

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **WOODSETTON SCHOOL**

Sedgley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103879

Headteacher: Philip Rhind-Tutt

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2004

Inspection number: 268660

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	88
School address:	Tipton Road Woodsetton Dudley
Postcode:	DY3 1BY
Telephone number:	01384 818265
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Westwood
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> May 1999.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Woodsetton has a designated roll of 110 pupils, which is much bigger than average for a school of this type and age range. Currently, 84 pupils attend, of whom five are in the Foundation Stage. There are almost three times as many boys as girls, and all have a Statement of Special Educational Needs; 64 for moderate learning difficulties, six for autism and 14 for speech and communication difficulties.

There are six classes in total, with pupils being grouped according to age. There is one class for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Year 1, and five for those in Years 2 to 6. Because of the pupils' learning difficulties, their development, especially their attainment, on entry to the school is delayed compared with others of a similar age. The school has a broad socio-economic mix in keeping with its intake from a wide geographical area. The vast majority of pupils have a white British background. Three pupils do not have English as their first language but this does not restrict their learning. Ten pupils attend classes at local mainstream schools in order to extend their learning and to encourage their personal development.

In 2004, the school was awarded a Gold Activemark and its award as an Investor in People was renewed.

The local education authority is reviewing its provision for pupils with special educational needs and its ideas are currently at the stage of public consultation. The proposed new model includes the closure of Woodsetton in 2006, and this is having a significant effect on staff morale and parents.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13101	Mike Kell	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Music French Geography Art and design English as an additional language
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
32050	Glan Davies	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Personal, social and health education and citizenship Religious education Special educational needs
22620	Bob Wall	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Woodsetton is a very good school with some excellent features. It is excellently led and very well managed.** Very high quality teaching promotes pupils' learning very well and they achieve very well. The excellent school ethos is supported by very strong links with parents and other schools and so pupils make very good gains in all aspects of their personal development. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and key staff share a very clear vision for the school's development, which is enthusiastically endorsed by all staff and governors.
- Very good management procedures are in place to track pupils' progress, and the data obtained is used very well to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- There have been good improvements in subject provision since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils make very good progress overall.
- Teaching and learning is very good; an excellent team of teaching assistants supports teachers very effectively.
- Excellent relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, give pupils confidence and develops in them a desire to learn.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient experience of living in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.
- The breadth and range of sporting opportunities available to pupils is excellent.
- The school has very good links with parents, but it does not have routine procedures for seeking their views formally and involving them in its development.
- Accommodation and resources for outdoor play for the youngest pupils are limited.

There have been two significant changes since the last inspection; there are no longer pupils in Years 7 to 11, and more pupils with additional learning needs, such as autism and speech and language difficulties, are being admitted. There has been good improvement in provision. Pupils' achievements have improved as teaching is more effective, so that pupils learn better. There have also been improvements in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development; the quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities; and levels of care, welfare and support. Two key issues were identified in the last inspection; performance management arrangements have now been implemented but the other key issue, regarding arrival and departure procedures, has only been partially addressed because of the reluctance of the local education authority (LEA) to help to fund this work until the outcomes of the special educational needs review are known.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	Very good	Very good
Year 6	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor, very poor.*

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, **pupils achieve very well** at all ages and make very good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress and those with additional learning needs, or whose home language is not English, achieve equally well.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well overall across the areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, and physical education. It was not possible to inspect other subjects in the same depth in terms of the number of lesson observations. However, those observations that were carried out, assessment records, and pupils' work show that pupils make similar very good progress in music, art and design, geography, French, design and technology, history and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are excellent, enabling maximum time to be spent on learning. **Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils' attendance is also good, and their punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality education** for its pupils. Teaching and learning is **very good with some excellent features.** As result, pupils learn very well and make very good progress. Assessment procedures are very good throughout the school. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage them extremely well, supported by excellent relationships. An excellent team of teaching assistants supports teachers very effectively; all staff work very hard to include all pupils in all activities. Lessons are planned very effectively, based on detailed knowledge of pupils' prior achievements and targets in individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils' application to work is excellent and they are provided with many opportunities to work independently and collaboratively. Currently, there is limited use of alternative communication systems, such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), although the school is aware of this and has begun to take appropriate action.

Although it is in a state of transition, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage remains good. Pupils in Years 2 to 11 have equality of access to a very good range of curricular opportunities. Opportunities for additional activities outside the school day are very good. Very good accommodation and resources meet the pupils' needs.

The school meets a very high standard in the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides very good support, advice and guidance, based on very effective monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development. The school takes good account of pupils' views.

Very good links with the community and with parents contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. There are very good links with other schools and colleges, and a very effective programme for providing pupils with integration opportunities in mainstream schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the school by the headteacher and other key staff is excellent. The governance of the school is very good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Management of the school is very effective; very good induction procedures and performance management arrangements and an excellent programme of staff development have all combined to enable the school to meet the needs of a changing pupil population.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents' and pupils' satisfaction with the school is excellent. Parents are very positive about the education and care provided for their children, and pupils enjoy everything the school has to offer.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop formal, routine procedures for seeking parents' views about the school.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor area for the youngest pupils by increasing its size and extending the range of fixed and mobile play resources.
- Promote more actively pupils' awareness of other cultures and their understanding of the features of a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils of all ages achieve very well and make very good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress and those with additional learning needs, or whose home language is not English, achieve equally well.

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

- There have been good improvements in subject provision since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils make very good progress overall.
- Pupils in all years achieve very well in their personal development.
- Some pupils' achievements are extended well through the school's links with mainstream schools.
- Very good assessment procedures enable very effective individual targets to be set in all subject areas.
- Very effective monitoring and tracking systems enable senior staff to evaluate the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Teachers are very adept at promoting the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in all the areas of learning. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, and physical education. It was not possible to inspect other subjects in the same depth in terms of the number of lesson observations. However, those observations that were carried out, assessment records, and pupils' work show that pupils make similar very good progress in music, art and design, geography, French, design and technology, history and PSHE. Overall, achievement throughout the school represents good improvements on the findings from the previous inspection when achievement was judged as good in most subjects, and satisfactory in two

2. Pupils develop their language and literacy skills very well. Very high quality IEP targets address speaking and listening, reading and handwriting skills, and more capable pupils also have additional targets for phonics, spelling and writing. A very appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and is very well supported by the very structured use of the Derbyshire Language Scheme. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well and they make very good progress in all areas of mathematics. Consequently, they achieve very well in basic numeracy skills and in their understanding of shape, space, and measure. Pupils also achieve very well in using and applying their mathematical skills in day-to-day activities. Pupils' very good achievements in science result from teachers' very effective use of questions that encourages pupils to think, discuss, explain and extend their understanding. This approach is supplemented very well by a focus on investigative work in lessons. In ICT, by Year 4, pupils have made very good progress and are able to copy words and produce simple sentences using word processing. The most capable pupils in Year 6 have ICT skills broadly equivalent to national expectations for the subject; they create simple presentations, inserting text and pictures and adding simple animation.

3. Current levels of achievement reflect improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are very well taught; lessons have a number of strengths and so pupils make very good

progress in acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding. In particular, teachers have extremely high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work and pupils are aware of this.

4. The rise in standards of achievement has also been influenced by aspects of leadership and management, at a whole school level and in the case of individual subjects. Teachers' performance management arrangements have been used very effectively to target improvements in pupils' progress. In addition, whole school data on pupils' achievements that has been collected, analysed and compared is used very well to focus on areas of teaching and learning that may need further development. The role of subject co-ordinators has also been more clearly established so that they, too, have been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in addition to developing planning and assessment systems. Assessment is particularly strong across the school. Staff working with children in the Foundation Stage are very adept at observing children and maintaining ongoing monitoring and recording of their achievements in order to establish baseline levels quickly so that tasks can be geared to their needs. Further up the school, carefully planned assessment tasks help teachers to evaluate pupils' achievements so that focused and specific targets can be set in their subject IEPs. As a result, learning can be individualised because teachers provide activities appropriate to pupils' needs and, therefore, achievement is maximised.

5. Very good links with mainstream schools provide opportunities for pupils to be additionally challenged in some subjects, and they generally respond to these opportunities well. However, an equally important focus of the integration programme is to promote and enrich pupils' personal and social development in ways additional to the school's own arrangements.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, give pupils confidence and develops in them a desire to learn.
- The school sets extremely high standards with regard to pupils' conduct.
- The caring school ethos helps all pupils flourish, show respect for others and be respected themselves.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but they are not provided with sufficient experience of living in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

### **Commentary**

6. The good level of pupils' attendance has been maintained since the last inspection and remains above that of similar schools. This is because pupils want to attend, as they are very interested in all that the school has to offer, and parents and carers support the school by ensuring their children attend when they are well. In addition, the school has good procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance and follows up any incidents of unacceptable levels of attendance or unauthorised absence.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.9	School data	0.4
National data	9.1	National data	0.6

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

7. The promotion of pupils' personal development is a key feature of the school's aims, and this is evident in its ethos and all the work that it does. Consequently, pupils make very good progress in their personal development because this integrated approach focuses on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and other elements of personal and social development in every aspect of their school lives.

8. There have been two significant changes in the school population since the last inspection; there are no longer any pupils above primary school age, and pupils are now being admitted with more complex needs. Therefore, the school has done very well to improve on the high standards of pupils' behaviour reported at that time. The behaviour of all pupils is now excellent at all times and this is evident in the fact that no pupils have been excluded in the last twelve months. This includes lessons, break times, lunch, and assemblies and during off-site activities, such as when having swimming classes at the local leisure centre or when attending lessons in local mainstream schools as part of the integration programme. At these times, pupils are a credit to their parents or carers and the school. The school has good procedures in place that ensure that pupils' positive behaviour is acknowledged, encouraged and rewarded.

9. Pupils' attitudes to work have also improved, even from the high standards seen during the last inspection, and are now excellent. They respond very well to the very good teaching which challenges pupils at all times. They are eager to answer questions and clearly enjoy learning new things. Teachers and teaching assistants are very adept at encouraging pupils' confidence by ensuring their efforts are acknowledged and successes celebrated. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in their achievements of the early learning goals in personal and social education.

10. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has also improved on the good standards of the last inspection. The ethos of the school is focused on pupils' personal development and this is evident in all that the school does and the tone that it sets. However, these qualities are also promoted in more formal, planned activities. For instance, imaginative whole school assemblies are used excellently to provide a positive and uplifting start to the day. As well as having a spiritual dimension, these acts of collective worship provide pupils with very many opportunities to reflect on moral issues and they are also used very effectively to encourage pupils to respect others' feelings and to support each other. The audio-visual assembly taken by the headteacher, which traced 'Barnaby Bear's' holiday antics across Europe, was watched in awe by pupils, teachers and inspectors alike.

11. Pupils understand very well the responsibilities of living in their school community and are proud to belong to Woodsetton School. This social awareness is enhanced very well through the residential trip that is available to all pupils in Year 6. Pupils show respect for the feelings of others and, through lessons like religious education, history and geography, they gain a satisfactory understanding of their own culture and beliefs and those of others. They have a good understanding of the local community, its history and culture, but their understanding of the wider world is not so well developed. They do not have sufficient opportunities to experience or examine the multi-cultural diversity that exists in society today. For example, the school does not work hard enough at actively promoting the achievements of, for example, black sportsmen and authors through displays and discussion.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a very good quality of education. Pupils benefit from very high quality teaching and care, supported by very good links with parents, other schools and colleges and the community.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good overall with some excellent features. Therefore, pupils learn very well and make very good progress in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons also make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Assessment procedures are very good throughout the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage them extremely well.
- Excellent relationships and the appropriate use of praise and encouragement underpin the extremely high level of expectation and challenge that teachers have of their pupils.
- An excellent team of teaching assistants supports teachers very effectively; the quality of team work is an outstanding feature of lessons.
- Staff work very hard, and successfully, to include all pupils in all activities.
- Lessons are planned very effectively, based on detailed knowledge of pupils' prior achievements and targets, as staff use very effective assessment procedures.
- Pupils' application to work is excellent and they are provided with many opportunities to work independently and collaboratively.
- Currently, there is limited use of alternative communication systems although the school is aware of this and has begun to take appropriate action.

### Commentary

12. The overall quality of teaching and learning, in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6, is very good overall. Many lessons have excellent features. Increasingly, the school is now admitting pupils with additional learning needs, such as autism and speech and language difficulties. Senior staff have recognised that they need to consider adopting communication systems that are additional to speaking and listening and are beginning to implement such change. For instance, PECS is used on occasions with some pupils. Currently, although such additional systems are not used routinely, these pupils' learning is not being inhibited and as a result they achieve as well as other pupils, as do those whose home language is not English.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	8	1	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.*

13. Teachers are very well prepared; lessons are very well planned and classrooms are very well organised and structured. All adults know their pupils and their needs very well. Praise, encouragement and excellent relationships are features of all lessons. Therefore, lessons are very rewarding experiences for all pupils. Adults' in-depth knowledge of their pupils, and the quality of relationships, enable staff to have extremely high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond accordingly. Consequently, lessons are very orderly and pupils' understanding of what is expected of them is very evident. Even though the inspection took place early in the school year, pupils showed a very clear understanding of classroom routines; they move from whole class work to group work very quickly, smoothly and maturely. As a result, time is usually used very efficiently and lessons are very busy sessions, with a purposeful atmosphere a consistent feature of lessons. Pupils behave extremely well, try very hard and always approach their work with interest and enthusiasm.

14. Overall, lesson planning is very good. Plans are extremely detailed, with clearly identified tasks that are carefully chosen to meet individual pupils' needs. Teachers are able to do this because all pupils have very regularly updated IEPs for all subjects which show specific targets. As a consequence, teachers' detailed information about pupils' prior learning and current targets enable them to identify what all pupils are expected to learn in terms of subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the learning needs of all pupils are met by tasks which challenge the most capable pupils, by extending their understanding, and reinforce and consolidate the learning of lower attaining pupils.

15. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to lessons. All full-time permanent teaching assistants are trained to National Vocational Qualification Level 3, and the majority of them are also trained as speech and language therapy assistants. They have extremely high expectations of the pupils and work incredibly hard to ensure that all pupils achieve highly. Their contribution in lessons is consistently of a very high standard and they are exceptionally well used by teachers to support teaching and learning.

16. Teachers are committed to developing pupils' personal qualities in addition to providing opportunities for them to make academic progress. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to work independently, even the youngest pupils, such as operating computer programs in lessons like English and mathematics. They also encourage co-operative work, such as the Year 4 pupils who worked in pairs drawing simplified portraits of each other. Pupils are also given opportunities to participate in large group activities, such as whole school assemblies, in which they participate willingly and with gusto.

17. Assessment procedures throughout the school are very good, and are particularly effective in the Foundation Stage. Teaching assistants are particularly important in contributing to the assessment and recording of pupils' achievement and progress during lessons, but all adults observe and record individual pupils' achievements. Consequently, teachers have access to detailed assessment data to plan future activities that reflect individual needs. Other aspects of assessment are equally good; teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' achievements contribute to events such as Annual Reviews of Statements of Special Educational Need and very detailed annual reports to parents.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a very good range of curricular opportunities in Years 1 to 6 and a good curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Opportunities for extra curricular provision are very good. There is very good provision of learning resources, and the accommodation is good in the Foundation Stage and very good overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning for the curriculum is consistently very good across all subjects.
- Very effective assessment systems, and very high quality subject IEPs, ensure that all pupils' learning needs are met.
- The breadth and range of sporting opportunities available to pupils is excellent.
- Teaching assistants make an exceptional contribution to the quality of the curriculum.
- Very good quality resources are available to support the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources for outdoor play for the youngest pupils are limited.

## **Commentary**

18. The quality of curriculum documentation available to teachers to aid their planning is very good. The headteacher has worked exceptionally hard, and with great determination, to ensure that policies, curriculum guidance and planning documents follow a common format and are of equally high quality across all subjects. This is a particular strength of curriculum provision. The long and medium term planning schemes contain very detailed guidance to teachers of the knowledge, concepts and skills that pupils should learn in each of the half-termly blocks of work for each year group. Curriculum co-ordinators have just completed a very comprehensive review of these schemes in all curriculum subjects.

19. The curriculum is further strengthened for individual pupils by the school's very comprehensive and highly detailed IEPs. This system ensures that the school addresses the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs very well. IEP targets are written half-termly for every pupil in all curriculum subjects. It is clear from observing lessons that these targets are very closely followed, very regularly assessed and make a highly significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement. The school has used ICT very effectively to store IEPs electronically, which allows both very easy access to all members of staff and a rapid assessment of individual pupils' progress.

20. The school has ensured that the core subjects of the National Curriculum are all amongst the strongest curriculum provision for the school; provision for English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education are very good. These strengths result from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, as overall curriculum manager, in creating a very effective curriculum structure, identifying and addressing weaknesses and driving forward the development of the curriculum.

21. The organisation of the curriculum for the youngest pupils is in a state of transition, but this does not detract from the learning experiences that children and pupils receive. It is based on the principles of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and so children receive appropriate experiences in all the areas of learning. When children leave this class at the end of Year 1, the records that are passed from one class to the next show pupils' achievements under these six areas of learning. However, the class timetable identifies lessons as subjects, for example English and mathematics, rather than as Foundation Stage curriculum areas of learning, and reports to parents on their children's progress are constructed in the same way. They are written under subject areas. The school is fully aware that it needs to rationalise these arrangements, but developments have been hampered by long-term illness. More recently, significant progress has been made; new curriculum and reporting documentation has been produced that shows that all elements of Foundation Stage work will be based on the six areas of learning.

22. The extracurricular activities offered by the school are very good and those for sport are exceptional. Very close links with a local specialist sports college result in staff providing excellent support to a range of activities during lunchtime. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in football, cricket and swimming competitions and are involved in an annual dance festival. The exceptionally strong quality of these sporting opportunities has been recognised by the recent achievement of the Gold Activemark Award. The school is involved in the very good Active Playgrounds initiative and has appointed two very well-qualified play leaders to offer, along with the school's team of lunchtime assistants, a rich range of lunchtime activities. Less active children benefit from a very good range of lunchtime activities as part of the school's Busy Kids initiative. These activities are led exceptionally well by two teaching assistants and a parent volunteer.

23. The school has been very efficient in the purchase and production of resources, which are of a very high quality in all curriculum areas. Teaching assistants' contribution to the production of relevant, high quality resources is a strength of the school. The allocation of one administrative

assistant, whose sole responsibility is the production of resources, is an outstanding feature of this aspect of the school's work. Resources are always of very high quality, and very relevant to the pupils' needs. As a result, pupils respect them and take great care in their use.

24. Following the completion of building work, which was being undertaken at the time of the last inspection, the accommodation is now very good. However, the outdoor accommodation for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is limited; space is restricted and, therefore, opportunities to play on large fixed and mobile equipment are reduced.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' welfare is a priority for all staff at the school.
- Relationships are excellent.
- Every pupil is very well supported by a number of adults.
- The very high quality of monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development means that staff have a very good understanding of their achievements and levels of development.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has made good improvement in its provision for the support, guidance and pupil welfare beyond the good standards reported at the last inspection. The school is a very safe place for pupils and staff. The school and the grounds are kept very clean and there is no litter or graffiti. The school takes health and safety issues very seriously. Corridors are kept clear of clutter, and furniture is stored away safely when necessary. The school has a nominated health and safety officer who ensures regular audits are undertaken and any issues are quickly addressed. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for specialist teaching activities, such as physical education. The school has partially addressed a key issue from the last inspection concerning pupil arrival and departure arrangements. Arrivals and departures are very safe, given the current constraints on parking arrangements for school transport. Although there are plans to improve these arrangements through building works, this expenditure has been delayed until the current local education authority review of special education has been completed.

26. There are three trained child protection co-ordinators at the school and they ensure very good procedures are in place for staff awareness training and for monitoring pupils. This is supported by the school's good relationships with other agencies such as social services, education welfare and the counselling service. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good knowledge of the many and varied needs of the pupils in their care. Whole staff meetings, class briefings and even after school telephone contact between staff are all used as opportunities to share information or concerns about pupils. There are many adults within the school whom any pupil is confident to approach if they should have a problem. This helps pupils to become more self-confident. Pupils have excellent trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school.

27. Teachers and teaching assistants routinely monitor pupils' achievements during lessons through marking and annotating their work, questioning, and during plenary sessions. They also assess pupils very regularly, such as at the end of taught modules. Staff working in the Foundation Stage are particularly effective in monitoring children as they seek to determine baseline levels of achievement. Overall, pupils' progress in terms of both academic and personal development is tracked very effectively, and this enables

meaningful targets to be set in subject IEPs and at Annual Reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs.

28. In the classroom, pupils' opinions are always valued and as a result they are always eager to contribute to lessons and answer any questions. Pupils are also regularly, and fully, involved in setting and reviewing their own personal targets. Major development projects, such as the development of an outside activity area, are used well as an opportunity to seek pupils' views and enable them to influence what is eventually put into place.

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

Very good links with parents, other schools and colleges and the wider community contribute positively to pupils' learning and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school; concerns are dealt with very quickly and well.
- There are very good relationships between parents and staff at the school.
- Parents receive very high quality reports about their children's progress.
- The school does not have routine procedures for seeking parents' views and involving them in its development.
- The school has very positive links with a wide range of local schools and colleges.



## **Commentary**

29. The links maintained with the parents and carers of the children who attend the school have improved even upon the high standards reported at the last inspection. Parents and carers have complete faith in the school's ability to provide the best possible education for their children. This was the strong message given in the responses to the parents' questionnaire and during the meeting of parents before the inspection. Parents confirm they have no problems discussing any difficulties with staff at the school and the school responds very positively to any issues they raise.

30. The quality of reports parents and carers receive about their children's progress is of a very high standard. Reports in the form of IEPs and annual reports on their children's progress describe very well what they know and can do. Annual reports, in particular, describe very clearly the progress pupils make at school as well as providing detailed and appropriate targets for future development.

31. Good use is made of the telephone and home /school diaries for staff and parents to exchange information, and there are very good relationships between school staff and the few parents and carers who come to school to deliver or collect their children. As a result, parents are confident the school is well run and that they have an input on the education their children receive. However, the school does not yet consult with parents on a regular and formalised basis, for example through an annual questionnaire, and as a result all parents and carers do not have an opportunity to be involved, in a systematic way, in the development of the school.

32. The school is outward looking and uses the resources and facilities of the local and wider community very well. Visitors, such as representatives from local churches and sports coaches are encouraged to visit the school in order to enrich pupils' learning. The school arranges visits to the local area, associated with topics they are studying, to enhance pupils understanding of the community they live in and to 'bring the subject alive'. For example as part of the geography syllabus pupils have recently visited local villages and towns to examine their characteristics. The school also makes effective use of local sporting facilities, such as swimming at a local leisure centre.

33. Senior staff also feel that they have a responsibility to provide opportunities for members of the local community to benefit from the school. Therefore, the school encourages the placement of students on the 'Early Years Care in Education Course' at Dudley College and those on graduate teacher training courses at Wolverhampton University, and it has an impressive record of taking on modern apprentices. These links are very good and represent one facet of the school's overall links with local schools and colleges. The school also works in close partnership with other establishments; there is a sports partnership with Coseley College and a science partnership with High Arcal College. These links benefit staff, through training opportunities, and pupils are given access to specialist coaching and teaching and the opportunity to use the colleges' specialist facilities. The school's programme to provide pupils with integration opportunities in mainstream schools is also very good. At present, ten pupils are on inclusion programmes in five different primary schools in the borough. The programmes vary from half-a-day to two full days, depending on the needs of the pupils, and their placement is supported by a teaching assistant and closely monitored by a member of the school's senior management.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the school by the headteacher and other key staff is excellent. Management of the school is very effective. The governance of the school is very good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff share a very clear vision for the school's development, which is enthusiastically endorsed by all staff and governors.
- Senior staff provide excellent role models and are extremely adept at creating very effective teams.
- Strategic planning is based on an acute awareness of the school's goals and priorities and is supported by very efficient financial management systems.
- Excellent systems are in place to recruit and retain staff and to deploy them in the most efficient ways.
- All staff are supported very strongly to undertake ongoing professional training and development.
- Very good management procedures are in place to track pupils' progress, and the data obtained is used very well to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The governing body fulfils its role as a 'critical friend' of the school extremely well.

## Commentary

34. Governors are very enthusiastic and they work hard, and very successfully, to support and develop the school. They are able to do this because there is a strong partnership between senior staff and governors that is grounded in a shared vision for the school's key priorities and development. Governors are very actively involved and strive to promote and encourage the school's aspirations, providing insight and challenge to ensure that the school's strategic planning identifies appropriate priorities and can be supported financially. They do this by monitoring financial reports very closely and by challenging senior staff to explain, and justify, recommendations in the light of a changing school population.

35. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff were judged as very good at the time of the last inspection. This very high level of performance has been more than maintained. Leadership is now excellent. All the key staff provide excellent role models and so they are able to carry all staff with them towards a clear vision that is articulated in carefully worded, relevant and appropriate school aims. An outstanding feature is the quality of teams that have been created throughout the school; all staff are mutually supportive and work exceptionally well together in areas such as planning, teaching and assessing pupils' achievements. The quality of leadership is also evident in other aspects of the school's work. Senior staff have constructed and implemented a very appropriate curriculum and they are very ably supported by highly effective subject co-ordinators. The school's developing programme for inclusion and integration also reflects the excellent quality of leadership in the school. The very strong commitment to inclusion provides equality of opportunity for all pupils within the school, irrespective of their special educational need, as well as the integration opportunities being made available through links with mainstream schools. This commitment to inclusion shown by the leadership team and governors has a direct impact on the quality of education for pupils; priority is given to removing as many of their barriers to learning as possible.

36. The very good level of management in the school is evident in many aspects of its work. Very good induction procedures and performance management arrangements, and a very focused programme of staff development have all combined to bring about change since the last inspection. As a result, standards of achievement have risen because the quality of teaching and learning has improved. An outstanding feature of management is the way staff are recruited, deployed and developed. This is rooted in the school's commitment to the continuing professional development of all of its staff. For instance, in the last year three teachers have been enabled to attain advanced skills

teacher status, and teaching assistants are encouraged to attend a range of courses as part of their career development. In addition, the training programme is equipping all staff with the new skills they require to meet the widening range and increasing severity of the learning needs many pupils exhibit.

37. The management team has begun to develop extremely effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and carrying out whole school analyses of pupil performance. There are very well-established systems for the regular monitoring of individual achievement in all subjects through IEP targets, but the school has now begun to collect data in a systematic way and is using it very effectively in order to raise standards of achievement. The performance of different groups of pupils and their achievements in different subjects are compared, and the school is now beginning to use the data to help with moderating teachers' assessments of the 'p' levels and National Curriculum levels that pupils achieve.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	797219
Total expenditure	774589
Expenditure per pupil	8802

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	80595
Balance carried forward to the next year	103225

38. The last local education authority audit took place in 2001, when auditors judged that "the systems in operation and records maintained are excellent". This standard of financial management has been maintained and there are clear and thorough accounting and monitoring systems so that financial procedures are able to support development planning very well. The surplus that the school has accumulated has been accrued for a specific purpose; there are plans for an extension of the school to provide additional therapy rooms and training accommodation, and for the development of the outside play area for children and pupils in Reception and Year 1.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

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

- Personal development is encouraged very well through all lessons and other activities.
- Children achieve very well in developing language and literacy skills; communication is fully integrated into all areas of learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good and are based on very well structured planning.
- A very good variety of appropriate, interesting activities is planned to stimulate the children's curiosity and enhance their understanding.
- Children achieve very well because of the staff's very good understanding of their needs.

#### **Commentary**

39. It is not possible to comment on improvement since the previous inspection, as this aspect of the school's work was not reported upon on that occasion. One class, consisting of children of Reception age and some Year 1 pupils, follows the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is entirely appropriate for this group of Year 1 pupils. It was not possible to observe lessons in all areas of learning.

40. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed and so children are provided with a good curriculum that balances different areas of learning. Teaching and learning is consistently very good. Very high quality teamwork is an outstanding feature of lessons. Staff have excellent relationships with children; they are warm and supportive, but manage behaviour very well, and give endless encouragement to the children. Adults have very high expectations of children, both in terms of the tasks that they set them and with respect to their behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, children quickly learn what is expected of them and this was particularly evident in the way in which they moved smoothly into different groups and then back together as a whole class. Their understanding of routines was particularly impressive as many of them had only been in school for only a very short time.

41. All adults are particularly skilled at observing children and recording their achievements, however small. Staff's very careful observations during the first weeks children are in school determine the priorities for the early teaching. This very high quality assessment continues throughout the children's time in this class, with lesson planning identifying activities based very effectively on individual children's needs, underpinned by what staff have observed. Children are prepared very well when it is time to leave the Foundation Stage.

42. Children enter Reception with underdeveloped personal and social skills, but they achieve very well because they are extremely well taught. Teachers are consistent in planning all lessons to encourage learning in this important area and they have very high expectations. Expectations are applied consistently and, as a result, children make very good progress in listening to, and co-operating with, each other and in developing understanding of acceptable ways of behaviour. Adults are very adept at giving children the time and opportunity to develop personal skills, such as using computer programs independently, but they are skilled at choosing the right time to intervene or prompt.

43. Children make very good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills. Learning in this area is encouraged in all lessons. As a consequence, all aspects of children's communication skills are promoted very well; adults promote their attention skills, their ability to express themselves in different ways and their understanding of what is said to them. Staff are very skilled in communicating with

children and encouraging a response, with very good attention given to the development of children's speaking and listening skills. The learning of those children with reduced communication skills is enhanced well by staff's increasing use of additional and augmentative communication systems, such as PECS.

44. Pupils achieve very well in their mathematical development. More capable pupils name 2-D shapes accurately, copy single digit numbers, and count up to ten. Teachers' planning of lessons ensures that teaching assistants are well briefed and fully engaged in working with groups of children. Activities involving exploratory play are used very well to encourage children to discover things for themselves, and adults are very skilled at seizing all opportunities to teach and reinforce mathematical language, such as big/small and under/over.

45. Children are provided with a good range of activities that stimulate their curiosity and develop their awareness and understanding of their environment. Planned play activities, opportunities to use different materials and equipment, and the effective use of the local environment combine to develop children's understanding of the world around them. Information and communication technology is used very well to support and extend children's learning, such as using simple programs to reinforce their understanding of ideas like 'the same as' and 'more than'.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve very well because the curriculum is of very high quality and the quality of teaching is consistently of a very high standard.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent.
- Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Pupils do not use the library routinely for research or for reading for pleasure.

#### **Commentary**

46. The school's very clear and detailed curriculum structure for teaching English is very well understood by all teachers and teaching assistants. Very detailed long term planning provides a very clear basis for teachers' plans in the medium term and for individual lessons. Pupils' subject IEP targets, which are updated every half-term, are of very high quality and cover speaking and listening, reading and handwriting. For more capable pupils, teachers devise additional targets for phonics, spelling and writing. A very appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and is very well supported by the very structured use of the Derbyshire Language Scheme. The subject co-ordinator, a qualified tutor for the scheme, has worked extremely hard to train the vast majority of teachers and teaching assistants in the use of the scheme. As a result, pupils' speaking and listening targets within their IEPs are extremely precise and detailed. The school is now admitting more pupils whose speaking and listening skills are less well developed, such as those with autism and speech and language difficulties. Additional communication strategies, such as PECS and Makaton signing, are used on occasion with these pupils, but not yet routinely. However, this has been recognised by the school and staff are examining how other communication systems

can best be used, and the training needs required to skill staff accordingly. Currently, these pupils' learning is not being inhibited and as a result they achieve as well as other pupils.

47. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in English lessons for pupils of all ages. The school has adopted a very effective lesson structure based on pupils working in small groups, taught by either a teacher or teaching assistant. Pupils understand these routines and respond exceptionally well to them. Therefore, as teachers adopt the same routine, pupils are able to settle quickly into their new classes at the beginning of each school year, such as at the time of the inspection. These routines extend to the use of very good resources; for example, a pupil new to Year 4 knew that his comprehension exercises would be stored in yellow folder within a yellow box. Teachers and teaching assistants consistently set very high, but realistic, expectations of their pupils. They are able to do this because activities are based on a very secure knowledge of pupils' capabilities, which in turn are developed from very effective assessment and record keeping systems. As a result, pupils concentrate and work extremely hard for extended periods of time. Group work, within lessons, is very well planned and always covers a very good range of speaking and listening, reading and writing activities. These activities are directly related to pupils' individual IEPs.

48. Teaching assistants make an exceptional contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in English and the achievement of pupils. They are very well trained, know their pupils very well and use their skills to maintain very high expectations of pupils throughout lessons. They adapt and adjust activities to meet individual pupils' needs very well. Teaching assistants keep very detailed records of pupils' achievements within their teaching groups, and use these records very well to discuss with their class teachers possible alterations to pupils' IEPs. In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants are able to work independently of direction from their class teacher. This results in lessons which are efficiently organised, very well paced and purposeful.

49. The attitude of the pupils' to their learning is consistently excellent. They arrive in lessons promptly, very excited at the prospect of learning and are keen to hear the content of the lesson. All staff always insist that pupils behave very well. On the very rare occasions that pupils begin to lose interest and misbehave, a quiet word or quick look is all that is needed for pupils to refocus on their work. As a result, pupil behaviour in lessons is excellent; they concentrate for long periods and respond extremely positively to the wide range of very appropriate learning activities. Personal development is encouraged as older and more capable pupils are given opportunities to work together for short periods and, as a result, they show great respect for each other and their work.

50. The leadership and management provided by the subject curriculum co-ordinator are very good. There is a very clear action plan for the subject and the co-ordinator works very hard, and with commitment, to achieve her objectives. Very good whole-school approaches exist which provide very good consistency in the teaching of the subject. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. The selection of a commercial reading scheme for all pupils up to Year 5 has allowed an extensive range of very good resources to be produced by staff. A different scheme is used in Year 6, which provides very good continuity with that used by the secondary school that most pupils will attend. The contribution of a specialist teaching assistant, whose sole responsibility is to produce learning resources, is a outstanding strength of this aspect of provision. Excellent teamwork is provided at all levels for the teaching of English; teachers creating highly effective class teams and teaching assistants lead and manage their teaching groups with great skill and expertise.

51. At present the library has only a satisfactory stock of books and , therefore, it is not used regularly by pupils. However, the subject co-ordinator has very clear plans for its future development.

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

52. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled at ensuring that the school's emphasis on developing pupils' communication, language and literacy skills is very well delivered in all curriculum subjects. There is evidence of very many opportunities for pupils' development of speaking and listening skills, and an increasing focus on the promotion of key words to be taught during lessons in all subjects of the curriculum. This aspect of literacy is being monitored very closely by the subject co-ordinator.

## **French**

53. French is taught only to Year 6 pupils and so only one lesson was seen during the inspection. This was only the pupils' second lesson in the subject and, therefore, the idea of speaking and listening to another language was very new to them. However, they maintained their concentration and worked very well; very strong relationships with extremely effective teaching assistants enabled pupils to have the confidence to make oral contributions. The teacher is not a subject specialist and, therefore, subject knowledge is insecure but an enthusiastic and lively teaching style enabled pupils to make good progress in their understanding and use of French numbers. Questions were used very effectively to assess pupils' understanding. Overall, if the school continues to offer this subject it needs further development. Subject documentation and subject action plans are out-of-date and medium term plans require updating.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of mathematics are very good.
- Teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.
- Monitoring and assessment procedures are used very effectively to identify targets and plan future work.
- Learning is supported very well by ICT.
- Mathematical skills are promoted well through other subjects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

54. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school now achieve very well and they make very good progress in all areas of mathematics. Consequently, they achieve very well in basic numeracy skills and in their understanding of shape, space, and measure so that higher attaining Year 6 pupils, for example, use both 12 hour and 24 hour clocks. Pupils also achieve very well in using and applying their mathematical skills in day-to-day activities.

55. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. In the very best lessons, teachers have very good subject knowledge and they use this to develop very effective lesson plans that identify activities which are interesting and accurately matched to pupils' needs. At times, there is an exemplary balance between the degree of challenge and the need to provide close guidance and support, without giving the answer, to pupils who have low self-esteem. Teaching assistants are highly skilled at managing these situations, knowing when to intervene and when to hold back.

Higher attaining pupils are presented with tasks that challenge and extend their understanding but they, too, have access to the high level of support provided by the teaching assistants.

56. Pupils make such good progress in lessons because of adults' careful and effective use of very good assessment procedures to determine precisely what pupils know, can do and understand. Therefore, teaching can focus on matching accurately work to the needs of individual pupils and this is further supported by adults' ongoing assessments during lessons and their subsequent feedback to help pupils progress as well as they are able. All lessons are conducted at a very good pace and very good resources are used appropriately. Pupils are very well managed in lessons and there are excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Consequently, pupils apply themselves very well and are always prepared to seek assistance when difficulties arise.

57. Mathematics lessons have other very good features that encourage pupils' achievements. Teachers are always seeking opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of mathematical language and pupils' use of ICT is developing very well as the range of programs increases.

58. Mathematics is managed and led very effectively by a co-ordinator who has a very good overview of mathematics throughout the school. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in attaining the improved quality of provision and has a secure understanding of what needs to be done further. This has been achieved through attendance at externally organised courses, such as 'Braingym', and through working closely with two mainstream primary schools. There is now very good long and medium term planning in place, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, and the co-ordinator's observations of teaching by her colleagues have been significant factors in raising the standards of achievement throughout the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Other subjects of the curriculum make a good contribution to developing pupils' mathematical skills. Their understanding of number is reinforced in lessons such as French, when pupils count and carry out simple calculations, and in music, when they sing "*Peter hammers with one hammer*" and then increase the number of hammers as the verse progresses. Other mathematical knowledge is promoted in lessons like art and design, when pupils consider mathematical language such as vertical, horizontal and diagonal.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- The subject curriculum is very good, with an appropriate emphasis on investigative work.
- Pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy their science lessons; they behave very well and have excellent attitudes.
- Very good use is made of assessment information to determine future planning.
- The role of the science co-ordinator is fully developed and as a result she provides very strong leadership to develop the subject effectively.

#### **Commentary**

60. The staff has worked hard, and successfully, to improve the good provision observed at the time of the last inspection. Improvement has been good. Assessment procedures have improved and



are now very good; assessment information is recorded and collated to track individual pupils' progress. Other improvements include the overall quality of teaching, which is now very good, and the quality of the curriculum and other subject documentation such as the subject policy and subject action plan.

61. Pupils are taught very well. Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons, with clear learning objectives for each lesson that they share with their pupils. This enables the pupils to be certain about the tasks that have been set. Very effective questioning, and a focus on investigations, encourage pupils to think, discuss, explain and extend their understanding. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils had to identify the various materials, like wood and metal, that they could see around the school and establish the fact that these materials can be used for different purposes. They carried out this activity sensibly and with understanding so that this was a very productive session for all pupils.

62. Pupils' very good learning is evident in the quality of their responses during lessons. This reflects their exemplary attitudes to learning, their extremely impressive behaviour, and the strong and trusting relationships with adults that give pupils the confidence to participate and contribute. However, pupils' very good achievements are also facilitated by elements of teaching. Teachers' careful preparation of very good resources helps them to maximise teaching time and to maintain a good pace throughout. This maintains pupils' interest and keeps their concentration levels high. Very highly skilled teaching assistants also make a significant contribution to pupils' learning as they work very competently with individuals and groups of pupils.

63. In addition to developing scientific skills, teachers also successfully promote pupils' personal and social skills. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils learnt about different parts of the body, naming and labelling them. They used mirrors to see parts of their body, such as facial features, and were required to describe them. The teacher used this opportunity very well to emphasise hygiene, such as cleaning teeth. Pupils' literacy skills are also promoted at these times, as adults teach new vocabulary, such as scientific key words.

64. Leadership and management in science are very good with careful monitoring of teaching, learning and achievements and a long-term vision of developing planning. The co-ordinator provides very strong leadership and has developed very effective long and medium term planning that encompasses all areas of study across the whole subject curriculum. In this respect she works closely in partnership with other special schools and staff from a local college; pupils have access to the college's science facilities and this stimulates their interest in the subject. Teachers assess and record pupils' achievements very well and they use this information very effectively to plan future work that is appropriately challenging for all pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very well structured and very relevant to pupils' needs.
- Very well trained and confident teachers and teaching assistants ensure that ICT is very well used to support other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' attitudes to the use of ICT are excellent.
- Resources for the teaching of ICT are very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

### **Commentary**

65. Although few ICT lessons were observed during the inspection, there were very many examples of pupils, in all year groups, using technology in different subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants are very confident in their use of new technology and, as a result, all pupils achieve very well. By Year 4, pupils have made very good progress and are able to copy words and produce simple sentences using word processing. The most capable pupils in Year 6 have ICT skills broadly equivalent to national expectations for the subject; they create simple presentations, inserting text and pictures and adding simple animation.

66. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator have worked extremely hard to improve provision for ICT across the school; the leadership and management of the subject are very good. There has been very good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants have been very well trained and, as a result, are very confident and competent in their use of ICT. There is a very clear vision for the future development of resources; for example, the school has researched various options and is planning to install interactive whiteboards, and train staff in their use, later in the current school year. The curriculum policy, long term planning and general guidelines to staff are very clear and provide a very good basis on which class teachers can plan their lessons. The documentation also includes standard recording sheets and assessment tasks, which are of high quality.

67. Because of the training all adults have received, and the supporting planning and assessment materials available, pupils achieve very well in developing new ICT skills and understanding. In particular, teachers use the materials that are available very well to assess pupils' achievements and then use that information to create very detailed individual IEP targets for the subject. These are very closely monitored by teachers and teaching assistants and they enable teachers to plan activities that match pupils' needs very closely.

68. Pupils are extremely confident in their use of ICT. They are very keen to use computers and other technology resources, such as language masters, in lessons and talk confidently about their work and achievements. They are always exceptionally well behaved and are able to work both independently and in small groups for extended periods. Pupils are consistently polite to their teachers and teaching assistants, show great consideration for other pupils and are always willing to share tasks. Pupils of all ages persevere with activities and show great satisfaction in the outcomes of their work.

69. The school has worked very hard to improve resources for ICT. Each class has three networked computers, all of which can access the Internet. There are additional computers available in the school library, and there is a very good stock of language masters which are well used within English lessons. Staff make very good use of digital cameras to support their teaching in ICT and other subjects, and computers are used very efficiently for administrative purposes and to produce learning resources. This is a significant strength of ICT use within the school.

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

70. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to develop and use ICT skills in different subjects of the curriculum. This includes the youngest pupils too; pupils following the Foundation Stage curriculum use computers to explore and reinforce their understanding of terms such as "on", "under" and "over" in English and are able to match colours using a simple computer program in mathematics. With the exception of an unavoidable network breakdown on the first day of the inspection, ICT use was evident in all observed lessons in English, mathematics and science. These

opportunities are directly related to the planned objectives of lessons and as a result ICT makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

71. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' achievements, or overall provision for the subject, as no lessons were observed during the inspection. Curriculum documentation for the subject is very detailed and contains highly comprehensive planning for teachers to plan individual history lessons for pupils in each year group. The repetition of topics every two years for pupils in Years 3 to 6 provides a very good structure to ensure pupils reinforce and build on their knowledge of historical events. The subject co-ordinator has produced a very good action plan for the development of history, which includes detailed costings for future developments. Overall, the subject is very well led and managed. Very good displays of historical artefacts were evident during the inspection and they matched the curriculum plans for pupils in Years 3 and 5. These displays were very well placed so that pupils could gain easy access, handle and investigate the objects.

### **Geography**

72. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection and, therefore, overall provision for this subject cannot be judged. In the lesson that was seen, effective teaching resulted in pupils achieving well in their understanding of the characteristics of a village. Pupils were extremely well managed and their speaking and listening skills were encouraged well as they talked about the previous week's visit to Trysull. Pupils follow a very well planned subject curriculum that is topic-based in Years 1 and 2, while in Years 3 to 6 they study specific modules such as maps, settlements and weather. The plans have been written by a very effective subject manager, who has also produced comprehensive and very useful assessment tasks for use by all teachers.

### **Religious education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good; a broad range of learning experiences is provided.
- Very good resources are accessible and well organised.
- The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- School assemblies make an extremely valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of religious stories and messages

### **Commentary**

73. Pupils are provided with a wide range of appropriate learning experiences, based on the local authority's agreed syllabus, as they move through the school. They steadily increase their knowledge and understanding of different religions and what religious principles and practice can teach us. In Years 1 and 2, the main theme is the study of aspects of Christianity, with a special emphasis on caring for others and sharing. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 extend their knowledge through studying the other main world religions. Pupils' learning of the subject is reinforced and extended exceptionally well through whole school assemblies, which also contribute very strongly to their personal development through moral and social themes.

74. Pupils achieve very well in lessons and make very good progress. They develop very good understanding and are very successful in meeting the subject's stated aims of helping pupils to learn, and form insight, about religious beliefs and practices. Pupils' very good learning occurs because pupils work hard and behave very well, and they receive very high quality teaching, with extremely high levels of support from very skilled teaching assistants. Lesson plans show clearly what it is intended that pupils will learn, and the interesting activities and challenging tasks provided are supported by a very good range of high quality learning resources, including artefacts, videos, posters and pictures. Pupils handle these carefully and sensitively, demonstrating their very positive attitudes towards learning. These positive attitudes were demonstrated very well in a Year 5 lesson when pupils considered the importance of communication, which involves both listening and giving messages. Pupils respected the atmosphere that had been created by lighting a candle and reflected in silence about the previous discussion before saying a prayer together. This required them to name some of the things for which God might be thanked, and they reacted sensibly with contributions like parents, home and food.

75. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. The subject is now very well led and managed by a co-ordinator who has equipped herself very well, through attendance on courses and seeking advice from various sources, to produce very effective planning and other subject documentation. Assessment procedures are very good; staff monitor and record pupils' achievements and evaluate learning at the end of modules through a variety of assessment tasks.

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

### **Art and design**

76. It is not possible to judge overall provision in this subject, or the quality of teaching and learning, as too few lessons were observed during the inspection. However, the quality of subject documentation shows that very good leadership and management has ensured that pupils follow a very well planned broad and balanced curriculum that also identifies strong links with other subject topics, such as the Romans, rivers and settlements, and earth and space. In the teaching that was observed, pupils achieved very well because the lesson was very well planned, the classroom extremely well organised, and highly skilled teaching assistants ensured that all pupils were all able to participate in the activities. In addition to developing new drawing skills and providing experience of the characteristics of new materials, such as charcoal, the teacher seized every opportunity to reinforce numeracy skills and to develop new vocabulary. Pupils' understanding of mathematical language such as horizontal and vertical was evaluated and consolidated, and new terminology, like cross-hatching, was illustrated effectively so that pupils were able to use the technique in their drawings of abstract figures.

### **Design and technology**

77. It was not possible to make a judgement about overall provision in design technology, as no lessons were observed during the inspection and it was not possible to interview the subject co-ordinator due to his long-term absence from school. The quality of curriculum documentation is high with very detailed planning containing half-termly topics appropriate for each year group. Plans for each topic contain very clear details of the knowledge, concepts and skills pupils are to be taught. There is a highly appropriate emphasis throughout the documentation on the importance of health and safety within lessons. Accommodation for teaching design technology is very good, with a separate room available for both art and design technology lessons. A good range of learning resources is available to teachers in this specialist base.

### **Music**

78. Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning and overall provision for this subject. However, the school places a great emphasis on giving pupils musical experiences and, therefore, they make good progress in their appreciation of music and in performing. For example, school assemblies provide pupils with many musical experiences; pupils sing songs with which they are familiar enthusiastically and some play instruments, accompanying the headteacher's guitar. Pupils also have musical experiences in other lessons, such as the Year 3 group who sang 'Heads and shoulders' at the end of a lesson about identifying different parts of the body. In the lesson that was observed, pupils achieved well as they considered instruments that could make a similar sound to a hammer. They were extremely interested in the activities provided and remained focused throughout. This lesson reflected the strength of curriculum planning, as there were clear and strong links with the term's topic of 'Buildings' in geography. Very comprehensive curriculum planning identifies many links with other subject areas, and it also shows how the subject contributes strongly to pupils' cultural and multi-cultural development. For example, they study topics such as 'Music since the 1930s' and Afro-Caribbean music. The quality of planning and other subject documentation shows that the subject is very well led and managed, and assessment records confirm the very good progress that pupils make.

## **Physical education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities.
- The curriculum is very well structured and very appropriate and relevant to pupils' needs.
- Accommodation and learning resources are very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There is a very good emphasis on health and safety in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

### **Commentary**

79. The provision of an exceptionally wide range and highly appropriate extra-curricular activities makes an outstanding contribution to the sporting opportunities available to pupils at the school. There has been good improvement in overall provision since the last inspection.

80. The subject coordinator has been instrumental in developing the subject, and the sporting activities that are generally available, in his three years of responsibility. He has worked very hard to create a curriculum policy, long and medium plans of work and general guidelines to staff, which are very clear and comprehensive. The curriculum is adapted from the local authority's scheme of work and takes very good account of the pupils' special educational needs. Pupils' IEP records indicate that teachers use the curriculum materials very well to create very detailed individual targets. These show that pupils make very good progress over time and achieve very well. The co-ordinator also demonstrates clearly articulated plans for the future, based on a very clear vision. For instance, he has already audited the amount of time pupils spend on physical activities each week against proposed future targets for children's participation in sport.

81. The school maintains very close links with a local specialist sports college whose staff provide excellent support to a range of activities during lunchtimes and in physical education lessons. The school is involved in the very good Active Playgrounds initiative and has appointed two very

well-qualified play leaders to offer, along with the school's team of lunchtime assistants, a rich range of lunchtime activities. Less active children benefit from a very good range of lunchtime activities as part of the school's Busy Kids initiative. The exceptionally strong quality of these sporting opportunities has been recognised by the recent achievement of the Activemark Award (Gold). Visiting coaches from a local professional football team along with others for basketball, rugby and cricket further strengthen the exceptionally high quality of this provision.

82. Overall, pupils are taught well. A particular feature of lessons is the very high, and appropriate, emphasis placed on health and safety. Teachers follow extremely clear guidance on risk assessment procedures and they always emphasise the need to be careful. Pupils are always very well managed and their attitudes and behaviour are always very good. Consequently, they attempt activities enthusiastically and with interest. However, some shortcomings in lesson planning sometimes restrict the learning opportunities for some pupils. At these times, the activities extended the development of skills for the more capable pupils but they were beyond the reach of others. On other occasions, teaching assistants were not always managed efficiently in order to allow them to make the substantial contribution to teaching and learning that was observed consistently in lessons in other subjects.

83. The school has very good accommodation for physical education. The school hall is of a good size and is well equipped. The outside accommodation is very good, with access to a large grassed area and hard surface playground and basketball court. Resources are very good, of high quality and very well organised in two large stores adjacent to the school hall.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

84. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and, therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning and pupils' achievements in lessons. However, the attitude and behaviour of the pupils when they participated in all aspects of school life presented a clear picture of the outcomes of the school's work in developing personal skills. Pupils of all ages make very good progress in meeting their personal targets. These targets are precise and all staff contribute to monitoring and recording pupils' successes.

85. The subject is taught as a discrete subject, as well as in all other subjects, in an inclusive educational programme. The school has developed a very good policy and planning for PSHE and citizenship education, and suitable programmes to guide teachers in planning individual lessons. Planning covers all statutory requirements, the environment, healthy living and the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the pupils to lead a confident and independent life. Learning is supported by good quality resources.

86. The overall PSHE programme provides an integrated approach that focuses on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and other elements of personal and social development in every aspect of their school lives. School assemblies make a significant contribution in this respect. Pupils know that they are part of a caring community, where their views are valued; they are given many opportunities to explore and discuss moral issues. They understand the importance of respecting each other's feelings and of caring for one another; staff take every opportunity to reinforce in pupils an understanding the consequences of their actions, and to remind them of inappropriate actions. The school promotes healthy living through such initiatives such as providing more healthy alternatives in the tuck shop, and it has joined the Dudley Health Scheme to enhance its provision in this area.

87. The subject is very well led and managed and the high standards are maintained as the co-ordinator monitors provision throughout the school. There has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</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	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	2

*In a special school such as this, standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not national standards. Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*