good and occasionally excellent. Assessment is satisfactory, overall, but varies between subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well organised, confident and generally use time well.
- There is a strong focus on constructive discussion and investigational work, providing an effective basis for learning.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and provide good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment systems are satisfactory, overall, but sometimes not linked closely enough to specific skills to provide a clear agenda for teaching and learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	12 (28%)	21 (49%)	9 (21%)	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.

17. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good, often very good and builds well on the children's good attainment as they start the reception year. Teaching activities are suitably practical and children enjoy learning. A strong aspect of the teaching is the way in which simple resources are used efficiently to help children understand. The teacher placed cubes in different hoops, for example, before asking children to count and then combine the two amounts to illustrate simple addition. Full account is taken of good assessment procedures to plan work, which meets the needs of different children well, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The good skills of the teaching assistants are well deployed in the reception classes and make a good contribution to children's learning, helping to make sure that all are suitably challenged and supported.
18. Teaching is good overall in all classes in the school but there is a higher proportion of very good teaching in Years 4 to 6, which explains the higher standards by the end of Year 6. In the older classes, the pace of learning is more challenging and teachers are generally more confident of their knowledge and understanding of what is to be taught. Throughout the school, high standards of behaviour enable good concentration and productivity. Interesting tasks engage pupils well and encourage good acquisition of skills.
19. The key strength in the teaching is the consistently good attention to discussion and investigation. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening become increasingly good as they learn to formulate and express their views. This was evident in both classes in Year 6, where pupils confidently took part in discussions based on a range of controversial issues, such as the use of mobile telephones. Teaching in science is centred on a wide range of investigations, with good discussion as the key to balancing evidence and formulating well thought out hypotheses and conclusions. In history, pupils have a good grounding in historical research. Teachers' questions are very effective in moving pupils' understanding forward and teachers are skilled at challenging pupils according to their needs. This was evident in a science lesson in Year 4, for example, where pupils were questioned at different levels according to their level of attainment. Occasionally preparatory discussions take up a disproportionate amount of lesson time, as was observed in a unit of lessons focused on writing in Year 6.
20. Teachers try to plan effectively for the differing needs of pupils in their class but their success varies. In science, for example, wider ranging investigations are usually planned for higher attaining pupils and more support arranged for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. This approach generally works well where the quality of teaching is very good, or excellent, because the input of the teacher through questions and discussion successfully supports lower attaining pupils and challenges more able pupils to take their work further. Where teaching is less skilled, lower attaining pupils tend to fair better than higher attaining pupils. The support of well trained teaching assistants

adds significantly to the school's considerable success with lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory and the pace of learning moderate, work is insufficiently varied and higher attaining pupils become bored, as was observed in mathematics lessons in Year 2. In writing throughout the school, the considerable group of higher attaining pupils in most classes does not usually achieve as much as they are able because most teachers are not fully aware of how best to develop writing at higher levels, particularly narrative and extended writing.

21. Assessment systems have moved forward since the last inspection but there is still more to be accomplished to help teachers plan successfully for the needs of pupils. Successes are evident in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, where the teachers' good use of clearly defined systems keeps standards high. Recently introduced target systems for writing are useful in setting 'success criteria' for pupils, and used well in some classes to raise standards. Generally, however, the targets set are not clearly linked to rigorous assessment of pupils' work and vary widely in their usefulness.
22. The marking of pupils' work varies; where it is good, progress is good because pupils and teachers have a clear understanding of successes and how to improve work further. In other subjects, assessment systems are vague. They generally seek to identify pupils whose progress is more or less than average, without identifying specific skills.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve well. The school day is enriched well, with a wide range of activities available outside lessons. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, overall, with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear focus on key skills provides a productive foundation for learning.
- The curriculum includes a good range of opportunities for enrichment through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum for the children in the reception class is well suited to their needs and they get off to a good start.
- Although the curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of average and lower attaining pupils, the match is inconsistent for higher attaining pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school's contribution to pupils' multicultural education could be stronger.

Commentary

23. The school is successful in providing a broad range of worthwhile activities that interest pupils and enable them to build well, generally, on previous learning. This is a sound improvement since the last inspection, when weaknesses were identified in the sequential aspect of curriculum plans. The curriculum for the children in the reception classes is based securely on national guidance and the breadth of curricular opportunities is good. The resources for learning outdoors have been developed well for the youngest children especially and are effectively integrated into the whole curriculum.

24. The school gives high priority to the key skills within each subject and this is an important factor in pupils' good achievement. Good opportunities are found for the effective development of pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills and for learning through experiment and investigation in mathematics and science. These skills are transferred well to enable learning in other subjects, such as history and geography. Writing is not such a strong element of the curriculum and is not so well extended within other subjects. In part this is because there is a lack of flexibility between subjects with regard to writing. Opportunities are missed to extend writing based on historical topics fully, for example, by working on them within time allocated to English. There has been a delay in modernising and increasing computer resources but problems are now resolved and computer programs are becoming much more successfully incorporated into the curriculum in all subjects.
25. Innovative aspects of the curriculum include the organisation of special days, such as an Ancient Egyptian day and school grounds day, science weeks and blocked units of time for design and technology projects. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from weekly lessons in French. Educational visits, including a residential visit for pupils in Year 5, and specialist visitors into school enrich the school's provision well. These include opportunities for pupils to develop musical and sporting skills and are supplemented well by a good variety of after school clubs and other activities, all very well attended. Good links with other local schools provide opportunities for interested pupils to take part in competitive sport.
26. The school is strongly committed to enabling all pupils to take part in all learning opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. Individual education plans set clear, manageable targets for improvement so that pupils and staff know clearly where to focus teaching and learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and teachers ensure that pupils, parents, teaching assistants and outside agencies work well together to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively.
27. The school's ethos focuses strongly on pupils' personal development and values are positively reinforced during daily collective worship, with visitors from the local Christian churches providing an additional contribution. Opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions generally lack depth. There is an imbalance in religious education with regard to developing a thorough understanding of religions other than Christianity. Visits arranged and visitors invited into school rarely include links with people from other ethnic backgrounds.
28. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory with specialist knowledge used effectively in the allocation of subject co-ordinator roles. Support staff are well trained and effectively deployed across the school and within the classroom. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, overall, with strengths in provision outdoors for the Foundation Stage and for science. A newly upgraded and well-equipped computer suite on the site for pupils in Years 3 to 6 presents good opportunities for improvements in provision for ICT. Suitable book resources are available to support the curriculum but some the books in the library at the Alderbrook site are out of date and ready for renewal.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction arrangements enable pupils to quickly settle into the reception classes and to transfer easily to the high school at the end of Year 6.
- Very good relationships ensure that care for the pupils' personal and emotional welfare is consistently good.
- The pupils' views are very influential in matters raised by the very effective school council.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Health and safety procedures are good, overall; although the school environment is generally very safe, risk assessment procedures are not clearly defined.

Commentary

29. The provision for ensuring pupils' personal welfare is very good. Parents value the secure and happy environment in which individual pupils' well-being is effectively promoted. Pupils and their families are well known to teachers. Adults are sensitive to pupils' needs, being fully aware of the physical, emotional and intellectual needs throughout their school life. The trusting relationships evident in school ensure that pupils are happy and give them confidence to share any concerns to help them cope with any problems that arise in everyday life. The school ensures that new teachers and supply teachers are fully aware of the particular needs of each child.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and quickly provided with the support they need. This prompt action, combined with trained support in class, helps them to achieve well and prevents unnecessary delays in learning. Good management by the co-ordinator of provision for special educational needs and good liaison between staff and outside agencies means that staff and pupils usually get the help they need when they need it. The pupils' work is checked regularly and review meetings held at least termly make sure that all concerned are fully aware of progress and next steps. The school has a very caring and supportive ethos and pupils' efforts are valued and celebrated whatever their attainment levels. The school has regular presentation assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements in and out of school, and display individual and group awards. Teachers monitor and assess the personal development of pupils through observation and record appropriate details. However, this information is not formally collated for future evaluation.
31. The school council provides a very good opportunity for all pupils to influence the life of the school, either through class discussions or whole school council meetings involving year group representatives from Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils feel listened to and are proud of the changes they have helped to bring about, such as the provision of playground equipment and quiet areas for pupils. The modest budget allocated to the council is supplemented well by fund-raising activities and helps pupils to take a responsible attitude to planning change.
32. The governing body and headteacher take a very serious attitude to health and safety and good safeguards are in place. The risk assessment programme includes the building, grounds and out-of-school activities but some improvements in the record keeping system are needed to add rigour to the system. The building does not yet fully comply with the Disability Act but the governing body is in appropriate negotiation with the local education authority. The individual needs of pupils with disabilities are suitably met through very flexible arrangements for class bases. A suitable number of

staff are trained in first-aid. All accidents and other incidents are recorded routinely and the information regularly reviewed to verify cause and any necessary action implemented.

33. Good arrangements are in place to deal with any child protection issues that may arise. Useful records of all cases are maintained in confidence. All teaching staff have received instructions and guidance to ensure early identification of any child at risk. Training for child protection is included in the induction programme for new staff. Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils using the Internet are safe from inappropriate communications.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with other schools and the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are confident that the school provides well for their children and, in turn, parents support their children's learning very well.
- The school provides a very good range of information for parents but does not formally seek their views on the schools strengths and areas for development.
- Good links, overall, with other schools and the wider community provide useful opportunities to enrich pupils' learning.

Commentary

34. The partnership with parents is very good and has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The school takes a deep interest in the home life of pupils, and plays a significant part in the life of the parish and the local community. Parents, in turn, support their children's learning very well at home and reinforce the values that are taught.
35. Views expressed in the parents' pre-inspection meeting, the results of the parents' questionnaire and discussions during the inspection indicate that parents are highly satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. They are particularly appreciative of the openness and warmth of the staff and praise the way they make themselves available to parents so that any issues are dealt with promptly. They see the school as a friendly, caring community where their children are encouraged to work hard and behave well and where they are helped to grow in responsibility. The majority of parents appreciate the good quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership provided by the headteacher. They feel that the school works closely with them.
36. The wide range of information they receive from the school is highly valued. Weekly newsletters and other information keep parents up-to-date with ongoing and special events. Well presented topic charts and grids are available to give parents valuable information about the curriculum being taught in each year group, and guidance on how they can help their children to read and write. The school prospectus provides comprehensive detail about school life and the governors' annual report to parents fulfils statutory requirements in detailing the school's development during the year. Some parents feel they do not receive enough information about their own children's progress, but arrangements are similar to most schools. The school is generally very successful in involving parents in decisions about the individual education plans for

pupils with special educational needs. A wide range of outside agencies, local education authority staff and specialist school services is involved with supporting parents, pupils and staff.

37. Parents support the school very well and regularly take up invitations to attend the events over the year. Parents' offers to help in school are well co-ordinated by a parent volunteer and include help in classrooms, for educational visits and in organising fund raising activities. The parents' and friends' association raises a substantial amount of extra income to support provision in the school, for example, through organising a Community Day each year. Many parents have attended the adult numeracy and literacy courses made available in school in order to provide further support for their children. The local library helped organise a 'Chatterbox library course' to encourage enjoyment through sharing books with the children.
38. The school plays its part in the life of the village community and also uses the community as a resource for learning. The school choir visited Lichfield Cathedral, for example, to participate in a concert alongside many other local schools. Pupils take part in local sporting activities, including the Dove Valley football tournament and the Kings Bromley cricket tournament. A theatrical group visits the school to help pupils dramatise historical events to aid their understanding. For instance, the role of Roman soldiers was dramatised and pupils have had the opportunity to re-enact Queen Boudicca's battles.
39. Links with other schools and colleges are good, overall. Liaison arrangements with the local high school are very good and the main strength, helped by the chair of governors shared by both schools. Links with the pre-school unit on the school site are close and the organiser is a governor of the school. Staff are regularly involved in shared training events with other local primary schools and takes its turn to provide training for others. The school has had no recent links with initial teacher training institutions situated locally. Few connections are made with local businesses but the local police force, fire brigade and school nurse play a useful part in the pupils' understanding of local services.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management is satisfactory, overall. The governance of the school is sound and all statutory duties are met.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is strongly committed to a good quality of provision for the pupils and inspires staff and pupils to do their best.
- After a period of uncertainty, three temporary assistant headteachers are in post pending the appointment of a new headteacher in September.
- A high turnover of staff means that many subject co-ordinators are new to their roles and need time to make an impact on standards.
- Data systems for checking pupils' overall progress in literacy and numeracy are used well to allocate extra support where needed.
- Subject co-ordinators concentrate on one site and this reduces their effectiveness.
- The governing body has a good level of expertise and a good understanding of the main strengths of the school, but its involvement in checking the school's performance is no more than satisfactory.

Commentary

40. The headteacher is strongly committed to providing a good education for pupils and provides decisive and clear leadership to the school. A strong ethos is established of very good relationships that encourage the very good personal and social development of pupils. All in the school, staff and pupils, are expected to do their best and the staff form an inspired team. Strenuous efforts are made by the headteacher to share his time fairly between the two school buildings and he is a familiar figure on both sites. Liaison between the staff of the two sites is very friendly but subject management roles are shared and there is some lack of cohesion in managing standards on both sites. Mathematics, for example, is more successfully managed for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
41. Management is satisfactory, overall. The school has experienced difficulties recently in maintaining stability in the senior management team of the school. Although some are long serving members of staff, the three assistant headteachers are in temporary roles. Many subject co-ordinators are in new roles, needing time to impact on standards in their subjects. All have devised outline action plans for the year and although priorities for development are clear, there is a considerable amount of innovation and change planned across the whole curriculum that is likely to detract from the current main focus of improving writing.
42. Monitoring systems have expanded significantly since the last inspection. The school now has secure data from annual tests that gives a useful overview on the performance of pupils. This is used well to check on progress and to allocate extra support where needed. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, assessment systems are newly established but generally too vague to provide the managers of the school with a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in standards. In English, recent moves forward in target setting in writing show promise in involving pupils well in their own assessment but are weakened by the lack of clear links with skills associated with levels of attainment in the National Curriculum.

43. The governing body is very supportive of the school's work and ensures that all statutory duties are fulfilled. The governors include a range of professional expertise and the school benefits from their knowledge. The chair of governors is also chair of the governing body at the local high school and is very interested in preparing pupils well to take their place there at the end of Year 6. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and staff and show a good awareness of the strengths of the school and areas set by the school for development. Although governors are confident and interested in taking the school forward, they could do more to hold the school to account for its standards. There is some complacency evident in their use of data made available nationally about their school. They are satisfactorily involved in setting the school development plan and monitor expenditure carefully. The development plan is a brief document that makes priorities clear but sets no success criteria to enable governors to judge the degree of success and value for money. Performance management targets set for the headteacher and staff are suitably linked to the school's development plan.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	823,850
Total expenditure	835,970
Expenditure per pupil	2,395

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	38,251
Balance carried forward to the next	26,131

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**, overall, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

On admission to Reception, the attainments of the children vary but are above average overall. The very good links with the pre-school unit on the same site contribute to the very good induction arrangements that help children settle quickly into school. Consistently good teaching and a broad curriculum, based firmly on a good understanding of how young children learn, enables children to achieve well. Standards are above average, overall, at the end of the reception year and children are well prepared for entry into Year 1.

The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The outdoor provision has been improved since the last inspection. Although the layout of the building prohibits direct access to the very good quality outdoor resources, imaginative planning by staff means that the facilities are well used to enhance children's learning and contribute to the good standards achieved in physical development.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, who has a strong background in educating young children. She leads a co-operative staff team well and provides an effective model of good practice.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Simple rules are consistently applied so children know what is expected of them.
- There are many planned opportunities for children to co-operate and work together.
- Children are regularly asked to judge how well they have succeeded in a particular activity and to consider how they could improve.
- Very good relationships and a supportive atmosphere help children to develop good attitudes and confidence.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching is good and consequently children achieve well. Most children exceed the recommended goals for personal development by the time they enter Year 1; standards are above average. Simple class rules are discussed, with children adding their own contributions, such as "Don't fight!". Children respond very well to the consistently high expectations of staff and so behaviour is very good. Any areas of difficulty are targeted clearly, such as when children tried hard to line up quickly and sensibly to meet the class target.
45. The supportive atmosphere and interesting variety of activities help children to develop good attitudes to school from an early age. The very good relationships between all adults and the children mean that children feel able to offer an opinion and this helps them to gain confidence. Children learn to co-operate well through planned social activities, such as traditional games outside and playing tunes together on the electronic keyboard. They develop independence through opportunities to choose their own activity and the expectation that they will clear away afterwards. They adopt

a sensible attitude when asked to consider how well they have learned in a lesson and this helps them to improve their application and concentration.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong emphasis on speaking and listening helps children to develop very good language skills.
- The basic skills of reading and writing are taught systematically and well, with very good support from home.
- Children's work is marked well; good assessments of skills are used well to help children to improve.

Commentary

46. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Standards are above average as children transfer to Year 1, with strengths in the development of their speaking and listening skills.
47. Whatever the activity, teachers ask constructive questions that require children to explain their thinking and this develops their speaking skills very well. This contributes well to children's achievement in all areas of learning. The requirement for children to explain how they have worked things out, for example, helps children to develop their mathematical understanding.
48. Regular stories from attractive books encourage children to develop an enjoyment of reading from an early age. One higher attaining child reading to an adult laughed out loud as she became excited as the story emerged and she anticipated the ending. The teaching of letter sounds is structured well, children learn at a good pace and this helps them to make good attempts at reading unfamiliar words. Children become confident with reading through regular opportunities to read to adults in school and at home. Parents make a strong contribution to their children's learning.
49. Children make good progress in developing increasingly independent writing skills. Teachers mark the children's work carefully so that they can explain to each child how they can improve. For example, the teacher focuses children's attention on leaving 'a finger space' between words. Children learn well through regular writing practice with good teaching points, so that less than half way through the reception year, most children are close to meeting the learning goals set for the end of the year. Most can form recognisable letters already and about a third of the children can make a good attempt at writing a simple sentence independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop a good mathematical understanding through a good range of practical activities.

- Very good questioning encourages children to develop their own methods of working things out.
- Work is well matched to the needs of different groups so that all achieve well.

Commentary

50. Teaching is good overall and so children achieve well, attaining standards that are above average by the time they transfer to Year 1.
51. Children develop a good awareness of numbers through regular practical activities such as counting, obeying rules such as 'only four can play in the sand' and through matching the correct numeral to a set of cubes. In a very good lesson observed the teacher built very well on these practical activities so that higher attaining children progressed to counting on in their heads to work out simple addition. Very good questioning encourages children to devise their own ways of working things out and this helps them to develop a greater understanding and to solve problems. Teachers plan work that is well matched to children's needs and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive a good level of support from the skilled classroom assistants to improve their learning.
52. Children become suitably aware of the language of measurement through everyday activities focused on comparison, such as deciding which line of children is longer or shorter.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of visitors enhances learning in this area.

Commentary

53. Sound teaching enables children to reach the recommended goals in this area of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. Children have daily access to a satisfactory range of construction toys and natural materials, such as sand and water, to build a suitable understanding of the world. The teachers make good use of the limited number of computers available so that children experience a range of computer programs, including picture making and reading programs, so that they develop their computing skills to a satisfactory level. A strong aspect is the number of visitors invited into school who enhance the children's knowledge. For example, a nurse, police officers and other visitors spoke to the children about their work to improve the children's knowledge of 'People Who Help Us'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of the high quality resources in the outdoor area is planned very well to enhance children's learning.
- Children are taught to use a good range of tools and implements correctly.
- Children develop their skills well in physical education lessons by observing the teacher and each other to discover how they can improve their own performance.

Commentary

54. Teaching is good and so children learn well, exceeding the recommended goals in this area of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. The good improvement in outdoor provision through the purchase of high quality resources has helped to raise achievement in this area of learning. Lessons are planned well and adults deployed very successfully to overcome the fact that outdoor resources cover a wide area with no direct access from the reception classes. Children display obvious enjoyment in climbing on and through the large train and show care and skill when negotiating the adventure area.
55. In a very good physical education lesson in the hall, children showed a good awareness of space. The teacher used her very good knowledge of the subject to observe children closely and to suggest ways they could improve. A strong aspect of the teaching is the way children are encouraged to observe others carefully so that they are able to reflect on how they might improve their own performance.
56. Children are taught how to use a good range of tools and implements correctly to develop good manual skills. For example, children cut out the outline of a nurse's uniform carefully and accurately, and hold pencils and brushes properly and with good control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults join in well with children to improve the quality of their imaginative play.
- Children enjoy the music sessions.
- Children's artwork on display shows limited evidence of individual creativity.

Commentary

57. Teaching is satisfactory overall and children achieve the recommended standard by the end of their year in the reception class. Children enjoy exercising their imagination in the varied imaginative play areas, and learning is enhanced on regular occasions when an adult joins them. This was seen outdoors when the classroom assistants took the roles of train driver or lollipop lady to enliven children's games. In a good music lesson in the hall for both reception classes, children responded well to suggestions of how they could improve and enjoyed making 'scared' faces at the appropriate part of the rap song. The examples of children's paintings on display, including winter pictures and painting on black paper, show good control of materials but their similarities indicate limited opportunities to express individual creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, overall, by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' above average language skills on entry to school are built on well; by Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average.
- Reading is taught consistently well and, with very good support from home for most pupils, standards are above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6.
- Writing is not so successfully taught; standards are broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Leadership is good, overall, but management is satisfactory.

Commentary

58. Standards are above average, overall, by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, with strengths in pupils' very good speaking and listening skills and high standards in reading. Standards in writing are average. Pupils' learning benefits considerably from support from parents, enhancing the school's strong provision for speaking and reading especially.
59. Good opportunities are frequently planned within lessons in different subjects for pupils to share thoughts with a 'talking partner' before contributions to whole-class discussions begin. For the older pupils especially, many opportunities are found to share thoughts and ideas, sometimes on controversial issues, such as fox-hunting or the pollution caused by traffic. Teachers provide very good role-models for the use of language and generate a lively interest in the views of others. Pupils are taught the skills of reasoned argument well and, consequently, the older pupils especially know what they think or can soon come up with a justifiable answer. Pupils answer and ask questions well. The pupils' very good communication skills provide the bedrock for learning in other subjects. For example, discussions in science lessons on the means of finding out about muscles and intricacies noted and checked during investigations owe a lot to the pupils' good ability to express their observations and ideas. They develop very good language for thinking and reasoned discussion, which pays off across the curriculum. The school provides well for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language by sensitively helping them to improve their speaking skills. The many opportunities for practice, combined with the very good relationships in school, result in good progress.
60. Most pupils enjoy reading and frequent practice improves skills at a good pace. Teachers make reading attractive by providing interesting books and most make sure pupils read across a wide range of material. In one of the classes in Year 6, for example, pupils choose a fictional story and a factual book to work on both at school and at home. Some pupils add a personal book to the collection. Homework is based on a good list of varied comprehension questions that give pupils a choice of how they analyse what they have read. In addition, small reading groups give pupils further practise in class, often working with the teacher or teaching assistant. Texts shared with the whole class are not always so well used, with opportunities reduced sometimes because texts are too small for class use or discussions on texts not made available for class view. Staff are diligent in ensuring that extra practice is provided for those who progress more slowly. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well, generally, through high expectations on the pace and depth of their reading. Pupils with English as an additional language learn to read quite rapidly and time is given to discussion to close what is quite a wide gap in comprehension.
61. Although the teaching of writing is satisfactory, it is a relative weakness. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning mean that, at all stages in the school, they work diligently on the writing tasks set. Pupils good speaking skills ensure a reasonable flow to written work but teachers are not always skilled at taking the pupils' work forward at as rapid a pace as might be expected. Teachers are not wholly clear on the stages of progress in writing. Marking lacks the skill in many classes to home in on important developments and work on these until secure. Target setting is an important step forward but the usefulness of targets varies considerably. For example, pupils with the capability of achieving high standards in Year 6 sometimes have quite facile targets set that would be better suited to younger pupils. For support with spelling, the school tends to stick too closely to word lists for specific age groups without tailoring

learning to the needs of individuals or groups of pupils. Thus, pupils at all stages of development in a class are given the same list of spellings as prompts and the same lists of word to learn, whatever their individual or group needs. A strength in some classes is the development of interesting and rich vocabulary but the structure of character or setting descriptions is generally not worked on sufficiently well. In some classes, the marking of spellings lacks consistency and rigour. Teachers do not home in soon enough on spellings that are expected to be correct at that stage of learning. Standards are generally rising through the school, with a better pace to learning promoted by target setting and self-evaluation of skills. Where these are carefully focused and used consistently, targets are improving the pace of progress. Tasks within classes are generally not varied sufficiently to match pupils' needs well. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are still at the stage of reproducing known stories are asked to devise their own too often. Tasks intended for assessment are not marked in detail to enable teachers and pupils to stock and establish a renewed basis for future teaching and learning.

62. Leadership of the subject is good and generates an enthusiastic and energetic response from teachers as well as pupils. Management is satisfactory, overall. The teaching of speaking, listening and reading is led forward well but not enough is understood about the features of each stage of writing to enable standards to rise through the methodical application of teaching skills and sequential checking of learning. The effect of recent improvements in target setting is weakened through insufficient links to assessment levels identified within national guidance. Few opportunities are available for the co-ordinator to observe the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Satisfactory opportunities are planned, overall, for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and discussion in other subjects. Pupils read for research in subjects such as history and geography. The quality of written work in such subjects is lower than in English lessons. There is little flexibility in the timetable to allow written work for different subjects to be honed in literacy lessons. However, there is ample opportunity to practice discussion skills in all subjects, and this is a strength in the school's provision. Computers are used for word processing throughout the school but the limited number of computers available in Years 1 and 2 restricts opportunities for practice. In Years 3 to 6, the new suite is just coming into use and has yet to impact fully on skills for literacy.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not achieve as well as they should.
- There is a good emphasis on giving pupils the opportunity to use and develop their skills through investigating and solving problems.
- Teachers use simple resources well to help pupils to understand.
- There is a good system for tracking pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6.

Commentary

64. Standards by Year 6 are well above average. This shows very good improvement on the broadly average standards evident in Year 2, where the number of higher attaining pupils is below average compared to all schools nationally and well below average when compared to schools with pupils from a similar background.
65. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2 but varies between classes and groups of children. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, in both year groups achieve well because of the good level of support they receive. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 achieve well because work is well planned to meet their needs. However, the slow pace of lessons in Year 2 and the lack of sufficiently challenging activities means that higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
66. Achievement is good, overall, for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 because work is well planned to support and challenge different groups of pupils with differing needs. Learning accelerates in Year 4 and in Year 6 because of some very good teaching in these year groups. A strong feature is the way pupils' progress is tracked from year to year so that the school can intervene to maintain an appropriate pace in each pupil's learning.
67. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in Years 1 and 2, though is stronger in Year 1. In a very good lesson observed in Year 1, the exciting pace and the helpful use of simple resources such as bead strings, kept pupils involved throughout. The specific lesson plan prepared for the classroom assistant led to a very good contribution to the lesson in providing very good support for lower attaining pupils, helping them to split numbers between 10 and 20 into tens and units. Higher attaining pupils responded very well to the higher expectation to record the tens and units for much larger numbers. In lessons observed in Year 2, the pace of the initial sessions was too slow to develop pupils' calculation skills well. Whilst lower attaining pupils were well supported to consolidate their understanding of addition to 10, higher attaining pupils spent considerable time reinforcing skills that were already secure. For example, higher attaining pupils who could quickly spot all the two-digit combinations of six numbers, and explain why they had all the possibilities, were asked to wait whilst the rest of the class worked it out.
68. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6, with strengths in Years 4 and 6, where learning proceeds at a rapid pace. In a very good lesson observed in Year 6, the teacher posed very searching questions to encourage pupils to think and consider systematic ways to solve a problem. Lower attaining pupils made very good progress as they tackled a problem in dividing a four-by-four square in different ways, into two identical pieces, by cutting out the shapes. Higher attaining pupils were challenged to find all the possibilities, working systematically, and they co-operated very well, working in pairs, in their eagerness to discover all the solutions. In the lessons judged to be satisfactory rather than good, pupils were given too much time for each task, lost concentration and there was insufficient demand for pupils to explain how they had worked things out to extend their understanding.
69. The subject is led well by two very knowledgeable co-ordinators who provide good role models for other staff. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. A stronger aspect of management is a thorough analysis of test results, which has been used well to identify areas of weakness, which are now foci for improvement. Consequently teachers are now providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems throughout

the school and to make greater use of lines of numbers in Years 1 and 2 to aid memory and calculation. There is a weakness in that the good procedures for tracking pupils' progress do not start until Year 3 and this is a major factor in the lack of achievement for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 not being adequately addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Mathematics is used and developed well in other subjects. In science, pupils in Year 2 check the time when observing how quickly ice melts in different locations and display their results well in a bar chart. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4, pupils took accurate measurements in centimetres when designing winding mechanisms. Older pupils learn how to complete spreadsheets in lessons in ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6, leading to very good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Learning is securely based on well planned opportunities for scientific investigation.
- Assessment is used well to check understanding and to help pupils to improve their learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good, helping the school to establish clear priorities in raising standards.
- Good resources are used well to extend learning.

Commentary

71. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, and well above average by the end of Year 6. Compared to similar schools, standards are at least average. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection.
72. The school has focused successfully on improving standards by increasing pupils' opportunities to learn through scientific investigation. This has had a significant impact on the pupils' scientific skills and their level of understanding. Throughout the school, pupils develop an increasingly good understanding of how to plan, organise and evaluate investigative work. Pupils are generally supported or challenged well, according to their needs, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In a lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were provided with useful planning frameworks that helped them to investigate forces, for example, by testing the bounce of a variety of balls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, responded very enthusiastically to the interesting work planned. Opportunities were missed, however, to organise more demanding tasks for the higher attaining pupils, for example, by expecting them to extend the investigation by testing the balls' bounce on different surfaces.
73. By Year 6, pupils show initiative, confidence and independence in conducting their own investigations. They investigated dissolving independently, for example, ensuring that their approach involved the whole scientific process, including a good awareness of fair testing and accurate recording of results, including a good variety of methods. Class discussions in preparation for investigative work and in conclusion are thorough.

In Year 6, for example, the teacher emphasised very well the need for pupils to pose their own well thought out questions about shadows and the transfer of light. Technical vocabulary, such as *transparent*, *translucent* and *opaque*, was used accurately. Learning is set at a higher level than average in most classes, meeting pupils' needs well and leading to above average attainment. In addition, in Years 3 to 6, most teachers challenge higher attaining pupils further, firstly through searching technical discussions but also through extending the range of the investigation. In Year 4, higher attaining pupils had a wider range of measurements of muscles to make, a more complex chart to complete and this led to discussions of greater depth as pupils tried to find a pattern within the varying results. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils showed high levels of precision in the production of graphs to record results evaluating their investigations into evaporation. They used scientific principles confidently in reaching their conclusions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs carry out their own investigations and record their own results, but with fewer examples and more help in drawing conclusions.

74. Teachers make very good use of discussion in helping pupils to extend their learning at all stages in the school. Relationships are very good, tasks are interesting and so pupils take part in discussions very enthusiastically. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 4, pupils developed a very thorough understanding of muscles, how they work and how they vary in size even between different limbs on the same person. Pertinent questioning from the teacher led to deep discussion within small groups and possible reasons were put forward, such as right or left-handedness. Discussion challenged all pupils well, including those with special educational needs, but varied in depth and use of scientific vocabulary according to pupils' differing stages of learning. The teacher's own knowledge and strong interest inspired pupils to make observations very carefully, and re-check results when comparisons showed surprising differences. They were very keen to identify patterns and draw conclusions, using computer generated block graphs and scatter-grams to compare results across the whole class.
75. Most staff use assessment systems well at the beginning and end of each project in order to check pupils' needs and progress, and to identify areas for individual or whole class improvement. When marking pupils' work, teachers in Years 3 to 6, especially, provide comments that challenge pupils to improve their skills. In Year 5, within work on investigating materials, the teacher commented, "Does the amount of water affect the rate of dissolving?" to stimulate further investigation. Teachers generally share learning objectives with pupils and return to these at the end of lessons to help pupils to judge whether these have been accomplished. This helps pupils to improve their understanding of their own learning and to reinforce the scientific process of making predictions and hypotheses, and checking results. In Year 2's work on magnetism, pupils were asked, "Did our experiment work?" Because teachers generally have good subject knowledge and help pupils to produce clear explanations, pupils reach high standards in their understanding of scientific knowledge and in their use of scientific terminology.
76. Science has a high profile in the school and this helps to engender the interest of staff and pupils, and to raise standards. The school runs a very popular science club for pupils and parents. 'Science weeks' provide a good focus on scientific activities. All of the pupils in Year 6 achieved national awards for their work in science. Throughout the school, scientific work is attractively displayed and includes examples of work from the school's successful participation in science competitions involving local schools. The school has a high reputation for its work in science and is involved in providing training for other local schools. Teachers make good use of the good range of resources

available to ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils' work is suitably practical. Outdoor natural areas are very carefully planned to enhance the curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to study a wide range of habitats and plant life in carefully organised locations, such as the pond and bog area, vegetable and herb plots, and the natural meadow.

77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The lead subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is leading a new management partnership for the subject well. She is very enthusiastic and provides a very good role model in her own teaching for other members of staff. She provides good support for colleagues in Years 3 to 6 and this influence is extending now to Years 1 and 2 since the appointment of a counterpart on the other site. There are insufficient opportunities for checking teaching and learning in lessons throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new computer suite on the site for Years 3 to 6 is beginning to be used well and standards are rising for the older pupils.
- Although standards are average in Year 2, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have sufficient access to computers to raise standards further.

Commentary

78. In line with the findings of the last inspection, standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. Recent significant improvements in resources, resulting in a well-equipped computer suite on the Alderbrook site for Years 3 to 6, are just coming into use and standards for the older pupils are rising.
79. Although there has been insufficient time for the new arrangements to impact fully on standards, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to have more 'hands-on' experience of computers and are beginning to develop their skills more rapidly. Adjustments have been made to planning in order to ensure that pupils build securely on work that has gone before and that they are presented with more challenging tasks in order to raise attainment. Pupils are very enthusiastic in their work in the new suite and are rapidly becoming familiar with the system. This has not happened to the same extent for pupils in Years 1 and 2, although there are plans for them to access the suite. By Year 2, most pupils show a basic competence in keyboard and mouse control skills from their limited access to their class computer and the very small suite situated in the library. This restricted access to computers is impeding the rate of their progress.
80. Past work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, although the good teaching and learning observed during the inspection suggests that provision is improving as teachers gain confidence in using the new resources. In Year 6, the teacher and teaching assistant made good use of the interactive whiteboard to review previous work so that pupils improved their web site designs when they began work on their individual computers. Because the teacher used clear explanations and checked pupils' work carefully, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well. In Year 2, although the teacher's explanations were clear and she managed pupils well, their learning about a modelling

program was restricted because only a small number of pupils could access the computer.

81. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the way forward in order to raise standards. Assessment systems are planned to enable a review of learning and pupils' rate of progress. The co-ordinator's considerable expertise has already provided staff and pupils with effective support, which is enabling them to increase their skills and rate of learning. The school makes good use of the specialist skills of a teaching assistant to support teachers and to help with the training of other teaching assistants. Good use is made of a range of technological resources, such as digital cameras, tape recorders and programmable floor robots to extend pupils' skills. Pupils have the opportunity to extend their learning through participation in an extra-curricular computer club.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. The school makes satisfactory use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. In English, for example, pupils in Year 1 use tape recorders to interview other pupils to help improve their speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Year 3 use word processing skills to extend their use of adjectives within their writing. In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 use floor based programmable robots to extend their directional and number skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 collect data about the number of school meals taken over a given period and use the computer to analyse the information to indicate trends and patterns. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils use CD-ROM's as sources of information. In design and technology in Years 5 and 6, pupils developed well planned computer-controlled models of merry-go-rounds, and used digital cameras for photographs to be inserted in pamphlets about the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

83. Insufficient lessons were observed to make clear overall judgements on the school's provision for geography and the quality of teaching and learning. The evidence of past work, discussions with pupils and the two lessons observed indicate that standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6, with strengths in the knowledge and understanding pupils have of their local area.
84. Pupils throughout the school have a satisfactory, developing knowledge and understanding of their own locality and countries in Europe and further afield. Pupils' mapping skills are satisfactory. In Year 1, pupils begin by drawing maps as pictures, marking man-made features, such as houses and roads. By the end of Year 2, pupils can locate on maps the countries in the United Kingdom and their home town. By Year 4, pupils begin to understand grid references, simple map symbols and can locate their school on an Ordnance Survey map. In the lesson observed, teaching was good and pupils in Year 4 were helped to understand maps well through comparing them with aerial photographs of the area. Higher attaining pupils noted that the maps were drawn to a different scale than that captured by the photograph.
85. In Year 6, pupils become involved in discussing local environmental issues, such as traffic congestion in towns and sustainable development within the school grounds. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits out of school, such as the residential visit by pupils in Year 5 to an outdoor education centre in Wolverhampton.

86. Assessment systems lack rigour and do not yield sufficient information on pupils' skills to help teachers to tailor lessons well to meet their needs. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory; pupils' books are monitored annually and the audit informs the school development plan.

History

87. Insufficient lessons were observed to make clear overall judgements. Evidence from past work, the one lesson observed and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6.
88. Pupils are enthusiastic about historical topics and enjoy their work. They are confident in explaining their knowledge and understanding both verbally and in writing. In Year 2, the higher attaining pupils show understanding of the complexities surrounding the Gunpowder Plot. A pupil wrote, 'Guy wanted to be a catholic which he was, he tried to destroy King James the 1st.' By Year 4, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the lives and cultures of people during Roman times, making clear comparisons with the Celtic way of life. In Year 6, pupils extend their skills of historical enquiry by studying archaeology, considering different hypotheses on the basis of evidence and expressing opinions on characteristics of the ancient civilisation of the Indus Valley. In a good lesson observed in Year 6, pupils extended their skills of historical enquiry well through trying to establish hypotheses from looking at small parts of a picture. These observations were extended well through discussion, for example, establishing the type of bread baked in ancient times and the possibility that people believed in an after-life existence.
89. Pupils' learning is enhanced well by visits, such as that by pupils in Years 5 and 6 to Shugborough Hall, where opportunities for role-play as an evacuee extended their understanding of the Second World War. Books studied within English lessons, such as the Diary of Anne Frank, extend pupils' empathy for people living in past times well.
90. The leadership and management of history are satisfactory, overall. A good interest in the subject is generated but assessment systems do not provide a clear enough picture of what pupils understand to enable teaching to be matched closely to their needs. There is an appropriate programme of topics, made interesting by good teaching, but limited planning for the sequential development of skills of historical enquiry. Nevertheless, pupils' books are monitored annually and the audit usefully informs the school's development plan.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' understanding of the social and moral principles of religion is good but their knowledge of the teaching, customs and practice of major world faiths other than Christianity is weak.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by visiting places of Christian worship, related to areas of study but there are few links with other faith communities.

Commentary

91. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but lower than those observed during the last inspection. The school has focused on improvements in understanding personal and social lessons from religious principles but has reduced its focus on religious practice. Planning is based satisfactorily on the locally agreed syllabus but an appropriate balance across the curriculum is not always achieved. The curriculum in practice does not fully reflect the pupils' need to understand the British multi-faith and culturally diverse society.
92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Strengths are their sound understanding of the Christian faith. A pupil in Year 3, for example, wrote about the Christingle celebration, "Christians believe that Jesus died (sic) for us and so he can help us when our minds are dark and cloudy. The candle is a symbol that Jesus brings light to the world." Pupils are not challenged well enough, however, to look at what can be learned from other world faiths. Pupils in Year 6 show satisfactory understanding of a Christian church but show little understanding gleaned over their years in school of the places of worship linked to other faiths. Pupils in Year 6 have recently begun work on studying Sikhism and are beginning to understand about the special items that are spiritually important to Sikhs.
93. Lessons to be learned from applying religious principles to everyday life are taught well. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils achieved a good awareness of the benefits of equality and sharing fairly within society as a whole. Teachers' questions, usually tailored to pupils' attainment levels, are effective in developing a deeper understanding of the thoughts and ideas of others.
94. Celebrations form an important part of school life, and pupils enjoy learning about how different faith communities celebrate festivals such as harvest, Christmas, Chanukah, and Id-al-Fitr.
95. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, overall. The personal and social elements of the curriculum are taught with enthusiasm but the co-ordinator has not checked that the pupils' knowledge and understanding is effectively balanced across the whole curriculum and that features of world faiths other than Christianity are taught in sufficient depth. Lessons are supplemented satisfactorily by school assemblies but work on other faiths is superficial, overall.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject, concentrate well and enjoy making decisions and choices as they complete their work.
- A suitable range of work by famous artists inspires pupils' work.
- Co-ordinators are new to the role and their first task is to review the out-dated scheme of work for the school.

Commentary

96. A review of past work and displays in school indicates that by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
97. Although in the lessons observed, teaching and learning were judged to be good, evidence of a range of past work indicates that it is satisfactory overall. A suitable range of skills is developed to satisfactory levels of attainment. Pupils in Year 2, for example, learn to mix shades and tones of colours in paint. Painted portraits show satisfactory design skills and control of the medium. In a good lesson observed in Year 2, pupils responded well to the opportunity to observe the work of Gustav Klimt and to replicate his style in card and paper collage. Pupils worked independently, planning their own work and their responses showed creativity.
98. Work in the new co-ordinator's class in Year 3 showed the teacher's good subject knowledge. Pupils produced pleasing closely observed drawings in pencil of shells and other natural objects. They went on to produce well thought out designs, inspired by the objects and painted carefully in a limited palette of colour. Pupils were inspired well to produce creative designs and showed a good level of skill and organisation in controlling the paint. In Year 5, pupils made imaginative drawings, based on photographs of moving figures, in the style of Miro. This was usefully linked to work in geography on Spain. In Year 6, work on the Indus valley was enriched well through a study of the Paisley design. The teacher used previously sketched designs well to help pupils to understand the natural objects that were likely to have inspired the designs and to develop their understanding of repeated patterns. Unfortunately the only actual sample of fabric printed with a paisley design was too small to be seen clearly by the class. Sketchbooks are made available but not used sufficiently as a record of past work or as a regular source of inspiration.
99. The co-ordinators have only recently taken over the subject and it is too soon to judge the quality of leadership and management. The scheme of work is being reviewed and draft plans are in place for Years 1 and 2. The assessment system is vague and not linked sufficiently closely to skills in the subject. A weekly art with mathematics club for pupils in Years 3 to 6 enables those who take part to develop their skills further.

Design and technology

100. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on provision or teaching and learning in design and technology because only one lesson was observed. Discussions with pupils and evidence of past work indicate that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age. In the lesson observed in Year 4, teaching and learning was good. The teacher placed strong emphasis on the importance of the design process and made good use of technical vocabulary to improve pupils' understanding of winding mechanisms. Pupils with special educational needs were very well supported to enable them to take a full part in the lesson. Older pupils are making good use of ICT to extend their learning, such as when designing their own websites and when linking models to computers to provide good control systems. The subject is currently a priority for further development within the school's development plan.

Music

101. No lessons were observed in music so judgements on provision cannot be made.

Singing heard during school assemblies indicates that the quality of pupils' singing by both Year 2 and Year 6 is at least average. Opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, such as brass, stringed and woodwind instruments are made available and extend the skills well of those pupils who take part. Choirs are formed for specific performances. For example, 75 volunteers prepared for a recent performance in Lichfield cathedral.

102. Two co-ordinators have been recently appointed and they are focused on raising the profile of music in the school. A newly purchased published scheme is in place and introductory training has been arranged for staff.

Physical education

103. Due to the small number of lessons observed, it is not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of provision or the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions with staff and a review of planning indicate that the school meets the statutory requirements for teaching the subject. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good and pupils achieved very well.
104. In the lessons observed, a significant feature was the good opportunity provided by teachers for pupils to reflect on their work and to comment on how they might improve their skills. Teachers showed very good subject knowledge and ensured that pupils engaged in suitable activities to warm up muscles in advance and to cool down at the end of the lesson. In a very good lesson in gymnastics in Year 2, the teacher explained tasks and learning objectives very clearly, helping pupils to combine sequences of movements on the large apparatus very effectively, both individually and in pairs. Pupils responded very well to the high expectations set. They showed a good level of initiative and responsibility, for example, in setting out the equipment.
105. In the games lesson observed in Year 6, pupils made very good progress in the development of netball passing techniques because the teacher showed keen observational skills and advised pupils well, engaging in detailed discussions on what they needed to do to improve further. The teacher checked carefully that skills were moving forward. Good use of subject vocabulary made pupils familiar with terms such as lactic acid, shoulder pass and invasion games. This helped to deepen their insight into the skills that they were practising. The teacher managed pupils very well in the playground on a cold and windy day; pupils maintained their concentration, behaved very well and exercised enthusiastically.
106. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular sporting activities to complement pupils' work in lessons. Club activities include football, cricket, rugby, netball, hockey, athletics and rounders. School teams are well supported by parents with specialist skills and by local sports clubs, and do well in local competitions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 attend swimming lessons at a local pool. Most can swim by the end of Year 4 and many reach high standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

107. Insufficient lessons were observed to make overall judgements on the quality of provision. A review of planning, observations of pupils' behaviour and discussions with pupils indicate that provision is at least satisfactory, overall, and probably better.

108. The school has good systems in place to develop the pupils' personal and social skills, and their responsibilities with regard to good health and citizenship. It is clear that learning objectives detailed in planning for lessons permeate the school and influence behaviour and relationships throughout the day. Most pupils are confident, articulate and able to understand how their actions affect other people. Personal responsibility and consideration for others are well developed amongst pupils. They develop the empathy needed to see things from another's viewpoint, and resolution of disagreement through discussion is effective. There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity.
109. Pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy and are supported in this by effective lessons led by specialist visitors to school. Links with the local high school have resulted in the development of an effective drugs education programme that spans both phases of education. The schools are now working on a similar anti-bullying programme.
110. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have valuable experience of some of the responsibilities of being a citizen through the well thought out and managed school council. This helps pupils to begin to understand democracy and has enabled pupils to actively learn about sustainable development through the care and development of parts of the school grounds. Their efforts to support charities encourage an awareness that others are sometimes less fortunate than themselves.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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