

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST LAURENCE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Ludlow, Shropshire

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123529

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Bryant

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 267844

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 225  
School address: Jockeyfield  
Ludlow  
Postcode: SY8 1TP  
Telephone number: (01584) 872 766  
Fax number: (01584) 872 766  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr Colin Spanner  
governors:  
Date of previous 17<sup>th</sup> May 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Laurence Church of England Primary School is located just south of the town centre of Ludlow in Shropshire. The school serves the parish and draws pupils from a wide area. The school is heavily over-subscribed. It is of average size for a primary school with 102 boys and 123 girls on roll. In addition, 26 boys and 18 girls attend the Nursery part-time. The attainment of children when they start school is average.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average. There are five pupils with statements, which is above average. There is also a small proportion of pupils in the Nursery with special educational needs. Most special educational needs are for learning difficulties. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.

The school was awarded the *Schools Achievement Award* in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                     |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| 15414                          | Mr David Carrington | Lead inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education                               |
| 9188                           | Mrs Jane McHugh     | Lay inspector  |   |
| 22421                          | Mrs Val McGrath     | Team inspector | Geography<br>History<br>Special educational needs<br>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage |
| 8710                           | Mrs Julie Moore     | Team inspector | Science<br>Religious education<br>Music   |
| 19765                          | Mrs Pauleen Shannon | Team inspector | English<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>English as an additional language                     |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Laurence Church of England Primary School is an **effective** school and provides a thorough all-round education for its pupils. The headteacher is totally committed to the success of the school and ensures that the overall quality of leadership, management and governance is very good. Standards are above average at least in all subjects, with well above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well, especially in their personal development, which is very good. They develop into very pleasant children who are very well behaved and who really enjoy being at school. There is a very rich and varied curriculum and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The school gives **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, art and design, and physical education by the end of Year 6. They are very high in music and are above average in all other subjects.
- Pupils achieve well from their average starting point. They have a thirst for learning and work productively and purposefully.
- Leadership, management and governance are of very good quality overall. The headteacher has excellent vision, crystal clear sense of purpose and very high aspirations, which inspire adults and pupils alike.
- The school is particularly successful in helping develop the pupils as very polite, considerate and caring children. Relationships and behaviour are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good with much very good teaching, especially in the junior years.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. In general, the school works very effectively to ensure that all pupils, regardless of background, are valued and included in all aspects of its work.
- The curriculum is enjoyable, rich, relevant and rewarding and the programme of enrichment is excellent.
- The challenge for higher attaining pupils is not consistent through the school.
- The programme of assessment is not fully complete. There is appropriate assessment in English and mathematics but little useful assessment to assist planning in other subjects.

The school has made **good** improvement since its previous inspection in 1999. Boys' achievement in literacy has been improved well and pupils in the infant phase are now more successful in their learning. The effective programme of checking and evaluating teaching and learning has improved the quality of lessons well. Assessment systems require further improvement, but all subjects are planned systematically. The school improvement plan is firmly based on appropriate priorities. Overall, the improvements in school have ensured that standards have been raised significantly and that pupils achieve well.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The following table shows that the results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in recent years have been well above average overall in English and mathematics and generally above average in science.

|                     |             |                 |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Results in National | all schools | similar schools |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|

| Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| English   | A    | B    | A    | A    |
| mathematics   | A    | B    | A    | A    |
| science   | A    | B    | C    | B    |

*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.*

This year, standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 are higher than they were in the 2004 teacher assessments. They are above average in English and average in mathematics, which marks satisfactory progress since these pupils started school. Standards are also higher, and above average, in science in Year 6 compared to the level found last year. Standards are well above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics, art and design, music and physical education. Achievement is generally good, though higher attaining pupils could be challenged more consistently, especially in the infant years. Standards and achievement are raised very effectively in Year 6 because of the high calibre of provision.

Attendance is broadly average. Pupils behave very well, they have very good attitudes to school and they share very good relationships with staff and other pupils. The pupils are a particular strength of the school. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are of **good** overall quality. There is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning, but nowhere is it less than satisfactory and in many classes it is very good. The use of resources, insistence on high standards of behaviour and the promotion of equal opportunities are strengths. The work of teaching assistants is very good and contributes very effectively to the consistently good progress shown by pupils with special educational needs. Assessment has weaknesses, and is unsatisfactory overall, because there is not total coverage of all subjects. Additionally, marking is not linked strongly enough to individual targets and is not informative enough about ways to improve. The current school priorities identify assessment in science and information and communication technology as key areas for improvement. The curriculum is very broad; it is enjoyable and has considerable excellence. Art and design, music and physical education are all particular strengths of the curriculum, with excellent provision in music. Pupils' welfare, support and guidance are of good quality and there are some very fruitful partnerships with parents, the community and other schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are of **very good** quality. The school is very capably led by the headteacher, who is tireless in his work to bring improvement. Staff, governors and pupils feel very valued for their contributions and all give very committed support to the headteacher in his work. The leadership of other staff is effective in ensuring that pupils learn and achieve successfully. Governance is very good; the governors are alert, interested and involved and they do not hesitate to ask critical questions. They understand the school's performance very well. The school is managed well and there is prudent use of finance.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold very positive views of the school and are pleased that they have chosen it for their children. The pupils also think that their school is a good place to be. The school takes parents' and pupils' views very seriously and they are followed-up very effectively.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Review the challenge provided in the work for higher attaining pupils throughout the school and ensure that it is consistent and demanding.
- Introduce appropriate and manageable whole school assessment procedures for subjects where there are gaps, and ensure that the marking of pupils' work is informative about ways to improve.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Standards are **above average** overall by the end of Year 6 and achievement is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in the Year 6 national tests in recent years have been well above average overall in English and mathematics and above average in science.
- Standards in Year 2 in reading and writing are above average overall, and they are average in mathematics.
- Standards are well above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics, art and design, and physical education. They are very high in music.
- Achievement is generally good.
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve steadily and well.
- Higher attaining pupils should be challenged more consistently.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children start Nursery with broadly average levels of skill and knowledge. There is good quality provision in the Foundation Stage and the children achieve well across the six areas of learning. The school's decision to teach Reception children and pupils from Year 1 together is working to the advantage of the Foundation Stage children in terms of their achievement. By the end of the Reception Year most children will have reached their targets in these six areas.
2. Pupils in the infant phase achieve soundly, and in the case of pupils with special educational needs progress is good. There is inconsistent challenge for higher attaining pupils in this phase. Inspectors sometimes observed restlessness in lessons amongst higher attaining pupils, especially the boys. The school has identified the need to raise achievement amongst the higher attaining pupils in order to lift the overall level of attainment. Currently, standards are higher in Year 2 than they were in the 2004 teacher assessments. For example, standards in English are above average and are average in mathematics, compared to the generally below average levels found in these subjects last year.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 15.3 (16.1)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 14.1 (15.2)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| mathematics   | 15.3 (16.2)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Pupils in the junior years achieve well. There is some variation in their progress, though at no point is it less than satisfactory. Because teaching and learning are at their strongest in Year 6, a fillip is given to standards and achievement at the end of school. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. For science this marks a big

improvement over the situation in the 2004 national tests, which the following table shows. However, standards in English and mathematics have been at a generally well above average level for the last few years.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 28.6 (27.2)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| mathematics   | 28.7 (27.9)    | 27.0 (26.8)      |
| science       | 29.2 (29.7)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Because the curriculum is rich, rewarding and very well balanced, standards in other subjects keep pace with those in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. There is firm evidence of well above average standards in art and design and physical education, and very high standards in music, all of which are particular strengths of the school. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are above average. The indicators for other subjects suggest standards are also above average in design and technology, geography and history. It is very evident that the school takes achievement across the curriculum, not just in the core subjects, as its central priority.
5. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is a diverse range of sometimes very significant personal needs amongst this group of pupils. For many, learning difficulties are at the centre of their special needs; these pupils benefit from the tightly written individual educational plans that give shape and scope to the very good quality support they receive. The pupils with special educational needs are very proud of their accomplishments and the work consistently well because of the strong encouragement they receive from staff and the other pupils. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve consistently well through the school.
6. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is more mixed. As discussed above, it is not consistent in the infant years, though in Year 6, for example, it is very good. Consistent provision and challenge for this group of pupils is the first key issue of this inspection in order to ensure that their achievement is maximised. Paradoxically, the provision for gifted and talented pupils in the junior years is well thought through and the outcomes of intensive instrumental tuition and participation in a wide range of competitive sports and arts activities are very good.
7. There are only a very few pupils who speak English as an additional language in school. These pupils are all in the early years of their primary schooling. They well provided for and they are making good progress in learning English. They already communicate well with adults and the other pupils.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are **very good**. Their spiritual, social and cultural development is good whilst their moral awareness is very good. Attendance levels are **average** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The schools ethos, very good relationships and high expectations of staff play a major part in pupils' very good personal and moral development.
- Attendance to school and pupils punctuality is satisfactory.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners; they are very well behaved and polite.

## **Commentary**

8. St Laurence is a school where pupils develop into well-behaved, confident individuals who have a thirst for knowledge and are eager to learn. They respond extremely positively to everything the school offers, working hard and enjoying the wide range of extra curricular activities, particularly the opportunities to play a musical instrument. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare due to the high expectations of staff and a consistent approach towards raising pupils self esteem by rewarding positive responses. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong, showing respect for others. There have been no exclusions.
9. Recently, staff and pupils participated with the local education authority in a behaviour audit and the school council were instrumental in formulating school rules; there are very few incidents of racial disharmony or bullying. When these do occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents and pupils have confidence that problems and concerns are dealt with. An ethos of caring for individuals and very good relationships, between all members of the school community, ensures pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs are fully integrated. The school works closely with the Traveller Support Service who speak very highly of the inclusive supportive attitude of the school and to pupils from traveller families.
10. There are wide ranging opportunities for pupils to assume posts of responsibility, from caring for the school fish tank to representing pupils views at governing body meetings, all making a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. From a young age pupils learn to play an active and responsible part in the life of the school and wider community for example regularly organising charity fundraising events.
11. Occasions such as assembly provide just some of the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their thoughts and feelings. At times like these you can literally hear a pin drop such is the level of participation of the pupils. Recent visitors to school enabled pupils to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of India, developing not only their spiritual but multi cultural awareness. Careful consideration is given to broadening pupils' cultural experiences through music and art. It is commendable that every child leaving the school can play a musical instrument thanks to the vision and generous support of the headteacher. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development are good; moral development is very good.
12. Attendance is satisfactory overall, in line with the national average for primary schools. This was the position at the time of the last inspection. The importance of regular attendance is communicated to parents regularly. The majority of absence is due to minor illness; there are no unauthorised absences. Whilst no system of first day calling is in place, the headteacher personally telephones parents of absent pupils where there is cause for concern. Punctuality is satisfactory.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data:       | 5.1 | 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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. This includes **effective** teaching and learning and a **very good** curriculum, which has **excellent** enrichment.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are of **good** quality. Assessment is **unsatisfactory** because it is not complete in all subjects.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are of good quality in the Foundation Stage and the junior years; they are satisfactory in the infant years.
- In many classes teaching and learning are very good with some key strengths.
- The work of teaching assistants is very good and contributes very effectively to pupils' achievement.
- Assessment procedures are not good enough in some key subjects.
- Marking is not linked strongly enough to individual targets and is not informative enough about ways to improve.

### Commentary

13. The overall picture of teaching and learning in school is of good quality. Inspectors judged 49 lessons and spent considerable time evaluating pupils' past work. All this evidence of teaching and learning quality indicated that there is no unsatisfactory teaching in school and that most is of good or better quality. The overall quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and the junior years and satisfactory in the infant years.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 2 (4%)    | 11 (22%)  | 21 (43%) | 15 (31%)     | 0 (0%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. One other lesson was observed but this was not judged for quality, as the visit was short.*

14. The strongest teaching is in Years 3, 4 and 6. Much of the very good, and all of the excellent, teaching is found in these years. Lessons in these years are characterised by a brisk pace to learning, very good relationships between staff and the pupils, an absolute insistence on high standards of work and behaviour, and the provision of work that is well matched to the individual needs of all pupils and which is consistently taxing. In many lessons observed in these years, and also in other years where the

teaching and learning was of good quality, learning was fun, it was much enjoyed and at the end of the session the pupils were keen to return for more.

15. Across the school, the chief strengths of teaching and learning are the effective use of resources, insistence on high standards of behaviour and the promotion of equal opportunities. The school has fairly recently introduced new technology whiteboards into most classrooms. These are being used as an effective teaching tool, though their use as a learning aid is less consistent. The work of teaching assistants is very accomplished and makes a significant contribution to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
16. All subjects are well taught at least. There is effective teaching of literacy and numeracy and some very skilful instrumental and sports tuition, which benefits all pupils, significantly those with gifts or talents. The six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are taught well, enabling the children to make good progress.
17. Learning is generally productive and purposeful. Pupils work energetically, for example, in physical education lessons and they show good application to their tasks in English and mathematics. There could be more opportunities for practical investigation for younger pupils in science. Pupils collaborate very well and most develop the skills of independent work successfully. They build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates in most lessons.
18. Assessment is unsatisfactory because there are some significant gaps in assessment procedures. Chief amongst these is the lack of a programme of assessment to assist planning and to check on pupils' progress in science and ICT. The school has identified these as priorities for the next school year. However, assessment is the second of the two key issues from this inspection because the missing assessment procedures mean that staff cannot always be absolutely certain of the skills and knowledge pupils have gained or not yet achieved, and this, in turn, affects the tracking and targeting of pupils across the school. Additionally, marking, whilst completed conscientiously, is not always informative about ways in which the pupils can improve their work and is not tied enough into the targets that are set for pupils in English and mathematics. There is good potential for the school to tackle the weaknesses of inspection as staff are keen to meet this challenge and the general track record of improvement in school is good.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **very good** with **excellent** enrichment of pupils' learning. Very good resources and good accommodation meet the needs of all pupils effectively.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is of very good quality, with excellent provision in music.
- There is excellent curriculum enrichment through a range of activities and particularly through the arts.
- Curriculum innovation is very good and effectively promotes good achievement for all pupils.
- There is very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs.

## **Commentary**

19. Pupils are highly motivated by the broad and rich curriculum. The excellent curriculum enrichment through visits, visitors and extra curricular activities provides opportunities to not only for pupils to participate, but also to excel in sport, music, art, dance and chess. The curriculum is also enhanced very successfully by links with schools in Birmingham and Wolverhampton, promoting pupils' achievement across the curriculum particularly in ICT, geography, history and multi-cultural awareness. The school's provision for music is excellent, which leads to high standards; curriculum provision in art and design and physical education is very good.
20. The school frequently invites specialists as additional resources for lessons, including regular music tuition, artists in residence for art, dance and theatre, religious leaders and health specialists. There is very good curriculum innovation in the use of subject-based days. These have provided opportunities for pupils to work in a sustained and intensive way on art, dance and theatre projects, and for gifted pupils to pursue mathematical ideas in more depth. Reception and Year 1 pupils explored Indian art and dance for a day and responded very creatively, developing a thorough appreciation of other cultures in the process.
21. A particular strength in the curriculum is the schools vision for promoting high academic achievement alongside opportunities for every child to play a tuned instrument, participate in competitive sport, and engage in the visual and performing arts. The vast majority of pupils learn to play at least one instrument successfully, supported by the free loan of instruments and high quality music teaching within and beyond the school day. Pupils also enjoy high levels of sporting achievement in netball, swimming, football, cross country running and athletics. They also enjoy participating in musical performances and plays, which are planned, written and organised by older pupils in some instances. This vision ensures the needs of pupils with gifts and talents are very well met by the wide range of opportunities to pursue interests and to excel.
22. The school places high emphasis on inclusivity and strives to ensure equality of access for all pupils to all aspects of the curriculum. The work for higher attainers requires review to ensure it is consistently demanding enough, especially in infant classes. However, provision for special educational needs is very good. This is a consequence of very good leadership and management, which has secured good training for teaching assistants and good involvement of outside agencies and parents. Good use is made of regular assessments to ensure the needs of pupils are met well. This is evident in the quality of the individual education plans for pupils with a wide range of physical, emotional and learning needs. Pupils receive high quality small group or individual support from teaching assistants, who consistently make a very positive contribution to pupils learning.
23. Teachers provide effective personal, social, and health education, including drugs awareness, sex and relationships education. The detailed curriculum map ensures these aspects of the curriculum are taught each year, through other subjects such as science and physical education where possible, or discretely when necessary. This brings relevance and progression to the curriculum. The school is particularly successful in developing pupils' self esteem, collaboration and positive attitudes to learning. Induction to Nursery is very good, supporting children's emotional development through home visits and very good parental partnership. Transition to secondary school is well planned and supported well by visiting secondary teachers and visits to the high school.

24. There is a good match of teachers to the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum. The school accommodation is good overall, with recent improvements in the provision of an ICT suite and an outdoor learning environment for Reception pupils. Resources are very good, are very well organised and used to good effect.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for pupils' care and welfare is **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** advice and guidance to pupils and involves them **very well** in the work of the school. Arrangements for induction into the Nursery are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are very good and based on mutual respect.
- Pupils' opinions are valued; they are involved well in the development of the school.
- Advice and guidance to enable each pupil to receive support appropriate to their academic needs is satisfactory.
- Very good induction procedures are in place into the Nursery and subsequently school.

### **Commentary**

25. The very caring ethos and positive relationships on all levels is a strength of this school where every child really does matter; they are confident there is an adult they could talk to if they had a problem. Appropriate procedures are in place for child protection and regular monitoring of health and safety takes place.
26. At the time of the last inspection a few disruptive pupils were not always well managed; there has been good improvement in this area. Behaviour is very good due to the consistent approach of all staff towards behaviour management.
27. The school council is truly representative of all pupils, with members elected each year from every class, including the very youngest; to ensure all age groups views are taken into account. Regular meetings discuss matters as diverse as behaviour in the playground to fundraising ventures for the purchase of a "buddy bench" where pupils can sit and chat; council members are involved in the appointment of teaching staff. The chairperson and secretary of the school council regularly attend meetings of the school governing body to report on issues concerning the school from their perspective. Pupils' confidence that the school listens and acts upon their opinion is high.
28. Tracking of pupils' academic progress as they move through the school is unsatisfactory. This hampers the level of support, advice and guidance pupils receive which in all other respects is very good. Staff know pupils extremely well as individuals and provide good emotional support. The system in place does not yet enable staff to set sufficiently sharp focused individual targets in all subjects aimed at raising individual attainment and then checks to see if these targets have been met. Teaching assistants and the special educational needs coordinator provide good support for pupils with additional needs.
29. Induction procedures to the Nursery class, including home visits, are very good. Parents are encouraged to remain with their children when they start Nursery until they are happy and confident to be left, helping pupils settle quickly into new routines

and have a gradual entry into full time education. Very good attention is paid to smoothing pupils' transfer into and out of the school at other times of the year. The transition from one stage of their education to the next is made as smooth as possible.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents, with the community are **good**; with other schools **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Support from parents is good; they have very positive views of the school and are regularly consulted on a variety of issues.
- There is good information for parents through newsletters and parents' evenings; information about pupils' progress through annual progress reports is satisfactory.
- Community links support pupils' educational and personal development well.
- Liaison with the local secondary school is very good.

### **Commentary**

30. Parents feel they have an effective partnership with the school and hold it in high esteem, helping regularly in class and on residential trips. They speak highly of helpful staff and friendly informative newsletters, sent on a regular basis, keeping them informed of day-to-day matters; regular canvassing of parents' views takes place which is then communicated to all staff and governors during the school self evaluation days. Parents feel comfortable approaching staff when there is a problem.
31. The information parents receive through the written progress reports, although fulfilling legal requirements could be improved to enable parents and carers to know more about the education of their children. Closely linked to the assessment system in school, which is unsatisfactory, progress reports are inconsistent; some subjects, such as English, give more information than others. Whilst clearly indicating what pupils have experienced during the year, they do not all show what progress has been made and the steps they need to take to improve.
32. Good links with the local community help pupils to appreciate and develop the skills to enable them to become good citizens and prepare them for life in a multi cultural world. In addition to supporting charities at home and abroad, a noteworthy link is a partnership formed with a school in Wolverhampton. Regular visits take place that not only support various parts of the curriculum such as history and geography but also help forge firm friendships. These wide ranging links are of mutual benefit to community and school; they contribute positively to pupils' learning and personal development.
33. Links with the local secondary schools to which the majority of pupils transfer are very good. Both pupils and staff are regular visitors to each other's school, sharing facilities and expertise in a number of areas, for example music. By the end of Year 6 pupils are confident and looking forward to the transfer knowing they can quickly settle into new routines.
34. The effectiveness of the partnerships between home, school and the wider community supports pupils' educational and personal development well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**



Leadership, management and governance are **very good**. The headteacher is inspirational and his vigour and enthusiasm have created very strong teamwork, which is tackling weaker areas effectively and moving the school forward at a brisk pace.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the success of the school and this is instrumental in boosting standards.
- Pupils, parents, staff and governors are valued and respected.
- The school is very good at evaluating how well it is doing and taking appropriate action.
- Teaching, learning, standards and achievement are monitored and evaluated but there are gaps in the school's systems for assessing pupils' progress and achievement.
- Governors help to shape the direction of the school. They are very effective in their role.

### **Commentary**

35. The headteacher is an inspirational leader. Everyone shares his vision and aspiration for a successful school where every pupil achieves his or her personal best in all aspects of the school's life. With this goal in mind everyone is united in their quest for high standards. Teamwork is strong because staff are consulted about major decisions, they know that they are part of an effective team and their contributions are valued. Pupils are at the centre of the push to improve standards across the board. They enjoy being at school and they enjoy learning. Parents are rightly proud of their school.
36. Subject leaders have a good knowledge of their subjects. Teaching and learning are monitored and test results are analysed, enabling the subject leaders to have an understanding of how well pupils are achieving. Areas for improvement are identified, for example, writing was identified as a weakness across the school. An action plan identified the way forward and standards have improved significantly as a result of the action taken.
37. Management is very good. The school improvement plan is a very good document and is the main vehicle for moving the school forward. Systems for evaluating every aspect of the work of the school are effective, with the one exception of assessing and tracking how well pupils are doing. There are good systems in English and mathematics but there are gaps in the other subjects. All the data about the school's effectiveness is analysed very well enabling senior managers and governors to have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Suitable action is taken to tackle these issues so that no time is wasted. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis, administrative systems are efficient and effective.
38. The school is fully committed to caring for and supporting its staff. There are good arrangements for evaluating the performance of all staff, who are well trained to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The contributions of all staff are welcomed and valued and teaching assistants provide a valuable range of support that boosts pupils' achievement throughout the school. The very good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well in everything they attempt.

39. The governing body supports and challenges the school effectively, and governors have very good systems for critically examining all aspects of the school's development. They have good information about the effectiveness of the school and they use this information well to help plan the next stages in its development.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                             |        |
|----------------------------|---------|--|--------|
| Total income               | 586,905 | Balance from previous year               | -9,175 |
| Total expenditure          | 594,306 | Balance carried forward to the next year | 7,401  |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,351   |  |        |

40. Financial planning is very good. The finance committee receive regular reports about the school's finances and governors work very closely with the headteacher to make sure that funds are spent effectively. For example, they are fully committed to every pupil having the opportunity to learn to play an instrument during their time at St Laurence. The cost of the programme was carefully worked out beforehand and the outcome evaluated. Standards are now very high and music is loved and enjoyed by all.
41. Governors and staff are closely involved in the preparation of future plans for the school. Priorities are realistic and achievable and targets are met. The budget is carefully monitored and controlled so that governors are able to make responsible decisions about priorities, timescales and planning. The day-to-day administration of the school's finances is very good. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Currently 44 Nursery children attend part time, and 21 Reception children attend full time in two Reception/Year 1 classes. Teacher assessments show attainment in social, language and mathematical skills on entry is in line with that expected for children of this age, although the full range of ability is represented. The very good induction procedures and the smooth transition from Reception to Year 1, contributes to the very good provision for the children's emotional development.

There are good systems for recording children's achievements in the Nursery, and regular assessments of children's writing and reading competencies are made in Reception classes. However, assessment systems are not consistent and therefore do not aid the tracking of children's progress. Provision for children with English as additional language is good, promoted by the emphasis placed on speaking and listening and the good levels of support and challenge provided in small group tasks. Provision for children with special needs is very good because very good use is made of assessment to ensure individual needs are met and teaching assistants provide high quality support.

The accommodation and staffing ratios are good. The accessible and attractive outdoor areas are used effectively. Learning opportunities are well planned and there is a good allocation of time for outdoor learning, promoting good achievement in all areas of learning. Resources are very good. There is good leadership and management, providing good vision for improvement, good curriculum guidance and innovation. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement across all aspects of the Foundation Stage including leadership, resourcing, teaching and learning and curriculum provision.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is very good and standards are above average by the end of the Reception Year.
- Very good relationships promote very good personal, social and emotional development, and high pupil self esteem.
- Children are encouraged to initiate activities, leading to very good independence and collaboration.
- Very good resources and adult interaction with children leads to very good concentration and perseverance.

#### **Commentary**

42. Positive relationships between staff and children lead to very positive attitudes to learning. Frequent opportunities for child-initiated activity ensures children regularly interact socially and collaborate well. Children demonstrate good concentration and perseverance when working independently. Lively interaction in whole group sessions, and effective use of questioning leads to enthusiastic responses from children. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good. This is a consequence of the high

priority given to this aspect of the curriculum by the whole team, reflecting a good understanding of the distinct nature of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and the needs of the youngest children. By the end of the Reception Year the vast majority of children are exceeding the expectations for their age.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well and attain above average standards by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children's talk is promoted well as they engage in well-planned and resourced role-play.
- There are good opportunities for parental involvement in the teaching of reading.

### **Commentary**

43. Speaking and listening are promoted well by the good ratio of adults to children and frequent opportunities for talk in role-play, puppet performances, small world play and discussion in small groups and pairs. Children respond willingly to directions and are confident when speaking. Good teaching and learning leads to good achievement by all groups of children. They attain standards above those expected for their age in speaking and listening by the end of Reception.
44. The teaching of writing is stimulating and challenging. Children acquire a good knowledge of letters and sounds and are encouraged to use these skills to sound out and build words and sentences. There is a good range of opportunities for writing for meaningful purposes and this promotes enthusiasm and confidence in early writing. For example Reception children listed items in the picnic basket beginning with *p* and also wrote simple stories and accounts. The writing and reading areas offer good stimuli to attract and maintain children's interest. For example letters, cards, word lists, invitations, greetings and story openings are displayed to prompt independent writing. There are regular sessions for teaching letters and sounds, using stimulating resources, practical tasks and games. This good teaching leads to good learning and achievement in writing.
45. The opportunities for reading in school are good. Children read with an adult, as part of a small group, once each week, read individually to adults and enjoy listening to stories. Children also have good opportunities to share books with parents and regularly take books home. A good range of introductory reading books are well matched to children's competencies. Reading is also promoted well by the systematic teaching of letters, sounds and word building. Teaching, learning and achievement in reading are good. Children with special needs are well motivated by high calibre support from teaching assistants and also achieve well. Overall, the vast majority of the children exceed their goals in communication, language and literacy by the time they join Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve above average standards because planned activities offer good levels of challenge.
- Achievement is good.
- There are good opportunities for children to count, read and write numbers through outdoor physical activity.

## **Commentary**

46. Good planning enables all staff to promote learning purposes well and maximise the use of space. For example Reception children counted, recorded numbers and ordered numerals when working outside. This promoted very good attitudes to learning, as children were encouraged to be physically active, enjoying lively interaction with each other, taking real pleasure in each other's achievements. The vast majority of Reception children can count confidently to 20, add and subtract using simple number sentences and name and describe shapes.
47. Nursery children regularly use mathematical skills in a well-planned learning environment. They match shapes and sizes when returning equipment to templates and use measurement vocabulary as they play with sand and water. Regular use is made of counting skills when collecting equipment and when using a well illustrated number line. Number rhymes, games and simple problems are a regular feature of adult led activities. As a consequence of stimulating teaching and good learning, children of all ability groups achieve well and the vast majority attain standards above those expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

48. It is not possible to make a judgement of standards for this area because insufficient teaching was observed. There is good curriculum innovation, however, in the strong commitment to implementing a *Forest School* initiative in the Nursery. This places emphasis on using the outdoor environment to promote good achievement in all areas of learning. Good teamwork is evident in the commitment made by the Reception staff to incorporate this work in their routine and there are plans to continue these opportunities for Year 1 and 2 children, promoting good continuity in the curriculum.
49. Children regularly explore materials on the *investigations table* in the Nursery. For example they have observed and explored ice, feathers, a mix of oil and water, kaleidoscopes and mirrors. Good quality interaction with adults promotes children's thinking as questions are offered, and suggestions made for further exploration.
50. Good parental involvement has made a positive contribution to the study of life in Africa and China, using musical instruments, photographs and artefacts. Reception children have developed a good awareness of the past in their study of old toys in the class *Toy Museum*.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and standards are above average.
- Teaching and resources are good.
- There is good accommodation in the hall and outdoors.

### **Commentary**

51. Nursery and Reception children regularly access the outdoors during each session, providing good opportunities for planned and child initiated physical activity. The Nursery outdoor environment has been well planned and resourced to enable children to enjoy a wide range of physical activity including ball control, climbing, balancing and swinging. Good planning, good quality adult involvement and resources for physical activity leads to the good development of physical skills. Reception children attained above average standards in their dance lesson, based on the circus. The good role model set by Year 1 pupils, as well as the good stimuli provided by music, video and demonstration, contributed to good achievement in the quality and range of movement.
52. Children's manipulative skills are promoted well, developed through a wide range of opportunities for building, manipulating materials and controlling tools. For example, Nursery children built a large-scale bus using cardboard boxes and fixed them together by cutting and applying sticking tape with good levels of precision before setting off for the seaside!

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is very good and standards are above average.
- Teachers provide very good stimuli for creativity.
- Children respond imaginatively in their role-play, dance and artwork.
- Good quality resources are independently access by children.

### **Commentary**

53. Children respond creatively and purposefully in their role-play in the Post Office, on journeys in *Mr Gumpy's* car and the bus. They imaginatively take on roles and create stories. They control tools and materials very well as they paint, model, build and construct. The creative areas are designed to give independent access to a good range of art materials and tools. Consequently children use a wide range of materials, and are given very good opportunities to pursue their own ideas. For example in response to a story, *Maisy's Bus* one child made the bus using dough, another painted and others built a model. As a consequence there is very good achievement in the development of children's creativity and in their skills in handling materials. Music appreciation is a regular feature of the Nursery routine. They sang tunefully and rhythmically and demonstrated a very good appreciation of the *Nutcracker Suite* as they listened and talked about features of the music.
54. Reception children have produced high quality outcomes in response to their study of Indian art and dance. They have demonstrated a good awareness of pattern, colour and form in their own batik designs, mendhi hand patters and Genesh masks.

Teaching, learning and achievement are very good and nearly all children attain standards that exceed their goals.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Achievement is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors.
- Pupils with special needs are very well supported by the teaching assistants.
- Some higher attaining pupils could be challenged more consistently.
- Standards and achievement have improved because of good leadership.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills.

#### **Commentary**

55. Standards in English in the Year 6 national tests have been generally well above average over the last few years. Most pupils achieve well, and some very well, in lessons and over time. Available evidence shows a well above average proportion of pupils likely to gain the expected level and a high proportion likely to gain the higher Level 5. In the infants the standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average, with satisfactory achievement.
56. Teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and often very good. It is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. The strongest teaching is in a Year 1 class and in Years 3, 4 and 6. Where there is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning, it is when some higher attaining pupils could be challenged further and the pace increased. Teachers generally pitch questions skilfully at the needs of different groups of pupils. They use attractive resources that motivate and stimulate pupils. Pupils respond well to this. They work extremely hard and have very good attitudes to their learning. While all pupils have targets, better use could be made of these when marking pupils' work, with more focused suggestions to help pupils understand how to improve their work further.
57. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average in the infants and well above average by Year 6. In all subjects pupils are given opportunities to talk using either talk partners or through small group discussion sessions. Their views are respected by staff, which gives pupils real confidence to explain their ideas. They in turn listen well to the teachers and their classmates. Infant pupils have good informal opportunities in imaginative play areas and reading corners to talk together, explain their ideas and listen to story tapes. Junior pupils are praised for using subject language and encouraged to answer in extended sentences. Consequently by Year 6 pupils are confident and articulate communicators. The atmosphere of the school is highly inclusive and care is taken to ensure both boys and girls extend their language skills through drama, class council meetings and assemblies. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there were insufficient opportunities for speaking and listening.
58. Pupils' reading skills are above average in the infants and well above by Year 6. The teaching of reading is good throughout the school, with most pupils achieving well.

The strategy of taking guided reading sessions out of lessons is effective and has led to a sharper focus on specific reading skills. Pupils are enthusiastic about these sessions and work very well both independently and with their teachers. Regular use is made of computer programmes to reinforce and extend skills. The infant staff build on well from the good start children make in the Foundation Stage. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in the infants has improved since last year. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have good strategies for working- out unfamiliar words. By Year 6 pupils are confident fluent readers, with approximately half reaching the higher level 5. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of fiction, including traditional and modern authors, information books and books that reflect other cultures. The school has worked hard to address any differences in attainment, and care is taken to include books that appeal equally to boys and girls. Classes have attractive reading corners and all classes make use of the school library. From discussion with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, they enjoy reading and can identify preferences for different types of books such as mystery, fantasy and humour. Parents and carers support the school well by hearing their pupils read and helping them practise their spelling.

59. Throughout the school lower attaining pupils and pupils with special needs are very well supported by the teaching assistants and consequently achieve well. The teaching assistants are very capable and knowledgeable and work well under the direction of the school's special needs coordinator. Whether in lessons or working in small groups outside of classes, they motivate the pupils to learn and gain in confidence. They make learning of reading and spelling skills interesting through regular use of computers, catch up programmes and word games such as scrabble.
60. Pupils' writing skills are above average in the infants and well above average by Year 6. There is a clear focus on basic skills such as spelling, handwriting and grammar. The more able pupils in the mixed Year 2 / 3 class benefit greatly from working with the older pupils. However, a few more able pupils in Year 2 need further challenge. While teachers throughout the school provide a wide range of writing opportunities, there are less opportunities for pupils to experience poetry. Consequently pupils are less knowledgeable about poets and poetic language. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work, which is consistently neat and well organised. Teachers show pupils that their written work is valued by the way their work is displayed. Most classes, but not all, provide systematic opportunities to write extended pieces of creative writing, with good examples in Years 1, 3, 4 and Year 6. For example in a well taught Year 1 lesson, the teacher pointed out to the whole class good examples of pupils using their imagination whilst writing adventures from *The Dragon Tree Story*.
61. By Year 6 many pupils regularly produce stories that show a subtle use of language, a flair for words and gripping starts to stories:

*Where was she now? The thought struck me like an axe through wood. The walls seemed as if they were closing in on me, suffocating me.*

62. The leadership and management is good in English. The subject leader is well supported by a second leader so that the needs of pupils across the school are considered. They have both observed teaching and learning, although the opportunities are not yet systematic. Both monitor pupils' work and teachers' planning regularly and strategies are in place to tackle any issues identified. This has led to improvements this year in the achievement of higher attainers in the infants and improvements in boys' attainment compared to girls' in the juniors. The current focus on supporting staff to improve their expertise in analysing pupils' writing is helping staff



gain a better understanding of any gaps in pupils' writing skills. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the standards pupils attain, the quality of teaching and the leadership of the subject.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

63. There are good opportunities to use language and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils have many opportunities explain their thinking in subjects such as art and design and mathematics and to develop their subject vocabulary in science, history and geography. There are regular opportunities to write at length in all subjects and good opportunities to use ICT to extend their literacy skills.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Achievement is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors.
- Standards and achievement have been improved well in mathematics because of good leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There are effective links to other subjects.
- Pupils' mental arithmetic and problem solving skills are very good by the end of Year 6.

#### **Commentary**

64. Standards in mathematics in the Year 6 national tests have been generally well above average over the last few years. They have also been very positive in relation to schools in similar circumstances. This trend is set to continue this year, as the available evidence from lessons and the evaluation of pupils' past work show that a well above average proportion of pupils is likely to gain the expected level in their national tests and a high proportion is likely to gain the higher Level 5.
65. These well above average standards indicate that achievement over time is good. Children start school with generally average standards in mathematical development and they build skills and knowledge well overall. However, the rate of progress is not consistent, which the school well recognises. In the infant years, achievement is satisfactory and standards by the end of Year 2 are average. This is an improvement on last year's teacher assessment results, which indicated below average standards at that time. The school still has work to do to ensure that the challenge for higher attaining pupils is consistently good in the infant years. It has succeeded in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are provided with good mathematical experiences in the infants, which lead to good achievement. It now has to do the same for the pupils at the other end of the academic range.
66. The calibre of leadership and management is good in mathematics. All staff work hard in a focused way to improve the quality of provision and results. They form a united team in this work and understand well the strengths and weaknesses of provision. There is an appropriate network of assessment and target setting and tracking in mathematics, which contributes soundly to the improvement of achievement. As for

other subjects, marking of mathematics work is not sufficiently focused on informing pupils of how well they are meeting their targets and how to improve their work.

67. The biggest boost to achievement and standards is provided by the overall good quality of teaching and learning. This is compounded by the very good quality of mathematical education in Year 6. Mathematics lessons are usually productive, purposeful and well focused on the gaining of skills, knowledge and understanding. The school's numeracy strategy is working well and many pupils have impressive levels of mental arithmetic dexterity by the time they leave Year 6. Similarly, the strong focus on mathematical problem solving and investigation within the very good quality curriculum is equipping pupils with very good skills in the use of mathematics in life as a whole.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

68. There are good links between mathematics and other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT). The general level of mathematical competence and achievement is well served by these links. For example, the Year 6 work to build quite complex spreadsheets involves the pupils in much checking of data and their own arithmetical accuracy. There is some effective consolidation and extension of mathematical skills and knowledge in science investigations, physical education and design and technology. Mathematics effectively pervades the full curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are adept at planning and setting up their science investigations.
- Many of the Year 2 pupils have limited opportunities to investigate and to work things out practically.
- The school lacks a consistent approach to assessing how well pupils are doing.
- The subject leadership is good and there is a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in science and what needs to be done to move the subject forward.

### **Commentary**

69. In 2004, standards in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were average in relation to the national picture and above average in comparison with similar schools. In years prior to that, standards in science were generally above average at the end of Year 6. This year, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average overall, due to the effective teaching and learning in that year. Standards for Year 2 pupils this year are broadly average. Achievement is good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. Too few pupils are attaining the higher levels in Year 2 and the challenge for higher attaining pupils requires strengthening. Girls and boys achieve equally well, and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the other pupils.
70. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. Where planning is good the activities are well matched to pupils abilities and they are challenged and extended by their tasks. In the

one class, where planning is too sparse, the pupils are not challenged sufficiently and the pace of lessons is slow. In the stronger lessons, teachers use questions very effectively to check out pupils' understanding or to extend their knowledge, giving teachers a clear indication of their pupils' achievement.

71. Pupils are adept at planning, setting up and recording their investigations. In a Year 6 lesson, focussing on factors that may affect seed germination, the pupils speedily worked out their own questions to ask about the conditions for germination. This valuable opportunity helped them to make sure their investigation was *fair*. All pupils had a very secure understanding of the importance of fair testing, whilst planning how they were going to record their findings. Pupils are well motivated because they are well taught.
72. No lessons were seen in the lower part of the school. However, pupils' work in their books indicates that many of the seven-year-olds have limited experience of working practically and this is an omission. Other infant pupils have a good balance to their science activities.
73. One significant weakness is the lack of a cohesive whole school approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievement. Without this it is difficult to keep an accurate check on how well pupils are doing. Teachers keep their own records and most pupils' work is assessed and marked well. Where marking is weaker, in Year 2 and Year 5, the pupils have very little idea about how to improve.
74. The subject leader has worked hard to improve the science curriculum and she has been successful. She has a very good grasp of where the strengths and weaknesses lie and her input is moving the subject forward at a good pace. Standards, teaching and learning are monitored effectively, and appropriate action is taken, but there is still much to do before all the elements of a successful science curriculum are securely in place in every class.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are of good quality.
- ICT has been improved well since the previous inspection, indicating that leadership and management are effective.
- There are good cross-curricular links with ICT.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

75. The school teaches most ICT skills and knowledge through the use of computers in other subjects. This is evidently successful, and is assisting the effective development of pupils' skills and knowledge and resulting in above average standards in ICT. Thus, achievement is good.
76. ICT is taught well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence and they make effective use of the resources. ICT lessons are usually very hands-on and the

pupils enjoy their work, especially when they work with other pupils and have full responsibility for their own learning. This is usually the case, but just occasionally there are over-long introductions by teachers that some pupils find less motivating. Learning mirrors the good quality of teaching. Pupils collaborate well and work sensibly and in a mature way. They give good effort and complete ample work, sometimes especially so, in the available time.

77. The school has considerably improved resources for ICT. In addition to the well-equipped ICT room, there are computers in all classrooms, new technology whiteboards in most, and two banks of computers in key areas of the school. There is also a supply of notebook computers, which are used flexibly and effectively to aid progress. All resources are put to good use in the development of pupils' ICT competence. Crucially, staff knowledge and confidence in ICT has been raised very well and ICT is now at the heart of learning in many subjects.
78. Assessment remains an issue in ICT, as there is not a complete set of assessment procedures. It is not therefore possible for teachers to chart rigorously whether skills and knowledge are being built effectively enough as pupils move through the school. As such, assessment is the weak link in the generally good provision for ICT. In other respects there has been good improvement to the subject since the 1999 inspection, which reflects well on the leadership and management of the subject.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

79. The general integration of ICT into lessons in different subjects is good, though it is very good in some cases. Inspectors observed very intensive use of all computers in school, throughout the day. There are particularly strong links between ICT and English, though the school wishes to enhance this in terms of the development of pupils' writing skills. Links with mathematics, art and design and geography are also strengths, as observed in a Year 4 lesson on the development of a map of Ludlow, where ICT allowed the very effective overlaying of an aerial view on to the emerging map. The new technology whiteboards are being used well as a teaching tool, though as yet, pupils do not use them consistently enough for them to be a full aid to learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average for the eleven-year-olds and their achievement is good.
- The curriculum is effective and is closely based on the local guidelines.
- This is a church school and religious education contributes effectively to the school's ethos.
- There are limited systems for tracking and assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

### **Commentary**

80. Standards are average for the seven-year-olds and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above average for the eleven-year-olds and their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the other pupils.

81. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are carefully planned and they follow the guidance in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This means that all pupils have a good introduction to all strands of the curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully explore religious themes and ideas. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the story of *The Good Samaritan* enabled young pupils to share their own personal experiences of neighbourly behaviour helping them to understand the meaning of the Bible story.
82. During their time in school, pupils build effectively on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, as well as learning about other world faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good understanding of the importance of religious symbolism in all the religions they study. Alongside this, discussions about friendship, caring for others and empathy for their needs, as well as caring for the natural world, all contribute towards pupils' growing awareness of themselves and their role in the wider world around them. The school has a positive and caring ethos, which is promoted well through all aspects of religious education and pupils respond, in their own way, to the spiritual dimension of creativity as they learn to play musical instruments or work with artists, authors, poets and musicians.
83. The subject leader provides good leadership and the subject is managed well. Staff have good support, which is why the teaching is good. Assessment procedures are limited, making it difficult to track pupils' progress and achievement accurately.

## **Geography and History**

84. It is not possible to make complete judgements about provision and standards in geography and history because insufficient evidence was available during the inspection. However, from teachers' planning and the work completed by pupils, it is evident that the school meets the National Curriculum requirements well in these subjects and that overall standards are above average. The work on display and photographs of class visits indicates there is good enrichment of history and geography through a wide range of visits and visitors.
85. In geography these include good opportunities for fieldwork in their studies of Ludlow. For example pupils considered the advantages and disadvantages to housing and supermarket developments, and used aerial photographs, maps and direct observations to record change and consider the factors influencing the location of leisure, industrial and commercial activity. There are good opportunities for pupils to compare their own with contrasting localities through the partnerships established with schools in Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Pupils have also visited the Welsh coast at Barmouth and mapped the leisure and commercial areas of seaside town, compiling maps and graphs to show the range and frequency of retail businesses. The development of geographical skills is well incorporated in the study of places, providing good purposes for the use of geographical skills and knowledge. ICT is used to good effect for communicating with pupils in contrasting localities, and for developing data handling and mapping skills. Resources for geography and history are good.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Teaching is very good and pupils achieve very well.
- The school caters well for pupils who are particularly talented.
- The school provides very good support for pupils with special needs.
- The subject is very well led and managed with excellent use made of external visitors and resources.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **Commentary**

86. Art and design has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is vibrant and alive. The school shows it values all pupils' work through the excellent level of display and presentation from the moment you enter the school. Pupils' are keen, confident, enthusiastic and very well taught.
87. The wide range of work displayed indicates that standards are above average in the infants and achievement is good; with staff building on well from the good start children get in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn to mix colours, use paints and pastels and produce self-portraits. They have regular opportunities for observational drawings, such as the delightful snowdrop pictures in Year 1 and drawings of vehicles in Year 2 as part of their design and technology work.
88. Standards are well above average by the end of the juniors. Teaching is never less than good and often very good, with regular use of the expertise of local artists. Lessons are generally characterised by lively teaching, high expectations and excellent resources. Both girls and boys are highly motivated and consequently pupils achieve very well. Throughout the juniors pupils have a wide range of artistic experiences. Pupils have regular opportunities to draw, paint, print, use a range of textiles, work with clay and produce three-dimensional objects. While sketchbooks are well used in some classes, more use could be made of them with all pupils.
89. A real strength is the care taken to develop pupils' individual creativity and confidence as artists. For example, in an excellent mixed Year 3/4 lesson all pupils achieved highly because of the sheer enthusiasm and expertise of the teacher and the excellent support of the teaching assistant. The pupils were encouraged to see themselves as artists, signing their own work. Pupils with special needs get very good support from staff. Care is taken to extend pupils with particular talents. For example giving them additional time with visiting artists.
90. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader ensures that pupils have a wide range of artistic experiences and monitors standards through collecting work samples. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils have many opportunities to work collaboratively. They study a range of artists and are taught to value art from around the world through participation in such events as the *India Day*. A very strong feature is the regular opportunities for all pupils to work with a range of local artists. The result is work that is imaginative, original, bold and of a high standard.

## **Design and technology**

91. In design and technology, due the focus of the inspection only one lesson was observed. This Year 2 lesson was satisfactorily taught, with pupils gaining knowledge about vehicles and able to use their drawing skills. The limited samples of work seen suggest that pupils attain above average standards throughout the school. Evidence supplied by the school shows that the school covers the agreed syllabus. Pupils' skills are systematically built upon. Useful worksheets help pupils to plan, design, modify and evaluate their work. From the evidence supplied, pupils are encouraged to be creative and take care with what they make, such as when making Victorian toys. Pupils have regular opportunities to use their drawing, writing and mathematical skills whilst developing their design and technology skills. Staff work hard to overcome the constraints of lack of space to display or store work in progress. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of healthy foods. Leadership is good, with the weaknesses related to the curriculum, identified at the time of the previous inspection, fully addressed. However, there is no consistent system to help all staff assess the standards pupils achieve.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are very high, especially in Years 3 to 6 and pupils' achievement is excellent.
- Teaching is very good.
- Music makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **Commentary**

92. The school is committed to providing musical experiences of the highest quality for all its pupils. It is successful. Every pupil has the opportunity to learn to play an instrument during their time at school. Governors ensure that sufficient funds are available and that every pupil is fully included in the programme. The impact of this policy is apparent in the pupils' obvious love of music, their competence at playing and singing, and the very high standards and achievement that are reached by the end of Year 6. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2, but discussions with pupils, staff, parents and governors indicate that achievement is good for this group. Parents, rightly, identify music as one of the strengths of the school and the pupils are justly proud of their performances.
93. Early experiences are built upon and extended very well as pupils move through Years 3 to 6. Pupils' singing demonstrates feeling and expression. Instrumental work is of the highest quality. Year 6 pupils' own composition, using a wide range of pitched and un-pitched instruments, demonstrated an excellent range musical ideas that combined to produce a complex work full of different musical structures. Pupils are adept at linking

their musical compositions to creative dance routines and they enjoy giving performances in all aspects of the music curriculum. Another strength is pupils ability to appraise and evaluate their own and others performance, making suggestions and improvements to ensure first-rate performances every time.

94. High quality teaching means that lesson planning is spot on so that pupils' skills are developed very well. This holds good for all pupils, whatever their capability. No one is left out. The choir and orchestra, alongside the very wide range of specialist tuition that is open to all, provide a rich music curriculum that makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural experiences.
95. The subject leadership is excellent. The leader is a skilled musician with very high expectations of what pupils (and staff) are capable of achieving. The many opportunities for pupils to sing and play an instrument are delivered with enthusiasm and verve, creating a genuine sense of happiness and pleasure for all the pupils at St Laurence Primary School.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6, and achievement is very good.
- There is an excellent range of enrichment activities for physical education.
- Pupils' sporting prowess is very good.
- Provision in physical education is a particular strength of the school.
- Leadership and management are very good.

### **Commentary**

96. Before the inspection the school and parents claimed that physical education is one of its main strengths. During the inspection pupils told inspectors that it was amongst their favourite subjects. The inspection evidence supports these statements fully.
97. Standards are clearly well above average and achievement is very good. Though few lessons were observed, there is impressive evidence for the strength of provision and achievement in physical education. For example, of the 28 Year 6 pupils, 22 are involved in at least one sports team, and most take part in two or three. There is a similar picture earlier in the junior years. The school is at the heart of the local primary school leagues for football, netball, rounders and cricket and its results are very good. Additionally, in most recent years, over 90 per cent of Year 6 pupils left school not just with the basic, desirable skill of swimming 25 metres, but also with achievement that stretched well beyond this.
98. There is excellent provision for sporting and physical education activities outside school time. These activities are immensely popular and have a very positive impact on pupils' achievements. Physical education lessons are very well conceived. There is ample opportunity for warming up activities, with a key focus on the impact that these have on the heart, lungs and muscles. As well as intensive development of skills and knowledge during lessons, there are also very good opportunities for pupils to self-



evaluate their own work and that of others. They sensibly suggest ways to improve, and then practice and refine their movements. In all, provision in physical education is very effective.

99. Physical education is very well led and managed by the hard working, dedicated and influential subject leader. She knows well the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and is ready, for example, to make key improvements to assessment in order to safeguard and extend pupils' achievements.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

100. During the inspection it was not possible to observe many sessions devoted to the development of pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, and so this area is treated briefly here. However, it is evident that these aspects are developed effectively. Because pupils are valued and their views taken seriously, the understanding of citizenship is very well enhanced. For example, pupils are involved in an influential school council that bases its priorities on the outcome of the effective class councils that are in force. There is formal representation by pupils at some meetings of governors, including those to decide on staff appointments. In this way, pupils gain insights into the democratic workings of formal bodies and the need for reasoned and well-informed argument. This complex area of life is increasingly understood as pupils move through the school because of the very effective way in which the school listens to the views of pupils, respects them, and follows them up.
101. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles, the dangers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco and the responsibilities of living in a community. Many visitors work with pupils, such as the community policeman and they visit and take part in events in the local library, the Assembly Rooms and the castle. Pupils show good initiative in suggesting themselves worthy charitable causes to support and then in organising the fund-raising for the chosen organisations.
102. In all, the pupils become thoroughly pleasant children who are invariably polite, considerate and very well behaved. There is very harmonious work and play in school. The pupils are valued as individuals and their personal, social and health needs are respected and met successfully.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>3</b> |
| How inclusive the school is  | 2        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 3        |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 3        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Attendance  | 4        |
| Attitudes   | 2        |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                 | 2        |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development     | 3        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>           | <b>3</b> |
| The quality of teaching  | 3        |
| How well pupils learn  | 3        |
| The quality of assessment  | 5        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 2        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 1        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 3        |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                         | 3        |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                          | 3        |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views              | 2        |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents             | 3        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 3        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 2        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>2</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 2        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  | 2        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 3        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 3        |

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

