

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TWO GATES COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tamworth, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124156

Headteacher: Mrs A Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs R J Schaffer  
23698

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 June 2001

Inspection number: 193675

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parkfield Crescent Two Gates Tamworth Staffordshire
Postcode:	B77 1HB
Telephone number:	01827 475 051
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Buglass
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23698	R J Schaffer	Registered inspector	Science English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19343	M Howel	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
7938	T Handforth	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music	
29263	F Clarke	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	

21910	G Longton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21666	A Margerison	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a community primary school with 342 boys and girls on roll. It admits children in the year in which they are four to the nursery for a morning or afternoon session. It is larger than most other primary schools. The infant and junior classes are on separate sites that are almost half a mile apart. Most pupils who attend the school live nearby in the wards of Two Gates and Kettlebrook where there is some unemployment. Nearly all the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. The very small minority with a different cultural heritage speak English fluently at home. There is 22 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, and some of these pupils have more pronounced learning needs than is usual. Four per cent have a statement and this proportion is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is average. When children start in the school their attainment is below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective in much of its work. Although the school's standards in mathematics and science by the end of the juniors are below average, pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and some make good progress as they move up the school. The staff ensure that the opportunities offered by the school are available to all. Teachers implement the school's code of conduct well so that behaviour is good. Difficulties that the school has experienced in the past, through less effective teaching, have been overcome. Good quality teaching has resulted from the firm commitment of the headteacher and senior staff to improvement. Governors take care to manage the school's money in a cost-effective way and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- There is a very good community spirit established in the school, and pupils work and play together very well.
- Pupils use computers well and their knowledge of information and communication technology is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn because of the good teaching in the school.
- Pupils' achievements in religious education and music are good, and a good number of pupils gain enjoyment from learning to play a musical instrument.

#### **What could be improved**

- The pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics at the end of the juniors and in reading and writing and mathematics at the end of the infants.
- Planning and assessment in science and geography so as to improve standards.
- The use of information from assessments and tests to check on the progress pupils make as they move up the school.
- The pupils' attendance.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

At the time of the previous inspection in March 1997 there was 11 per cent unsatisfactory teaching and only five per cent was very good or better. Teaching is now very good or better in 25 per cent of lessons and the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is down to three per cent. The school was asked to improve behaviour. Overall, the standard of behaviour is now good with just a small minority of pupils needing to be reminded of the school's code of conduct in some lessons. Subject leaders in mathematics, English and information and communications technology have much more responsibility and effective monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out. Monitoring in science and other subjects has been less effective. The improvement in the pupils' performance in national tests has kept pace with the upward national trend, and this has been recognised by the Department of Education and the Environment, although results are not as high as in most other schools. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

### **STANDARDS**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	C	D	D
mathematics	C	D	E	E
science	D	C	C	C

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's results in national tests started to improve in 1998 and continued to do so in 1999. In 2000, there was some improvement in English and mathematics, but not as much as that made by other schools. This was because there was a high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs in that year group. This is also the case for the present group of eleven year olds. The school set itself realistic but challenging targets for English and mathematics for the year 2001. It is likely to meet them for English but not in mathematics. Current standards are similar to the national average in English but well below average in mathematics. The standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the national tests for 1999 and 2000 for reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national average. This year standards have improved in writing and mathematics because of improved teaching, although attainment is still below average. Standards in reading have not improved sufficiently. Although the school has identified some of the ways to address this, more needs to be done. Standards in science are well below average and similar to teachers' assessments in 2000.

#### Standards in other subjects:

**Above average:-** music, and information and communication technology;

**Average:-** history, religious education physical education, art and design, design and technology;

**Below average:-:** geography.

#### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils participate in school and class activities with enthusiasm. They are interested and keen to learn in lessons. Nearly all are proud of their school and eager to support school activities and their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is very good particularly in assemblies and at lunch times. In lessons, most pupils behave very well. However, a small minority of pupils, particularly in Year 3, do not behave consistently well, and the need for the teacher to remind them of how to behave takes time from more productive activities.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with the adults in the school. They show a mature understanding of how their actions may affect others.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average and is not satisfactory. Most pupils arrive at the school on time and lessons start promptly.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. It is good or very good in 65 per cent of lessons, very good in 24 per cent of lessons and one lesson was excellent. There was three per cent unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils learn at a good rate in most of their lessons.

**Strengths in Teaching and Learning:** Careful attention is paid to the planning of lessons. Work is generally well matched to pupils' levels of attainment and is very relevant to their interests, particularly in the nursery and reception classes. Lessons are well organised so that pupils spend equal time on listening and learning to that on active pursuits. Teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn, and whether they have achieved their expectations. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

**Aspects of teaching that could be improved:** Teachers' knowledge and understanding relating to the teaching of reading and writing in the infants and Year 3. On occasions, teachers' expectations of pupils, especially those who learn more slowly, is not high enough and explanations and instructions are given too many times.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education contribute to pupils' understanding but aspects of medium-term planning needs improvement in some subjects. All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory but plans for pupils' individual learning need to identify more specific targets and be set over a shorter period of time.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school very successfully provides an environment in which all pupils are encouraged to work together in harmony and to respect and celebrate each other's differences. Music, art and literature contribute well to pupils' development. The school has gone further than many in providing pupils with a good understanding of how to co-operate with others and live in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is very caring and pupils' welfare is paramount. However, greater care needs to be taken in checking on the reasons for pupils' absence, and the progress of pupils year on year as they move up the school.

The school is an open and welcoming place for parents. There are good opportunities for parents to find out about the progress their child is making and the standard of their work. There are good opportunities for parents to be involved in school life and some parents appreciate this. However, not all parents make sure that their child completes their homework and returns it to school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has successfully promoted an effective staff team who work well together. Their strengths are recognised and developed for the benefit of the school. Senior staff respond to the rigours of their responsibilities exceptionally well. There is, however, insufficient development of the role of subject co-ordinator in evaluating pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They play an active part in planning the school's development and have the school's best interests at heart. They have not sufficiently developed methods of judging how well the school is doing and asking questions relating to pupils' progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very detailed and effective monitoring of teaching has contributed to improvements in pupils' learning but insufficient use is made of information from national tests and the school's own tests to evaluate the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is good planning to ensure that all school funds are well directed and support planned developments. Understanding of how to compare the school's performance to that of others' needs to be improved.

The school has a good number of teachers, some with specialist knowledge, and the number of learning support assistants is adequate. They are well trained and provide good support to pupils. The accommodation is adequate in respect of provision for all National Curriculum subjects. The aspect of two sites for the one school presents many difficulties and inefficiencies, in particular the fact that the pupils from the infants have to walk almost half a mile to use the computer suite. The good control of finances has meant that, despite this difficulty, there are ample resources in most subjects.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become more mature.</li> <li>• The school is welcoming to parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities offered outside school.</li> <li>• The behaviour in the school.</li> <li>• The amount of homework set.</li> </ul>

A reasonable number of parents responded to the questionnaire to give their opinions. The percentage of parents who held negative views was low. The inspection confirmed parents' positive views. Overall the inspection team did not agree with parents' negative views. The range of activities offered outside school is quite extensive, although they are only held for two terms which does limit the development of interest throughout the year. Behaviour in the school was found to be good, and the amount of homework set is similar to that in most other schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1 Most children start in the reception class having had the opportunity of part-time education in the school's own nursery. The school administers the required tests for four year olds. These indicate that there is a very marked difference between those of higher and lower attainment. Overall attainment on entry is below what is generally expected for this age for communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. For mathematics the children's attainment is similar to expectations. Inspection findings agree with these early assessments. Children make good progress in most of the areas of learning, except in mathematics where progress is satisfactory. All children, except those with special education needs, should reach the expected level for their age by the end of the reception year for all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to others. They are identified early, and support for them is generally good, although on a few occasions work is not well matched to their needs. Children's attainment is particularly good in letter formation. They are taught very well to form letters correctly and to join them as they write a word. Good teaching in knowledge and understanding of the world means that children have begun to be very interested in the world around them. They listen well and have developed a very good interest in books and many recognise a good number of words, opening a book to read words in simple sentences. They have not, however made sufficient progress in using their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple words or to begin to form their own sentences as they write independently.

#### The overview of standards in the infants in English, mathematics and science

2 The school's results in tests for seven year olds in 2000 were well below average for reading, writing and mathematics when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. This was similar to the results in 1999. Although the school had improved, so had the results in all schools and, as a consequence, the school only kept up with the national trend and did not improve its performance against others. The school had implemented the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily, but had not focused sufficiently on teaching children the letter sounds or how to use them. The school has identified this problem and taken action to improve provision. However, some pupils in Year 2 do not use letters sounds well enough to work out unknown words. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well but pupils of average and lower attainment have not benefited sufficiently to do well in this year's assessments. Currently attainment at the end of Year 2 is below average in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics, there is an above average number of pupils achieving above expectations.

#### Achievement in the infants in English, mathematics and science

3 In Year 2 pupils' achievements are satisfactory in writing and mathematics. From a low beginning they have made satisfactory progress as they moved up the school. In reading the achievement of some pupils is satisfactory but a significant number have not made sufficient progress in the past and their achievements in reading are unsatisfactory, particularly in the use of letter sounds. Many pupils do not have enough practice to read with an adult at home or in school, and this affects their progress. In science, pupils' achievements in acquiring the knowledge expected in the National Curriculum is satisfactory for most but it is unsatisfactory in their

understanding of scientific enquiry. In Year 1, pupils have achieved well throughout the year in all three subjects because the teaching is good and builds on the work in the Foundation Stage.

The overview of standards in the juniors in English, mathematics and science

- 4 The school's results in national tests for eleven year olds in 2000 were average in science, below average in English and well below average in mathematics. The school's results started to improve in 1998 and continued to do so in 1999. In 2000 there was some improvement but not as much as that made by other schools in English and mathematics. This was because there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. This is also the case for the current group of pupils in Year 6, many of whom joined the school late in their primary education. The school achieved its targets for English and mathematics in 2000. This year it is likely to do so in English but not in mathematics. The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is average in English and below average in mathematics and science.

The achievements of pupils in the juniors in English, mathematics and science

- 5 In Year 6, pupils' achievements have been satisfactory in English and mathematics but, in science, achievement has been unsatisfactory for a good number of pupils. In this year group there has been changes of staff and staff absences and year group planning has not been as strong as elsewhere in the school. In Years 4 and 5, pupils' achievements in all subjects, except reading are good. In reading, pupils' achievements have been only just satisfactory. There is strong year group planning and teaching is good but assessments in reading do not focus attention sufficiently on those pupils whose progress is slow. In consequence efforts are not well directed to improve this. In Year 3, pupils' achievements in mathematics have been good and in other subjects generally satisfactory, although work in science sometimes goes at too slow a pace and this detracts from pupils' progress. Planning in this year group is good but, on occasions, planning does not take account of what pupils already know, and work covers knowledge and understanding pupils have already gained.
- 6 Numeracy is promoted well throughout the school. Pupils like mathematics and can use it successfully in other subjects. There are good displays celebrating aspects of mathematics in every classroom and elsewhere in the school. The promotion of literacy is satisfactory. There is, however only a corridor for use as a school library and pupils could not remember any visits they had made to a public library, except if taken there by a parent.
- 7 Pupils are given good opportunities to talk and listen to each other in large class groups, smaller groups and in pairs. By the age of eleven in speaking and listening, most pupils are achieving the standard expected for their age. By the age of seven the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard. However, a significant proportion of those with lower attainment have difficulty using full sentences and the appropriate vocabulary when they reply to questions not relating to themselves and some find listening difficult, losing concentration relatively quickly.
- 8 Seven-year-old pupils enjoy reading the books that they share in class. Pupils with higher attainment can read with fluency. Many pupils of higher attainment have a good sight vocabulary. Those of average attainment, however, have not built up a wide range of words they recognise by sight. Pupils of lower attainment struggle to make use of letter sounds to devise the meaning of simple words. A strength in the standards achieved in writing is that pupils write well in a joined hand and many

have very good control of the size and shape of letters. Pupils write about events at home, and simple stories. Many choose to start with the traditional story opening of "Once upon a time". Few, however, are able to use descriptive words beyond the very well known. Much of the work that they do is on worksheets. This is the main limiting factor to pupils developing a good understanding of how to sequence sentences in longer pieces of work.

- 9 By the age of eleven the majority of pupils are competent readers and have developed a knowledge of literature and different authors to the level one would expect. Those of higher attainment can enjoy and read books that have complex narrative structures and non-fiction that deals with adult issues. Those of lower attainment read accurately but lack fluency and do not have the understanding of how to infer meaning from implication. In their written work pupils can plan their work so as to structure their ideas logically. They can reflect a variety of styles according to the purpose of their writing. For example, in examining issues such as the current outbreak of foot and mouth disease, a pupil stated what was happening in the countryside in a precise factual manner, then put her own point of view persuasively. Pupils with higher and average attainment use a good range of punctuation effectively but in nearly all books careless spelling mistakes persist.
- 10 Pupils throughout the school develop their skills in mental calculations at a good rate in brisk well-planned sessions. Pupils in Year 2 for example can add three numbers together in their head, using a variety of strategies and explaining how they have done this. They recognise that addition can be done in any order. Year 1 and 2 pupils of lower attainment, were able to explain in their own words that they can find 17 in the same column as 7 and 27 on a 100 square. In Year 6 pupils work is generally of a satisfactory standard, for example in recent work pupils have shown how to calculate the perimeter of compound shapes by breaking them down into several rectangles. Their work on areas and perimeters being well supported by their knowledge of tables. However, over the year some work from previous years has had to be revisited, indicating that for a good proportion of pupils gaps in their knowledge and understanding from previous years is limiting their current attainment.
- 11 In science, pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of materials and their properties, of electricity, and of living things, including human beings and plants but their understanding of scientific enquiry and aspects of forces and motion is below average. In Year 6, pupils have covered work on all the elements of the programme of study in some detail and they remember a good number of facts relating to their studies. For example, in a lesson on green plants, all pupils in a lower attaining group could explain that dandelions grow taller in a shady area in order to try to reach the light. However, pupils spend too much time copying scientific facts and learning correct terms without developing their knowledge through the context of scientific enquiry.
- 12 In information and communication technology, the attainment of pupils aged eleven is above expectations. At age seven, it is as expected. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in the infants do not have the benefit of the computer suite which has had a very beneficial effect on the achievements of pupils in the juniors. Pupils in Year 6 can produce good quality work which combines images, text and tables. In religious education the attainment of pupils of seven and eleven reaches the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. At the end of both the infants and the juniors pupils' attainment is as expected for history, art and design, design and technology

and physical education. This was what was found at the time of the previous inspection. However standards were satisfactory in geography and they are now below expectations because work is not planned systematically. For seven and eleven year olds, attainment in music is above average which is a good improvement on the previous inspection.

- 13 The school has not identified any pupils who are gifted or talented and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Overall, the achievements of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils who learn more slowly than others in English and mathematics make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual plans, but sometimes, when plans are too general, teachers cannot assess how well they are doing and this limits progress from being good. Pupils with statements of special educational needs for behaviour make good progress owing to the good match between the targets in their plans and the use of the suggested strategies by teachers and support staff.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 14 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good and the overall behaviour in the school is good. There are very good relationships throughout the school. The attendance rates are below the national average and are unsatisfactory.
- 15 Children in the nursery and reception enjoy coming to school. They are confident, happy and behave well. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to their work. They settle quickly to the tasks set and show good levels of concentration. They enjoy their lessons and take an active part in the activities. This was evident in a music lesson in the juniors, where pupils were keen to demonstrate their knowledge of different rhythms. They co-operate well when working in pairs or small groups and show a willingness to help one another.
- 16 The behaviour of the majority of the pupils is good, both during lessons and when moving around the school. They clearly know and understand the code of conduct and show respect for adults and their fellow pupils. They are polite and courteous and very willing to assist visitors to the school. During the breaks and in the dining room, they mix well together and need very low-key supervision to maintain their good behaviour. There has been a considerable improvement in behaviour in the juniors since the previous inspection. However, on a few occasions the behaviour of a minority of pupils in specific lessons does not match the high standards now set. The pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with fairly and promptly, and this is not an area that causes them any concerns. There were no exclusions during the last academic year.
- 17 The school has a happy and secure atmosphere, and this is in part due to the very good relationships which exist between all members of the school community. As pupils arrive at school, they are greeted by their teachers. This particularly helps the younger children to feel comfortable. Some of the children arriving at the nursery showed such confidence that they had to be reminded to say "Goodbye" to their parents.
- 18 The pupils mix and play very well together and, during lessons, listen well to the ideas and suggestions of their fellow pupils. They spontaneously praise other pupils. This was seen during science, music and English lessons in both infant and junior classes. Pupils are proud of their school. They respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their attitudes. Pupils play an active part in the daily

routines of the school, and this is particularly true for pupils in Year 6. At breaks and at lunchtime pupils take responsibility for answering the telephone and for ensuring visitors are safely admitted to the school. This helps the pupils to gain confidence, and they clearly enjoy the task. There is a school forum, with representatives from all classes. This group has recently been responsible for consulting pupils about lunchtime activities and for raising the funds to purchase the chosen equipment.

- 19 The levels of attendance at the school fall below the national averages and are unsatisfactory. There are low levels of unauthorised absence but high levels of authorised. The comparative attendance figures have fallen since the previous inspection. The school day begins promptly, with few pupils arriving late to lessons. Registration meets statutory requirements.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

- 20 The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school was asked to improve teachers' management of those pupils whose behaviour and attitudes were adversely influencing their own and others' learning. The school has put in place good strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. There are a significant number of pupils in the school who have difficulties in controlling their own emotions and actions. Some of these pupils have not been managed well in other schools and it is to the teachers' credit that these pupils are now learning effectively.

- 21 Teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. In 67 per cent of lessons it is good or better with the very good being 27 per cent. One lesson was excellent. There is three per cent unsatisfactory teaching. The school has developed good practice in teaching throughout the school, particularly through the introduction and subsequent monitoring of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. There is little difference in the quality of learning in the different phases but there is a variation in the strengths and areas for improvement within each phase. There is satisfactory teaching for pupils with special educational needs.

### Strengths in the Foundation Stage

- 22 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and learning assistants work very well together as a team. Teachers have a good understanding of how to develop young children's knowledge and skills through active learning. For example, the enclosed outdoor space was turned into a 'beach', which would tempt any four year old and develop their use of language through imaginative play. The book area was turned into a 'public library' complete with tickets to record borrowed books, which contributed very well to children's interest in books and learning to read. Very good relationships are established in both the nursery and reception classes. From this secure foundation, children are happy to work hard and to use with confidence the resources and activities provided. Work and learning is carefully assessed as children tackle the tasks presented to them.

- 23 Aspects of teaching and learning that could be improved:

- In the reception classes areas are insufficiently used to develop children's confidence in writing independently. There is a writing area to which children are directed by teachers, or choose to use themselves. Some children attempt their own writing, but there is insufficient support for them from adults, and from the resources around them. They are not always given a good reason to write; one with which they can identify. For example, they were given a picture of Cinderella's castle and asked to write about the story. Many found this daunting

and simply coloured in the picture when perhaps they could have written a note to the ugly sisters asking them to be kind to Cinderella.

- On occasions, teachers spend too much time with one group. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher gave her attention for all of the session to a group who were struggling to understand addition. Meanwhile, other children played games such as snakes and ladders on a 100 square without adult support. Their stage of maturity was such that they needed some adult intervention to ensure that the games contributed to their learning about numbers.

24 Strengths in the Infant Classes

The good attitudes to learning established in the nursery and reception classes continue to be very well promoted in these classes. The organisation of lessons in English and mathematics is good. Lessons proceed briskly, and this helps to keep pupils eager to learn and interested. In the main, teachers' knowledge of subjects is good and there are particular strengths in art and design, information and communication technology and music, which is taught well by an outside specialist.

- 25 In numeracy, teachers have a good understanding of how to develop pupils' skills in mental calculations and how to start to explain how they have carried out a calculation. For example, in a good lesson for pupils who learn more slowly than others, the teacher had placed a card over two of the numbers on a 100 square. The pupils were asked not only to identify the hidden number but to find six ways of explaining why they knew it was that number. This was a difficult challenge for them but one from which they learnt much, a good indication of the teachers' high expectations. In literacy, teachers' knowledge of developing pupils' skills in reading and writing is sometimes good, as in teaching letter formation. However, developing understanding of sentence structures is not so well taught.

- 26 Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, and objectives are clearly identified in planning. This focuses pupils' thinking and attention on what they are doing and why. For example, in a very good science lesson in Year 1, the children in each group knew that they were looking at leaves to find similarities and differences. At the end of the lesson the teacher and pupils discussed together the findings of the different groups. Because of their very real involvement in the purpose of the lesson, all pupils were interested in talking about their own discoveries, and listening to those of others.

27 Aspects of teaching and learning which could be improved:

- Teachers do not always provide good activities in literacy lessons to develop learning and skills as planned. Teachers use too many worksheets, which do not give pupils the opportunity to learn how to structure their own thoughts and so write them down.
- In reading, pupils are not taught well to use letter sounds to work out unknown words. Although pupils know their letter sounds, few use them successfully in their reading. This continues to be the case in Year 3, especially for pupils who learn more slowly.

Strengths in teaching and learning in the juniors:

- 28 In the junior classes, the good focus started in the infants on identifying the learning objectives for lessons and sharing these with the pupils is continued. Throughout

the school, teachers benefit from the joint planning in year groups or phases but in the juniors this is a particularly good feature. In the best lessons, this has resulted in pupils tackling tasks that take full account of the learning of previous weeks. For example, in Year 4, pupils gained real satisfaction from using their observations and careful recordings of plant growth obtained over a period of several weeks to produce a graph. Pupils of higher attainment tackled a line graph, whilst those in the adjacent class, who learn more slowly, produced a coloured block graph. The activity successfully consolidated all pupils' understanding of what makes a plant flourish.

- 29 In almost all lessons in numeracy, pupils' mental strategies are improved at a good rate. Teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and its aims is good. Teachers extend pupils' thinking by well-directed questions and careful explanations when misconceptions occur. Generally, activities are well thought out and appropriate for the learning intended.
- 30 A good proportion of teachers provide lessons that are particularly successful because they relate very well to pupils' interest, and excite or inspire. For example, in Year 6 the teacher fascinated the pupils with the story of how the Roanoke Settlement, an ancient civilisation in South America failed. In Year 5, lower attaining pupils learnt how to use comparative words when advertising a 'marvellous new pair of trainers' and, in Year 4, pupils designed and made a miniature garden using their knowledge of plants.
- 31 Aspects of teaching and learning that could be improved:
- On occasions, expectations for pupils in the lower attainment groups are not high enough. Teachers concentrate too much on lengthy explanations and repeat instructions too many times, and pupils become restless.
  - Some activities in literacy do not develop pupils' learning in line with the teachers' planned objectives. Sometimes, the activities lack challenge or do not focus on pupils' previous understanding.
- 32 Teachers in all classes give pupils good encouragement and explain well how improvements can be made. Particularly good marking in Year 6 identifies for pupils how they can improve on the objective for that piece of work. Frequently teachers refer to the previous work to plan for the next. Assessment of pupils' reading and, in particular, their use of sounds to work out unknown words, is not sufficiently rigorous. Homework is set appropriately but not all parents support the school in ensuring that their child's homework is completed and returned to school. As a consequence, homework does not contribute sufficiently in developing learning which has taken place in lessons.
- 33 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and mirrors how well they learn. Teachers have a clear understanding of how support staff are to be used in group activities so pupils are fully involved in most lessons. However, support staff are not used effectively in the part of the lesson when teachers talk to the whole class, and this is an inefficient use of their time. Where there are specific programmes for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, teachers and support staff use these well to manage pupils and to help them improve their behaviour. When pupils are involved in small group activities working on particular programmes, such as learning letter sounds in Years 1 and 2, the teaching is good and is rewarded with pupils achieving well.

## HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

- 34 The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, social and personal development and prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- 35 There has been a significant improvement in the management and organisation of the curriculum since the last inspection. All subjects in the National Curriculum are taught and contribute to the range of opportunities offered to pupils. Work is planned that is relevant to pupils' experience and meets the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. All subjects now have a policy that has been agreed by the governors. Schemes of work are in place in most subjects, with others due to be completed by September 2001. In some subjects, such as science and geography, schemes have not been reviewed sufficiently to make sure that pupils' learning builds consistently on their previous knowledge and understanding. Medium- and short-term plans give details of objectives for lessons. Most teachers share these with their pupils as lessons begin so that all pupils know what they are expected to learn.
- 36 The provision for children in the nursery and reception class is good. Planning is based on the six areas of learning and provides the children with broad and balanced experiences. There is a wide range of focused experiences to promote the children's learning in personal, social and emotional development, communication, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In language and literacy there is insufficient emphasis on providing children with opportunities for independent writing in the reception classes.
- 37 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented throughout the school and are contributing to improving pupils' learning in English and mathematics. Planning for numeracy is good and reflects the methods and objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy very well. Literacy plans are well balanced in that there is an equal time for the teaching of writing and reading but short-term planning often fails to identify how the activities given to pupils will develop what has been taught in the earlier part of the lesson. There is insufficient planning for drama and the use of speaking and listening to develop writing.
- 38 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are good individual plans to support those pupils who have difficulty in controlling their own emotions and actions on occasions. Pupils are given specific targets, and it is possible to measure how well they are doing against these targets. They are well matched to strategies and are practical for teachers and support assistants to use. The individual plans for pupils who learn more slowly than others in literacy and mathematics are often too general and do not clearly identify what skill or new idea the pupils should learn during the lifetime of the plan. Consequently, the strategies are not as precise and staff are not able to evaluate pupils' progress in order to devise the next set of targets. Support staff and class teachers are appropriately involved in the reviews of pupils' individual plans.
- 39 Social inclusion for all pupils is a strength of the school. All staff make strenuous efforts to include in every activity pupils of all levels of attainment and backgrounds. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The school makes every effort to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in their learning.

- 40 An interesting range of educational visits enrich and support pupils' learning in the curriculum. These include visits to places of local interest such as visits to Sutton Park and Minworth Sewerage Centre when Year 4 and Year 6 pupils study the environment. The residential visits arranged for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils provide for them an insight of a different environment to that of home or school. The provision of extra-curricular activities in the school is soundly developed. It includes clubs for art, dancing, computers, juggling, recorders and guitar as well as a selection of sporting activities, but is only available to pupils in the autumn and spring terms.
- 41 The programme for personal, social and health education is very good. During lessons and in assemblies pupils are introduced to a variety of ideas about how to develop themselves, and how to deal with issues that arise in their young lives. For example, the vicar from the local church led an assembly which explored how important it was for the pupils to try hard in their work. She made a very good connection between a Bible story and the pupils' everyday lives. Discussion times are valuable when pupils sit quietly on the carpet and take turns one-by-one to explain how some things are important to them. Pupils speak their ideas in a safe environment, where every person's contributions are valued. The school nurse and dental nurse are regular visitors and they explain various matters of personal hygiene. There is a well thought out programme to teach about sex and drugs awareness.
- 42 The school has good links with the community which are beneficial to pupils' understanding of citizenship. The pupils benefit from the large number of visitors to the school. They well remember the visitors and are aware of plans for future events. They greatly enjoy the groups who bring ancient history to life through drama, and the visitors from the local police and fire services. There are also regular guests who take part in the school assemblies. The pupils in Year 6 have recently taken an active part in an enterprise to 'make work real'. The initiative enabled pupils to gain a very good understanding of the world of work. It has been a sustained involvement over a number of months. Pupils gained in maturity through their involvement, so much so that four pupils had the confidence to make a presentation of their work and answer questions in front of an audience of adults at an outside venue. The school was awarded a certificate for its successful participation.
- 43 There are effective links with local secondary schools and colleges. The school is also part of a local cluster group of primary schools. Pupils in Year 6 visit their new school and meet their new teachers. They are also given the opportunity to experience some lessons in the new surroundings. These links help the pupils to be prepared for progressing to the next stage of their education.
- 44 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Clear values, which underpin the work of the school, contribute to an atmosphere of care and consideration for others. This is a considerable improvement on the previous inspection when the provision was judged to be satisfactory
- 45 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is developed through the daily assemblies, and religious education which provides pupils with knowledge and understanding of other major faiths as well as Christianity. Pupils visit local churches and the vicar comes into the school on a regular basis to take assemblies. Good use is made of music and singing in assemblies which make a significant contribution to the good ethos of the school. At one assembly the school's string

orchestra provided pupils with opportunities to listen to and appreciate music as they played a variety of pieces. Pupils celebrate the Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and harvest and are made aware of celebrations in other faiths, for example Diwali. During assemblies and in classes, pupils are given commendations for their endeavour and good work. This provides good opportunities for them to gain insights into their own personal worth. In a Year 4 science lesson, the pupils were amazed and delighted when their carnation flowers turned a different colour as they investigated the effect of dye moving up the stems. In literacy lessons pupils compose their own poems and listen entranced to stories read by their teachers. The school makes good use of the grounds which are often used in connection with art and science, providing pupils with opportunities to discover the wonders of the natural world in which they live. The headteacher and co-ordinator for religious education monitor planning to ensure that appropriate opportunities for developing the spiritual elements of a subject are in place.

- 46 The provision for moral development is very good. There is a strong emphasis on good behaviour throughout the school. The school's rules, which pupils help to formulate, are displayed in classrooms. All staff have a positive approach to behaviour. The staff aim to create an orderly environment, and to help pupils to become responsible members of the community. All adults in the school set a good example to pupils, treating them with fairness and consideration whilst reinforcing their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral development. During the inspection no instances of bullying were observed. Pupils play happily together at break and lunchtimes. Lunchtime supervisors promote good moral values and attitudes. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those who attended the meeting held for them prior to the inspection expressed support for the values the school promotes.
- 47 The provision for pupils' social development is good. Social skills are developed successfully in most lessons. The teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to build up in pupils an awareness of the community, where each member is valued and works for the common good. Discussion times help pupils to build up confidence and relate to other members of the class. Pupils are expected to take care of their surroundings and to take responsibility for classroom equipment. Pupils of all age groups are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups, and to undertake responsibilities. From an early age, pupils help as monitors in classrooms. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative, by, for example, welcoming and showing visitors round the school, preparing for assemblies and looking after the school library. Year 2 pupils help the reception classes at lunchtime. In a physical education lesson pupils were asked to appoint their own leader in each group and this was accomplished without any problem. The school received a letter from Mr. Blair in reply to their own letters about peace in the world. The school forum, composed of two pupils elected from each Key Stage 2 class, meet on a regular basis and suggest ideas to improve the school. They were recently successful in suggesting that small apparatus be made available for all pupils to use at lunchtime and helped raise the money to purchase the equipment. The residential visits organised for the upper Key Stage 2 classes play a significant part in the pupils' social development.
- 48 Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. All pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own culture through studying the immediate area, listening to and appreciating music and looking at art from different countries as well as their own. The school provides a wide range of

cultural experiences through visits to places of worship, museums and visits to the theatre and musical concerts. Subjects such as history, geography and art are used well to develop pupils' awareness of their own and others' cultures and differences in societies around the world. For example, in Year 6 an art project based on the patterns and colours found in African art led to a study of masks and the reasons for their use. The school has done more than most to promote an understanding of the issues involved in people in Britain from different ethnic backgrounds living together. The school is forging strong links with a school in Burton-on-Trent, where nearly all the pupils are of Asian heritage. Year 6 pupils have already been in touch with their pen friends there and will share a residential visit with them later in the term.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 49 The school provides a happy and secure learning environment for its pupils. There is satisfactory provision for their pastoral care and welfare, with good provision for the promotion of good behaviour within the school.
- 50 There are satisfactory arrangements for child protection procedures and a policy in place. All staff members have received training and there is a governor with special responsibility for this area. All records are kept in accordance with the policy, and the school works well with the social services department and other local agencies. Parents are informed of the policy and it is mentioned in the school prospectus. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure the health and safety of its pupil. Necessary records are kept relating to fire drills and equipment is tested regularly. Again, there is a governor with specific responsibility for this aspect. The premises are inspected each term and there is a secure system to identify day-to-day problems. Minor health and safety matters were brought to the attention of the headteacher.
- 51 Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' attendance are unsatisfactory. There has been a slight improvement in the attendance rates since the last inspection, but this has not matched national improvement over the same period. The school does not operate a first day call system and has no new strategies planned to improve the attendance of the pupils. The school is aware that the parents play an important role in ensuring their children attend regularly, but has not yet succeeded in gaining the support of all parents in this important area.
- 52 The school has good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and very good procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour. The policies are used consistently and fairly throughout the school. The codes of conduct are clearly displayed in the classrooms, and pupils fully understand the rewards and sanctions used. The class teachers keep full records of any behavioural difficulties the pupils may have and these are shared with other teachers when appropriate. Through the 'golden moments' books, the merits and awards pupils receive are recorded and displayed. There is a weekly assembly when pupils are presented with their merit certificates, and a cup is presented to the house gaining the most points. Pupils obviously enjoy these occasions and readily show their support for their fellow pupils. The class teachers play a very important role in the pastoral care of the pupils. They know their pupils and their families, and the pupils are confident they will be listened to if they have any worries or concerns. The very good relationships throughout the school are an effective indication of how secure the pupils feel with their teachers.

- 53 In the reception and nursery classes, teachers use assessments of children very well to check on their progress. All areas of learning are included. Children are assessed at the start of their time in the nursery and regular checks are made on their progress through into reception. Assessments are well linked to the national guidance, so that teachers can judge children's achievements against the national expectations.
- 54 In mathematics and English, throughout the infants and juniors there are good procedures in place to check on pupils' progress. There are formal end-of-term tests, and a range of assessments which teachers carry out on a daily and weekly basis. They contribute to a good record of pupils' achievements. However, there are insufficient checks to find out how well pupils know and use letter sounds after Year 1. This omission means that teachers do not have a sufficiently clear picture of how well pupils use letter sounds to help them read. In science, teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each topic, but there has not been sufficiently clear guidance on what levels should be achieved. As a result, there is insufficient information to help the school judge how pupils are progressing year on year in science. Similarly, in history and geography, pupils' achievements are not assessed accurately. Most teachers use the assessments they make at the end of lessons well to identify what pupils need to learn next but, where assessment procedures need improving, teachers are not in a good position to plan for future needs. There is insufficient use of assessments to monitor individual pupils' progress year on year. The school has identified assessment and recording keeping as work to be tackled in the coming year and has good plans in place to ensure that this is carried out.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 55 Parents have positive views of the school. The returned questionnaires show that they are pleased with the way the school helps their children to mature and accept responsibilities, and with the effort the children are expected to put into their work. They also consider there is good teaching in the school. There were less positive views expressed about the extra-curricular activities provided and the amount of homework their children are expected to complete. Some concerns were also raised about the behaviour of some children. The inspectors agreed with the parents' positive views. However, they also found that sufficient and appropriate amounts of homework are set and that the extra-curricular activities are satisfactory for the type of school. The general behaviour of nearly all the pupils was found to be good, with the only unsatisfactory behaviour seen in a number of specific lessons.
- 56 The quality of information supplied to parents is good. When children begin in the nursery, their parents are given detailed information about how they can help their children settle into school and the daily routines they will experience. There is a notice board which details the curriculum areas being covered during the term and any specific help the school needs at that time, for example, boxes, tubes need for model making. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of staff news and forthcoming events. Parents are given details of various school policies, including those to do with child protection and behaviour. They receive an annual written report, which clearly relates to their child and gives details of the standards reached.
- 57 The parents have three formal opportunities during the year to meet with class teachers. These are held at varying times in an effort to help parents who may work unsocial hours. The school also holds an open 'working day' when parents are

invited to see the school whilst their children are in their classes. If parents have any concerns or worries, the teachers will see them either before or after school on any day. Each pupil has a homework diary, which is used effectively as an easy means of two-way communication between home and school.

- 58 There is an active parent/teacher association, which organises social and fund raising events. These are well attended by parents and friends, and valuable funds are made available to the school. The school and pupils benefit from the regular help which parents, grandparents and other adults provide in the classrooms. Parents also provide help with the annual plays and concerts and when school visits and outings are arranged. The school consults parents if changes are to be made to policies or new procedures are being introduced. Recent consultations have related to the home/school agreement and the homework policy. There was a very good response to a recent questionnaire, which covered many aspects of the school's work.
- 59 Some parents give good support to the school and make significant contribution to their children's learning. Not all parents, however, support the school by ensuring that their children complete their homework. The poor attendance figures and the levels of condoned absence indicate that a small number of parents are not fully supportive of the school and its aims.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 60 In this larger than average primary school on two sites, it has been a priority of the headteacher to develop an effective team of key managers. This has been accomplished well. Senior managers have clear roles. The different teams within the school each work well together, and there is trust and support between staff. Throughout the school teachers, including those who have recently joined the staff, and learning support assistants, work together successfully to improve the quality of teaching in each age range.
- 61 The school has reviewed its aims since the time of the previous inspection and has ensured that policies in all subjects and aspects of school life reflect these aims. The aims are well focused on encouraging pupils to attain to their highest level of performance but also emphasise the promotion of equal opportunities for all and developing pupils' understanding of working together as a team. The aims are understood by all staff. There are good quality procedures for planning for school improvement that are linked to school aims. All staff and governors are involved in identifying priorities, and in reviewing their progress through the new annual cycle introduced to maintain, improve and change. In order that developments can be managed effectively, careful consideration is given to the workload of key staff resulting from involvement in the leadership of an aspect of school improvement. The priorities for school improvement focus appropriately on improving pupils' achievements and the standards in the school. However, in the past, on occasions the school has been slow to identify where their best efforts should be directed. This is mainly because there has not been a careful enough analysis of the progress pupils make year on year.
- 62 The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have been effective in introducing the national strategies and in monitoring and evaluating teaching and planning. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology has had good opportunities to evaluate pupils' work by checking the class files held on computers. The school evaluates the quality of pupils' work during a whole staff meeting once a term.

Whilst this is a useful exercise for staff discussion, it does not provide subject co-ordinators with a clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing from year to year in their subject. In some subjects such as history and geography, co-ordinators have a difficulty in identifying where improvements need to be made. Responsibility for the pupils with special education needs is shared between three co-ordinators. This arrangement makes communication and ensuring consistent support across the school difficult. However, staff work well together and the two co-ordinators in the infants and Years 3 and 4 give a good lead to the aspect in their part of the school. They organise support within the school and from outside agencies well. However, the lack of detail in some individual education plans, and the lack of diagnostic assessment means that support assistants are not always used to the best advantage. The school has understandably considered it wise to wait before changing the present organization, until the introduction of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs.

- 63 The governing body has several members with some considerable experience of serving in this capacity and some bring specialist knowledge to their office. Through the use of a committee structure there is efficient use of governor's time. Care is taken to ensure that all statutory requirements are met by the school. Governing body meetings are well attended, as are committee meetings. Governors are involved in all stages of the process of planning for school improvement and have made helpful contributions through their discussions to the evaluation of those improvements. The school has good plans to involve governors further in more specific evaluation of the way in which school developments are progressing.
- 64 A satisfactory overview of the work of the school is obtained through both informal and formal means. Parent governors, including the chair of governors are in a good position to find out about the school from personal experience. Formal information is provided through the headteacher's report and presentations by staff to the governors. The pupils' performance in the national tests are reviewed. The governor for special educational needs has a clear view of how provision for pupils is organised. However, governors are at an early stage of comparing the performance of their school with that of others.
- 65 The school's monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements is effective in many aspects. There are, however areas which need improvement. The phase leaders check teachers' short and medium term planning very thoroughly and offer support and advice where needed. The numeracy co-ordinator reviews plans for the numeracy lessons against an extensive range of criteria and provides very specific information to teachers on aspects of planning that could be developed further. As this is a written report it provides not only guidance to individual teachers but also an opportunity to analyse how effective planning is throughout the school. Lesson observations by both the literacy and numeracy co-ordinator are well focused on set criteria, but do not provide clear evaluative judgements on how well pupils are learning. The pupils' achievements in the school's end-of-term tests and assessments are used well by teachers to identify which pupils will be best placed in which teaching group. They are not, however analysed sufficiently by the headteacher or senior management to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress or used to provide an overview of strengths and weaknesses in teaching or curriculum provision, linked to the work done on monitoring and evaluating teaching. There is no long-term tracking in place of pupils' progress through from the tests carried out in reception to end of Year 6. The need to improve the use of data and assessments by managers has been identified in school improvement planning Some analysis of how pupils have answered different questions in tests is

made and used to help identify areas of weaknesses in curriculum planning but this could be further developed. Similarly, some analysis of the pupils' performance in national tests, taking account of their gender has also been undertaken, but no action has been identified to address differences detected, for example the significantly lower achievements of girls than boys in mathematics in the tests at the end of Year 6.

- 66 The school has very effective procedures to support new members of staff, including teachers who are newly trained. The open and friendly atmosphere amongst staff is particularly beneficial for newcomers and, as a consequence, they can quickly contribute their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the pupils. The school has had experience of training students and their needs are well met. Staff development effectively promotes the improvement of staff's skills and their contribution to the school. New procedures for performance management have been set up efficiently.
- 67 Financial planning is good. The governors' finance committee is well informed of the school's priorities and its recent spending patterns. The headteacher and governors make effective use of the funds available through careful planning and comparisons of alternative supplies and services. They are concerned to get the best value from what they buy and what they do, and thus ensure that the school's resources are used efficiently.
- 68 Specific funding is well used, for example, to provide generous and effective support for pupils with special educational needs enabling them to make good progress or to create and resource a new information and communication technology suite to a good standard. Procedures for financial control are very good. They are very well managed by the school secretary and her colleagues, who have a thorough understanding of the importance of monitoring spending and of keeping clear, accurate records. The recent school audit took a very positive view of the school's financial systems and the small number of technical improvements identified have all been put into place.
- 69 The school has a good number of well-qualified teaching staff. There are adequate learning support assistants who have a range of qualifications, experience and expertise that benefits the pupils. The roles of the teachers and support assistants are clearly identified. They work well together to make a good contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school and to those pupils who have special educational needs.
- 70 Overall, the accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, the school is on two sites separated by almost half a mile. This results in some inefficiencies and duplication of resources. The computer suite is situated in the juniors and as a consequence infant pupils cannot benefit fully from this resource. Each site has a full range of facilities and generous hard surfaced and soft grassed playing areas. Both sites are maintained to a high standard by the caretaking and cleaning staff. The school grounds also provide good natural resources to enhance scientific and other studies. The classrooms used by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils do not have fitted doors and working noise can enter and disturb pupils in other areas. The school has secured funds to cure this problem. The internal environment of both sites is enriched by a variety of good quality displays of pupils' work.

- 71 Resources were adequate at the time of the last inspection, except in information and communication technology where some of the equipment was out dated, and in religious education where insufficient artefacts were available to support the teaching of religions other than Christianity. The school has invested significant amounts of money in these resources to bring them up to a good level. Resources for other subjects are generally good, except in science and design and technology where they are satisfactory, and in history, which has insufficient artefacts available in the school's own stock. Although the library in the juniors is reasonably well stocked its situation in a corridor inhibits its use.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72 *The governors, headteacher and senior management of the school should:*

- 1) Improve the pupils' performance in the national tests for eleven year olds for mathematics and for seven year olds for reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that all teachers in the juniors have good expectations of those who learn more slowly and challenge them well; (paragraph references: 31, 105)
  - improving the planning in literacy to make sure that activities give pupils the opportunity to develop, consolidate and extend what has been taught in the first part of the lesson; (paragraph references: 27, 31, 96, 98)
  - improving teachers' knowledge of how to develop pupils' ability to use letter sounds to help them read and write in the infants, Year 3 and the Foundation Stage; (paragraph references: 27, 81, 91)
- 2) Improve planning and assessment in science and geography so that in each lesson pupils can use their previous knowledge to improve their understanding at a good rate;\* (paragraph references: 35, 54, 112, 128,129)
- 3) Improve the use of information from assessments and tests to check on the progress pupils make as they move up the school \* (paragraph references: 54, 63, 99, 106)
- 4) Improve attendance by closer monitoring of absences and giving it a greater importance to pupils and parents. (paragraph references: 19, 51)

*In addition to the key issues above, governors should consider including the following identified weaknesses in the action plan:*

The targets set for pupils who learn more slowly than others are not specific enough to judge how well pupils are making progress towards their targets. (paragraph references: 38, 62)

Insufficient planning for drama, role play and speaking to contribute to pupils' confidence in writing and reading. (paragraph reference: 99)

- \* This indicates those aspects already identified by the school either on the school development plan or in teachers' action plans.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

90

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	24	41	30	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	342
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	75

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	17	17	20
	Total	42	43	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (56)	74 (62)	79 (69)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	27
	Girls	18	20	18
	Total	44	46	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (64)	79 (69)	78 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	28	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	16	22
	Girls	20	14	22
	Total	38	30	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (76)	55 (67)	80 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	22
	Girls	19	15	19
	Total	38	35	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (74)	64 (76)	75 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	292
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	24.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	649,123
Total expenditure	621,643
Expenditure per pupil	1,566
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,420
Balance carried forward to next year	28,900

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	368
Number of questionnaires returned	120

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	36	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	53	7	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	48	8	3	2
The teaching is good.	59	37	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	43	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	35	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	43	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	47	0	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	45	2	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	45	6	5	12

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

- 73 Children start full time education in the school in the September prior to their fifth birthday. The school also has a nursery class where children attend either the morning or the afternoon session. Nearly all the children attend the school's nursery before joining the reception classes. During the inspection there were 96 children in the Foundation Stage, 52 of whom were in the nursery. The nursery is staffed by two nursery nurses. Each reception class has a teacher and two nursery nurses support the two classes.
- 74 The school's provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. The curriculum is well planned on the six areas of learning identified in the national guidance for children of this age. Teachers provide a wide range of experiences relevant to children's interests and needs. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those which children can explore for themselves. In language and literacy, however there is insufficient emphasis on providing children with opportunities for independent writing in the reception classes. The quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is good. Staff establish good caring relationships with the children and provide them with a secure environment. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. This has a positive effect on the good progress children make towards the nationally identified Early Learning Goals and provides a firm foundation for learning in the infants.
- 75 Plans are detailed with clear learning objectives linked to the national guidance for this age. Teachers make good use of themes to capture children's imagination, such as that of 'Cinderella'. This is used well to develop children's skills in speaking, reading and writing. In other areas, however, planning sometimes lacks a central focus. In mathematics, in particular, activities are not linked to a theme and do not always relate to children's interests and level of understanding.
- 76 A very informative assessment and record system exists that is linked to the planned activities and indicates children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Assessments of attainment in all areas of learning and personal development are carried out when the children start the nursery. These are used regularly to make sure that children's needs are met. The overall attainment levels of most of the children entering the nursery are slightly below those expected nationally. By the time children enter the reception classes, the majority are achieving standards which are in line with those of similar schools in the area, except in communication, language and literacy, where they are slightly below. This is confirmed by the initial assessment which takes place soon after the children are admitted to the reception classes. As a result of the good support they receive in the nursery and the reception, most children achieve well. They are in line to reach the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception year with a minority reaching them before they move into Year 1.
- 77 Arrangements for admitting children to the nursery are very good. A series of meetings and visits are arranged for parents and their children, so that everyone is prepared for and knows what goes on in the nursery. Parents have the opportunity to provide their own assessment of their child's development. Staff have prepared

various information sheets about what children are doing throughout the Foundation Stage and ways in which parents can support their child's learning. This provision successfully promotes the value of the education the child is to receive and establishes a very positive relationship with parents.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

78 Children make good progress. Most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development by the end of the Foundation Stage. The constant reinforcement of classroom routines ensures all children become confident and develop independence. The calm attitude displayed by the staff makes children feel secure. The children enjoy coming to school and have a positive attitude towards learning. This is shown by their good behaviour and their sustained application on one activity at a time. There are good relationships between staff and children, and between the children who share resources amicably when engaged in activities such as using the water area or taking part in role-play activities. Children in the nursery soon become familiar with the daily routines. When they arrive they select books to look at and join their group for registration before proceeding to an activity of their choice. In the morning reception children are told about the activities planned for the day. They take part fully in the life of the school. For instance, they attend assemblies, have lunch with older pupils and join in school outings.

79 Teaching is good. Children have opportunities to develop responsibility and independence such as choosing an activity or getting ready for a physical education lesson. At the end of sessions they are required to help with tidying up resources. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop sensitivity and awareness of other people, for example in the reception classes when they suggest ways of being kind to one another. Feelings such as being happy, sad, angry, scared, hurt and excited are effectively explored. Children are given opportunities to talk about these emotions. Instances of awe and wonder are handled appropriately, for example when nursery children observe their tadpoles turning into frogs.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

80 Children's development in communication, language and literacy is good in the nursery and good in some aspects in the reception classes. The majority are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children in the nursery recognise their own name which they read from a card at the beginning of each session. In the reception classes the majority write their name cursively and independently. They know the names of most letters and read simple sentences in their reading books. Less able children recognise a few important words. There is a good selection of books available to the children and they readily select a favourite to read. Most children can hold a pencil correctly and are gaining confidence in the very early stages of writing. Most form letters correctly and make up simple sentences to be written by the teacher. A few attempt to write their own sentences.

81 Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Children listen with enjoyment to stories. In the reception classes these are used effectively to develop a variety of skills such as recognizing words beginning with the letter 'w' or predicting what might happen next in a story. Teachers have good knowledge about how to teach children to read and form letters. Children made good progress in a session on letter formation because of the varied activities the teacher introduced, including 'writing' on one another's backs. Very skilful support as children concentrated on correctly reproducing the letter shapes ensured that children learnt the correct starting and finishing position of letters. Staff work hard to give children

the confidence to contribute to discussions. Children in the nursery confidently introduce themselves and talk about what they have been doing. In the reception classes skills are promoted well in group sessions. On occasions, however, staff miss opportunities to develop children's learning. This happens when children have chosen activities such as role play or the independent writing area. Adults are not sufficiently aware of moments when they can move children's learning on by a question, word of encouragement or help with a spelling. For instance, children in the writing area needed encouragement to think of what words to choose when writing about Cinderella. As an adult did not help them out with a suggestion most simply coloured in the picture and did not attempt to write. The writing area is not sufficiently well resourced with simple words that children can use to start a sentence. In general, teachers do not sufficiently encourage children to use the letter sounds they know to have a go at their own spellings.

### **Mathematical Development**

82 Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children in the nursery can already recognise and name simple 2-D shapes. They count confidently to 20. The more able children identify numbers to 10 and order random numbers to 5. By the time the children leave the reception class they are developing addition and subtraction skills, with the more able making and recording their own addition facts to 12. Children in the nursery play with a wide range of toys that increase mathematical understanding. They do practical activities using sand and water for measuring and capacity, weighing ingredients and baking biscuits. Opportunities to develop children's mathematical knowledge outside of designated activities are well used. In the nursery at the start of each session children count up to the number of children present, discussing the difference one extra makes. Reception children discuss the date each morning and add up the cost of a meal when engaged in Beach Party role-play. They count forwards and backwards while waiting to go into the hall.

83 Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall. In the nursery, it is sometimes too formal and not sufficiently linked to children's everyday experiences, for example when learning about shapes is not connected to actual objects. In the reception classes some of the direct group teaching is good but there is no focus to connect the different kinds of mathematical activities taking place. Opportunities are lost to enhance children's learning in this area. Activities are not always linked to the experiences being enjoyed by the children in other areas of the curriculum, especially literacy. Such a link would provide a more appropriate basis for mathematical learning than some of the activities observed during the inspection, for example when children were given games to play or tasks to do which were too challenging for them without adult intervention.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

84 Progress in this aspect of learning is good and most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this aspect by the end of their time in the reception class. Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. Care for and knowledge about living creatures is encouraged as children observe the development of spawn into tadpoles and, later, frogs. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, and talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. The celebration of festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year enhances children's cultural development, as do visits into the local environment to look at features such as the local church. Reception children learned a lot about the characters and events of the first Christmas through

their visit to Polesworth Abbey. Children in the nursery are interested in and can use the computer when supervised, and most have good control of the mouse. Children in the reception classes are developing other basic computer skills and use programmes confidently to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. They also use listening centres with much enjoyment.

- 85 Teaching is good. In the nursery interesting and exciting activities, such as examining a range of foods and discovering where items such as pineapples or prawn crackers come from, provide opportunities for smelling, tasting and comparing textures as well as expressing opinions about preferences. Vigorous physical activity provided an opportunity to talk about lungs and beating hearts and bodies becoming warmer after exercise. Well-planned activities in the reception classes increase children's understanding of magnetism and magnification.

### **Creative Development**

- 86 Children in the nursery and in the reception classes make good progress in developing their creative skills. Most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this aspect by the end of the Foundation Stage.

- 87 Teaching is good. Children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A wide range of materials of different textures is provided. Children have opportunities to practise skills such as painting, printing, cutting and pasting when they make models and pictures. Occasionally in the reception classes there is more adult intervention than is necessary when children engage in these activities. Children were confident in working independently to design and make a wand as part of their work on the 'w' sound. Children enjoy taking part in the good varied role-play situations provided. In the nursery children explore and play together in 'the three bears' cottage, using the equipment and resources creatively. Sand and water are available daily, with well-planned and stimulating activities to develop children's imagination and to extend their knowledge and understanding. Reception class children enjoy selecting and 'buying' a variety of foods for their beach party and re-creating aspects of the Cinderella story. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. In the nursery cooking activities such as making pizzas, are available regularly, enabling children to explore different tastes and smells of food. Reception class children develop observational skills reproducing the pictures and patterns on cereal packets. Children have opportunities for singing and making music with a wide range of musical instruments.

### **Physical development**

- 88 Progress in physical development is good and children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They have lots of opportunities to develop their manipulative skills throughout the Foundation Stage as they use scissors, tools, moulding materials, brushes and pencils in a variety of activities. Children in the nursery develop their skills of climbing and jumping when they use large and small apparatus in the enclosed area adjoining the nursery. They learn to control the way they move, and pedal tricycles with good control. They also have lessons in the school hall. One very good lesson was very much a fun activity and proceeded with an energetic pace. A variety of skills such as changing direction and using hoops to instigate different kinds of movements were developed. Children stayed on task throughout the lesson because they enjoyed it so much. Children in

the reception classes also enjoy their physical education in the school hall, showing their effective ball control skills and ability to find a space.

## ENGLISH

- 89 In the National Curriculum test for eleven year olds in 2000, the school's results were below average when compared to all schools nationally, and when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school towards the end of the juniors had a significant effect on the school's results. In the national tests in reading and writing for seven-year-olds in 2000, standards of attainment were well below national averages and they were also well below average when compared with similar schools. The school identified problems in the teaching of letter sounds, spelling and reading and has been working hard to put this right.
- 90 The school's results have risen in line with the national trend over the past four years. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in learning new skills, knowledge and understanding. In the current year, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level or above by the age of eleven is similar to the national average. The school should meet or exceed its target of 60 per cent of pupils achieving the nationally expected level.
- 91 By the age of seven, the proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in reading and writing are below national averages, but the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high (more than a quarter of pupils in Year 2 are on the Code of Practice register). Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, except for some pupils in reading. There are a significant number of pupils who have little support with reading at home and the school has not put in place strategies to compensate for this. Standards in the infants are beginning to improve because of the new initiatives the school has put in place. There is a greater focus on pupils learning letter sounds but there is insufficient attention paid to helping pupils using letter sounds as they read.
- 92 Since the previous inspection, against a background of considerable variation and change in pupil groups, the school has worked hard in a number of ways to improve standards:
- the national strategy for literacy has been implemented effectively;
  - planning has been developed through year group teachers planning together;
  - the quality of teaching has improved throughout the school, particularly in the management of pupils identified in the previous inspection as the main contributory factor to weak teaching in the juniors;
  - the quality of handwriting has improved and is now good;
  - there are effective procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress;
  - the head teacher and literacy co-ordinator have observed teaching and a very thorough system to monitor planning has been implemented.
- 93 By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils attain the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening. They make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. By the age of seven, the majority listen carefully to questions and instructions. However, a significant number have a limited concentration span so their attention drifts after a relatively short time. Pupils generally respond to questions appropriately but, on occasions, their replies are not relevant to the

question and few pupils express their own ideas unprompted. In Years 3 and 4, teachers have to remind a few pupils, most of whom are on the special needs register, to listen to them and the other pupils. By the age of eleven, most pupils listen attentively and take turns to contribute to discussions. For example, they discussed and evaluated each other's history work in a Year 6 class. They reply appropriately to teachers' questions and have a sufficient technical vocabulary to express their thoughts and ideas in most subjects. Most pupils speak confidently to a larger audience. However, some pupils find it difficult to add sufficient detail or expand upon their ideas.

- 94 Pupils' attainment in reading by the age of seven is below the national average. The majority of pupils develop a basic sight vocabulary and know how to use letter sounds or pictures to work out unfamiliar words. Lower attaining pupils use the first letter of a word when deciphering new words, but they are not secure on the full range of letter sounds or how to join them together, and this limits the progress they make in their reading. Pupils of average attainment can explain, in basic terms, the story of a book, but do not have a broad sight vocabulary so their reading is hesitant and disjointed as they often have to work out the words. They know the names of a few authors, such as Martin Waddell, whose books they have read in lessons. Teachers have not developed enough strategies to support pupils who learn to read more slowly and those who have little support from home. In contrast, higher attaining pupils read at the levels above those expected for their age. They are fluent and use punctuation and expression to give added sense and interest to the story. They confidently find specific information using the contents or index, and talk about the books they have read, their favourite authors and characters in the stories.
- 95 By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are achieving the expected level for their age. They develop a good range of strategies to get to the meaning of what they read. Most break down words into syllables and make effective use of the context of the passage. Pupils enjoy reading and can recount the significant ideas, events and characters in stories. Lower attaining pupils read at a steady pace, but with limited expression. They have good sight vocabulary. However, they do not read with sufficient understanding to deduce what might be the outcome from the writers' clues within the plot. Higher attaining pupils read good quality fiction of a more adult nature with fluency, expression and understanding. They cope well with the more complex narrative structures of these stories. Pupils' knowledge of well-known authors is satisfactory and out of school, they read a range of literature including magazines and children's novels. Pupils are confident enough in their research skills to use school resources and the Internet, but the lack of proper library facilities for junior pupils restricts their opportunities to do independent research. It also means that there is no focal point for teachers to make books and stories high on the agenda.
- 96 By the age of seven, too few pupils achieve the levels expected in writing for pupils of their age but, from a low starting point, they make satisfactory progress in developing their skills. As they move up the infant classes they develop their letter formation in a joined up style and begin to understand how to use capital letters and full stops to write in a series of sentences. The content of the writing is usually satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils extend their ideas in a logical sequence of events. However, their ability to write in a variety of styles is less well developed with most work being descriptive. Teachers have started to plan an extra session each week for extended writing to improve pupils' ability to write at greater length and with more meaning. However, teachers in Year 2 use too many worksheets during the

literacy lesson that ask pupils to fill in missing words, circle a correct word, or write a phrase or sentence. This approach has not been beneficial over the last year in helping pupils gain confidence and write with enthusiasm. Pupils spell simple common words correctly and make good progress in learning to spell.

- 97 By the age of eleven most pupils' attainment in writing is similar to the nationally expected levels. Currently, the majority of the oldest pupils write in a joined style and the quality of presentation is good. Punctuation is generally accurate. Most common words are spelt correctly, but some pupils make frequent errors that are uncorrected. All the pupils can vary the style of their writing to match the audience or subject. Stories are developed logically. However, the breadth of the language used and the limited use of complex sentences affects the impact that the writing has on the reader. This reflects the lack of emphasis that has been placed on developing broader writing skills until recently when the school recognised the need to give pupils more opportunities to do this. The extended writing lessons are beginning to improve the writing of younger pupils whose work is more expansive and complex. Information and communications technology is beginning to be integrated into literacy lessons which gives pupils good opportunities to present their work in an attractive format. However, throughout the school, and particularly in the juniors, the opportunities that displays of work can give to celebrate achievement are not fully exploited.
- 98 In the main, the pupils' achievements mirror the quality of the teaching of English, which is satisfactory. During the inspection 30 per cent of the lessons seen were good and 20 per cent were very good, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils and organise activities well. This has a direct effect upon the way pupils' behave and work in lessons. They concentrate well, listen carefully to their teachers and each other and follow instruction when asked to do something. They work hard on tasks and consequently most classrooms are positive places of learning. However, the noise from other groups is intrusive in Year 3 and 4, which sometimes makes hearing the teacher difficult. Teachers' lesson plans are detailed, but on occasions do not identify clear objectives for group activities. Consequently, these do not always provide opportunities for pupils to reinforce and practise what they have learnt in the whole class sessions. In the very good lessons, the group activities did this very effectively. For example, in a Year 4 lesson looking at adverts, each group activity was linked to the opening discussion about the key features of adverts. This ensured that the teacher was able to assess how well each pupil had understood the purpose of features such as the headlines, and pupils worked hard to create their own advert. The closing session was used very well. Pupils shared their work with each other and discussed how it could be improved further. Teachers mark work regularly, but do not use marking to set short-term targets for each pupil. This means that pupils do not have clear guidance about what they do well and how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They have very good relationships with pupils and support them well, so pupils with special educational needs are able to complete group tasks and to join in the lessons. However, their role is limited during the times when teachers talk to the whole class. On occasions teachers do not make sufficient use of the specific programmes of work for pupils with special educational needs when planning activities.

- 99 The subject co-ordinator has held the post for only a short time, but has a clear understanding of the areas that need further development. She thoroughly monitors teachers' planning and gives colleagues areas for improvement. She has given good guidance on the importance of using drama to develop pupils' speaking skills. Currently, the limited use of drama activities does have a negative impact upon how quickly pupils develop confidence in speaking and listening. Where it is used, for example in a Year 2 literacy lesson, when pupils acted out the story they had read in class, pupils enjoy it tremendously and develop much more confidence in expressing their ideas. The school has introduced a good range of tests and checklists to check pupils' learning, but not enough use is made of the information they provide. For example, reading tests are conducted termly, but these are not analysed with a view to identifying those pupils whose progress is slower than expected and who may need extra help or specific teaching programmes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 100 In the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds, the school's results were well below those of all schools nationally and those of similar schools. There has been an overall upward trend in the school's results since 1997, similar to that seen nationally. For three years the performance of girls has been significantly worse than that of boys who have, in fact achieved higher than the national average year on year. The school has not identified reasons for this difference in attainment between boys and girls. In the tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the results improved on the previous year, continuing an upward trend since 1998 but were still well below the national average.
- 101 The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and it is now running successfully. However, staffing changes have delayed the full impact of the strategy on certain groups of pupils, most noticeably in part of Year 6. There is a high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs and currently standards in Year 6 are below the national average. The situation is an improving one, in that pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 are achieving results in line with national expectations and a rising proportion of pupils exceed them.
- 102 By the end of Year 2, attainment is below the national average. There are a significant number of pupils who are achieving above the nationally expected level but there are also a large group of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 1, most pupils count sets of objects up to 20, organizing them in order from largest to smallest and identifying missing numbers in a sequence. In Year 2, pupils use addition and subtraction facts up to 20 in simple investigations, for example ensuring that each sequence of 4 numbers from 1 to 20, arranged along a rectangle, gives the same total along each side. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a working knowledge of money to £1, the calendar and time. The pupils with higher attainment can recall number patterns based on the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. They are familiar with block graphs, simple data handling, and two and three dimensional shapes such as triangles or cubes. There are, however, a significant number of pupils who need support when working with numbers above ten.
- 103 Year 3 pupils understand that division is the inverse of multiplication and can use facts from the multiplication tables to demonstrate this. In Year 4, pupils' knowledge and recall of the tables is increased to include the tables to 10 times. They multiply numbers together by partitioning. The higher attainers also understand the decimal equivalents of common fractions such as  $\frac{1}{2} = 0.5$ . In Year 5, pupils study angles and can measure them with a protractor. They use mathematical vocabulary, such

as isosceles, right angle or degrees correctly. They can calculate mentally the difference between a given two-digit number and 100. Year 6 pupils understand the concept of a simple formula and can use it to calculate the areas of rectangles. Their good mental recall enables the higher attainers to use decimal fractions in an investigation to find as many combinations as possible to length and breadth for a rectangle of given area, e.g.  $24\text{cm}^2 = 6\text{cm} \times 4\text{cm} = 96\text{cm} \times 0.25\text{cm}$ .

- 104 In all classes, the quality of learning is good overall and pupils' work, which is usually well presented shows evidence of sound achievement. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and persevere to complete their work. In the best lessons seen pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of their teachers and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for appropriately in teachers' planning with suitable tasks and good quality additional support from both teachers and classroom assistants.
- 105 The quality of teaching is good overall in both the infants and juniors. In the juniors, there were a number of very good lessons, and one unsatisfactory lesson. In the best lessons teachers managed very well pupils who had some difficulty controlling their own behaviour, had high expectations of pupils' mental and written work and planned in detail the lesson activities. They used their own assessments and the school's formal records to match work closely to their pupils' needs. As part of whole school organisation, pupils are placed in ability sets within two year groups. This arrangement enables a closer match of teaching to pupils' needs and also helps ensure that both higher and lower attaining pupils have appropriate teaching. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teachers' expectations of pupils were not high enough. The work was not well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities, classroom management was less successful and the pace of the lessons slowed, resulting in pupils making unsatisfactory progress.
- 106 The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and enthusiastic. He has been in post two years and has contributed well to the development and management of the subject. He, together with other members of the management team, use time when they are released from lessons to monitor teaching, planning and pupils' responses in the subject. Assessment of the subject is developing well. It includes analysis of the national tests at the end of each key stage, annual tests taken by the other year groups and teachers' own tests. A means of ensuring that the knowledge from this data assessment is fully utilised in all teachers' planning is also not fully developed.
- 107 The subject meets statutory requirements. Resources for the subject are good. Numeracy equipment has been audited and appropriate purchases made. The previous report stated that greater quantities of number equipment needed to be purchased and that displays of pupils' mathematical work should be improved at Key Stage 2. Both these issues have been addressed. The displays seen throughout the school are lively and well presented.
- 108 Standards at the time of the previous inspection were described as average in both infants and juniors. However, results were well below average in the National Curriculum tests at the end of that year. The work seen during this inspection has shown evidence of improvement especially for higher attaining pupils in the infants. However, because of the large proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs in Year 6 at the time of the inspection, and the changes to senior staff, the improvement is showing most in Year 5 where standards are as expected for that age.

## SCIENCE

- 109 The pupils' performance in the national tests in 2000 for eleven year olds matched the national average. This was similar to the standards at the time of the previous inspection. Over a four-year period the school's results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend. Teacher assessments for seven year olds year in 2000 found standards well below the national average.
- 110 Currently the attainment of eleven year olds at the end of Year 6 is below average. The drop in standards can be explained by the significant number of pupils in the year group who joined the class at a late stage. The attainment of seven year olds is also below average. This year group has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Both these explanations are relevant, but do not explain the full picture. Curriculum planning in the past has depended too heavily on presenting pupils with factual information and insufficient time has been spent on developing pupils' understanding through investigation. There has also been some inaccurate assessments, and pupils' previous achievements have not been taken sufficiently into account. This has been changed or is in the process of being improved. Currently, there is a good balance of work and pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In Years 1, 4 and 5, progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support in group work. In the juniors, work is generally well modified to support their needs although, on occasions, the amount of challenge is pitched too low.
- 111 By the age of seven, pupils have begun to learn that investigation is needed in order to find out answers to questions. For example, in a much enjoyed series of lessons on plants, in which the pupils looked carefully at seeds before planting them, the teacher asked the pupils if the size of the seed was related to the size of the plant that would grow from the seed. Pupils all gave an opinion but then decided that they could not know until their plants had grown. The teacher missed the opportunity to develop their thinking and knowledge further because she did not ask them for suggestions about how they could fairly test this out. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils are given opportunities to sort, classify and look for different properties. In Year 1, for example in a very good lesson on sorting leaves by their characteristics pupils achieved the level of understanding above expectations for this year group. By the end of Year 2, pupils have satisfactory knowledge in much of the programmes of work, except those relating to scientific enquiry. This is because work in the past has not been planned sufficiently well against the targets set in the National Curriculum, and activities do not increase sufficiently in difficulty as pupils move up the school.
- 112 By the age of eleven, pupils have again covered the range of work expected, including the processes of scientific enquiry that are detailed in the National Curriculum. However, their understanding of these processes has been limited by the fact that teachers directed too much of the enquiry process. This limited their creativity and desire to think things out for themselves. Work is done as a whole class group, or smaller groups working with adult support. Teachers often provide interesting experiments, such as the one carried out to prove that 'fire needs air because of the oxygen in the air'. In this investigation, pupils watched as the flame of a candle in a jar extinguished as the oxygen was used up. Whilst this experiment needed to be conducted with an adult present for safety reasons, pupils did not generate their own questions about what would happen and, most importantly, did not find reasons for their suppositions. Currently in Years 4 and 5 pupils are making good progress because teachers have identified aspects of scientific enquiry.

Teachers plan ways in which pupils develop their understanding of this key aspect whilst carrying out investigations into the full range of contexts in the National Curriculum. As always, when work is well structured but there is an element of choice, pupils become keenly interested and often push their own learning beyond that planned by the teacher. This was clearly seen in a science lesson in Year 4, when a pupil noticed an aspect about his evidence on plant growth that they were presenting as a line graph. This had not been thought of by the teacher and the pupil explained it with confidence to the group.

- 113 The teaching of science is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, 91 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and 54 per cent were good or very good. In all lessons, teachers provided pupils with good practical activities in which they could observe either living things or materials, according to the topic being covered. Teachers know the content of the science programme of study well but some are not fully confident in using the methods which develop pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry. Sometimes this is based on weaknesses in planning. For example in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to sort various seeds into groups. Pupils found it difficult to identify categories other than the colour and size. After the activity pupils did not manage to make independent explanations for the basis of their groupings, and so did not fully achieve the expected level for understanding classification. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils learnt to sort and classify leaves by their shape, size, smell, leaf indentations and other criteria. They identified these criteria themselves. The success of the lesson came about because the items to be sorted naturally belonged to identifiable groups which fitted the planned objective for learning. By the end of the lesson pupils achieved the level expected at the end of Year 2. In Year 5, teachers planned an investigation, which pupils found very interesting. It was relevant to their learning and they could see the purpose of their investigation and so were able to make correct suggestions about how to ensure that what they were doing was fair. They tested loops of paper strung on a rod by putting on an increasing number of weights. They did this well and identified for themselves the one variable which they would change. They did miss the fact that there was another variable but in effect this did not detract from the good learning that took place. During this lesson, safety had to be observed and the teacher gave most of the instructions as to how to carry out the test. The excitement and consequent learning came about because the teacher allowed pupils to think out part of the process for themselves. On occasions, teachers spend too long on explanations at the start of the lesson and pupils have insufficient time to learn from the practical activities provided. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils of lower attainment became restless and disinterested because instructions were too specific and lengthy. The teacher did not give them the opportunity to puzzle things out for themselves, and as a result their learning was unsatisfactory because they lost interest.
- 114 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. A good policy and organization of year group planning to cover the areas of the National Curriculum are in place. An identification of scientific vocabulary and terms has been drawn up for each year group, which would be useful if linked to different topics. There is however, insufficient mid-term planning to ensure that teachers identify appropriate key objectives for each series of lessons to build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Assessment activities are carried out at the end of blocks of work but there is too much disparity between teachers' judgements because of the lack of guidance on what level pupils should achieve. The science co-ordinator left the school earlier in the term. The deputy headteacher has taken over the co-ordination of the subject. She has extensive previous experience and

qualifications in science teaching. She has already begun an audit of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision, and has good plans to continue the development of the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 115 Only one art lesson was observed, owing to the organisation of the curriculum at the time of the inspection. An analysis of the work on display provided sufficient evidence to judge that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Attainment is in line with national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 116 Pupils in the infants gain experience in using a range of materials including, paint, crayon, pastels, moulding materials and textiles. By the time they are seven, pupils have gained confidence in using a range of techniques. Observational drawings of plants and butterflies by Year 1 pupils already show attention to detail, such as shading and reproducing the markings on butterflies' wings. Attractive seasonal collages demonstrate skills such as cutting, pasting and making use of various textures. Compositional skills are displayed in pleasing arrangements of natural materials such as shells, pebbles and sand after pupils' attention was drawn to how the environment can be used to stimulate creative work. Lively pictures of things which are alive and not alive show satisfactory paint-handling skills. Year 2 pupils' pencil drawings of features in the playground show an ability to respond to depth and perspective. A drawing of a shelter is particularly impressive.
- 117 Pupils in the juniors have been introduced to a wide variety of artistic styles and methods from different times and cultures. This is a particular feature of the schools' art curriculum and is used well to promote pupils' artistic skills. Year 6 pupils, using as a stimulus posters depicting African tribal culture, make face masks with papier-mâché and paint. Their study of Tudor Times has included examining some of the realistic portraits by the artist Holbein. Pupils have reproduced these effectively using 'pouncing', a method of copying portraits used in Tudor Times. Year 5 pupils have made imaginative masks using collage in the style of those worn by actors in ancient Greece. Year 4 pupils have experimented with the visual elements of pattern, texture and shape to produce good quality 'dragon' pictures after examining some of the work of the Spanish architect Antoine Gaudi. They have also copied Celtic designs and medieval illustrative writing, using shade and tone to give their pictures shape and form. Year 3 pupils have drawn and painted striking figures based on the non-representational, but dynamic, stylised art of the ancient Egyptians. They further explored the art of this period through a study of the practice of enlarging skills for painting, making canopic jars from a moulding material, and printing, using Egyptian motifs. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities for making drawings and sketches based on close observation. Good quality drawings of exotic fruits by Year 6 pupils and plants by Year 5 pupils show an understanding of line, tone, and shade, and the skills to adapt these successfully in their drawings. Year 6 pupils have successfully explored texture shape and form by making a variety of paper containers. They decorate them with different materials that include sand, beads and sequins, and assess their use and appearance.
- 118 Throughout the school finished pieces of work are well displayed to show the range of techniques used and to value the efforts made by the pupils.

- 119 Teaching in the one lesson observed was very good. Year 5 pupils produced good examples of close observational studies of their own arrangements of various artifacts, using media of their choice. The teacher's secure subject knowledge, use of appropriate methods and very good relationship with pupils ensured a positive learning environment with pupils wanting to achieve. Very good organisation and clear explanations enabled pupils to know exactly what was required. They made very good progress in their ability to draw still life.
- 120 There is satisfactory leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The difficulty presented by the two sites, however, places limitations on her ability to give guidance to colleagues in the juniors. The co-ordinator is collecting a portfolio of pupils' work. This will be useful in establishing the levels of progress being made in the subject throughout the school. The school is in the process of reviewing the scheme of work and is aware of the need to ensure progression in the development of skills. The subject contributes very well to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 121 Standards at the ends of both key stages are in line with national expectations. They are similar to those found when the school was last inspected. Pupils' learning and achievements are satisfactory as they progress through the school including for those pupils with special educational needs.
- 122 In the infants, pupils design and make paper puppets with moving parts and simple joints, and draw and prepare fruit and vegetables. Year 2 pupils create decorated textile designs and apply them to cushion covers. They also design and construct simple mechanisms using ideas taken from favourite stories, for example a winding mechanism to enable the pussycat to be rescued from the well.
- 123 Teachers in the juniors use design and technology to support other subjects such as history and science. Year 3 pupils have used dough and paint to make 3D models of Egyptian canopic jars. They have been introduced to more detailed evaluation in a lesson comparing three types of sandwiches. Pupils in Year 4 build models of Saxon houses using card, thin wooden frames and adhesives. They have also created some interesting miniature garden designs and co-operated in groups to construct them. Year 5 pupils created designs and models inspired by their studies of ancient Greece, whilst Year 6 pupils have designed and built simple moving vehicles consisting of a wood-framed chassis with the wheels powered by an elastic band.
- 124 Overall, the quality of the finished work is good and the designs imaginative although some projects do not allow pupils enough challenge to extend and develop their ideas. Pupils enjoy their lessons and usually learn well in their classes. They modify their designs and persevere to make their model work or complete a project.
- 125 In the lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory overall with some good lessons in both the infant and junior classes. Teachers use their subject knowledge and skills effectively to discuss and to demonstrate techniques, with an appropriate emphasis on safe usage of tools and equipment. Teachers plan lessons well and show imagination and interest in the choice of topics many of which are very relevant to pupils' interests. Resources are organized appropriately so that they are accessible during lessons. Teachers create a safe, supportive atmosphere for pupils to complete their work. On occasions, lesson do not provide pupils with enough

opportunities to make their own decisions about their plans and how they should proceed with their work.

- 126 The subject is managed satisfactorily by the newly appointed co-ordinator. She is undertaking a review of the policy and schemes of work to ensure that pupils have the subject's skills taught to them in a manner appropriate to their ages and abilities and that the school can monitor this process to check on pupils' standards and progress. Resources seen in the school are of good quality and sufficient. There has not been a recent audit of resources. The information from this could be used to ensure that the new requirements of the National Curriculum can be fully supported.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 127 Standards in geography are below those expected for seven and eleven year olds. At the time of the last inspection standards were higher. The drop in standards is attributed to more time being allocated to literacy and numeracy at the end of each key stage and insufficient time being allocated to geography.
- 128 The plans for work in Years 1 and 2 does not reflect the breadth of study demanded by the National Curriculum. Year 2 pupils name the countries which make up the United Kingdom. They make plans of their classroom and suggest ways of improving the school grounds. However, analysis of their work shows that, while pupils are given an initial introduction to environmental matters and aspects of their locality, their work is not developed in sufficient detail to extend their geographical knowledge and skills. Insufficient attention is paid to comparing or contrasting the local area with one further afield.
- 129 For older pupils the amount and quality of provision for the subject varies in different year groups. Pupils in Year 6 are knowledgeable about aspects of the limited number of geographical topics covered in the current year but have failed to retain a certain amount of the skills and information learned previously. For example, although they are aware that different weather conditions exist in different parts of the world, they were unable to give examples of what these might be and where they might be found. They described the water cycle well, and described how rivers might be formed and some of their attributes, but their understanding of the effects of rivers on landscapes was limited. They have studied features of their own local area but have not had opportunities to compare it with any other area. In Year 5, pupils study a wider range of geographical topics develop their skills well. They make very good progress in independent work, such as analysing evidence and suggesting geographical questions. For example, in their study of India, they discover that there are three seasons, and use this information as a basis for finding out why this should be. Analysis of work indicates that the very little geography done in Year 4 is related to mainly factual information, and investigative skills are not sufficiently promoted. The work done in Year 3 is well presented. It demonstrates that pupils are gaining satisfactory knowledge and skills using their immediate locality. They have made a plan detailing land use in Tamworth. Their work also shows a growing awareness of places beyond their own locality. They use maps to locate the countries that make up the United Kingdom featuring some cities, rivers and mountains. They use a line graph to show differences in temperature between London and Cairo.
- 130 Teaching is generally satisfactory. Good aspects are the clear explanations and opportunities provided for discussion. Year 5 pupils made very good progress in a lesson developing enquiry and research skills. They worked well with partners

finding information about the Indian climate. Very good relationships ensured very good pupil response. The teacher emphasised the importance of analysing information and posing questions to develop further knowledge and pupils responded very well to this challenging task. The success of this lesson reflects the fact that pupils in this class are used to working with their teacher in this enterprising and challenging manner.

- 131 The co-ordinator is developing the present scheme of work and is keen to introduce elements of the national scheme. She is very enthusiastic but has not had opportunities to monitor children's work or the teaching of the subject. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy. Pupils have opportunities for discussion and write accounts of their investigations in their own words. The internet is used well for research and numeracy skills are developed when pupils record findings in graphical form.

## HISTORY

- 132 Discussion with pupils, analysis of pupils' work in books and displays and lessons observed with older pupils show that standards are in line with those expected for seven and eleven year olds. A comprehensive variety of topics is covered and the key elements of the subject are appropriately developed. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 133 By the age of seven, pupils develop enquiry skills and an understanding of past and present when they compare school lunches now with those in the 1950's, and their own toys with those of their parents. They examine the diary of Samuel Pepys to enhance their knowledge of the Great Fire of London in 1666. Year 1 pupils also develop their understanding of what life used to be like when they study holidays in the past, and what hospitals were like in the time of Florence Nightingale.
- 134 Between seven and eleven, pupils increase at a satisfactory rate their knowledge about life styles through the ages. All classes make good use of secondary sources to engage in research using the Internet, books and videos. Interesting activities and an extensive range of visits give pupils a genuine feeling for the life of particular times. Year 3 pupils, in their study of the Egyptians, take on the role of journalists writing accounts of the discovery of Tutankhamun's Treasure Tomb for 'The Egyptian Times' of 1922. They also act as time detectives, examining change in objects of ancient Egypt and today. Year 5 pupils make masks of the type used in Greek theatre and their knowledge of the ancient Greeks is enhanced by a visit to a local center. They dress in appropriate costume to take part in dramatic and other activities of the time. A study of fashion in the 1970's and 1980's, and music throughout recent decades, increases their knowledge of more recent history. Year 6 pupils have studied an extensive range of topics related to Tudor Times. Their study of the voyages of Christopher Columbus and John Cabot provides useful links with geography. A visit to Stratford makes them more aware of William Shakespeare and they subsequently make a comparison between him and the modern writer Roald Dahl.
- 135 No teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. For older pupils the teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons start well because teachers share the learning objectives with their pupils and help them to recall previous learning. This effectively consolidates their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a clear idea of what the pupils are to learn. The time at the end of lessons, when the class gather together, is used well to reinforce learning. However

there are weaknesses. Occasionally, pupils lose interest because the work they are given is too challenging or because the lesson goes on for too long. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were required to write an account of the reasons why the Roanoke settlement failed and what problems the settlers faced. This involved the challenging task of recalling, selecting and organising historical information obtained in a previous lesson. The pupils made very good progress in their learning because of the teacher's very emphatic approach, which ensured a thorough recall of the facts, and clear explanations of what was required. Pupils' knowledge of this venture was good because previous work had included a dramatisation of what their own feelings would be on setting up in a new country and establishing a life thousands of miles from home.

- 136 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' development in speaking and listening. Analysis of work shows that it also makes a good contribution towards writing skills as pupils express their learning and ideas in their own words. Year 5 pupils take on the role of children evacuated away from their parents in World War 2 and show their understanding of events, empathising with their feelings and reactions as they write letters home. Good use is made of the Internet to research information about different periods in history. Visits to places such as the Roman site at Wall and the visit to Tamworth Castle also help pupils to learn about the past and enhance the work undertaken. Book resources for the subject are good but the school has too few historical artefacts that can be used to extend pupils' research skills.
- 137 Overall subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard, updating the policy and scheme of work but her role is insufficiently developed at present. She has only recently had access to the planning done by the year groups and no opportunities to look at pupils' work throughout the school. This has now been identified as a priority. Future plans for the subject include looking at lessons and monitoring the standard of pupils' work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 138 The previous report showed that standards in information and communication technology were in line with expectations. Since 1997 there has been an improvement in the standard of pupils' work and now, by the age of eleven, pupils are achieving standards above expectations. By the age of seven pupils are achieving in line with expectations. In the infant classes pupils do not have the benefit of the use of the computer suite and this has meant that, despite good teaching, they have only made satisfactory progress, whereas in the juniors progress has been good.
- 139 Year 1 pupils access programmes independently. They move the cursor to where they want to work on the screen and correct mistakes, usually without help. They know how to put capital letters and full stops in their sentences on the screen. Year 1 pupils use a clip art program to 'take their paintbrush for a walk' and paint different shapes on the screen. A group of four Year 2 pupils used a publisher program to design a book cover. Another group of eight more able Year 2 pupils worked in the computer suite with their teacher learning how to send e-mails to each other. During the summer term the school has arranged for all Year 2 pupils to visit the junior building and experience working in the computer suite. Infant pupils will have more access to computers on a regular basis when the new computers, now on order, are delivered.

- 140 By the end of the juniors pupils have developed their ability to work on computers individually and in pairs very well. Most pupils can enter information, change fonts and colour, and use clip art to improve their work. Year 4 pupils enter instructions to program a 'turtle' on the screen to make a flower pattern. They entered a series of instructions correctly to make exciting patterns. Another group of Year 4 pupils showed how they had used their computer to construct a questionnaire about rides on a pleasure beach, which they intended to use to collect data and present it in graph form. Year 5 pupils use computers to create a fact sheet connected with their study of the ancient Greeks. They create borders, change colour and reposition text and objects in different parts of the screen. As well as using the Internet to find information about America, Year 6 pupils were very interested in making a film. They appointed an actress and a director, and watched with great interest as the pupils made the short film. Plans were made to allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to have the opportunity to take part in this activity in future lessons.
- 141 The quality of teaching seen was never less than good and, in two fifths of lessons, it was very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology, and their skill at handling the equipment have improved since the last inspection. They support pupils through demonstrations, explanations and by asking and answering questions to probe pupils' understanding. Care is taken when pupils are working together to make sure that all are participating equally. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make use of computers to support and enhance other areas of the curriculum. In most classes, teachers manage pupils well and make good use of the time available. All this combines to motivate pupils well. Such motivation is evident from the way in which pupils work hard and enthusiastically.
- 142 The leadership and management of the subject has been very good. The previous co-ordinator, who left the school at the end of the last year laid very good foundations for the subject and was instrumental in providing very good staff training. Since September 2000 the deputy headteacher has continued to co-ordinate the subject well. Records of pupils' work is held on file on computer and each pupil can access their file. This provides teachers with a good overview of how well pupils are progressing. There is clear guidance to ensure that work builds on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Few of the pupils have computers at home, except for those on which to play games. In consequence, most of their experience is gained in school and homework does not contribute to any great extent.

## **MUSIC**

- 143 At the time of the previous inspection all class lessons were taken by visiting music specialists, who ensured that high quality lessons were available for all pupils. However, as the class teachers used this time as non-contact time for curriculum development, few of the music skills were reinforced or developed thus slowing down progress. Since the previous inspection this has improved considerably.
- 144 Pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and eleven in music is good. A significant number of pupils exceed national expectations. Pupils' progress and learning, including for those with special educational needs, is never less than satisfactory and often good in individual lessons because the teaching is good. Visiting teachers provide high quality tuition and encouragement but the school's own staff are now

responsible for a larger part of the classroom teaching, particularly in the juniors. This is a significant improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection.

- 145 Pupils in Year 1 use the theme 'Morning Town Ride' as a vehicle for their musical studies. They sing in a tuneful and lively manner and can use both tuned and untuned percussion to capture in musical sounds the emotions of the story line. They can respond to the instructions of louder and softer, learn and perform simple rhythms and melodies and can give individual performances to their class group. They also learn about famous composers and their music, for example Debussy.
- 146 In Year 4 pupils study the emotional content of musical compositions, linking, for example, Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' to the viewers' feelings and emotions as suggested by the music. They compose and perform some simple rhythms of their own and take part in the critical discussion that follows. Year 6 pupils use correctly a wide range of musical vocabulary. They analyse simply various rhythms and their time signatures, and perform co-operatively and individually in front of their peers. The pupils enjoy their music. They sing well in assemblies. Those who learn an instrument (violin or 'cello) provide an enjoyable and well-executed contribution to school assemblies and other celebrations.
- 147 Music has a specialist room which, while useful for small group practices or singing, is rather small for whole class instrumental work and tends to get rather hot in the warmer weather.
- 148 The subject is well led. The recently appointed co-ordinator, together with colleagues, has begun revision of the subject policy. The school is carrying out trials of a new scheme of work,. This has yet to be reviewed or monitored to make sure that there is the required balance between the different elements of learning. Teachers assess pupils' attainment against the objectives of each lesson but as yet the school has not put in place a simple system to record this. Resources for the subject are of good quality and quantity, and are well maintained and stored.
- 149 Musical activity is a very positive feature of school life and is much appreciated by parents. Assemblies have their own worship programme, which includes regular opportunities for singing, instrumental work and listening to music. The headteacher and other staff present the music of the week together with details of the composer and the year of writing. Music from other cultures is regularly featured. Year 6 pupils also visit the high school Christmas presentations and other musical events.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 150 During the inspection, pupils were observed in gymnastics, dance, athletics and games lessons. Overall standards of attainment are as expected nationally at the end of both the infants and juniors, although there are many examples of above average attainment by some pupils in most classes. Although overall standards have not improved since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the consistency of pupils' progress in the juniors. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Attainment in swimming is satisfactory, with most pupils being able to swim at least 25 metres by the end of the juniors.
- 151 Year 1 pupils work well together to send and receive balls of different sizes and weights. Pupils complete a variety of simple but interesting games, which help them develop their skills in a most enjoyable way. Year 2 pupils enjoyed their first lesson in games played outside. They worked in teams, learning to move in a variety of ways while bouncing the ball. They learn how to obey the instructions as well as enjoying the element of competition with their friends.
- 152 In the juniors, pupils continue to make good progress in their physical development. The school makes very good use of its playing field, which affords excellent facilities for athletics in the summer term. The two Year 4 classes work very well together and all groups are given equal opportunities to experience a wide range of athletics activities including jumping, long and short distance running, relay races and hurdles. Year 5 pupils practise long jump and throwing skills. They appraise each other's performance and suggest how improvements could be made. Year 6 pupils were given the task of choreographing a series of dance movements set to very exciting music based on the idea of an alien. After an appropriate time to practise, the groups were keen to perform the dance routines they had planned the week before. This gave pupils opportunities to work collaboratively, which was said to be lacking in the last report. At the end of their performances the generous applause of their friends helped boost the pupils' self esteem.
- 153 Pupils' attitudes to these lessons are good. They clearly enjoy the opportunity to engage in physical activity. Almost all behave well, even when they have to sit still, to listen to the teacher or wait their turn to demonstrate. They all change quickly and quietly without fuss and follow safety rules well, clearly understanding the need to warm up and cool down before and after exercise. They co-operate sensibly in pairs and small groups, and use their initiative and imagination creatively.
- 154 The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers always dress appropriately. All have a secure knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the subject and of all safety issues, for example keeping ball games away from the busy road. In most lessons, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. Teachers demand constant effort from all the pupils in order to extend their movements beyond a satisfactory level. Teachers build assessment strategies into lesson planning and use these to check progress.
- 155 The co-ordinator has improved resources, which are now good. There is a plentiful supply of small apparatus for games, which is well organised and readily available to all staff. There is a policy and the scheme of work is due to be finalised before the beginning of the next academic year. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 156 Pupils aged seven and eleven are attaining standards similar to that expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' learning is good and pupils with special educational needs are well supported, so that they progress in their learning in line with their ability, either as a result of work which is adapted to suit their needs or by additional help from their teacher or support worker. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- 157 By the age of seven, pupils reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding. They learn about the Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and harvest. Year 1 pupils visit a local church and write a list of questions to ask the vicar. In one lesson observed they developed the concept of caring by thinking about the need to look after their pets properly. As part of their work on the festival of harvest, Year 2 pupils make a collage of all the good things they have to eat. They write prayers thanking God for food, and write about their favourite foods. At the end of the lesson the pupils were pleased to talk about their collage and other pupils read their prayers about thanking God.
- 158 By the age of eleven, pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of different faiths. Year 3 pupils know what a mosque is and why it is important to Muslims. They learn about people who affect our lives, and study the story of the creation of the world. Pupils in Year 4 explore the theme of 'belonging', which is a part of a study of pattern and order. They discuss order in their lives in a very sensible way, making many interesting contributions to the debate. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher introduced a version of The Lord's Prayer. Pupils were invited to expand on a line of their choice and, after a good discussion, enjoyed the challenge, bringing into their work examples of their own personal thoughts and experiences. Year 6 pupils were very keen to show their excellent display on the subject of 'My Hindu Faith'. They had done this work in preparation for their forthcoming residential visit. when they will meet with a group of pupils from a school in Burton-on-Trent who are mainly of the Hindu faith. They were sensitive to the importance of knowing something of the religion, culture and traditions of their new friends. This work gave excellent support to the pupils' understanding of other cultures.
- 159 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They show interest by being attentive in lessons and by confidently offering views and opinions. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons. Replies to questions are thoughtful and relevant. Pupils are well motivated, and work in groups, with minimum supervision in most classes. They respect each other's work and take care of resources.
- 160 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, with one lesson judged to be excellent, three very good and one good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use precise, specific language in their discussions with the pupils in order to increase their vocabulary in a structured way. At the end of lessons pupils are questioned and encouraged to respond, using the newly acquired words correctly, so demonstrating that they have learned and understood the specialist language. Teachers interest and motivate the pupils through the provision of a wide range of activities, so that pupils can build on earlier learning. Year 2 pupils enjoyed eating the food provided by their teacher to celebrate 'The Gathering'. Teachers introduce lessons with sensitivity and incorporate questioning well to stimulate thought and to capture the interest of pupils. Planned observation and discussion are regarded as important means of

assessment. Teachers use discussion in the subject as another way of improving pupils' skills of speaking and extending their English vocabulary. Lessons are well planned and include support staff, who help some pupils who need support for particular activities. Group work is carefully planned so that the activities are sufficiently challenging and motivating, and match the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils.

- 161 Co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and has worked well to implement the locally Agreed Syllabus, and organise staff training. Resources to support the teaching of the subject have been improved. They are now good. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to spirituality and the good ethos in the school. Formal assessment is at an early stage of development.