



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**St Ambrose RC Primary School**

**Worcestershire Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 19-20 May 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	St Ambrose RC Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs M Yates
Address of school:	Leswell Street Kidderminster Worcestershire DY10 1RP
Telephone:	01562 823568
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr P Collins
Local education authority area:	Worcestershire
Unique reference number:	131400
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr B Gunnell HMI
Dates of inspection:	19-20 May 2004

## Introduction

1. St Ambrose RC Primary School is situated in Kidderminster. The school has 187 boys and girls on roll; the vast majority are white and around three quarters are British. At 13 per cent, the proportion of the pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion that have special educational needs, at 17 per cent, is similar to the national figure. Six pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of the pupils whose first language is believed not to be English, at four per cent, is higher than in most schools. The pupils' attainment on intake is broadly average.
2. The school was inspected in July 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and it was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of July 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on four occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In May 2004, two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
    - the pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2003 were below the national figures in reading and well below this level in writing and mathematics. The pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003 was in line with the national figure in English, below this level in science and well below in mathematics;
    - standards are rising in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). In lessons, large proportions of the pupils attain or exceed the national expectations for their ages in these subjects. They also produce work of a good standard in other subjects, especially in art;
    - the pupils in the Foundation Stage make very good progress and many have already reached the national expectations for the end of the stage;
    - the pupils' progress was very good in seven lessons, good in six and satisfactory in six. This is a marked improvement since the inspection in July 2002;
    - the low attainers and the pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. The higher attainers often make good progress in lessons; however, as with the gifted and talented pupils, their needs are not always met and at times they are not challenged sufficiently;
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- the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning were very good in ten lessons, good in seven and satisfactory in two. This is a notable improvement since the previous inspection in 2002. The pupils were keen to learn and responded enthusiastically to stimulating teaching. They behaved well in the playgrounds, took care of each other and showed a polite interest in visitors;
  - the pupils' attendance for the 2002-03 academic year was 98.3 per cent, which is very high compared to the national figures. The headteacher has made clear to parents that absence should be kept to a minimum and her actions have had a positive impact on the rate of attendance for the spring term 2004;
  - the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social education is particularly strong;
  - the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the inspection in 2002. The quality of teaching was very good in seven lessons, good in six and satisfactory in six. The teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Marking has improved and much is of good quality;
  - the curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. Suitable emphasis is given to literacy, numeracy and ICT, though their application across the curriculum requires further development. The curriculum is suitably enriched through a good range of additional activities;
  - the procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment have several strengths and are satisfactory overall. Appropriate and necessary improvements are under way to extend the good practice in the assessment of writing to other subjects. The procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and for tracking their progress have been refined;
  - the accommodation meets many of the school's requirements although it is spread over two sites and parts need repair. The lack of a sports field restricts the pupils' experience of team games and athletics;
  - the headteacher has paid careful attention to improving the relationships and communication with parents, both of which are strong;
  - the headteacher provides good leadership and thoughtful, productive management. There is a good team spirit among the staff, who are hard-working and highly committed to the school's further development. The headteacher, strongly supported by the effective deputy headteacher and subject leaders, has stepped up the pace of change. The school has demonstrated its capacity to secure and sustain improvement;
  - the subject leaders have significantly improved their effectiveness and much of their work is of high quality. However, this practice is not uniformly good across the curriculum;
  - the governing body has improved the way it maintains oversight of the school and is well organised to fulfil its responsibilities;
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- the local education authority (LEA) has worked closely with the school and has provided well-focused, effective support in a range of areas and this has been valued by the staff.

## Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue raising standards across the curriculum;
- ensure that subject leadership is effective in all areas of the curriculum;
- improve the provision for the higher attainers, physical education and the application of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum;
- extend the effective procedures for setting targets and assessing the pupils' progress in writing to a wider range of subjects.

## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The proportion of the pupils that gained the expected Level 2 or higher in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2003 was higher than in 2002 in reading and mathematics but lower in writing. The pupils' performance overall in these tests in 2003 was below the national figures in reading and well below this level in writing and mathematics. The results were well below those of schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. The trend in results over the last five years is below the national trend.

8. The proportions of the pupils gaining the expected Level 4 or above in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003, when compared to 2002, were higher in English but lower in mathematics and science. While the school did not achieve its targets for Level 4 in each subject, the targets for the higher Level 5 were exceeded. The pupils' performance overall in these tests in 2003 was in line with the national figure in English, below this level in science and well below in mathematics. However, the results in English were above those of schools in similar socio-economic circumstances and those with pupils of similar prior attainment. In contrast, however, the results in mathematics and science were generally well below the performance of these groups of schools. The trend in the school's overall results over the past five years is above the national trend. Value-added measures, however, indicate that the Year 6 pupils in 2003 made less progress during Key Stage 2 than pupils in schools nationally.

9. Standards are rising in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In lessons, large proportions of the pupils attain or exceed the national expectations for their ages in these subjects. They also produce work of a good standard in other subjects, especially in art in which the pupils have created eye-catching portraits and attractive, accurate paintings of sailing ships.

10. The pupils' progress was very good in seven lessons, good in six and satisfactory in six. This is a marked improvement since the inspection in 2002. The pupils worked hard for

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most of the time and usually got on well with unsupervised group and individual tasks. They collaborated well with each other and the teachers and teaching assistants. The pupils answered questions thoughtfully, and willingly offered suggestions or asked questions to clarify their ideas or to seek additional information. They discussed ideas enthusiastically in pairs and helped teachers with demonstrations. Many confidently explained and clearly justified their ideas, often to the whole class. The concentration of some pupils, often boys, fluctuated occasionally, especially near the end of the day.

11. The pupils in the Foundation Stage have made very good progress and many have already reached the national expectations for the end of the stage. The pupils have made good progress in communication, language and literacy, particularly in speaking and listening. They respond very positively to challenging questions and often build on their prior learning or their own experiences when doing so. This happened in a very successfully managed discussion where the pupils talked with partners to identify key features of the work of paramedics. Mathematical development is good and the pupils are highly motivated to use numbers creatively, as occurred when a group built a large construction using over eighty cotton reels which they counted enthusiastically. The pupils' progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the world is very good, particularly their use of computer-controlled toys which they successfully programmed to pick up injured play-people and then deliver them to hospital. The pupils' creative development and physical development are good. They have very good manipulative skills and they are able to use a range of materials appropriately and effectively.

12. Standards in literacy are rising. In English lessons the pupils made good progress overall and sometimes very good progress. Most of the pupils attain standards in line with national expectations for their ages and some higher attainers exceed this level. The pupils work conscientiously in lessons and achieve the planned learning intentions. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the pupils showed very good expression in reading, which was reinforced by the teacher's high expectations of their performance. The pupils make very good progress in writing, as happened in an imaginatively taught Year 5 lesson which encouraged the pupils to enjoy reading and enabled them to analyse and develop their skills of persuasive writing. The pupils are highly motivated to succeed and work towards their writing targets with enthusiasm. The boys have responded particularly well to a whole-school writing project which has had a major impact on the pupils' progress and standards. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the pupils worked with great interest to evaluate examples of good writing and identify the key features of high quality work. Standards in speaking and listening are good. The pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to assess and analyse their own work, participate in discussion and share ideas with others in their class.

13. Standards in mathematics are improving throughout the school. A large and increasing proportion of the pupils attain the national expectations for their ages and a significant number exceed these levels. The pupils made at least satisfactory and often good or very good progress in mathematics lessons. Many Year 6 pupils, for example, plotted and interpreted line graphs, though some used inaccurate axes. The higher attainers created graphs to convert test marks into percentages and knew how to modify them to fit a different range of marks. The pupils in Year 4 understand how to use standard measures; for instance, in work on capacity, some added millilitre volumes accurately while the higher attainers added volumes expressed as fractions of a litre and gave the total in millilitres. The Year 2 pupils have a suitable understanding of number and, for example, accurately use the correct vocabulary for directing movement. The school knows that the pupils find it hard to solve

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problems that consist of two or more stages. Some, however, have begun to master this skill because teachers have given it more attention.

14. Standards in science are rising and the pupils make satisfactory and sometimes better progress in lessons. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of science, much of which is in line with national expectations, and some of the pupils achieved higher standards in several classes. The pupils in Year 2, for example, understood that pushes and pulls might change the shape of objects or the way they move, and the more able applied their understanding of forces to explain how people stand up after sitting. The pupils are developing a range of enquiry skills at the level expected. They make suitable predictions, take measurements, observe carefully, tabulate their results and draw valid conclusions; however, while many successfully carry out enquiries guided fully or in part by the teacher, too few plan, manage and evaluate their own investigations. The pupils have begun to use their scientific understanding to justify their predictions and to explain their findings, but there is scope for significant development in this aspect of their work.

15. Standards in ICT are rising. Much of the pupils' work in lessons is in line with the national expectations for their ages. One of the strongest features of their achievement is word processing, which the pupils use to combine text and images to present attractive posters and information sheets. The pupils' computer-based art work is also of a high quality. Some have begun to use software to present data attractively; for example, by using graphs to display the results of an investigation into pulse rates. Some use software to create multimedia presentations, gather pertinent information from the internet and send emails. The pupils have begun to use computers to control events, such as the pupils in Year 5 who controlled how lights flashed on and off. The use of spreadsheets and data bases is evolving but requires further development.

16. The low attainers and the pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because the teaching is well planned to meet their needs, and the teaching assistants work with them effectively in class and in withdrawal groups, such as for reading and writing. The higher attainers often make good progress in lessons; however, as with the gifted and talented pupils, their needs are not always met and at times they are not challenged sufficiently.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning were very good in ten lessons, good in seven and satisfactory in two. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection in July 2002.

18. The pupils' attitudes to learning were good overall and frequently very good. The pupils were keen to learn and responded enthusiastically to stimulating teaching. Many willingly volunteered contributions to lessons and thrived on opportunities to share their ideas. Most listened carefully to the teachers and their classmates, and thoughtfully and coherently expressed their ideas, sometimes with considerable enthusiasm. The pupils often applauded each other's efforts and demonstrated pride in what had been achieved, such as when the teacher said that the well-written letter she had used to illustrate persuasive writing had been composed by a pupil in their class. The pupils thought carefully about difficult problems, sometimes for extended periods without seeking help. They collaborated well on shared tasks. The few less-attentive pupils were identified quickly and drawn into lessons by

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well-focused prompts or carefully targeted questions. Extensive dialogue was fostered by the friendly, purposeful relationships that existed between the teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.

19. The pupils' behaviour in lessons was good overall and often very good. The teachers assumed the pupils would behave well and they normally did so without being reminded to. The pupils usually responded quickly to the teachers' calls for attention and it was rare for a pupil's behaviour to impact negatively on a lesson. They acted responsibly when working in groups or when using equipment such as computers. The pupils behaved well in the playgrounds and when moving about the school. They took care of each other and took a polite interest in visitors.

20. The school takes bullying seriously and any breaches of the behaviour code are dealt with swiftly. An anti-bullying policy has been revised and communicated to pupils, staff and parents. The playground is closely monitored by staff. A range of relevant whole-school initiatives has been implemented. A suitable programme of peer mediation has been introduced for a group of girls in Year 5 and is soon to be extended to other years. There has been one fixed-term exclusion during the past year.

21. The attendance for the 2002-03 academic year was 98.3 per cent, which is very high compared to the national figures and much higher than in 2001-02. The headteacher has made clear to parents that absence should be kept to a minimum. The pupils who achieve full attendance receive awards and the number doing so has doubled in recent months. These actions have had a positive impact on the rate of attendance for the spring term 2004 which, at 94.6 per cent is two percentage points higher than for the autumn term 2003.

22. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social education is particularly strong.

23. Spiritual education is good and the pupils have a very clear appreciation of the wonders of the world around them and recognise themselves as special individuals. Good use is made of display to celebrate success across all areas of development. The pupils have a strong moral code and they are fully aware of right and wrong. They work within the school rules and have an empathy with the needs of others, such as through the work of the older pupils in the 'busy bees' playground team, who understand that the younger pupils need to feel safe and secure at playtimes. The peer-mediation scheme in Key Stage 2 also enables the pupils to understand what constitutes acceptable behaviour and to make informed decisions about the strategies they can use to support each other. Social education is a strength of the school, with the pupils working cooperatively and collaboratively. They engage in fund-raising projects to support the more vulnerable members of society, such as their contribution to the 'putting the boot into poverty' campaign. Cultural education is good, with pupils working on a number of relevant themes in history, geography and English. Good use is made of posters, displays, and fiction and non-fiction books to represent and enhance the pupils' understanding of a range of cultures.

### **The quality of education**

24. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the inspection in 2002. The quality of teaching was very good in seven lessons, good in six and satisfactory in six.

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25. The good and very good teaching was very carefully planned and was focused sharply on enabling the pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they needed to achieve the learning objectives. The activities were challenging, engaging and well matched to the pupils' varied needs, such as their different prior attainment or special educational needs. The teaching regularly encouraged the pupils to give consideration to their ideas, requiring them to provide detailed explanations and justify what they had said. The teachers set high expectations and encouraged the pupils to think carefully about new concepts before applying them. Explanations and demonstration were very clear and often drew heavily on the pupils' thinking. The pupils were sometimes involved in demonstrations and sensitively encouraged to help each other when they were unsure. Questioning was varied in style, stimulating and probing. Much of the teaching was inclusive in that it enabled all of the pupils to offer answers; for example, by targeting questions at different groups including those who have special educational needs, or by encouraging them to put their thumbs up or down, or by writing on personal whiteboards. The teachers effectively evaluated the pupils' understanding, drew out their misconceptions and reinforced or corrected their learning. Several teachers responded to the evaluation by suitably modifying subsequent tasks. Well-phrased feedback and reassurance encouraged the pupils to explain their ideas at length, even when they were uncertain about their accuracy. The pupils' occasional inattention was managed subtly and firmly and their good conduct was rewarded suitably.

26. The satisfactory teaching had many of the features of the best teaching, such as the effective lesson-planning and the good relationships between the pupils and teachers. The pupils were organised well and their contributions were clearly valued by the teachers. At times, however, the teaching was insufficiently demanding for the higher attainers and did not reinforce the main learning points sufficiently, or suffered from small but important gaps in the teachers' subject knowledge. On occasions the tasks were not focused sharply enough on the learning objectives and, though successful, they took longer than necessary.

27. The teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution to the teaching and the pupils' learning. They are well deployed within lessons, enjoy good relationships with the pupils and work conscientiously and effectively with designated individuals. The teaching assistants take an active part in lessons, including during whole-class sessions, as happened when several Year 1 pupils were sensitively helped after giving incorrect answers during a numeracy session about counting on and backwards in tens. On occasions, three teaching assistants were allocated appropriately to the same lesson to support pupils who have special educational needs: their input was always well focused. The teaching assistants have expanded the range of support they offer and, for example, have begun to observe and record the pupils' behaviour, such as their interactions with the teacher. There is scope for further development of this aspect of their work and for refinements in the way they work with pupils, such as in the management of their behaviour and in reinforcing key learning points. The headteacher has identified this need and relevant training is scheduled.

28. Marking has improved and much is of good quality. The pupils receive frequent feedback from teachers and teaching assistants during lessons. Annotations in their books are encouraging and generally make clear what the pupils have achieved and correct significant errors. Some of the marking provides useful prompts to help the pupils improve. In some subjects the pupils have started to edit and evaluate their own work.

29. The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. National strategies and schemes of work have been implemented to good effect. Suitable emphasis is given to literacy,

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numeracy and ICT, though their application across the curriculum requires further development. To varying degrees, subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in the provision for their areas and they are taking appropriate actions to eliminate the weaknesses or are developing strategies for dealing with them. While the provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is effective and the arrangements for the more able pupils are improving, the curriculum does not cater fully for the higher attainers and the pupils who are gifted and talented.

30. The curriculum is suitably enriched through a good range of additional activities, such as the well-attended science club, revision clubs for Year 6 pupils, French and Italian clubs, links with the parish and local community and through residential experiences for the older pupils.

31. The school's procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment have several strengths and are satisfactory overall. There is a very effective system for tracking the pupils' progress in writing and the data is thoroughly analysed and used to evaluate the impact of the whole-school strategy for improving writing. Appropriate and necessary improvements are under way to extend the good practice in writing to other subjects. For example, rigorous assessment procedures are being developed for subjects such as mathematics, science and ICT, and the need for more extensive moderation of the teachers' assessments has been recognised. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders are making increasingly effective use of assessment information to guide their work.

32. The accommodation meets many of the school's requirements but it is spread over two sites and parts need repair. Although there is an ICT suite, the overall level of ICT equipment is insufficient to fully meet the requirements of the curriculum: improvements, however, have been scheduled. The lack of a sports field restricts the pupils' experience of team games and athletics.

33. The headteacher has paid careful attention to improving the relationships and communication with parents, both of which are strong. In her capacity as co-ordinator for special educational needs, the headteacher offers to meet parents to review the pupils' individual education plans: the uptake has been high. Subject leaders are implementing a helpful programme of briefings for parents that offer guidance about the curriculum and how they can support their children. The vast majority of the parents attended consultation meetings about the pupils' progress during the autumn and spring terms.

### **Leadership and management**

34. The headteacher provides good leadership and thoughtful, productive management. There is a good team spirit among the staff, which is hard-working and strongly committed to the school's further development. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the impact of recent initiatives, such as the strategy for raising the standard of writing. She has a clear view of how to secure the improvements needed. The school development plan has been updated. The headteacher is acting strategically, such as in planning for the staffing for the next academic year and in developing the role of the teaching assistants. In partnership with consultants from the LEA, she has successfully developed the skills of subject leaders and enhanced their contribution to school improvement. Strongly supported by the effective deputy headteacher and subject leaders, she has stepped up the pace of change. The school has demonstrated its capacity to secure and sustain improvement.

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35. With the support of the LEA, extensive and effective procedures have been established for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. The cycle of subject monitoring helpfully includes the provision for the more able pupils. The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy headteacher and subject leaders, regularly observes lessons, checks plans and scrutinises samples of work. Suitable emphasis is given to evaluating the impact of the teaching on the pupils' learning. The judgements about the overall quality of teaching and learning have been matched to national expectations through joint work with an adviser from the LEA. Performance management procedures have been introduced for teachers and teaching assistants.

36. The support for pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively. The procedures for the early identification of special educational needs have been improved. The progress of the pupils is carefully monitored, but lacks the fine definition needed to ensure their very small gains in attainment are identified and recorded. Additional support for pupils is targeted appropriately.

37. The work of the core subject leaders has improved significantly and much of their work is of high quality. They value highly the support they have received from LEA consultants, which has made them far more confident in their role and given them a better appreciation of their responsibilities. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas, especially in terms of the standards attained by the pupils. The core subject leaders and the co-ordinators for other subjects are making a much stronger contribution to the school's improvement. They are well focused on raising standards and lifting the teachers' expectations. However, this practice is not uniformly good across the curriculum.

38. The leadership and management of English are very good and provide an excellent model for subject leadership across other curriculum areas. Performance data has been analysed very carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses and to inform a detailed action plan for improvement. Very good tracking systems are in place to monitor the pupils' progress and the data is communicated to governors and used appropriately by teachers. The data is complemented very well by clear guidance and support materials provided by the subject leader, which enable the teachers to make informed decisions about the focus of their teaching and help ensure that the lesson activities are sufficiently demanding.

39. Mathematics benefits from effective, well-focused leadership and management. The co-ordinator has made good use of work sampling and the analysis of data to identify weaknesses in the pupils' mathematics, such as in their problem-solving skills and understanding of shape and space. Rightly, she intends to improve the procedures for setting targets for individual pupils based on the National Curriculum levels. Suitable improvements to the scheme of work are under way in order to lift the teachers' expectations and to fill in the gaps that led to weaknesses in the pupils' mathematical skills. She has taken appropriate steps to support teachers by disseminating good practice in the teaching of mathematics. Wisely, the subject leader has prepared a policy to guide the teaching of calculation across the school, but she has yet to establish a strategy for evaluating the impact of mathematics-related initiatives.

40. The subject leader for science, supported by a consultant from the LEA, has correctly identified weaknesses in the pupils' skills of enquiry and to a lesser extent in their knowledge and understanding. Suitable revisions to the scheme of work are under way, as are

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improvements to the way the pupils' progress is tracked. Further work is needed to ensure that the evolving system for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress is implemented consistently.

41. The subject leader for ICT has a detailed understanding of the pupils' achievement in the various elements of the subject and a clear view of how the provision should be improved. She has introduced relevant online materials to support the teaching of ICT in Years 5 and 6, the use of which is being carefully planned and tried out by the class teachers. The subject leader has worked alongside teachers to help disseminate good practice. A system for assessing the pupils' progress is being developed and the subject leader has recognised that further action is needed to ensure a consistent standard of teacher assessment.

42. The governing body has improved the way it maintains oversight of the school and is well organised to fulfil its responsibilities. The governors have a good understanding of what makes a governing body effective and they have successfully begun to monitor and evaluate the school's work. Governors regularly check that the budget is in line with forecasts and are increasingly holding the headteacher and subject leaders to account by receiving reports and asking pertinent questions, especially at the curriculum committee. The governors have recently taken the initiative to form a group to promote the school within the local community. School visits by governors have been scheduled, though protocols to guide what they do have yet to be developed.

43. The LEA has worked closely with the school and provided well-focused, effective support in a range of areas and this has been welcomed and valued by the staff. Inputs by the link inspector and consultants have had a marked, positive impact on the school's development, such as the analysis of data to identify priorities for action in various areas, and the notable improvements in the monitoring and evaluation skills of the headteacher and subject leaders.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

44. The inspection report of July 2002 required the school to address six key issues. These principally related to: reducing the high turnover of staff; raising standards in English; raising achievement in mathematics and science; improving leadership and management; improving the quality of teaching; and developing assessment procedures. Overall good progress has been made and most tasks have been completed, though there is still work to do in some areas.

45. The school has made good progress in establishing a stable staff who work well together as a team. The subject leaders have identified weaknesses in the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and are taking suitable actions to overcome them. Standards are rising across the curriculum, especially in writing, as a result of a very effective whole-school strategy. The school benefits from good leadership and management by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The subject leaders in the core subjects and ICT have significantly developed their capacity to lead and manage improvement, though there is scope to ensure consistent and high quality subject leadership throughout the curriculum. The governing body has improved its practice and fulfils its responsibilities. The quality of teaching is far better than it was at the inspection in July 2002. The procedures for tracking the pupils' progress have been improved significantly and further relevant improvements are under way.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in July 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, May and October 2003, and in February 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of July 2002.

In May 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

## Notes





