

# INSPECTION REPORT

WESTWOOD FIRST SCHOOL

Leek

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124099

Headteacher: Miss V Hood

Lead inspector: Mr Keith Edwards

Dates of inspection: 06 – 08 June 2005

Inspection number: 268240

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#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:  
First School

School category:  
Community

Age range of pupils:  
4 to 9 years

Gender of pupils:  
Mixed

Number on roll:  
301

School address:  
Westwood Road

Leek

Staffordshire

Postcode:  
ST13 8DL

Telephone number:  
01538 483000

Fax number:  
01538 483005

Appropriate authority:  
The governing body

Name of chair of governors:  
Dr M Wiskin

Date of previous inspection:  
02 May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westwood First School serves a suburban area of Leek in the Staffordshire moorlands. Numbers on roll have increased since the time of the last inspection and there are now 288 full-time boys and girls as well as 13 children who attend the early years class on a part-time basis. This is a larger than average school that draws most of its pupils from the immediate locality. An increasing number of pupils are drawn from further afield. Almost all of the pupils are white and almost all come from homes where English is the first language. Socio-economic circumstances are favourable for most families although seven per cent of the pupils have an entitlement to free school meals. This is well below the national average.

There is one intake into the reception class at the beginning of the academic year. Most of the children who start in the reception have had the benefit of pre-school experience. The attainment of the pupils on entry to their reception year is broadly average, although there is a significant variation in the pupils' achievement at the start of their full-time education. After the Foundation Stage, the children continue to be taught in single-age classes. There is a wide spread of ability in each class. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is below the national average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school received the Investors in People Award in 2002 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2003. The school has also been recognised as an ECO School and a Dyslexia Friendly School.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team  
Subject responsibilities

21190

Keith Edwards  
Lead inspector  
English  
English as an additional language  
Information and communication technology

9189  
John Horwood  
Lay inspector

15236  
Morag Thorpe  
Team inspector  
Art and design  
Design and technology  
Science  
Foundation stage

22274  
Vera Rogers  
Team inspector  
Geography  
History  
Mathematics  
Religious education

8316  
Jozefa O'Hare  
Team Inspector  
Music  
Physical education  
Special educational needs  
Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House

Station Road

Cambridge

CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that has very good features. The headteacher provides very good leadership and this has led to significant improvements in the last two years. The management of the school is satisfactory as the senior management comes to terms with its role in raising standards. The quality of education provided by the school is good. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning that are being addressed by the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

The headteacher has successfully laid the foundations for the future development of the school whilst maintaining the ethos where every member of the community is valued. Relationships are very good.

Standards in literacy and information and communication technology are above average in Year 2.

The school provides very well for the personal development of its pupils. There is a very good level of care and as a result the pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. The school has developed good links with the parents and very good links with the community.

The school has made significant improvements in the Foundation Stage and the provision for the younger children is now a strength of the school. However, the external accommodation for the younger children does not meet requirements.

The senior management team has not yet developed its role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and the quality of teaching remains uneven.

The junior reference library is unsatisfactory.

Improvement since the last inspection in May 1999 has been satisfactory overall. However, the rate of improvement has accelerated since the appointment of the current headteacher. The school has dealt effectively with the key issues identified in the last inspection, particularly with the improvements made to the Foundation Stage. The school has ensured that there has been a very good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology and, as a result, standards are rising rapidly. Staff are now much more aware of the progress made by different groups of pupils and now plan more effectively for their learning.

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:  
all schools  
similar schools

2002  
2003  
2004  
2004

reading

C  
C  
C  
C

writing

D  
D  
B  
B

mathematics

D  
C  
C  
C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. The children make good progress in the



reception classes and most pupils are set to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is because the pupils feel secure and the quality of teaching is very good. The pupils benefit from the systematic teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2 and most pupils achieve the expected levels in numeracy and science. Standards are above average in reading, writing and information and communication technology. This represents a significant achievement as the improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 has been below the national trend since 2000. The full impact of the improvement in assessment systems have yet to be realised for the pupils in Years 3 and 4 and standards are broadly satisfactory across the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology are improving as the school makes full use of its new resources. There is some underachievement in science because of the lack of challenge for different groups of pupils, particularly those capable of more demanding work. Throughout the school, the pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs achieve well. This is because they receive good quality individual support and the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and number work is systematic. The quality and range of the pupils' artwork are delightful and make a significant contribution to the learning environment.

Because the school's provision is extremely effective, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils grow to become mature, confident and responsible. The pupils have positive attitudes towards school and their behaviour is good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels match the national average.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching in the last inspection has been eliminated. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much of the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Year 2 are very good and in some lessons they are excellent. In these classes, the planning is thorough and the range of activities prepared for the pupils is stimulating and effective in enabling the pupils to learn. Throughout the school, there are good standards of discipline and effective use is made of the classroom assistants, particularly in the support of pupils with special educational needs and in helping the pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology. Although the school has worked hard to improve the quality of marking, there remains much inconsistency between classes and too little guidance on how the pupils can improve their work. In some subjects there is an over-reliance on published worksheets that do not challenge the pupils.

The school has worked hard on developing the curriculum to provide a stimulating range of opportunities for the children. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and the curriculum for the pupils in Years 1 to 4 is good and enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities. The school has been particularly successful in its reorganisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum and in its approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. However, these improvements have yet to translate into higher standards for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. The school provides a very good level of care for its

pupils and relationships with the parents are good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The overall impact of the headteacher is very significant because she has motivated her colleagues to raise expectations of themselves and the children. She has a clear vision of how the school should be performing and has introduced a range of management innovations to make the school more effective. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. There remains scope for the development of the role of the senior management team to have a sharper focus on raising standards. The governors provide good support for the work of the school and are developing their role as critical friends.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and think highly of it. The pupils are proud of their school and feel they are valued and well supported.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

Develop the role of the senior management team.

Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching.

Develop the library and the accommodation to provide more appropriate outdoor facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The overall achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. This is because the school has made significant improvements to the curriculum and to its assessment procedures. Standards are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Year 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Standards in literacy are above average at the end of Year 2.

The school is making very good use of its computers and interactive whiteboards and standards in information and communication technology are above average in Year 2.

The children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage.

The improvement trend has been below the national norm since 2000 but the school is well set to reverse this trend.

Standards are broadly satisfactory in Year 4.

## Commentary

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and most of them exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The higher attaining and some average attaining children are already working within the National Curriculum especially in reading and writing. The able and talented children are extremely well challenged and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language achieve very well because of the high quality support they receive and the expertise of the staff. Children with special educational needs achieve very well because all aspects of their development are rigorously recorded and the activities are very well matched to their attainment levels.

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

Standards in:  
School results  
National results

reading  
16.2 (15.9)  
15.8 (15.7)

writing  
15.3 (14.4)  
14.6 (14.6)

mathematics  
16.2 (16.3)  
16.2 (16.3)

There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2, the improvement in standards has been below the national trend since 2000. This is because the results in the national tests in that year were unusually high. Since 2001, there has been a steady improvement in the results in reading and mathematics. However, there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' achievement in writing as the initiatives taken by the school have begun to take effect. For example, the school has ensured that the pupils have more opportunities to discuss their work and this has benefited their confidence in their use of a broader vocabulary and added fluency to their writing. Standards in reading have also benefited from the systematic approach and the close working partnership with the parents. In mathematics, there is evidence of much improvement as the school has taken effective action on raising the achievement of the

higher attaining pupils. Indicative results of the current round of national assessments show a marked improvement for the pupils in Year 2. This is not the case in science where there is too little emphasis on investigative work and the pupils lack confidence in drawing conclusions from their observations. Standards in information and communication technology are above average in Year 2 as the pupils have benefited from the systematic teaching of skills and have been highly motivated by the regular use of the interactive whiteboards.

The pupils make steady progress in Years 3 and 4 and standards are broadly in line with national expectations. The staff are beginning to respond to the higher expectations demanded by the headteacher and there is evidence that the pupils are rising to the challenge, particularly in Year 4. However, the full impact of the initiatives introduced by the headteacher have yet to be realised.

Pupils with special educational needs have a wide range of needs and achieve well relative to their abilities, because the school is committed to inclusion. They benefit from specific help they receive, particularly in English, mathematics and in personal development. Occasionally, there is insufficient small group help in lessons, particularly for older pupils. Recent sets of test results have suggested that the girls have been achieving better than the boys. During the inspection, there was no evidence to suggest that this was the case.

While there are still key areas where the pupils' achievements can be improved and standards raised further, notably in science, the school's improvement strategy is beginning to take effect. There is a clear commitment to further improvement. The headteacher has made a detailed analysis of the pupils' performance and raised the expectations of staff and pupils. Most of the staff have responded well to the increased rigour in the management systems and have made effective use of assessment information. They have welcomed opportunities for further professional development and have gained a greater understanding of data analysis, monitoring and evaluation to support improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Attendance is satisfactory but punctuality is good. The personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

The very good relationships and the lack of any form of harassment contribute to creating a very good learning environment.

Pupils' experiences in the Foundation Stage provide a very good basis to their personal development that continues to be very good as they progress through the school.

Pupils participate fully in the many activities available to them.

In some classes a minority of pupils are restless or demanding of the teacher's attention.

## Commentary

The children are keen to come to school and enjoy being there. Most pupils are brought to school by their parents and arrive in a calm and orderly manner. The level of attendance has fallen since the last inspection but is still similar to the national average. The school currently has good measures in place to promote improved attendance and figures for this year so far are indicating about 0.5% improvement. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and during the day punctuality to lessons is good.

## Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

School data

5.1

School data

0.5

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.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to contribute to both lessons and assemblies and they grasp these with enthusiasm. They also participate in significant numbers in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available to pupils of all age groups. To support the running of the school pupils can take on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council or the 'ECO' council supporting environmental projects within the school.

Very good relationships exist throughout the school with pupils and adults showing mutual respect and trust. These quality relationships contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and this is demonstrated by their confidence and self-esteem. There are only a very few ethnic minority background pupils in the school but there is

total racial harmony.

Attitudes and behaviour are good overall. In the Foundation Stage and in many of the other classes they are very good. In some classes, however, behaviour is less well managed and learning is impeded. Where this occurs it is demonstrated by pupils causing distraction to others or by some pupils demanding the teacher's attention too often. At lunch and break times supervision is good and a range of activities is available to occupy pupils with the result that behaviour is consistently good. Although the dining area is crowded it is well managed and pupils are well behaved and show respect to adults and to each other. There was only one fixed term exclusion last year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils  
Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census

No of pupils on roll

Number of fixed period exclusions  
Number of permanent exclusions

White – British

294

1  
0

White – any other White background

2  
0  
0

Mixed – Any other mixed background

1  
0  
0

Asian or Asian British - Indian

1

0

0

Any other ethnic group

3

0

0

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

Each aspect of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. From the time the children enter the Foundation Stage they are encouraged to think about what they are learning and about the world around them and they frequently express amazement and excitement about what they are taught. Assemblies fully meet requirements for collective worship and there are good opportunities for reflection. The religious education lessons contribute well to both spiritual and cultural development with the studying of various faiths. Experiences in music and art also contribute to cultural development. As pupils progress through the school they quickly benefit from the positive social experiences and understand right from wrong. Moral issues are well promoted through assemblies and lesson content as well as by the example set by staff.

Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the personal development of pupils, in relationships and in the attitudes and behaviour of Foundation Stage pupils. General levels of attitudes and behaviour have been maintained but attendance has declined.

#### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and the school provides a very good level of care.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good.  
High quality teaching in Year 2 enables the pupils to achieve well in literacy.  
The quality of marking lacks consistency.  
The school is successful in ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs achieve well.  
The school makes good use of teaching assistants in helping the children to learn, but there are too few of them.

### Commentary

As a result of careful monitoring of the effectiveness of the teaching in each class, the headteacher has been successful in improving the quality of learning. The incidence of very good and excellent teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection as the headteacher has raised the expectations of her staff. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good, with particular strengths in Year 2 and in the Foundation Stage. However, when the analysis of work is taken into consideration it is clear that the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good. This still represents a significant achievement for the school.

Children get off to a flying start in both the Early Years and Reception classes because they are very well challenged and very well taught by an excellent team of teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The staff know the children very well and cater for their needs very effectively. Curricular planning is excellent in all areas of learning. The assessment of all aspects of children's learning is detailed, thorough and rigorously used to guide planning and amend the provision for both groups of children and individuals. The system is easily managed and all members of staff understand their responsibilities for specific aspects of assessment. The Foundation Stage profile is an invaluable document and computer records combined with day to day observations are very thorough, detailed and highly effective. The provision has greatly improved since the last inspection.

Throughout the school, assessment procedures have been sharpened so that the staff have a much greater awareness of the pupils' progress and where there are weaknesses in the pupils' understanding. This is beginning to impact on the teachers' planning. The headteacher has identified the quality of marking as a priority for development. The staff ensure that the marking of the pupils' work is up-to-date but much of the feedback to pupils is far too generous in its praise and there are too few pointers for further improvement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent  
Very good  
Good



Satisfactory  
Unsatisfactory  
Poor  
Very poor

3 (9%)  
8 (23%)  
13 (37%)  
10 (29%)  
1 (3%)  
0 (0%)  
0 (0%)

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

The teachers show a good understanding of the Literacy Strategy and have worked hard to ensure that the pupils have good opportunities to discuss different texts and to develop their skills of speaking and listening. They provide good opportunities for the pupils to express their ideas by writing reports in other subjects such as history and geography. English is well taught overall and there is particular strength in Year 2 where the quality of teaching and learning is very good. However, on too many occasions in other classes, the writing merely consists of completing missing words in published worksheets and this does little to develop the pupils' fluency. Numeracy and science are satisfactorily taught but there are too few opportunities for the pupils to set up their own investigations or to apply their skills in number to other subjects.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly in Year 1 and 2. For pupils in Years 3 and 4, there is occasionally insufficient help to support teaching and learning in lessons. When this happens, the pupils struggle to complete their work. Teachers generally provide appropriately modified, but challenging programmes to meet pupils' needs. The combination of in-class support where this happens, and withdrawal for intensive small group teaching, for example, in 'Active Literacy', results in these pupils' good achievement. The thorough assessments maintained by teachers and support staff provide wide information and are used to inform planning.

Pupils are supported well within classrooms by class teachers and a small group of hardworking and effective team of teaching assistants. Class teachers ensure in their lesson plans that appropriate provision is made for pupils with particular learning needs and the teaching assistants provide good, and frequently very good, support for pupils. They monitor pupils' progress during lessons and provide a good blend of help and challenge. They make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning in the computer suite when they frequently take the responsibility for group lessons. However, although the teaching assistants are effectively deployed, there are too few of them to meet the

learning needs of all the pupils.

### The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is very well enriched through carefully planned activities within and outside the school. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, except for the outdoor play area for Foundation Stage children and the school library.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

The curriculum is broad and well balanced to enable the pupils to achieve well. The school offers many opportunities for enrichment within and outside the school. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, which has a positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum is innovative and inclusive; there are no barriers to pupils' learning. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall.

### Commentary

The previous inspection judged the curriculum as good, but criticised the lack of a statement regarding drugs education. This now is in place and carefully built into the overall provision. The report included the need to improve use of information and communication technology across other subjects, providing more opportunities for creative writing and for speaking and listening through drama. Moreover, the report was highly critical of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Since then, the school has made very good improvements, because the curriculum for children is stimulating and imaginatively planned to provide for their varying needs. The very high quality and enriching range of learning opportunities in the foundation stage is very good with some excellent features; this is a most impressive improvement since the last inspection.

The curriculum is very well planned to provide a superb range of interesting, challenging and relevant activities. It is enhanced by a very imaginative range of visits and visitors. The staff have developed effective teamwork and provide very good role models. Their relationships with the children is very good. They monitor all aspects of children's learning and personal and social development very carefully. Parents commented very favourably on the provision in all classes and their involvement in their children's learning. The outdoor accommodation is unsatisfactory; children do not have continuous access to a safe outdoor area with a safety surface. This aspect was unsatisfactory at the last inspection and, although the co-ordinator and staff know how it could be improved, the financial implications are daunting.

The curriculum is broad and well balanced to enable the pupils to achieve well in subjects and across all areas of their learning. It is innovative and offers many very good opportunities for enrichment within and outside the school day. These include the Eco project, which motivates the pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects, as well as

enabling them to become independent learners, who enjoy learning. There are now very good links between subjects and areas of learning, without losing the rigour of the National Curriculum requirements. Statutory requirements are met in all areas. The school's determination to maintain breadth and balance in the curriculum can be seen in the provision for the pupils to participate in the arts, for example, such as Buxton Opera House and in themed days to celebrate occasions such as VE Day or Divali.

The school strongly promotes educational and social inclusion. It is evident in the good planning that generally gives due recognition to pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able. As a result, there are no barriers to pupils' learning or to school life. The impact of these arrangements can be seen in the pupils' good achievement.

The very wide variety of extra-curricular clubs provides the pupils with very good opportunities to extend their learning. The carefully planned visits and visitors add expertise that enhances pupils' learning and personal development very well. Good examples include Shugborough where Year 2 pupils can experience Victorian life. Visits to Stanley Head for outdoor education enable the pupils to mix socially with others and to take up an interest for life. Moreover, the very high proportion of pupils who regularly participate in opportunities on offer to them outside the school day shows pupils' enjoyment of learning. In addition, the very good provision for pupils' PHSCE, which includes teaching about the dangers of drugs, prepares the pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but it is very good in Foundation Stage and good for Years 1 and 2. Currently, there is a satisfactory match of support staff to the curriculum. The main weakness lies in the deployment of support staff for the older pupils, who at times struggle with their work, because they have insufficient individual help. This was noted, for example, in a lower ability group in mathematics where the teacher had to cope with a wide range of pupils' abilities needing her assistance in order to make learning gains. However, a number of intervention strategies, such as Active Literacy and number work, are helping to raise standards in English and in mathematics.

The school has a good blend of experienced and newly qualified teachers, the latter receiving good mentoring. The staffing needs are appropriate to ensure that the curriculum is well delivered. Teachers and their assistants benefit from a very good programme of ongoing professional development. The headteacher's very good leadership is pivotal in creating a very effective spirit of teamwork among staff, which is a key factor in the school's improvements. The office staff provide a highly efficient and welcoming image for the school.

There is a satisfactory range of resources to support learning in most subjects and they are used well by staff and pupils for teaching and learning. The accommodation is satisfactory except for outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage. The library is sparsely resourced and currently positioned at the end of a long corridor of classrooms.

As a result, it is not conducive to pupils' independent learning or inviting to engage them in reading and enjoyment of books. The play areas and fields are imaginatively developed and offer space for sports and for quiet reflection. The accommodation is well maintained by the site manager and his cheerful staff, and effectively enhanced by attractive displays that celebrate pupils' efforts and success.

#### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Provision of support, advice and guidance is good. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

The extent to which each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adult in the school is excellent.

The school provides very good care of pupils throughout and beyond the school day. The induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.

The school is very involved in health promoting initiatives.

#### Commentary

Health and safety are well addressed in the school with a policy in place. All the requirements of the health and safety policy are carried out but the policy does not identify references to the appropriate procedures. Regular audits are carried out by the local education authority with governor involvement and issues are discussed regularly at governors' meetings. Risk assessments are carried out as required. Child protection procedures are fully in place with the headteacher being the designated responsible person. There is currently only one looked after child in school but the school has good links with the external agencies and with the care provider.

During the day all activities are well supervised. The school operates a breakfast club and an after school club to extend its provision of care. The parents of any pupil who does not arrive at school, with no notification received, are contacted as soon as possible to confirm their well-being. The school does not have a dedicated medical room but has sufficient trained first aid staff and first aid points at each end of the building. The percentage of pupils who responded on the questionnaire that there is an adult in school with whom they have a trusting relationship was exceptionally high. The school is actively involved in health initiatives such as healthy eating and happy playtimes and has been awarded a Health Promoting Schools award.

Relationships are very good in the school and the teachers know the pupils well enabling them to provide good support within lessons. Teachers have good opportunities to provide guidance to pupils during the day as the good behaviour of the pupils allows registration periods as well as lesson time to be used purposefully. The assessment processes are at an early stage of development which restricts how well informed the

teachers are about progress especially for the older pupils.

The induction procedures for new pupils are very good. Many will join from the private Early Years class, which is based on the school site and with which there are very close links. All parents are invited into school to see the facilities and have a presentation about the school. This first visit is kept fairly informal and in small groups. Parents are given booklets about the school and can ask questions. On their first day at the start of term, parents are invited to stay with their children for a short while until they are settled. Pupils who join at times other than the entry to reception will always meet the headteacher and be shown round the school; an appropriate class will be chosen and a 'buddy' selected for when they join.

The staff take every possible opportunity to ensure that children learn in a safe and stimulating environment. As there is no outdoor area which leads from the classrooms, they take extra care and time to ensure that children are very well supervised and that health and safety are a priority at all times.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with other schools and with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Parental consultation and involvement in school activities are very good.

A very good partnership exists with the nearby middle school and this ensures very good transition arrangements are made for pupils.

The school is well used by the local community and there are very good arrangements for them to be consulted.

Very good partnership arrangements are in place which benefit pupils through the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

The parents' questionnaires and comments made at the parents' meeting show that parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school. They are particularly pleased that their children like coming to the school where staff expect them to work hard, that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and all children are treated fairly. Some parents identified that bullying had taken place but none was seen during the inspection and the school's actions seem to have worked well. The only other area of concern was about the information they receive on progress. The annual progress reports are considered to be satisfactory as they contain all the required information. The format of the reports does not make it easy for parents to identify how well their child is doing compared to expectations but there are other opportunities for them to find this out.

Parents have good opportunities to discuss progress at the termly target setting meetings

as well as informal opportunities at the end of each school day. There are curriculum information evenings for parents although these have only been held every two years. The home school diary is used very well especially in the lower year groups. A questionnaire is sent to parents each year to gather their views and they are given comprehensive feedback. Information about the school is provided by regular newsletters to supplement the prospectus. There is a school website but this is currently being restructured.

Parental involvement is very good with a significant number helping in classes as well as supporting individual reading. Other parents will help on a casual basis such as on school trips. Parents of pupils who attend the after school computer club have the opportunity to join them towards the end of the course so that pupils can teach their parents what they have learnt. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and effective. The governors used to issue a combined prospectus and governors' annual report but have reverted to separate documents. Much of the information that has to be included in the governors' annual report has been omitted in error but it is available to parents within the prospectus.

The school premises are very well used by the community and a users' 'Community Forum' group has been established to ensure that they can all contribute their views. There are only limited business links but they are appropriate to this type of school. Pupils visit the local supermarkets and the local area as part of their studies and personal development. A local health unit has helped with improvements to the school grounds and links with the Salvation Army support pupils' spiritual development and general awareness.

During the day a private pre-school playgroup uses the school site and shares some facilities; this joint provision is well managed and the very good partnership contributes well to a smooth transition for pupils who move from the playgroup into the reception classes. The school has very good links with the local pyramid of schools and especially the nearby middle school to which most pupils transfer. There are benefits from the specialist arts status of the high school such as pupil involvement in a T-shirt project and a local special school provides support for disabled pupils. A partnership scheme whereby the Staffordshire sports co-ordinator spends one day each week in school and also supports extra-curricular activities is a significant benefit to pupils.

Parents commented on how welcome they feel in the Foundation Stage; they know their children's teachers and have a very good understanding of the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. The involvement of parents in their children's reading is particularly successful and has contributed to very high standards. The children benefit both socially and academically from the wide range of visits and visitors; recently they visited a Tram Museum and compared and contrasted modern day transport with transport many years ago.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and this has led to significant

improvements in key areas. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. The governance of the school is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

The headteacher provides very clear and purposeful leadership.

The governors support the school well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The management of the school's finances and resources is good.

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and these have led to significant improvements since the last inspection.

There is scope for the development of the role of the senior management team in monitoring the work of the school.

#### Commentary

The school benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher, a dedicated and supportive staff and a very supportive governing body. The headteacher has high expectations for the school and since her appointment two years ago, has made very good progress towards improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. She has done this through her clear vision for the school and her determination and ability to set appropriate priorities. This has been effective in developing a school ethos where there is a strong focus on valuing each individual member of the school community and a continuing emphasis on enabling them to improve their achievements. Her leadership is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the full inclusion of pupils from all abilities and backgrounds. Since her appointment, the headteacher has made changes to the senior management team although this is not yet sufficiently effective or engaged in carrying out its monitoring of the work of the school.

Since the previous inspection the school has improved its provision in the Foundation Stage and this is now of high quality. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management with some excellent features. She provides a sensitive balance of guidance, encouragement and support at the same time as ensuring that statutory requirements are fully met and assessment is rigorous and up-to-date. She monitors planning and assessments and is aware of the needs of individuals as well as groups of children. She monitors children's progress and supports teachers very well. The rigour and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator have been the driving forces that have contributed to the outstanding levels of improvement in provision for children since the last inspection. Apart from the outdoor provision, the many unsatisfactory aspects identified at the previous inspection have been fully addressed.

Improvements have been made in other key areas for development identified in the last inspection, particularly with regard to introducing more rigorous systems to assess and monitor the achievements of pupils. These are used satisfactorily to set individual and group targets in English and mathematics. However, in other subjects, assessment is not yet used sufficiently to match the work to the needs of the pupils. Marking remains an

area which is inconsistent across the school.

The staff and governors contribute to the school's development plan. This clearly sets out the priorities for improvement over a three-year period and for the forthcoming year in all areas of the school and curriculum management. The school identifies some good criteria for success although these do not yet fully identify clear measures for judging whether value for money has been achieved. There are clear systems in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning and this is being used well to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and curriculum planning. Systems to assess and monitor the pupils' work in English and mathematics have been established. The careful analysis of the pupils' performance both termly and in national tests is now a strong feature of the school. From this, areas for improvement have been identified and form the basis of much of the school's development planning.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and operates efficiently and effectively through a well-organised committee structure. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable about the school and ensure that resources are used wisely. Several governors visit the school regularly and governors receive regular monitoring reports from subject co-ordinators which outline progress in school developments. Consequently they are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

#### Financial information

The governors and the headteacher efficiently manage the school's finances. The governing body has a finance sub-committee with members who have very good financial experience and which meets regularly and receives good information from the school. The headteacher and the administration staff carry out the day-to-day financial management effectively. The best value principle is well used in the school and supported by the governing body. Specific funds are spent appropriately. Both the headteacher and the governors ensure that spending is linked to the development plan and therefore to raising standards. The large carry forward this year arose because of an underspend on predicted supply cover but a significant portion of it has been allocated within this year's budget to spend on priority items within the school development plan. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)

Balances (£)

Total income  
726,650



Balance from previous year  
52,472

Total expenditure  
702,390

Balance carried forward to the next  
76,732

Expenditure per pupil  
2,345

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school provides very well for all children in the Foundation Stage and children in the Early Years class have an excellent beginning to their school career.

All aspects of the Foundation Stage are strengths and children are very well prepared for Year 1. Children attend the Early Years class for either a morning or an afternoon session and at the end of the year transfer to one of the two Reception classes.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good with some excellent features. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Children are very well prepared for transfer to Year 1. Children achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and curricular planning. The staff ensure that the precise learning needs of all children are identified early through very good assessment systems and very effective links with families. The children, including higher attaining children, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve very well. They are very well motivated and their learning is focused yet fun.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

Very well-planned activities and resources increase children's independence and their ability to work in groups.

Very good teamwork ensures that all children achieve very well.

Children make very good progress throughout each year and between the Early Years and Reception classes.

Teachers plan an enriching range of special events that contribute to children's very good understanding of Christianity and other faiths.

Teachers and teaching assistants support children very well and they develop high levels of self-confidence.

#### Commentary

The staff work as a very cohesive and effective team and children are introduced sensitively but thoroughly to classroom routines and working in groups. The staff know the children very well and plan activities which interest them and ensure that they achieve very well. They take time to talk to them and use praise very effectively to raise children's self-esteem. They give sensitive reminders about behaviour. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Teachers, the nursery nurses and teaching assistants give children very good examples of social conduct and behaviour. In the Reception classes children build on their previous knowledge of class routines and are given more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers ensure that all children have a very good balance between guided activities and a wide range of choices. This makes a very good contribution to all aspects of their personal development. During these activities all adults ensure that children are purposefully involved. They use these opportunities for rigorous monitoring of attainment, achievement, attitudes and behaviour. From the calendar of celebrations and special events, children share in many celebrations from a wide range of cultures and religions. They are very well prepared for life in multicultural and multi-faith Britain.

#### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

Teaching is very good with many excellent features and is very carefully focused towards developing children's language skills in all activities.

The teaching of reading is very good and children's speaking and listening skills are very well promoted through all areas of learning.

The curricular planning, assessment systems and use of assessments to guide planning are very good.

The very effective partnership between home and school contributes to the many opportunities for parents and teachers to be involved in their children's reading and share in the observations and recording.

#### Commentary

Most children quickly adapt to the routines and exciting activities in the Early Years

class. They listen to and participate in a wealth of stories and songs. Most children speak with confidence, listen carefully and are very enthusiastic learners. During the inspection children shared the book 'The Rainbow Fish' and enjoyed and understood the story. Their summaries were succinct and showed very good understanding of the sequence of events.

In the Reception classes children achieve very well and the majority are well placed to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning. Most children read fluently and accurately with very good understanding as the books chosen are well matched to their abilities and interests. Children who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well. Children enjoy books and speak with interest and understanding about their favourite stories.

Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak and all adults listen and respond to their comments. The teachers have developed very rigorous and tightly structured plans for the teaching of sounds. Most children are therefore able to say the sounds, recognise them in books and practise them during writing activities. They are encouraged to hold pencils with the correct grip. Children learn handwriting skills well because of very good teaching. Standards show very high levels of improvement compared to their attainment on entry to the classes.

The teaching of handwriting is highly successful. Children are taught how to hold pencils with the correct grip and consequently they form letters accurately. Higher attaining and some average attaining children write sentences using creative vocabulary and accurate punctuation. During the inspection children wrote messages in a bottle related to their topic on the seaside.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is very good with some excellent features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

Children achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.

Teachers plan an exciting range of activities which ensures that children understand numbers and apply their skills to other areas of learning.

Children have very positive attitudes and apply mathematical skills to other areas of learning with confidence and understanding.

### Commentary

Children achieve very well and the majority exceed the early learning goals due to very good teaching and assessment in each class. Most children add and subtract using numbers to ten and the majority count to 50 and sometimes 100. They recognise a wide range of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. Children create interesting mathematical patterns showing a very good awareness of shape and colour.

During the inspection they compared the shapes and detail of living things found in the sea. Children's knowledge and understanding are very good in all aspects of number, shape and space and problem solving.

The teachers have high expectations and successfully develop the children's confidence and make learning exciting and relevant to them. Children apply mathematics to most areas of learning; they are encouraged to look for patterns and shape in art and knowledge and understanding of the world. ICT is very successfully incorporated into this area of learning to develop children's understanding of number. Very effective class activities at the end of the lessons give children opportunities to demonstrate their new learning and also consolidate mathematical skills.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

Children's learning is greatly enhanced by the exciting range of activities and very good range of visits and visitors.

Children have frequent opportunities for using ICT.

Literacy and numeracy skills and children's creativity flourish during the stimulating range of activities.

Children have a very good understanding of some essential aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

### Commentary

As a result of very good teaching children achieve very well in all aspects of this area of learning. During the year, teachers and nursery nurses provide very well for children's scientific, technical and social aspects of learning. Children's learning is very well developed through the wide range of investigations planned. During the inspection, the theme 'The Seaside' captured their interest and developed their creativity. They enjoyed the discovery elements of the subject especially using the 'Feely Bag' when they relied on their sense of touch to identify unusual objects such as starfish and loofahs. The classrooms were transformed into seaside environments and children's learning thrived as they shared in the 'Under the Sea' play areas. Children have many opportunities for making models from a wide range of construction equipment, are confident and capable users of ICT and identify many pieces of equipment that are powered by electricity. During their previous topic they compared present day lifestyles and transport systems with those of earlier historical periods. Throughout the year they have a wealth of opportunities for sharing in festivals and celebrations related to Chinese New Year, Diwali and sharing foods from different cultural groups.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

The very high quality teaching contributes to very good achievement in all classes. Very effective use is made of the available resources to ensure that children make very good gains in learning.

This area of learning is one of the features which develops children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

The outdoor accommodation is unsatisfactory, has no safety surface and therefore limits the wide range of activities that children should participate in.

### Commentary

Children in the Reception classes show very good physical control and creativity when they created movements related to 'The Rainbow Fish' story. Children are very well included in all activities; able and talented and higher attaining children have additional challenges and those with special educational needs benefit from support in all activities. These lessons contribute very well to children's personal and social development.

Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with very good levels of dexterity and accuracy. Most children in the Reception classes hold pencils correctly and are taught handwriting skills very well. Teachers have very high expectations of the children. The lower-attaining children and those with special educational needs benefit from very good support and encouragement and achieve as well as others in the class. Most children in the Reception classes already exceed the expected levels in this area of learning.

### CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

Teachers plan a wide range of exciting activities in all aspects of this area of learning. Children use a very wide range of media and develop confidence and a wide range of skills in the use of colour, texture and shape.

Children have many opportunities for singing and playing musical instruments.

### Commentary

Children gain confidence in using an increasingly wide range of resources because of very good teaching and curricular planning. They use a wide variety of materials to create pictures and models with a good feel for texture and shape. Children develop speaking and listening skills very well as they discuss the materials used and compare designs.

They use paint programs in ICT to generate a wide range of pictures. During the planned and informal music activities children sang a wide range of songs tunefully with accurate pitch, good dynamics and accurate rhythm.

From the lessons observed, displays and discussions with children, most of them are well placed to reach the expected levels in this area. Children achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good in all aspects. Planning shows that over the year children have a very wide range of creative opportunities. They experiment when mixing paint and using modelling materials. A particular strength is their very good awareness of shape and texture in art. The staff encourage children to speak and use their imagination in a wide range of activities.

#### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

#### ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

Standards in reading and writing are above average in Year 2.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The subject is well led and managed.

The school's library facilities are inadequate.

The school makes too much use of worksheets.

#### Commentary

The headteacher has made standards in literacy a priority area and has introduced a number of strategies to improve standards. This is because recent national test results for pupils in Year 2 have shown the pupils' performance to be below those pupils attending similar schools. Standards in writing have been below average. The school has changed its approach to the teaching of literacy and as a result standards are clearly improving. This is reflected in the improved SAT results in reading and writing in Year 2 in 2004 and early indications suggest that the current national assessments will continue this upward trend.

A key element of the school's strategy for raising standards in English has been the improvement in the Foundation Stage and the emphasis placed on speaking and listening. In every class, the pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups. This practice is a common feature not only in English lessons but also in other subject areas. This strongly encourages the pupils to develop their vocabulary and raises their confidence to communicate their ideas in writing. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. For example, in a Year 4 class, groups of pupils performed their own rap poems confidently and offered constructive criticism of the work of other pupils.

The subject leader has ensured that reading is taught systematically on a daily basis and this approach has resulted in clear signs that standards are improving. Assessment is used accurately to ensure that the pupils are reading at the appropriate level and that there is a good range of books available to them. Adult support is used effectively and in the best lessons, notably in Year 2, the pupils are gaining confidence and are highly motivated to improve. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils are developing their reference skills and are making good use of information and communication technology to practise locating information efficiently. However, the library is poorly situated and its organisation does not encourage independent usage by the pupils. Many parents reinforce the school's efforts to promote reading by providing good support and encouragement at home within the context of a carefully planned homework system, particularly for the younger pupils.

As a result of a whole-school initiative to improve the quality of the pupils' writing, there are clear signs that standards are rising. The school has developed good procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and information gained from the assessment of pupils' attainment in national tests. Teachers are beginning to make good use of this information to monitor the pupils' progress more closely and to set individual targets in writing. These are shared with the pupils, who are quite clear about what they need to concentrate on if they are to improve. A whole-school handwriting style is taught systematically and this has a positive effect on the presentation of pupils' work. The pupils have good opportunities to write for a range of purposes but in some classes, there is too much emphasis on commercial worksheets that provide little challenge and motivation for the pupils.

The quality of teaching in English ranges from satisfactory to very good and lesson observations, coupled with a scrutiny of pupils' work, indicate that teaching is good overall throughout the school. The quality of teaching is particularly good in Year 2 and has led to improved pupil progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have good classroom and behaviour-management skills. These allow most lessons to progress at a good pace. Teachers use day-to-day assessment well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and learning needs. Where teaching and pupils' progress are very good, the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, their impressive rapport with the pupils and comprehensive subject knowledge, combined with well-developed questioning skills are common features of the lesson. However, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of marking.

The attitude of the pupils makes a significant opportunity to their achievement. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good and this strongly supports learning. In the best cases, the pupils work enthusiastically together, respond very well and confidently to their teacher's questions and work independently without the need for frequent intervention by the teacher.

The subject is well led and managed. Despite the school's growing success in the subject, the leadership is not complacent. Effective monitoring systems and further professional development have improved the quality of teaching. Assessment procedures

are now effective and the pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. The school ensures that those pupils requiring additional support receive it.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Although there are opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects such as the humanities and science, there is an over-dependence on the use of worksheets or other exercises that do not require the pupils to develop their writing.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Teaching seen during the inspection was mainly good.  
The leadership and management of the subject are good.  
Marking is not always used sufficiently well to help pupils improve.  
There is insufficient support in some lessons.

Commentary

Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards by the end of Year 2 are likely to be in line with those expected. This is similar to the results of the 2004 national tests, although it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of pupils who achieve at the higher levels. This follows the improving trend in standards seen over the past two years. Pupils in Year 4 are in line to achieve the expected standards for their age.

Since the last inspection the school has fully implemented the National Numeracy strategy and adopted a common planning format for teaching. In order to improve the standards that the pupils achieve, the school has more recently adopted setting arrangements based on their abilities, which helps in planning work that meets the needs of the individuals more closely.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although in the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was mainly good, with some strong teaching particularly in Year 2. Although teaching has improved since that reported at the time of the last inspection, there remains a variation in the quality of teaching across the school which ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. There is very good use of a range of strategies, resources, including the interactive whiteboards and tasks which engage the interest of the pupils. In the most effective lessons, the teachers have high expectations of the pupils, the pace of lessons is brisk and the teachers' levels of questioning and discussion develop pupils' learning well. Tasks given are interesting and appropriate. The oral and mental sessions are appropriate and used well to engage the interest of the pupils and develop their



learning. In the less effective lessons, the pace is often slower and activities and tasks are not sufficiently challenging so that learning loses momentum. A factor which affects the teaching and learning in mathematics is the lack of support assistants available in lessons. This means that some pupils, particularly the youngest and those with special educational needs, are not always able to work at their independent tasks successfully.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given appropriate praise with reference made to the success criteria identified for the lessons. However, the marking of their work does not give pupils sufficient direction on how to improve. The school has sound procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and standardised tests. This information is used to track the pupils' achievements and to set targets for groups of pupils and individuals. In some classes these are used well and referred to during lessons; however, in other classes there is no evidence of them being used. The presentation of pupils' work is generally satisfactory and good in those classes where teachers insist on high standards.

The leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator are good. She evaluates the results in standardised and national tests to identify any common weaknesses within year groups. There are regular opportunities for monitoring standards and teaching across the school in accordance with the school's policy.

#### Mathematics across the curriculum

The pupils have some opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science and geography, for example when studying coordinates and drawing graphs. There are also opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in mathematics with the use of appropriate programs and teachers are using the interactive whiteboards effectively.

#### SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

The school's commitment to investigations contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.

The wide range of visits and visitors contribute to pupils' good understanding of environmental aspects of the subject.

Pupils understand the importance of recycling and the 'ECO' club contributes to their social and moral development.

Assessment is not used thoroughly enough to guide planning for higher attaining pupils. There are inconsistencies in the quality of presentation.

#### Commentary

The majority of pupils in Year 2 are well placed to attain the national average and those in Year 4 attain the levels expected for pupils in this year group. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress with strengths in the investigative elements of the subject.

Pupils behave well especially when they are involved in scientific investigations. During the inspection pupils in Year 4 were overawed at the range of minibeasts they found in the school grounds. They identified spiders and a wide range of insects and compared and contrasted their physical features. They also understood how different creatures are adapted to the environment. Pupils in Year 2 classified a wide range of living things according to physical features, their environments and lifestyles.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Particular strengths are in the planning of investigations and observations which give pupils good opportunities for classification and developing their reasoning skills. Teachers promote the accurate use of scientific vocabulary and make effective use of mathematics and ICT skills to support learning. They do not plan more challenging work for higher attaining pupils and the analysis of work shows many instances when children of all abilities were given the same work. In the lessons observed, pupils with special educational needs were well catered for as the class teachers supported them.

Teachers use a very good range of strategies to gain the interest of pupils and the activities given are interesting and appropriate. The discussion sessions are used well and involve all pupils. In the recording parts of the lessons the work planned does not take into account sufficiently the ability range of the pupils in each class. This leads to unsatisfactory levels of challenge for the higher attaining pupils and this aspect, which was a weakness at the last inspection, has not been adequately addressed. Although pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given praise, the marking does not give sufficient direction on how to improve. The presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent and at times praise has been given for untidy work.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Strengths are the wide range of visits for example to a nearby wildlife centre featuring creatures from the British Isles and the range of investigations planned. Pupils are very well motivated by the 'ECO' club and have a very good understanding of environmental issues including recycling. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and the benefits of exercise to the body. An unsatisfactory aspect is the overuse of worksheets which do not allow for sufficient independent recording and the unsatisfactory level of challenging activities for higher attaining pupils.

The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory; strengths are in the development of investigations and the range of visits planned. Although the co-ordinator monitors pupils' work, this has not yet resulted in sufficiently different and more challenging work for higher attaining pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

Because of effective leadership, the provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.

The pupils are making good progress.

The school makes good use of ICT to support learning in different subjects.

The school makes good use of teaching assistants to teach basic skills.

Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

## Commentary

Standards in Year 2 are above the levels expected and they are in line in Year 4. The situation is improving as the staff become more confident with their use of the new technology, particularly the interactive whiteboards. The pupils make good progress because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon the developing pupils' skills. The school's commitment to training all staff has led to increased confidence and a willingness to use information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. The school's computer suite is timetabled regularly for each year group to ensure that the basic skills are taught systematically and this is working well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.

The quality of teaching is good overall. The development of the teachers' expertise and knowledge and that of the teaching assistants has been well managed and this has enabled the new resources to be used to good effect. For example, the staff make effective use of the interactive whiteboards installed in every classroom. The computer suite is carefully timetabled to enable pupils to have regular access to computers. This enables all of the necessary skills to be taught systematically. In one very good lesson, on branching data bases, the teaching assistant provided an excellent model of the processes involved and had high expectations of the work the pupils were going to produce. Her focused questioning and practical demonstration involving the imaginative use of toy figures enabled the pupils to be clear about the purpose of the lesson. The explanations and instructions were clear, and when the pupils found difficulties with the process these were dealt with quickly. This meant that the pupils were kept busy and involved in their work. These factors, together with the quality of the relationships, which enabled the pupils to feel comfortable about sharing their mistakes, created a successful positive learning environment.

The subject is very well led and managed and the issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been fully resolved. The school has sufficient computers for the number of pupils and most other resources are readily available. Although simple assessment procedures have been introduced to provide staff with clear information about each pupil's progress, the subject leader recognises that more use could be made of the data to pitch the work set more accurately for the different ability levels in each class. There is a clear and appropriate vision of how standards in ICT should be raised and how its use in other subjects will be achieved. The improvement made since the last inspection has

been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Throughout the school, good use is made of digital photography to record special events.

## HUMANITIES

As only two religious education lessons were observed it is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching. Evidence from pupils' written work shows that throughout the school standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different religions and they understand the significance of some aspects of religion, such as celebrations and symbols. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development by widening their appreciation of the range of beliefs in the world around them and understanding the lifestyles of followers of different faiths in a sensitive and reflective manner.

In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. In the more effective lesson in Year 2 pupils were comparing Christianity and Buddhism. In this lesson the teacher engaged the interest of the pupils well by using a range of strategies such as giving them the opportunity to take part in a meditation exercise. She used resources, such as the interactive whiteboard, well to illustrate some of the practices of Buddhists in Thailand. In the satisfactory lesson in Year 4, when pupils were considering the importance of water to life, the pace of the lesson was often too slow so that pupils lost interest and were not fully involved in the learning.

The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection so that it is not possible to make a judgement about the leadership of the subject. However, management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning in lessons and teachers' planning. Resources for the subject are sufficient to deliver the curriculum. A range of visits and visitors to school also help to bring the subject alive for pupils, for example some have taken part in the mediaeval pilgrimage to Lichfield Cathedral. At present there are no procedures for assessment although this has been identified as an area for future development.

During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson in geography and two lessons in history. Inspection findings are based on the small number of lessons seen, the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinators.

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are in line to achieve the expected standards in geography by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Planning is based on national guidance (QCA), alongside the school's scheme of work. Pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge of their own area and contrasting areas through a range of visits, events and visitors to school. For example, pupils across the school celebrate a 'world week' when aspects of life in countries around the world are celebrated. During the inspection

the focus of pupils' studies in Year 2 was a Mexican Day when pupils learned about Mexico. In this lesson, the teaching and learning were good. The lesson was well planned and good use made of the interactive whiteboard to assist pupils to locate Mexico on a world map. As a result of their earlier work, pupils were then able to begin to make comparisons between their own town, a town in Mexico and Struay. During that day they also had opportunity to practise a Mexican dance during their physical education lesson. Great emphasis is being placed on improving pupils' understanding of environmental issues with visits to a local environmental centre by Year 4 and the ECO activities which are emphasised across the school. ICT is being used increasingly to support pupils' learning in geography. Scrutiny of pupils' earlier work, however, does not show sufficient attention to setting work to match the range of abilities, with too much emphasis on pupils completing the same worksheets.

The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and manages the subject well. She has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Assessment takes place at the end of each unit of work and is based on national guidance.

From an examination of pupils' previous work, standards in history are broadly in line with the average. Earlier work indicates that coverage of the subject is satisfactory and is well supported by a range of visits and visitors to school that bring the subject to life. For example, pupils in Year 2 visit Shugborough Hall where they experience life as a pupil in a Victorian school. Pupils in Year 3 experience an 'archaeological dig' at the local museum and take part in a Tudor Music workshop with a visitor to school. Older pupils visit the nearby museum when studying events and domestic life during World War 2. However, evidence from pupils' earlier work indicates that there is too much emphasis placed on pupils of all abilities across a year group completing the same commercially produced worksheets, rather than on developing their historical understanding and skills.

As only two lessons were seen, it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, from the evidence of pupils' earlier work it would appear that learning is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and unsatisfactory in the other. Although both lessons were clearly planned, in the more effective lesson the teacher ensured that all pupils were appropriately challenged and the focus of pupils' learning was clear. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils' learning was insufficiently focused and as a result pupils' were confused and unclear about the main points of the lesson. Additionally, the tasks given were not matched to the abilities of the pupils so that learning was slower than it could have been for all abilities.

The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for history which she manages satisfactorily. She has had some opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning and regularly monitors teachers' planning. She recognises the need to develop work to meet the needs of all abilities as an area for future development.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in depth and is reported below. Music was sampled.

No overall judgements were made as no art and design lessons were observed. The very attractive displays of work show a wide range of high quality art and standards above national expectations. Pupils' artistic and creative skills develop very well. They incorporate art from a wide range of cultures, styles and historical periods into their work. Outstanding features include:-

The use of sketchbooks in Years 3 and 4 where pupils make visual notes.

Observational drawings of plants.

Fabric printing and art in the style of Roy Lichenstein.

The design elements of art, especially for wallpaper and textiles.

Patterns after the style of Paul Klee.

The headteacher and staff have planned an exciting curriculum which gives pupils very good opportunities for developing a wide range of artistic skills and knowledge of art from a wide range of cultures. This subject promotes pupils' spiritual, cultural and multicultural awareness very successfully.

In design and technology the school uses national guidelines as a basis for its work, so there is an assured progression of skills. Pupils have many opportunities for designing, making and evaluating their work. Work on display showed very effective cross-curricular planning especially with art and science and high quality designs. In Year 4, pupils designed working models based on pneumatics and they had designed, made and evaluated their products very well. In Year 2, pupils created models with well formed heads and accurate facial details. Food technology is very well promoted when pupils devise healthy sandwiches and meals. The curriculum is well planned and pupils develop a good understanding of the requirement for identifying a need, making an initial design and evaluating the final result.

In music one lesson was observed in Year 3. In the lesson seen, the singing and rhythmical awareness was within those expected of pupils of this age group. The pupils listened attentively to differing excerpts of music and were able to identify different instruments, suggesting 'the strings' and a full range of orchestra'. Good links were made with history, where the pupils were given homework to find information about Napoleon. In assemblies, all pupils enthusiastically and tunefully joined in the hymn singing. The subject is enhanced by an after school club, currently in preparation for an inter-school performance. In addition, there are music specialists who provide violin and cello lessons to pupils, for which their parents pay.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Pupils achieve well through good teaching and learning.

Very good extra-curricular activities and sport enrich the subject.

Physical education is led and managed well.

#### Commentary

The previous inspection report judged that pupils reached the expected standards. Since then, the school has made good improvements, because standards are now above expectations. There is a good range of learning opportunities on offer for pupils in the subject. The school's participation in the national initiative for the schools' physical education project is effectively enhancing this provision. The very close links with the middle school through shared teaching is having a very positive effect on the overall standards and pupils' achievements.

Pupils' good learning is the direct result of the good teaching they receive at the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able learn well. Lessons are well organised, with tasks being made progressively more challenging and teachers provide the pupils with good opportunities to self-evaluate their performance against success criteria. In a very good lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher encouraged the pupils to evaluate each other's athletics skills and to make further improvements. Similarly in another Year 2 class, the very good teaching of dance skills enabled the pupils to move expressively and to communicate ideas and feelings in response to Mexican music.

Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to pupils' good learning, as observed in lessons. In addition, the very good range of extra-curricular activities, in which pupils participate well, provide extension and enrichment to pupils' learning. As a result, the subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development. There is a wide range of activities and coaching sessions, which successfully enhance the school's provision in physical education.

The subject is well led and managed. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has put into effect numerous plans to develop the subject. She ensures coverage of all areas of the curriculum, including swimming. She has introduced various initiatives such as Active Heart Fitness, outdoor education at Stanley Head and has raised the profile of the subject. In addition, the school has enjoyed numerous successes in inter-school competitions and galas. The hall, which is small and used for midday meals, puts limitations on time being made available for physical education.

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

Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to develop in personal, social, health education and citizenship. The PHSCE curriculum is well structured and timetabled. The pupils are provided with very good opportunities, where they can engage in discussions that develop their ability to consider the feelings of others, listen carefully to others' point of view and develop their social skills. These sessions are supported by the development of citizenship through subject lessons and through the school's involvement in the ECO project. For example, in history, the pupils experience what life was like in

the Victorian era and in geography, they learn to compare their life with children in different parts of Mexico. The school council, made up of pupils from Year 1 to Year 4, provides a very good forum for pupils to take an active part in the life of the school. Throughout the school, pupils develop social skills and their understanding of their action on the life and running of the school as a community. The interaction and high profile of all these aspects successfully develop pupils' understanding of their responsibilities of living in a community, of the impact of their actions on others, both positively and negatively and make a very good preparation for citizenship.

#### PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement  
Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school  
3

How inclusive the school is  
3

How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection  
4

Value for money provided by the school  
3

Overall standards achieved  
4

Pupils' achievement  
4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)  
3

Attendance  
4



Attitudes

3

Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions

3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

The quality of education provided by the school

3

The quality of teaching

4

How well pupils learn

4

The quality of assessment

4

How well the curriculum meets pupils needs

3

Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities

2

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

3

The quality of the school's links with the community

2

The school's links with other schools and colleges

2

The leadership and management of the school

3

The governance of the school

3

The leadership of the headteacher

2

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).

Westwood First School -

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Subject: Westwood 1st Draft Report

Date: Tue, 14 Jun 2005 16:01:08 +0100

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INSPECTION REPORT

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Full report template (PRI03).dot

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INSPECTION REPORT

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Westwood First

lydia.odonnell@camb-ed.com

Lydia K. O'Donnell

Root Entry

1Table

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