

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITTINGTON C OF E (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whittington

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123549

Headteacher: Mrs Melanie Wood

Reporting inspector: David Penney

23039

Dates of inspection: 20-23 May 2002

Inspection number: 196295

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Whittington Near Oswestry North Shropshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rector David North
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23039	David Penney	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Design and technology.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9958	Timothy Page	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27324	Daphne Crow	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Art and design; Music; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11528	Mike Wainwright	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Special educational needs; English; Geography; History.	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Whittington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves a large rural parish east of Oswestry in Shropshire. It is an average sized infant and junior school with 205 boys and girls on roll, aged from four to eleven years. There are more boys than girls, especially in Reception and in Year 3. Nearly all pupils are of white ethnic origin: one has English as an additional language. Thirty nine pupils, which is broadly average, are on the school's register of special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties. Of these, three have statements of special educational need, which is in line with the national average. Twenty four pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is similar to the national average. Most pupils attend the nearby playgroup before entering this school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception Class has, over time, been markedly below the authority's average but is average for this year, although there is a broad spread of ability. The school is part of the Northwest Shropshire Education Action Zone, set up to address matters of rural deprivation. In recent times, the school has experienced increasing difficulty in recruiting teachers with specific areas of expertise.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, giving good value for money. Pupils make good progress in the Reception Class, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. This gives them a good start and is a crucial factor in their good behaviour and sound levels of achievement throughout the rest of the school. The quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is supported well by key members of staff, who share a common determination to improve the school's work still further.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards are above those expected nationally in history throughout the school and in art and design in the infants.
- Teaching and learning are good, overall, especially in the Foundation Stage, where children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- The information gained from annual tests in English and mathematics is used well to identify areas for further improvement.
- There is a strong partnership between the school and parents, who appreciate what is being done for their children.
- Teachers share a common determination to improve the work of the school still further.
- Aspects of leadership and management are very good, particularly the headteacher's effectiveness, the governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the application of the principles of best value.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The precision with which teachers identify what they intend pupils to learn in a lesson.
- The way that assessment information is used to set tasks that are matched closely to individuals' developing needs and extend their skills and understanding, including the quality of marking.
- The range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of independence, enquiry and investigation, especially in mathematics and science.
- The range of opportunities for pupils to write at length in some classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997, since when it has improved at a good rate. All the key issues of the last report have been addressed conscientiously, although work remains to be done on improving aspects of teachers' planning and on devising manageable systems for assessing pupils' attainment and achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history and information and communication technology have risen. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved significantly, which has improved the progress they make overall. Provision in design and technology, and information and communication technology has improved significantly, the latter through additional input from the Education Action Zone. The leadership and management of the school are setting higher expectations and a clearer steer to the work of the school, which has resulted in more consistent application of agreed systems and procedures.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	C	D	D	<i>well above average</i> A
mathematics	B	C	C	D	<i>above average</i> B
science	B	C	E	E	<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were below the national average and that for similar schools in English, and well below them in science. In mathematics, their results were below the average for similar schools but matched the national average. In all tests, a high proportion of pupils did not achieve the levels expected nationally for their age and too few attained the higher levels, which adversely affected the overall results. Over time, results are improving at broadly the same rate as the national trend, although the table above appears to suggest the contrary. In schools of this size, each pupil in a small cohort represents three or four percent of the whole and results can appear more volatile than they actually are. In the Year 6 cohort in 2001, a significant number of pupils were on the school's register of special educational needs, with particular difficulties in reading. In addition, a considerable number had either left or joined the class

since the end of Year 2 and, on balance, the attainment of those joining the school was lower than that of the pupils they replaced. Analysis of the results of those who had been in the school since Year 2 shows that their progress had been very good in reading, good in mathematics and satisfactory in writing. The school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics in 2001: it is likely that they will meet them in 2002. The findings of the current inspection are that children enter the reception class with a range of attainment that, this year, is broadly average. They achieve good results, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, and are on track to meet, and in a number of cases exceed, the standards expected nationally by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils' standards in Year 2 and Year 6 broadly match those expected nationally in all subjects, except art and design in the infants and history throughout the school, where standards are above those expected. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory. Nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment, although there is room to improve the provision for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry and investigation in order to ensure that all pupils achieve the best results that they can.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are eager to learn, especially when stimulated by the content of the lesson. About half of the pupils take part in the extra-curricular activities run by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in and around the school. Pupils are well mannered and courteous to adults and each other.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory personal development. Most pupils accept responsibility willingly and carry out their duties diligently. Relationships are good and pupils are caring towards each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory and close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage, good in the infants and satisfactory, overall, in the juniors. There are, however, examples of very good teaching in all key stages and of excellent teaching in one junior class. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is always at least satisfactory and is often good. The teaching of English, science, geography, information and communication technology, music and physical education is satisfactory throughout the school, as it is in art and design in the juniors and design and technology in the infants. Teaching is good in mathematics and history throughout the school and in art and design in the infants and design and technology in the juniors. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught soundly, although pupils' numeracy skills are not used well enough in science. Increasingly effective use is being made of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects. Throughout the school, relationships are good and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of those pupils to whom they are assigned. Weaknesses in the way that teachers use assessment information and plan their lessons mean that there is not

enough precision in each lesson about what individuals are to learn in order to ensure that all make the progress that they could. The most effective lessons are those where the teacher has addressed these matters and, consequently, pupils work at relevant and interesting tasks that motivate them to work productively in response to enthusiastic and challenging teaching. Less effective lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge to enthuse pupils. Sometimes, pupils' behaviour is not managed well enough to ensure that they listen satisfactorily, which has an adverse effect on their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, overall, but good in the Foundation Stage where it is more relevant to the developing needs of individual pupils. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. All pupils are fully and appropriately included in all the school has to offer. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their independence or to write at length and extend their skills in mathematics and science in some classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school identifies individual pupils' needs at an early stage and plans achievable targets for improvement for them. All resources are targeted to where they are needed most.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Effective because of the very caring and sensitive way that needs are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory, overall. It is good for pupils' moral and social development but there is room to provide more opportunities to promote pupils' independence. Pupils are not prepared for life in a multi-cultural society fully enough.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection procedures are good, as are those for promoting good behaviour. The school is a safe and orderly environment. Pupils' progress is assessed and monitored well in English and mathematics and it is now timely to extend this process to other subjects.

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. Parents are very pleased with what the school is doing for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The headteacher has been very effective in raising standards and improving the school's ethos: she has a good vision for the school and directs its work with sensitive determination. She is well supported by key staff, who discharge their responsibilities conscientiously. Teamwork is good and there is a common desire to improve the work of the school still further, including aspects of subject leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They discharge their statutory duties diligently and have a very good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Financial management is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The results of annual tests in English and mathematics are used well to identify and address appropriate areas for improvement. The evaluation of teaching is frequent and focuses well on areas of weakness. It has yet to become fully effective in driving up standards. The school development plan sets a good agenda for continuing improvement. The principles of obtaining best value are applied very well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All available finances are used effectively for the purpose intended. Spending is clearly prioritised towards raising standards.

There is a satisfactory match of staff to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources are good but aspects need improvement for the youngest children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • Their children are expected to work hard. • Their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school is led and managed well. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or questions. • They are kept well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework.

The inspection team, overall, agrees with nearly all of the positive points made by parents. However, the teaching in the juniors, overall, is only satisfactory and the pace of learning in a number of lessons is not as swift as it might be. The team judges that the amount of homework is satisfactory for a school of this type and that the range of activities outside lessons is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the national tests in 2001, Year 2 pupils attained standards in reading that were in line with the national average but were just below the average for similar schools because too few pupils achieved the higher levels. In writing and mathematics, however, their results were above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. These results were an improvement on those of the previous years in all subjects but especially in mathematics.

2. In the same year, pupils in Year 6, a high proportion of whom had special educational needs (SEN), attained standards that were below the national average and that for similar schools in English and well below them in science. In mathematics, their results were below the average for similar schools but matched the national average. In all tests, a high proportion of pupils did not achieve the levels expected nationally of their age and too few attained the higher levels, which adversely affected the overall results.

3. However, in schools of this size, great care should be taken when interpreting statistics. Because each pupil in a small cohort represents three or four per cent of the whole, results can appear more volatile than they actually are, merely because one pupil attains this level rather than that one. It is important, therefore, also to look at the trend in results over time, which, in this school, is improving at broadly the same rate as the national trend. The school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics.

4. This phenomenon is illustrated by the apparent decline in standards in the national tests for Year 6 pupils. In the Year 6 group in 2001, a significant number of pupils were on the school's register of SEN, with particular difficulties in reading. In addition, a considerable number had either left or joined the class since the end of Year 2 and, on balance, the attainment of those joining the school was lower than that of the pupils they replaced. The school's analysis of pupils' achievements indicates that the progress made by those pupils who had been in the school consistently from Year 2 until Year 6 had been very good in reading, good in mathematics and satisfactory in writing.

5. The findings of this inspection are that the attainment of most children on entry to school in the current Reception Year is broadly average. However, data shows that attainment on entry has been significantly below the local average for the last three years with areas of specific weakness varying from year to year. In the Reception class, achievement is good, overall, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. All children achieve at least satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment. As a result, on entry to compulsory education in Year 1, nearly all are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals¹ in the six areas of learning². However, a number of older and higher attaining children achieve well and are working within the lower levels of the National Curriculum in communication, language and literacy and in the numeracy aspect of mathematical development. Standards of personal, social and emotional development are above those expected because of the careful support structures and caring relationships in the class.

¹ The 'Early Learning Goals' are the standards expected nationally of children as they enter compulsory education.

² The six areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

6. Because children are admitted to the school on three occasions each year, in accordance with the local education authority's (LEA) policy, the youngest children do not achieve as highly as their older classmates as they have spent less time in the class before entering Year 1.

7. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment in nearly all subjects, including the core ones of English, mathematics and science. They achieve well in art and design and history because of good teaching. In information and communication technology (ICT), their recent achievements have been rapid because of the improved facilities now available to the school. As a result, pupils' standards in art and design and history are above those expected of seven year olds. In reading, writing and mathematics, their standards are close to the national average. In all other subjects, their standards match those expected nationally.

8. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment. For the reasons stated in the previous paragraph, achievement in ICT has recently been good. Pupils in Year 6, therefore, attain average standards in English, mathematics and science, although pupils' scientific skills of enquiry and investigation are below average. In other subjects, standards are close to those expected nationally, except in history where they are above those expected. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory.

9. Pupils with SEN make progress at a rate similar to that of their peers throughout the school. This is due largely to teachers having a clear view of the pupils' needs and providing good personal support in lessons. The school has very recently begun to set group targets for the pupils it identifies as 'more able', very few of whom are working at levels significantly above those expected of their age nationally. The child for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is making very good progress in acquiring language because of the totally inclusive nature of provision in the class.

10. In each pair of parallel classes, there are differences in the overall effectiveness of the teaching which results in some pupils achieving better results than pupils of the same age in the other class. In particular, variations in expectations and in the quality of teachers' marking have an adverse effect on the achievements of some pupils. In many classes in the school, pupils' skills in writing at length or of using their mathematical and scientific knowledge are not as high as they could be because teachers do not consistently provide opportunities to develop them fully.

11. The school has set targets for attainment in the national tests in English and mathematics for this Year 6 group of pupils at 75 per cent. These targets appear realistically challenging and are likely to be met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have good attitudes to school: this is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection. They are eager to learn, especially when stimulated by the content of the lesson, and readily settle to work. They quickly develop enthusiastic attitudes in the infants department and these are generally maintained throughout the school. Most pupils take an interest and help in the smooth running of the school by undertaking a variety of jobs, and approximately half of the pupils are involved in activities outside formal lessons.

13. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are courteous to each other and develop an open and constructive rapport with teachers and other adults who work in the school. They take care of their possessions and treat the school's resources and buildings with respect. There have been no recent exclusions.

14. Relationships are good. Pupils say that there is little bullying or oppressive behaviour and this is confirmed by the very few incidents recorded by the school. Pupils fully appreciate the needs and feelings of others, and are very caring. In a Reception/Year 1 class, one pupil not only showed great personal concern for a friend who was becoming anxious, but also alerted the class teacher who gave reassurance.

15. Older pupils demonstrate that they reflect profoundly on events unfolding well away from their school or village. In a Year 5/6 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, one pupil was moved to say that he felt guilt after learning of the plight of those caught up in the Malawi famine. Whilst there are few first hand opportunities for mixing with people from other cultures, it is clear that pupils show genuine concern for all vulnerable people and this is often reflected in the international relevance of the charities which the pupils choose to support.

16. Most pupils respond well to being given responsibility, and show themselves to be reliable and trustworthy, but opportunities to develop initiative are often limited, especially in classroom discussion and independent work. A school council has recently been established and pupils' own ideas, such as the framing of class rules, are taken into account. Pupils also publish their own newspaper, '*The Whittington Gossip*'. The school is planning for its pupils to become more involved in aspects of decision-making.

17. Pupils with SEN have positive attitudes to school and to learning. They are rarely seen misbehaving and enjoy good relationships with their peers and with adults. The consistent promotion of good manners and appropriate behaviour by staff has a positive impact on the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. They are fully included in all activities.

18. Attendance continues to be satisfactory, being close to the national average, and the overwhelming majority of pupils are punctual.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage, good in the infants and satisfactory, overall, in the juniors. There are, however, examples of very good teaching in all Key Stages and of excellent teaching in one class in the juniors.

20. Teaching and learning were observed in 45 lessons. Of these, one was of unsatisfactory quality and 17 were satisfactory. Fourteen lessons were taught well and ten were very well taught. In three lessons, all in one class in the juniors, the quality of teaching was outstanding, with a consequent highly beneficial effect on the rate of pupils' learning.

21. Teaching is never less than good in the Foundation Stage: two-thirds of lessons were taught very well. Lessons are planned carefully, with good use being made of the information gained from continuing assessment to plan further work to meet individual children's needs. The teaching assistant makes a very good contribution to learning in this class and the strength of the teamwork between her and the class teacher is such that all children receive consistent messages about what is expected of them. This is especially effective in nurturing children's personal, social and emotional development and in creating

good attitudes to work and each other, which form the basis of the school's ethos. Expectations are high and children are managed exceptionally well, with the result that they make at least sound progress in all aspects of their learning and especially good gains in their personal, social and emotional development. The child for whom English is an additional language (EAL) benefits greatly from the warm and caring provision and is included fully in all activities, with the result that she is achieving good results in relation to her prior attainment.

22. Almost two-thirds of the teaching seen in the infants was of good or better quality. In the juniors, just under half the lessons seen were good or better, with all the very good and excellent teaching and learning being in one class. There is a difference in the quality of teaching between classes in each pair of parallel classes. This has a consequent effect on the learning of pupils in those classes. Currently, the school does not monitor the achievements of pupils with this factor in mind to ensure that they receive equal opportunities to make progress over time, irrespective of which class they are in.

23. The teaching and learning of English, science, geography, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education are satisfactory throughout the infants and juniors, as they are in art and design in the juniors and design and technology in the infants. In mathematics and history, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching and learning are also good in art and design in the infants and in design and technology in the juniors. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught soundly, overall, although pupils' numeracy skills are not used well enough in science.

24. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the new ICT suite to support work in other subjects and they invariably use the time assigned to them for that purpose. During the inspection, teachers made good use of pupils' ICT competences in lessons in English, science, art and design and geography. However, the computers sited in classrooms are not now used as effectively as they were because teachers are finding that time in the ICT suite is more useful in meeting pupils' needs. Nevertheless, some pupils use the class computers to reinforce their learning in, for example, mathematics.

25. Throughout the school, relationships are warm, which means that pupils are confident and willing learners. Teaching assistants give good, sometimes very good, support to the individuals and groups to which they are assigned. Liaison between the teaching assistant and the class teacher is open and helpful.

26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good. Where teachers have additional support, particularly for pupils with statements of need, the pupils benefit much from the close and caring supervision. Occasionally, when lesson plans do not identify exactly what pupils with special educational needs are to do that is different from their peers, tasks are insufficiently matched to pupils' different abilities and so these pupils' progress is slower than it might otherwise be. When there is no additional support, the teacher works hard to support many individuals. However, many, especially younger pupils, lack secure reading and writing skills and an ability to work independently, which means that some have to wait their turn for the teacher and do not achieve as well as they should.

27. The school has recently identified pupils who are more able and has compiled a register to begin to address their needs more fully: this is appropriate but has yet to have a significant impact on their learning because of the weaknesses described in the next three paragraphs.

28. Only a minority of lesson plans identifies with sufficient precision exactly what it is that individuals or groups of pupils are to learn in that lesson. As a result, it is not possible to judge accurately how successfully an individual pupil has achieved what they were supposed to accomplish. This has a consequent adverse effect on how well teachers can plan future lessons to meet the developing needs of each individual.

29. Teachers' marking of pupils' work, while regular and accurate, only rarely gives them ideas about how to improve their standards. In addition, it is evident from the comments made in pupils' books that teachers do not always circulate when pupils are working to ensure that they are working productively or are able to complete the task. On occasion, teachers write in books that they require pupils to complete or correct their work: pupils often do not comply and no further comment is evident.

30. Where teaching and learning, although often judged satisfactory overall, are less effective:

- The same task is given to all pupils with little consideration of their different needs, resulting in pupils who are either not challenged by the activity or who are unable to answer fully.
- The pace of lessons is 'comfortable' and levels of challenge are not high enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should. For example, the final plenary sessions of lessons are often not used effectively to extend pupils' learning, as in an art lesson in Year 3/4. In this lesson, the teacher talked too much herself and did not encourage pupils to give their opinions and evaluate their own efforts.
- Teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough to ensure that all pupils are productive enough, as in a science lesson in a Year 1/2 class. In this lesson, the constant need to ensure that a small minority of pupils were paying attention and behaving appropriately meant that many other pupils could not be given enough attention to make sure that they achieved all they could.
- Questions tend to be phrased so that pupils are able to answer in single words or short phrases, which does not give them the opportunities to speak at length. In addition, teachers tend to accept the first correct answer they receive, sometimes when it is inappropriately shouted out. As a result, they lose opportunities to challenge pupils and to extend their learning. In a science lesson in Year 5/6, for example, the teacher used questions soundly to ensure that all pupils were included in the discussion but did not probe understanding by asking supplementary questions, such as '*Do you agree?*' or '*What do you think?*'
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not high enough.

31. Where teaching is most effective and learning is swift:

- Teachers make good use of the results of their assessments of how well pupils' skills and understanding have developed to plan work that is closely matched to the needs of individuals and groups within the class. This is a feature of the teaching in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers plan tasks that pupils find relevant and interesting and this helps them to concentrate and to work productively. An example of this was an ICT lesson in one Year 5/6 class in which pupils started to design a PowerPoint presentation about their science work to deliver to their classmates.
- The pace of lessons is swift and unremitting, for example in a design and technology lesson in a Year 3/4 class, which ensures that pupils concentrate well and work hard.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and how they should behave and listen. Consequently, levels of challenge are high and teachers direct

questions so that all pupils are included in the lesson. When this happened in an English lesson in a Year 1/2 class, one could have heard a pin drop as the teacher set the scene for pupils' writing tasks.

- Teachers are enthusiastic and show very good subject knowledge. As a result, they intervene purposefully, ensuring that pupils are productive. They answer pupils' questions promptly and address their problems swiftly, ensuring that they can complete that part of their work before being challenged further with new or amended tasks.

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

32. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is planned effectively in accordance with national guidance in all six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; creative development and physical development. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good and gives children a very good foundation for their future development. The child for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is fully included and well integrated in all activities.

33. The curriculum for pupils in the infants and juniors is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, with an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics, and meets statutory requirements. There are satisfactory policies and long and medium term plans in place for all subjects and the school has implemented national guidelines for most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, short-term or daily planning is not sufficiently precise in identifying what pupils are intended to learn in a lesson and, consequently, some pupils do not achieve the standards they might.

34. The school has adopted the national strategies for numeracy and literacy satisfactorily. Teachers are confident enough not to adhere too rigidly to the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy but apply it as best fits the needs of the pupils. However, they do not consistently give pupils sufficient opportunity to write at length to ensure that they extend their writing skills. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are used soundly in other subjects but there is room to improve the way they are utilised in science and to increase the challenge to all pupils through the provision of suitable investigations.

35. In science, there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' skills of enquiry and scientific accuracy to a high enough level, especially in the juniors where pupils do not attain high enough standards in this aspect of the subject.

36. The Education Action Zone (EAZ) has made a considerable contribution to the development of information and communication technology (ICT). The new ICT suite and improved resources have greatly enhanced the curriculum for this subject, and pupils now have good opportunities to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. As a result, pupils' standards are now rising rapidly. The planning of work for design and technology has improved since the last inspection and pupils' standards are higher than they were at that time. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good throughout the school and they have full access to the curriculum.

37. A good range of activities outside lessons enriches the curriculum. Pupils participate in a number of sporting and other activities after school, such as drama, craft and cookery clubs. At lunchtime, pupils can do cross-country, play the recorder or work on the school newspaper. For appropriate logistical reasons, these are often limited to specific year groups, but all pupils get the opportunity to participate during their time in the school. All pupils are involved in school productions each year and Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to Arthog. The school makes good efforts to ensure that all pupils are involved, as appropriate, in all that it has to offer.
38. The school makes satisfactory provision for the personal, social and health education (PSHE) of all pupils each week. However, there is no scheme of work to enable the curriculum to be developed year on year. Drugs awareness and sex education are provided in Year 6 only and are not developed systematically throughout the school.
39. The school has satisfactory links with the community. Pupils undertake visits to places of interest, which are mainly linked to the topics being undertaken. For example, Years 3 and 4 visited Chester as part of their work on the Romans and Years 5 and 6 visited Shrewsbury as part of their work on the Tudors. Visitors to the school such as artists also enrich the curriculum. The school has satisfactory links with the schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6 and with the playgroup that the majority of pupils attend prior to their admission to the Reception class.
40. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory and makes an appropriate contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. This is broadly similar to the findings of the last inspection.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies generally offer a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on their lives and on issues affecting the lives of others. In an assembly observed during the time of the inspection pupils listened to a story around the theme of '*friendship*'. They reflected on how friendships sometimes change as you grow older but soon realised that this is just part of life and is not necessarily a bad thing. Although discussion times, called circle times, have been introduced throughout the school in order to give pupils the opportunity to discuss emotions and feelings, they are sometimes too dominated by the teacher, and many pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to participate fully in the discussion. Occasionally, opportunities in lessons are well used to engender a sense of awe and wonder in pupils. In a good art lesson observed, the teacher generated a sense of wonderment in the pupils as they gazed at '*A Portrait of a Lady with an Ermine*' painted over 600 years ago. In an ICT lesson, pupils were thrilled and amazed when they saw they were able to paint pictures on the screen. However, spiritual development is not planned for sufficiently and is generally not a strong feature of lessons.
42. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. The school has a clear set of values that teach the principles of right and wrong. These are implicit throughout the daily life of the school and spelt out clearly to all pupils. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to each other are good and they are usually well behaved. Sometimes, pupils have appropriate opportunities to consider the wider aspects of morality, such as September 11, or environmental issues.
43. There is good provision for pupils' social development. The good example set by adults in the school encourages the development of positive attitudes and generally good social behaviour. Pupils work together to set class targets and to formulate rules to maintain a safe and happy environment for themselves. Older pupils take on additional responsibilities, such as accompanying the younger pupils to church or taking responsibility for carrying out routine tasks around the school. Pupils are also encouraged to help those

less fortunate. During Harvest Festival, they collected produce to give to the Leonard Cheshire Home. On many occasions during the inspection, pupils throughout the school were observed collaborating and co-operating together in lessons. Participation in the wide range of clubs and activities helps pupils to develop their social skills. Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to participate in residential visit, which further promotes their personal and social development. The school has recently established a school council where pupils discuss and make decisions about matters that affect them. However, this has not yet been in operation long enough to have sufficient impact on their social development.

44. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Much of the stimulus for this comes through religious education, art, music and literacy lessons. Pupils enjoy learning about the major world religions and show respect for the faith of others. In literacy lessons, they study a wide range of books and poetry written by a variety of authors and poets. In art and design, pupils study the work of well-known artists and in music they learn about famous composers. Visitors into the school, such as poets and artists, and visits out of school, such as to museums, enhance pupils' cultural development. The school encourages due respect for people of other cultures and their lifestyles but there is no systematic promotion of the multicultural nature of our society.

45. The school's assemblies engender a sense of community within the school and make an appropriate contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school continues to make good provision for the welfare of its pupils, as it did at the time of the previous inspection. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and arrangements for regular risk assessment and safety checks are in place. Child protection procedures are good: members of staff have received recent training, and secure links have been established with support agencies.

47. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum emphasises the importance of personal safety. Older pupils have the opportunity to hear speakers from the police and from Railtrack and they take part in a 'Crucial Crew' activity. The school nurse assists with sex education for pupils in Year 6.

48. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the monitoring and promotion of good attendance. Registers are kept well, and weekly monitoring identifies emerging patterns of absence. Whenever concerns arise, the school makes effective use of its links with the education welfare service, which provides appropriate support. Parents are reminded of their responsibilities through the home/school agreements and in other communications from the school.

49. Expectations of good behaviour are implicit within the school's ethos and are well supported by the school's systems of progressive rewards and sanctions. These systems are well understood by pupils and lessons are rarely disrupted due to unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour policy is clear and its effective procedures include the early identification of problems and rigorous monitoring. Pupils are set clear parameters as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour when they enter the school and behaviour

management is good throughout the school. A clear anti-bullying policy that gives appropriate guidance to staff. Pupils are confident that they can confide in teachers if problems arise. As a result, pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are good and there have been no exclusions in recent years.

50. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well, and house points and certificate awards are recorded in classrooms. Teachers keep assessment files with details of pupils' personal development, and more formal and regular recording takes place if there is a particular need. A satisfactory summative record of progress and achievement is included in pupils' annual reports.

51. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good, overall. A range of tests and assessments is in place in English and mathematics. These show the level at which pupils are working and track their progress through the school. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to carry out thorough analyses of the test results so that any weaknesses can be highlighted. The information is used soundly to provide both individual and group targets in mathematics and writing. It is also used to select pupils who need additional support in booster groups. As a result, many pupils achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment.

52. Attention is now being paid to assessment in science and ICT but in other subjects assessment is mostly informal. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory, overall, although they do not provide a clear view of pupils' progressive acquisition of skills and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics.

53. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) maintains a very clear register of all pupils. Their problems are identified at a very early stage and action is taken to address their needs. Individual education plans (IEPs) and group plans are good: they are written clearly with specific and attainable targets. The support given by designated assistants to those pupils with specific statements of need is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Parents generally hold very positive views of the school and all those who completed their pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that their children like school. Other very strong areas of agreement include good teaching, high expectations, leadership and management, good behaviour and a feeling of comfort about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Inspection findings support these views.

55. The inspection team has reservations about the reporting of pupils' progress and about the encouragement of independent learning and classroom discussion but agrees that pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. Inspectors are satisfied that the homework set is appropriate for the age of the children but have reservations about the consistency with which it is recorded and marked, especially the reading done at home. There is a good variety of extra curricular activities, including school trips.

56. The quality of information is good and has improved significantly. However, although pupils' annual reports give a clear account of the work covered and provide advice and targets for improvement in English and mathematics, there is no reporting of standards against national expectations to help parents judge how well their children are doing in school. The school now publishes a very informative termly newsletter, which carefully

maps out the curriculum being followed for each year group, and provides an effective guide for parents to give appropriate support at home. Parents also receive a wide range of good quality information leaflets outlining the work to be covered, with a particular recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy, health issues, and attendance.

57. Parents have been fully consulted about the home/school agreements, which are reviewed annually: the overwhelming majority of pupils and parents signify that they are in agreement with the school's objectives. This is exemplified in their positive attitudes towards the school and the good contribution they make to their children's learning, for example through the efforts of the 'Friends of Whittington School', a parent-teacher body that raises a good amount of funds for the school.

58. The links between the school and parents are good, which has a positive effect on the work of the school. There are regular and frequent meetings to discuss the progress of individual pupils, which parents find very useful. The 'Friends Association' organises social events and raises funds for the school. It is also effective in feeding back parents' opinions to the school. Recent fund raising has supported the development of the computer suite and provided playtime resources for the pupils. Teachers are available to talk informally to parents at any reasonable time, which is appreciated.

59. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved in the framing of their child's individual education plans (IEPs). They are invited to any reviews of progress for those pupils and are nearly always supportive.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's management and development. Since her appointment, soon after the previous inspection, she has been very effective in improving the ethos of the school, as well as establishing consistent structures and raised expectations. This has had a beneficial effect on pupils' standards in both personal and academic terms and has resulted in a good rate of improvement since the last inspection. Her evaluation of the work of the school is founded securely on direct observation and the analysis of quantitative data, where possible, which gives her a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development.

61. She is supported fully by the deputy headteacher and key co-ordinators, which ensures that the school's aims are effectively translated into practice. In this school, each teacher holds multiple responsibilities. The deputy headteacher gives satisfactory support to the headteacher. Key personnel co-ordinate their departments and subjects well. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and of information and communication technology (ICT) are especially good. The efficient co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) has a clear overview of her responsibilities. She is well acquainted with and is implementing the new Code of Practice. The special needs register is well maintained. Teamwork is good throughout the school, which means that the school is well placed to improve its effectiveness still further. All the administrative demands being made on the school are being dealt with effectively and conscientiously.

62. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The prospectus is very comprehensive and informative, and good performance management systems are securely in place. The chair of the governors has been highly influential in improving the governing body's effectiveness and works well with the headteacher. All business is diligently and effectively carried out through a comprehensive system of committees.

63. The governors have very good systems for gathering information about the quality of provision and are very well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The termly reports from the headteacher are informative and detailed. Some governors visit the school each week, sometimes visiting classes to an agreed schedule, meeting co-ordinators and talking to staff and pupils. The curriculum committee receives reports from the co-ordinators for subjects, such as English. Through these means, the governors are very well informed about both the standards pupils attain and the progress and achievements they have made. Their understanding includes a full appreciation of the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils: they have been suitably involved in formulating and reviewing the behaviour policy.

64. Financial management is very good. Educational spending is well planned and prioritised. Many of the governors have relevant expertise and this expertise has been effective in improving the school's financial position since the last inspection. In addition, through prudent management they have accrued sufficient contingency funds to ensure that planned developments would be able to go ahead. The principles of best value are applied very well, so that over the past five years a deficit budget has been reversed and many cost-effective improvements in the fabric of the school have been achieved. They now evaluate the impact of spending decisions on raising standards in appropriate ways.

65. The school's finances are administered efficiently, which was recognised in the last audit. Funds are secure, procedures are clear, and information to assist senior management in making decisions is accessible. Spending is tracked on computer and compared with the school's spending intentions, and checks are in place to show that specific grants are being used appropriately.

66. The school monitors and evaluates its work well. The school development plan has improved markedly since the last inspection. It is now a thorough document that sets a good agenda for continuing improvement. Current priorities are firmly based on areas perceived to need attention as the result of national initiatives, rigorous evaluation of assessment information, observations of teaching and learning and the continuing maintenance of the building. Appropriate personnel are identified to monitor the implementation of priorities but it is not always clear enough who is responsible for evaluating the impact of the actions taken on improving standards or provision.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the headteacher and key stage co-ordinators frequently. The analysis of performance information in English and mathematics is good. Evaluations of the quality of teaching are crisp and lead to appropriate targets for improvement that are fed back to teachers, forming the basis for training, as needed, and subsequent monitoring. This gives the people involved a sound understanding of standards and provision. Although, so far, the school's efforts have focused sensibly on English and mathematics, it is now timely to extend this process to other subjects. In addition, evaluations of the impact of teaching on learning have not addressed with sufficient rigour the disparity in effectiveness of teachers in parallel classes so as to bring all practice up to the standard of the best seen during this inspection.

68. The headteacher is strongly committed to the professional development of all staff. All professional training is focused on the priorities identified in the school development plan: for example, many members of staff have been on a five-day mathematics course to improve their personal expertise. Good induction procedures are in place for staff new to the school. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. The headteacher reports increasing problems in finding teachers of sufficient quality for some specialist subjects and to cover for staff absences.

69. The accommodation is good. The school is clean and is well maintained. Good displays, most frequently in the infant and Foundation Stage areas, enhance the pupils' environment. The new ICT suite is a valuable addition, achieved through the combined efforts of the school, the parents and the Education Action Zone (EAZ), whose input into this area of the school's work has been most beneficial. The new fiction library is computerised and is an example of the effective way in which the school uses new technology. Children in the Foundation Stage do not have a secure area in which they can develop their physical skills. In addition, the hall is small and poses some problems when pupils are having indoor physical education lessons, especially for the older and larger pupils.

70. Resources for learning are good, overall, especially in English, mathematics, design and technology and ICT, as well as in the Foundation Stage, in spite of the weakness identified above.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. To improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- Identify in teachers' plans precisely what it is that they expect individuals and groups of pupils to learn in each lesson and how this is to be assessed.
(Paragraphs: 26, 28, 30, 33, 94, 108, 122, 137)
- Improve the way teachers use the information gained from assessment, including the marking of pupils' work, to set consistently challenging tasks that meet all pupils' needs and to develop their skills and understanding more fully.
(Paragraphs: 10, 22, 29, 30, 52, 55, 96, 97, 104, 124)
- Develop pupils' skills of independence, enquiry and investigation, particularly in mathematics and science.
(Paragraphs: 8, 10, 16, 23, 26, 30, 34, 35, 55, 89, 102, 106, 109, 116, 119, 121, 123)
- Ensure that pupils are given opportunities to write at length more consistently throughout the school.
(Paragraphs: 10, 34, 88, 92, 93)

72. Other issues that should also be considered are:

(Paragraphs: 44, 52, 66, 67, 69, 86, 96, 100, 103, 111, 113, 121, 124 and in sections for the Foundation subjects)

- Developing manageable assessment procedures in those subjects where they are currently lacking.
- Ensuring that full provision is made to enable pupils to appreciate the multi-cultural nature of society.
- Improving the part that co-ordinators play in accounting for the standards and provision in their subjects.
- Improving the outdoor facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	14	17	1	0	0
Percentage	6.7	22.2	31.1	37.8	2.2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	8	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (78)	96 (90)	92 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (70)	92 (78)	92 (70)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

NB. The numbers of boys and girls attaining the expected levels have been omitted to avoid a breach of confidentiality, as the number of girls in the cohort was fewer than 11. This is standard practice in all inspection reports.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	24	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	77 (82)	74 (76)	84 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	8	14	14
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	19	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	63 (76)	77 (76)	81 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	204
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	408 202.00
Total expenditure	418 104.00
Expenditure per pupil	2 040.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	34 257.00
Balance carried forward to next year	24 355.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

190
48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	44	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	61	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	48	13	4	0
The teaching is good.	44	54	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	50	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	65	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	46	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	61	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	48	17	0	25

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. The school admits children to school in three stages, at the start of the term in which they reach their fifth birthday. This results in the youngest, summer-born children having only one term in the Reception Class, which has an adverse effect on their overall achievement. They have very little time to benefit from the good provision that the school makes for children in the Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 children in the Foundation Stage.

74. Baseline assessment administered by the school when children first join indicates that their attainment is broadly average, though it has been below the local education authority's (LEA) average for the last three years. Areas of specific weakness have varied from year to year.

75. Improvement since the last inspection has been considerable. Overall, children, including those with special educational needs (SEN), make good progress. Higher-attaining and older children make rapid progress. Children in the Foundation Stage attain satisfactory standards overall. By the time they enter Year 1, virtually all children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. A good number of children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics and higher-attaining children are likely to have achieved Level 1 in English and the numeracy aspect of mathematics. The very good relationships between the staff and the children in this class and the effective teamwork of the adults result in children achieving high standards in personal, social and emotional development.

76. This area of provision is led and managed very well. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The teacher makes good use of continuing assessment procedures to provide children with work that is closely matched to the needs of individuals and groups within the class. The teaching assistant provides very good support and makes a positive contribution to the children's learning. The management of pupils' behaviour, learning and wider needs is exceptional.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. This is a very strong area of learning. Many children, especially those that have been in school for the longest time, achieve standards above those expected for their age and set a very good example to the youngest children in the class. Virtually all children achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1 because it is given a high priority by staff. The quality of teaching is very good and the children make very good progress in developing personal and social skills. Relationships between the staff and the children are very good and the children respond well to the high standards set for them. The child for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is fully included in all activities and, as a consequence, is happy, settled and achieving well.

78. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for simple day-to-day tasks such as taking the class register to the office. Children's confidence and self-respect develop very well and members of staff help them to develop a clear sense of what is right and what is wrong. Children play and work well together. A good example of this was observed during a practical session in the school hall related to mathematical development. Without any fuss, children organised themselves in numerical order and quickly formed a large circle when required.

79. Children show interest in all aspects of their work and are keen to participate. They concentrate well when working in a group with an adult, or when working at a task independently. However, occasionally, insufficient account is taken of the needs of the youngest and/or lower-attaining children during long whole class teaching sessions, which results in them losing concentration. Children learn about their own culture and beliefs and develop a sound awareness of other cultures and sensitivity towards those with different beliefs. The children are provided with good opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder. For example, in an observational drawing activity children were intrigued by the pattern of the veins on leaves. In a session in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite, children were amazed and delighted by the pictures and patterns of flowers they had produced on the screen.

Communication, language and literacy

80. As a result of very good teaching, children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills. The child with EAL is well integrated in all activities and is making good progress in acquiring language. A significant proportion of children achieve high standards. Most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1. Many children are likely to be working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English, with higher-attaining children at Level 2.

81. Children are consistently encouraged to use the correct language and to extend their vocabulary. As a result, they learn to express their thoughts and feelings clearly in sentences. During the inspection, children were developing their communication skills through role-play activities in 'The Garden Centre', which is related to their current topic. They take turns in conversation and in expressing their thoughts. Many children are developing a real confidence in talking about things that interest or concern them. Virtually all the children enjoy listening to stories and the whole class sharing of big books, such as 'Where's My Teddy?' during literacy sessions helps them to develop expression in their reading. They understand and use correctly terms such as 'title', 'front cover' and 'author'. Most children recognise a good number of familiar words and some read a simple book confidently, using picture and letter-sound clues to help them with unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining pupils use punctuation to help them to develop expression in their reading. They talk knowledgeably about what is happening in the story and have sensible ideas about what might happen next.

82. Good opportunities are provided for children to write and many of the children make good attempts at writing a simple sentence without help. During an activity session, a group of children were writing information books describing how they planted and were growing broad beans from seeds. One child wrote, without support from an adult, '*it starts with a seed*' and '*wen it gets warter it will grow*'. Children generally form letters correctly. The teaching of letter sounds is very good. Consequently, most children know the sounds of the letters and spell simple three letter words correctly. Higher-attaining children apply their knowledge of sounds very well when undertaking independent writing. They spell a good

range of familiar words correctly and make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling more difficult words. They are taught a good range of songs and rhymes, which helps them to associate sounds with patterns in rhymes and letters in words. Children's written work is marked satisfactorily. However, it is not sufficiently annotated to show clearly the learning that has taken place and to inform effectively the next steps for children's learning.

Mathematical development

83. Overall, children achieve average standards in their mathematical development. However, a significant proportion of pupils achieves above average standards in their ability to handle numbers. Most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of their Reception year. The teaching of mathematics is good and generally children of all abilities make good progress. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of number skills and children make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment in this area. Many children are working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum in number, and higher attaining children are working towards Level 2. For example, they solve simple number problems using mental calculation and recognise some number sequences, such as odd and even numbers.

84. Teachers make effective use of day-to-day activities to reinforce and develop children's understanding of number. During registration, for example, they work out how many children are present by deducting the number absent from the total of children in the class. Sometimes practical activities are used well to develop children's knowledge and understanding of numbers. This is particularly effective with the younger and lower attaining children. In a very good lesson observed during the inspection, children were participating in 'Body Maths'. Each child wore a tabard with a number symbol between one and ten and had to move around the hall according to the question asked. All the children remained fully motivated throughout. By the end of the session children had made very good progress in handling numbers to ten and were developing a good understanding of mathematical language such as 'more' and 'less'. Appropriate extension activities were provided for the older and higher attaining children. Nearly all the children identify and name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, triangles and squares, and many carry out simple investigations with three-dimensional shapes, such as finding out whether they will or will not stack. Through sand and water play activities, children begin to develop an early understanding of capacity and become familiar with terms such as full, half full and empty. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to sort, match and order objects and most children identify and recreate simple patterns correctly. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to develop an awareness of money coins and values, such as through money games and role-play. In one lesson observed, the children were counting out the correct money to pay for things in the 'Garden Centre'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. The quality of teaching is very good and children achieve very good results in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals. Some older and higher attaining children may attain above the expected standard. Teachers plan a good variety of experiences that develop effectively children's knowledge and understanding of the world. However, because of the reduced length of time they spend in the class, the youngest children miss many of the good experiences provided.

86. Work is mainly planned through themes or topics, such as '*Wonderful Me*', '*My School*' and '*Pets*'. Learning is enhanced by visits out of school, such as walks in the school grounds, visits to the local church or further afield, for example to Acton Scott Farm Museum. Through their current topic '*A Tiny Seed*', children are developing a good understanding of what plants need in order to grow. For example, one child explained clearly what would happen to the cress seeds they had planted if they did not get sufficient light. Another child talked enthusiastically about the broad bean plant he was growing and could identify correctly the roots, stem, shoots and leaves. The children have visited a garden centre and have designed their own Garden Centre where they participate in role-play. They are developing their skills well through designing and making a variety of seed packets and papier-mâché planters for their broad bean plant. Other topics enable pupils to develop a sense of time and place. They find out about past and present events and identify features in the place where they live. Children have regular access to ICT so that their computer skills, such as controlling the 'mouse', are developing well. Teachers use ICT well to link with work in other areas, such as creative development. For example, linked to their current topic, children used the computers in the ICT suite to create colourful pictures and patterns of flowers. Many children confidently log on and off, click and drag text and use the icon for changing the colour. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to begin to know about their own culture and beliefs and those of others. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers give children good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through first hand experiences and effective use is made of questioning to encourage children to think about how things work and why they happen.

Physical development

87. Most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals for physical development by the time they start Year 1. The teaching in this area of learning is good. However, children only achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior learning because limited time and resources for outside play inhibit them from achieving further in this area. Most children are well co-ordinated and move around with good control. Physical educational lessons in the hall are planned and taught well with the result that children make good progress. Instructions are clear and children follow them well. An appropriate time is allocated to warming up and cooling down. In a very good lesson observed linked to 'Body Maths', an Education Action Zone (EAZ) initiative, children were able to find a space, stop and start and run around confidently without bumping into each other. Children also have the opportunity to follow the 'Top Start' physical education programme, provided through the Northwest Shropshire EAZ. In another very good lesson observed children made very good progress in developing their ball control. The teacher had very high expectations of pupils and they were given responsibility of putting the equipment away, which they responded to well, doing it swiftly, sensibly and efficiently. A suitable selection of large apparatus enables children to develop their balancing and climbing skills. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their manipulative skills and they use scissors, pencils, crayons and paintbrushes with increasing precision and control.

Creative development

88. Through effective teaching children make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in developing creative skills and most attain the standards expected nationally by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children use a variety of equipment and materials, such as painting, drawing, modelling clay and collage. Linked to their current topic '*The Tiny Seed*', children have made an effective seed collage, press prints and observational drawings of seeds in fruit and vegetables, which have been

attractively displayed by the teacher. The children enjoy discussing their work and develop a sense of pride in their achievement. During the inspection, the teacher demonstrated to the children how to use pencils for shading when making observational drawings of leaves. The children responded well to this and their drawings improved as a result. Children have frequent opportunities to sing. They sing a number of simple songs from memory and are reasonably well in tune. They regularly participate in imaginative play. Staff create play areas related to the themes and topics being undertaken to help stimulate children's imagination, for example, 'Fancy Dress Shop' and 'The Vets'.

ENGLISH

89. The proportion of pupils attaining the standards expected for their age is close to the national average for both seven year olds and 11 year olds. The last inspection reported a similar picture. However, too few pupils are achieving the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6. The school is aware of weaknesses in reading at Key Stage 1 and writing at Key Stage 2 and has taken action to address these.

90. Throughout the school, pupils' progress in relation to their prior attainment in speaking and listening is satisfactory but uneven. When pupils in a Year 1/2 class wrote poems about the seaside, some pupils were asked to read out their work, including a pupil with special educational needs (SEN). She read about the 'swishing waves, salty seaweed and scratchy sand' clearly and with pride. Pupils applauded their classmates. Pupils in the upper junior classes are articulate. They speak confidently and usually clearly. When working with partners and in groups they generally take turns and often share in tasks well. Sometimes they help each other by checking work. Teachers often use good open questioning and press pupils to explain...*why do you think...?* In this way pupils are required to extend their answers. However, there are occasions when not all pupils are included in discussions, so that the less confident do not benefit fully enough. In some lessons, notably in junior classes, while pupils listen very attentively, sometimes for lengthy periods, they are reluctant to offer contributions. In an excellent history lesson in a Year 5/6 class, however, the teacher's dynamic approach motivated the pupils so well that almost all were bursting to contribute. This stimulating approach does not occur frequently enough in other classes. Indeed, on occasions teachers intervene when hands are slow to be raised, so that there is too little insistence on discussion and too much teacher talk, even though they are providing clear explanations. Reviews at the end of lessons sometimes provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to talk about what they have learned. When small groups of pupils talk with visitors they show maturity in their ability to share in sensible discussion and are a pleasure to be with.

91. Standards in reading are average at the ages of both seven and 11. By the age of seven, pupils read confidently and generally accurately, having suitable strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They have good recall of what they have read and give a clear outline of a story. Pupils enjoy reading and regularly choose books from the library to take home. Effective support in reading groups means that almost all pupils are achieving the expected level. There is, however, some underachievement; pupils in both Year 2 and Year 3 sometimes have reading books that do not extend them sufficiently and, on occasion, keep the same book for too long and read it two or three times. Older juniors read confidently and fluently. Some are very good readers, particularly in Year 5. These pupils very much enjoy reading. Pupils throughout the school make good use of the new fiction section of the library. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have the range of skills and understanding applicable to their age. This allows them to read competently both for enjoyment and for information.

92. Standards in writing are average by the ages of both seven and 11. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are encouraged to write answers in correct sentences. They are provided with an interesting range of tasks such as devising the instructions for making a snowman. When writing a description of Rumpelstiltskin, a Year 1 pupil explains, '*He was clever because he spun straw into gold*'. Good links are made with other subjects so that pupils reinforce skills in ordered writing when they explain the life cycle of the butterfly. Higher-attaining pupils are secure in their use of basic punctuation and are beginning to use cursive script. Most work is presented neatly.

93. Junior pupils in Years 3 and 4 have opportunities for varied writing experiences but overall there is too much emphasis placed upon grammar exercises and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their imagination in other writing tasks. Good links were made with other subjects when they answered questions based on life in Nigeria. Pupils practised note taking when they compiled a web chart about life under the sea. The standard of presentation of work is higher in one class than the other, reflecting the differing expectations of the teachers concerned. Many pupils have problems with spelling and improvement in this aspect is slow. Higher-attaining pupils tackle a range of interesting and challenging tasks, for example compiling the front page of a newspaper giving the story of the tortoise and the hare.

94. Year 5/6 pupils write reports on the life of Queen Elizabeth 1, interviews, a play script for Little Red Riding Hood and other different types of writing. They learn to plan a piece of writing by setting down the type, characters, setting, time and plot, and thinking about the beginning, middle and end. However, little evidence was seen of the amount and quality of writing at length that Year 6 pupils should be producing. A few examples were seen of pupils drafting pieces of writing, sometimes vetted by a partner. This activity is not pursued with sufficient rigour.

95. Teaching and learning seen in lessons was satisfactory, overall and one very good lesson was seen. In lessons there is good rapport between teachers and pupils. Teachers have the confidence to be flexible in their use of the National Literacy Strategy so that pupils' needs are met well. They know what they want the pupils to learn or reinforce, although they do not always share clear learning objectives with the pupils and assess whether they have been met in the lesson review.

96. In the most effective lessons, teachers match the tasks well to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils work independently so that the teacher is free to support a range of pupils and to check their learning. Pupils concentrate hard, for example in Year 3/4 where they were engrossed in their task based on the stories of Dick King-Smith. They are well motivated, helping each other at times and behaving well. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher used her voice effectively so that the pupils listened with rapt attention. Pupils knew what they have to do and, despite some having limited writing skills and needing individual support, most achieved very good results in relation to their prior attainment. Higher-attaining pupils worked independently and produced poems about using their senses at the seaside. One girl wrote, '*Listen to the sea splashing on the rocks and roaring like a lion*'. The teacher received strong support from a volunteer helper, which contributed well to all the pupils being fully included. The lively approach of a Year 5/6 teacher ensured that pupils were speedily on task. He encouraged them constantly with praise and reminders so that they applied themselves well to the task of changing a piece of writing from the informal to a formal mode. Some pupils showed particular skill in re-forming the piece using some complex sentences. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) learn as well as their peers. Teachers give good personal support and when additional adults are in the lesson, these pupils benefit greatly.

97. Where lessons are less effective, they lack drive and real motivation so that the pace of learning is slow. Teachers' expectations of standards in the amount of work and the quality of its presentation vary too much between parallel classes in the juniors. The marking of work is not effective enough and gives little guidance as to how pupils can improve. A comment such as *'No excuse for spelling mistakes'* may be correct but does not indicate what the teacher expects the pupil to do next. Frequently, there is no apparent response from the pupil, which further negates the effectiveness of the comment in assuring improvement. Comments such as *'Not the task'* and *'Far too slow'* at the end of a piece of work arrive too late to be of use. Consequently, the progress of some pupils is delayed. Teachers do not always model good handwriting and in some classes the pupils must have some difficulty reading the comments made.

98. Overall, provision has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator manages the subject well and has identified appropriate areas for improvement, addressing them effectively. The main improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been in the area of annual assessments and their use to inform teachers' planning. However, as indicated in the previous paragraph, more work remains to be done to improve the quality of teachers' marking. Pupils' attainment is assessed well throughout the school and their progress is tracked closely. This leads to additional provision for those pupils who need it and ensures that overall standards are being maintained.

99. There is a good range of big books for the literacy hour. Teachers make good links with other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), in many, but not all, classes. For example, in religious education, pupils write about the birth of Jesus through the eyes of the town crier. The school library is an attractive area, is well used and provides good support across the curriculum. The new, non-fiction section of the library is used well, providing more opportunities for pupils to widen and improve their knowledge of language. It is computerised, which allows pupils to appreciate the use of ICT in a practical setting.

MATHEMATICS

100. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. Compared to the results of the national tests in 2001, this indicates a rise in standards in Year 6 and a drop in Year 2 since that time. However, year group sizes are small and this has the effect of making such statistical comparison unreliable. Since the last inspection, overall standards have been maintained.

101. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve at least satisfactory results in comparison with their prior attainment over time. However, differences in the effectiveness of individual teachers affect the rate at which progress is made and, as a result, some pupils in some classes and groups achieve good results in lessons and over time.

102. In each pair of parallel classes, there are different ways of organising the pupils. During the inspection week, teachers in the Year 5/6 classes taught their own classes, although, before the National Curriculum tests in May, there had been a system that meant Year 6 pupils were taught in two separate groups according to need with a part-time teacher having all Year 5 pupils in a separate group. In the Year 3/4 classes, pupils were grouped according to their needs with a higher and a lower set. In the Year 1/2 classes,

nearly all Year 1 pupils were taught in one group and nearly all Year 2 in another, although there is some movement at times to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. These arrangements work satisfactorily because they allow teachers to plan work for a narrower range of needs.

103. Year 2 pupils have a secure grasp of the place value of two-digit numbers, which enables them to add and subtract these numbers generally accurately. They use this knowledge soundly, for example, to solve simple one-step problems, sometimes in the context of money. Nearly all, including those with SEN, recognise and name correctly simple two-dimensional shapes, using the correct positional language, such as '*above, behind and in front of*'. Average-attaining pupils read co-ordinates correctly and plot points on a graph reasonably accurately. Higher-attaining pupils have a secure grasp of simple fractions, order and sequence numbers accurately and sort two-dimensional shapes correctly, for example by the number of vertices. Pupils sometimes reinforce or extend their mathematical knowledge by using it in a range of different contexts. An example is when they generate their own examples of mathematical concepts, such as calculations with equal value. However, there is room to increase the challenge to all pupils through the provision of suitable investigations.

104. In Years 3 and 4, pupils name many common two- and three-dimensional shapes correctly, but even the higher-attaining pupils in one class found difficulty in identifying the number and shape of faces on a given three-dimensional figure because the teacher did not provide sufficient and appropriate resources. However, in the comparable lesson in the parallel class, where a good range of resources was provided and teaching was challenging, even average pupils achieved similar standards, and the higher-attaining pupils correctly identified shapes by the number and shape of the faces, vertices and edges.

105. In Year 6, pupils accurately calculate percentages. They add or subtract decimals to two places, sometimes in the context of money. They use their arithmetic knowledge soundly to solve simple problems but often show a lack of understanding of which operations to use in what sequence when faced with more complex, two-step problems. Pupils measure angles reasonably accurately and find the area of regular shapes correctly. Because one teacher is often insistent on neat and accurately presented work, some pupils make good gains in their arithmetic work. These standards are not insisted upon in all cases with the result that some work is unmarked and those corrections that are indicated as necessary are not done. Higher-attaining pupils calculate the internal angles of regular polygons with reasonable accuracy and have a secure grasp of the relationship between fractions and percentages. They plot co-ordinates accurately in all four quadrants and have a secure understanding of data handling, including the calculation of statistical mean, mode, median and range.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, as previously stated, there are differences in effectiveness in each pair of parallel classes. In the six lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory in one lesson and good in three. In the remaining two lessons, they were very good.

107. The national strategy is being implemented satisfactorily and pupils' numeracy skills are used soundly in other subjects, such as design and technology (measurement), history (arithmetic) and geography (compiling tally charts). However, there is room to improve the way they are utilised in science. Increasingly, computer programs are being used to reinforce and extend pupils' learning in mathematics, for example using pictograms for recording data in a Year 1/2 lesson.

108. Where learning is most swift and teaching most effective:

- Teachers are enthusiastic and lessons move at a brisk pace, capturing pupils' attention and motivating them to work hard for long periods of time. A good example of this was a Year 5/6 lesson about compiling pie charts. In this lesson, the teacher constantly insisted that pupils responded and had very high expectations of their attention, application to task and effort that were amply rewarded. At no time did he allow pupils to lose concentration because he circulated so well, intervening to good purpose to help, assess and cajole;
- The final, plenary sessions are used well to reinforce and extend pupils' learning, as for example in another Year 5/6 lesson on the same topic when the teacher used different examples from those the pupils had already met to check their understanding. In this session, he skilfully introduced other aspects of mathematics, thus also checking pupils' understanding of equivalent fractions, for example;
- The basic skills are taught well, as in a Year 1 lesson that used pupils themselves to demonstrate how to order numbers correctly. This strategy was highly effective in gaining and retaining pupils' attention and interest and in generating enthusiastic responses, which led to very good learning;
- Continuing assessment is used well to plan different activities to meet pupils' individual needs. This ensures that they concentrate for long periods of time because they are interested in, and able to succeed at, the task. A good example was a Year 3/4 lesson on shape in which the teacher had carefully allocated tasks and circulated to very good effect to ensure that pupils understood what was required. She also used the teaching assistant well to help targeted pupils. This enabled all pupils to make good gains in their learning and to enjoy the lesson.

109. Where teaching, although satisfactory, overall, is less effective, it is because:

- Teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough to ensure that they settle to work quickly and produce sufficient work. In the Year 1 class, for example, pupils found it difficult to work independently and spent too much time wanting the teacher's attention;
- Teachers do not provide the required resources that would enable pupils to participate or to make sense of the task. For example, in a lesson in the Year 3/4 classes to do with visualising three-dimensional shapes from two-dimensional drawings, one teacher had not made sure that pupils had access to the shapes necessary to make sense of the task;
- Explanations are over-long and the pace of the lesson suffers with the result that pupils lose concentration;
- Lesson plans do not identify exactly what it is that individuals or groups of pupils are to learn in the given amount of time and tend to identify what activity is to be completed. Sometimes they are too vague: for example, one lesson objective was identified as, *to practise taking away*.

110. Throughout the school, relationships are good, which results in well-behaved and confident pupils who have generally good attitudes to their work, to each other and to adults. They work well because they are confident that their efforts will be appreciated. However, some younger pupils lack the ability to work independently for any length of time, which adversely affects their learning and that of others as they place great demands on

the teacher's time and attention. The needs of pupils with SEN are met well through the provision of extra support from teaching assistants, who know their charges well and give them good levels of caring and, in some cases, challenging help to complete their tasks and to understand what they are doing.

111. Sometimes, the teacher's own handwriting does not provide a good enough model of neatness and is difficult to read. Many worksheets are not dated and, therefore, are less effective than they might be in providing evidence of how well pupils achieve. Homework is used satisfactorily, overall, to reinforce and extend pupils' learning in lessons.

112. In a number of classes throughout the school, the initial part of lessons, which are intended to promote swift recall of basic number facts, are less effective than they should be because the methods used do not involve individual pupils for long enough periods of time. For example, in one Year 5/6 lesson which intended to utilise a sound strategy of 'loop cards' to practise calculations, many pupils only had one calculation to perform and there was no incentive for them to continue to concentrate or participate once they had answered their question. As a result, too much time was lost and the purpose of the session was not fulfilled.

113. A good range of assessment procedures enables teachers to assess the levels at which pupils are currently working and, over time, to check the rate of progress they are making. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Test results are analysed thoroughly to identify and address areas of common weakness, to set group and individual targets for improvement and to identify which pupils would benefit from additional support through booster classes. In addition, the school has recently identified a number of pupils in each class who work at levels above their classmates. These pupils have been placed on a register of 'more able pupils' in order to raise teachers' awareness of their needs. However, very few of these pupils work at levels significantly beyond those expected nationally.

114. The quality of leadership and management has been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of teaching and learning frequently and has a good grasp of the factors affecting the progress and achievement of groups of pupils. Feedbacks to teachers are regular and strike an appropriate balance between strengths and areas for future development. However, leadership has not been rigorous enough to address the inconsistencies in teaching that adversely affect learning in some classes in the school. A good amount of training has been received with many teachers having also attended a five-day mathematics course. This has been effective in raising standards of personal expertise for those individuals and has had a beneficial effect on teaching and learning. Resources are good in amount and quality. Overall, the rate of improvement since the last inspection has been good.

SCIENCE

115. Standards of teaching, learning and provision have been maintained since the last inspection.

116. Pupils' standards of scientific knowledge in both Year 2 and Year 6 match the national average and pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment. These standards represent an improvement, however, on the results of the most recent National Curriculum tests for Year

6 pupils. Compared to teacher assessments of standards in Year 2 last year, there has been a slight deterioration. It must be appreciated, however, that year groups are comparatively small and that consequently statistics are unreliable in the short term.

117. Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and investigation are in line with those expected in Year 2, but are recognised by the co-ordinator as being below average in Year 6. Pupils in the juniors do not achieve as highly as they should in this aspect of science.

118. In Year 2, pupils know that sound is caused by vibrations that travel to a human ear and then to the brain. They correctly name the major bones in a human body and have a sound grasp of the functions of a skeleton. Pupils know that some changes caused by heat or cold are reversible and some are not. They realise that all magnetic materials are metallic. When investigating, they make sensible predictions based on prior experience, test soundly and record their findings in a suitable variety of ways. They draw good conclusions from their evidence, for example about whether or not people with blue eyes see better than those with brown eyes. Higher-attaining pupils give clear explanations of their findings based on their scientific knowledge. All pupils' recording techniques are supported well by the use of writing frames that allow them to respond in their own words to a common format.

119. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure grasp of the purpose of the parts of a flowering plant and have observed the effects of different coloured water on the eventual colour of the plant itself. They use keys satisfactorily to identify creatures and higher-attaining pupils classify creatures correctly. Pupils know that light travels in a straight line and higher-attaining pupils have a secure understanding of the effect of light on a human eye. Pupils use the correct symbols to depict an electrical circuit and know that the circuit needs to be complete for a bulb to light. Higher-attaining pupils have a secure grasp of the effects of switches in parallel and series circuits. Average- and lower-attaining pupils conduct group investigations, for example into how to separate materials, and record their results in their own words. Only higher-attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of fair testing, handling variables correctly. They predict sensibly and explain their findings clearly and correctly.

120. Pupils' literacy skills are used soundly to, for example, record the findings of their experiments and to label diagrams. Increasing use is being made of the new information and communication technology (ICT) facilities to support and extend pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding, for example through a well presented PowerPoint presentation by one Year 5/6 class. However, pupils' numeracy skills are not used well enough in any class in the school. There is too little evidence of any pupil being required to measure, for example, the effects of distance on the acuteness of hearing or the rate of fall of a paper clip 'helicopter'.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Four lessons were observed. In two, teaching and learning were good and in the other two they were satisfactory. Over time, teaching has been satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

122. A broadly satisfactory range of work has been provided for all pupils. However, in the juniors, as already recognised by the co-ordinator, there is insufficient emphasis on experimentation to ensure that all pupils develop their skills of enquiry and scientific accuracy to a high enough level. In a minority of classes, however, the evidence from the scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work shows that some teachers demand higher standards

than others and that this leads directly to faster progress and better achievements for some pupils. Equally, sometimes when the teacher has made comments on a book or has required further work to be done, the pupils have not responded and no further follow-up check has been carried out. Practice is too inconsistent.

123. Throughout the school, teachers have a good subject knowledge, which enables them to teach the basic facts accurately and to answer pupils' questions correctly. Their lesson planning is satisfactory; however, it would benefit from greater precision about what pupils are expected to learn. In addition, it needs, in some cases, to be focused more tightly on scientific matters. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson about how animals move, the activity that required pupils to draw and colour six animals and to fill in one word to say how it moves – *trot, slither, walk* – was too simplistic to extend pupils' knowledge or understanding.

124. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour soundly. However, in one infant class, there is a culture of calling out that means that the teacher cannot ensure that all pupils are listening and that her questions probe pupils' understanding sufficiently. In this class, a significant minority of pupils do not work well enough independently and have poor powers of concentration. Consequently, a great deal of the teacher's time has to be spent ensuring that they do concentrate and complete their tasks. This has an adverse effect on the pace and continuity of the lesson. These pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to work and do not behave well enough. This is in contrast to the rest of their class and the school as a whole, where pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good because of effective management and good use of time that keeps pupils interested and ensures that they work productively.

125. Assessment procedures are broadly satisfactory but they do not focus sharply enough on what skills and understanding individuals have acquired and what is needed next to extend this further. This is broadly a similar judgement to that of the previous inspection report. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has already identified the need to improve pupils' enquiry skills as a result of his monitoring of the quality of learning through pupils' books. This monitoring would now benefit from an increased emphasis on the effect on learning of his colleagues' expectations and marking. He has no opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching through observing colleagues' lessons. Nevertheless, he has a clear idea of what is needed to improve provision and standards in the subject through informal discussions.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Pupils' work in art and design in the infants is generally good and of a standard higher than expected for their age by the end of Year 2. In the juniors, pupils' work is satisfactory overall and is in line with expected standards for pupils by the end of Year 6. Infant pupils achieve good results in their art lessons and over time. Junior pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make similar progress to their classmates throughout the school. Since the last inspection, standards in art and design have been maintained in the infants but are not as good as they were previously reported in the juniors.

127. Work in art and design is often developed through cross-curricular links with other subjects. For example, as part of their history work on the Ancient Egyptians, pupils in Year 3 and 4 have designed and made clay amulets and papier-mâché masks. Overall, the broad range of work satisfactorily promotes and develops the required skills. However, pupils' ability to appraise and evaluate their work is not so well developed.

128. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced a good range of art and design media and acquired a good range of appropriate techniques. These include collage, printing,

drawing and three-dimensional work. Most pupils have a good understanding of mixing and matching colours. They observe details closely and record them with good accuracy for their age. They have, for example, produced delicate pencil and watercolour pictures of fruit and intricate charcoal drawings of a snail. In a good lesson observed during the inspection, pupils used a variety of media to produce portraits. They had a good understanding of proportion in faces and some pupils produced images of their own faces to a good standard. They enjoyed discussing their work and that of other artists such as the 'Mona Lisa' by Leonardo da Vinci. Pupils study the work of well-known artists, such as Lowry and Clarice Cliff, and make good attempts at producing the techniques and styles they observe. Pupils take pride in their work, which is attractively displayed and labelled by the teachers.

129. Pupils in Year 6 experience a satisfactory range of media in both two and three dimensions. They explore ideas and work from direct observation with satisfactory skill. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a variety of drawing pencils to explore line and tone when undertaking observational drawings of dried plants related to their current topic '*Plants and Animals*'. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make reasonable attempts at designing a poster advertising a forthcoming Arts and Science Week. In one very good lesson observed, pupils explored a range of ideas and used information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to produce their poster designs. Most of the pupils in the class were confident in evaluating approaches to their own and other's work in relation to its intention. However, this does not happen sufficiently in most classes in the juniors. Pupils do not have the opportunity to use sketchbooks to develop their initial ideas and to practise and refine their newly acquired skills.

130. Pupils enjoy practical activities. They usually concentrate well on what they are being taught and take care of their own and others' work. They like experimenting with colour and different materials and methods and persevere when they find the task difficult. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy discussing their work and are prepared to evaluate it critically. This does not happen with enough consistency throughout the school.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. For pupils in the infants it is good and in the juniors it is satisfactory overall, although one very good lesson was observed during the inspection. This lesson was particularly effective because the pace was brisk and the teacher had high expectations of pupils, which resulted in very good learning, and high standards of achievement.

132. Pupils are taught the necessary skills to enable them to develop as artists through the use of a sound variety of techniques using a satisfactory range of media. However, in the juniors teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of pupils, who therefore do not always produce work to as high a quality as they could. In some classes too little attention is paid to developing pupils' ability to evaluate and appraise their work orally. Teaching appropriately draws pupils' attention to the work of famous artists and emphasises the need to produce their own work in the style of an artist rather than an exact copy, which is good. Planning records show that pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to appreciate the artwork of other cultures and from other times.

133. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In some classes great importance is attached to celebrating pupils' achievements by displaying their efforts sensitively and creatively and there are some examples of high quality work on display. However, this is not in evidence all through the school.

134. The co-ordinator for art and design has good subject knowledge and is managing the subject satisfactorily. However, she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and

learning throughout the school and to become fully effective in her role. Assessment of pupils' work is only informal and needs development, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The portfolio of pupils' work to inform teachers about standards mainly relates to pupils' work in the infants and does not sufficiently inform standards in the juniors. The scheme of work is satisfactory, and is an improvement since the last inspection, but it has not been updated to take sufficient account of recent developments and national guidance. Resources for art and design are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

135. There have been significant improvements in the subject since the last inspection. As a result of greatly improved teacher expertise, provision has improved greatly, especially the quality of teaching, and this has had a consequent beneficial effect on pupils' achievements and standards, as well as on their attitudes to the subject. Pupils' standards are in line with those expected nationally in both Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment.

136. Because of the timing of the inspection, no lessons were observed in the infants. Nevertheless, the work on display gives secure evidence that pupils give sound attention to the aesthetic appearance of their models and good attention to their fitness for purpose, for instance when designing and building a wheeled toy to carry a teddy bear. They sometimes label their working diagrams clearly and give a clear account of the process involved in building their models. Pupils use a satisfactory range of materials and cut and join them safely and with reasonable accuracy. Evaluations are satisfactory. The writing frames provided are helpful, assuring a consistent approach to recording their work: however, they give too little space for some pupils, especially those who write more easily, to explain fully enough what they did. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in this area of the school.

137. In Year 6, pupils use commercial building kits soundly to produce a windmill using cogs and gears to alter the direction and speed of forces. They have a good understanding of how to use cogs. About one-third of the pupils have a reasonable grasp of how to gear up or down to alter speed and to increase efficiency. Their plans are detailed and accurate, using the mathematical skills of measurement soundly, and are altered appropriately in response to the difficulties met as they build their models. They evaluate their work in simple terms identifying accurately what did not go as planned but rarely give themselves credit for what worked!

138. Through talking to pupils and analysing examples of their work, it is clear that the quality of teaching and learning in the juniors is good but is not consistent across all classes. Generally, teachers plan their lessons satisfactorily but tend to identify activities to be completed rather than making a specific reference to what they expect pupils to learn in the lesson. They have a good understanding of the whole design process and ensure that all pupils develop their skills of design, construction and evaluation well.

139. Both lessons observed were in the juniors. These lessons were taught very well and, consequently, learning was swift. Relationships were very good and so pupils were willing and confident to attempt the tasks set, secure in the knowledge that their efforts would be appreciated. They showed very good attitudes to work and each other, collaborating effectively and sharing equipment maturely. The activities were well chosen to interest and challenge pupils, building well on what they had already learned and experienced. For example, the Year 5/6 lesson required pupils to combine their knowledge of transferring the direction of energy and, separately, of how to change the rate of movement through the use

of gears. This challenge was highly effective in helping all pupils to understand common design problems and in motivating them to high standards of concentration and effort. The pace of both lessons was swift, as in the Year 3/4 lesson to construct a moving monster, which ensured that pupils tried very hard –and successfully – to produce effective working models. Because all pupils in both classes were thoroughly involved and interested in their learning, their behaviour was at least very good and, in some instances, exemplary.

140. The leadership and management of the subject have improved significantly. As a result, the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed conscientiously and effectively. A good amount of staff training has been received, which has improved confidence and competence. National guidance has been appropriately integrated into a scheme of work that gives good support to teachers' efforts. Assessment of pupils' attainment and achievements is informal but it is recognised that this is an area for further development to provide a clear view of pupils' progressive acquisition of skills. Resources are good in quantity and quality but, during the inspection, no use of computers was seen to support learning in this subject.

GEOGRAPHY

141. Standards are similar to those expected of most pupils by the ages of seven and 11. Pupils achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment, including those with special educational needs (SEN). This reflects the picture seen in the last inspection: satisfactory progress has been made since then.

142. When pupils in Years 1 and 2 look at the seaside, they differentiate satisfactorily between human and physical features of a landscape. They focus on Llandudno, which is familiar to many of them. This is a good strategy because it makes learning relevant and meaningful. Some good links are made, sometimes using computers, between geography and history. When they look at the history of transport, for example, they make satisfactory comparisons with modes of travel in other countries, such as rickshaws in China.

143. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make compare different types of settlements satisfactorily. Their home village is used as a basis for simple mapping skills. They consider the uses of various buildings in the village and carry out a traffic survey, which is recorded as a tally chart and illustrated by a bar graph. This is a satisfactory use of their mathematical skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of maps satisfactorily, for example by looking at a wider picture of the world, using maps of Europe and the world. Year 6 pupils hone their map-reading skills when orienteering during their visit to Arthog residential centre. In discussion, Year 6 pupils show sound understanding of the nature of geography. They make sensible comparisons between places they have visited and their home area.

144. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good lessons were seen during the inspection. A Year 1/2 teacher had a very clear learning objective. She involved all pupils in discussion and set them tasks well matched to their ability. She challenged them fully and set time limits so that they worked very well at identifying the different human and physical features. An interesting activity in the lesson review showed that the pupils had learned well and with enthusiasm. A similarly productive lesson with a Year 3/4 class was well planned. As a result, pupils identified suitable differences between towns and villages and understood why towns develop. The pupils were interested and were set tasks that were suitably matched to their needs. Consequently they worked hard and behaved very well. Good questioning included everyone, so that pupils with SEN were able to make similar progress to their classmates. The teacher took the opportunity to reinforce pupils' listening and

speaking skills by asking them to read relevant passages and requiring them to stand and speak out clearly, which they do, for the benefit of all. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that the standard and presentation of the work was satisfactory, although the books of one of the two Year 3/4 classes are extremely untidy with some ugly over-colouring of maps. In this class, the teacher does not consistently challenge pupils to develop their skills and to achieve as fully as they should. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as their peers in the parallel class.

145. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Pupils learn basic geographical skills - looking at the reasons for settlements, comparing places, considering the impact of people on places and using aerial photographs alongside maps. However, there is no established procedure for tracking pupils' progression in the acquisition of skills, which adversely affects how consistently teachers challenge pupils to achieve the results they could. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to develop her role through regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching or learning.

HISTORY

146. Standards and provision have improved well since the last inspection. Standards are above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers make the subject interesting. Pupils enjoy it, behave well and consequently achieve well.

147. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 look at how different forms of transport have been used through the ages. They make satisfactory comparisons between travelling to school now and in the past. A good link is made with work in science when they consider the materials used in different eras in constructing houses, for example, Year 2 pupils connect the Great Fire of London with thatched roofs. They have good knowledge of how to find out about history and are familiar with the word *archaeologist* and with what an archaeologist does. Pupils' knowledge of the developments in agriculture is very good. They find out about the past from investigating artefacts found in the ground locally, which means that learning is very meaningful. This practical approach means that pupils know and talk with enthusiasm about, for example, different types of bottles found.

148. In Years 3 and 4, pupils look at a good range of artefacts, for example in their studies of Ancient Egypt. From this study, they discover various aspects of different people's lives. This work is well supported by a visit to the museum in Manchester. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study the Tudors. They show good skills of enquiry when they question some of the evidence seen, such as some of the unhealthy habits of the time, or interpret the meaning of a picture of King Henry VIII. Suitable comparisons are made, for example, between education in Tudor times and the pupils' own education. Discussions with pupils show that they remember their learning well. Older pupils understand reasons for learning history and are aware of what we can learn from it. Year 6 pupils have a good sense of chronology, with one higher-attaining pupil quoting the specific dates of the beginning and end of the reign of the Tudors.

149. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Learning is based securely on investigation, which includes, for older pupils, the use of the Internet. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that they make the subject interesting for pupils and that introductory sessions flow well: this makes a good contribution to pupils' concentration and learning. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and teach the basics well, giving pupils a good grasp of the fundamental historical skills and concepts. They use good strategies to gain and retain pupils' attention, for example through the use of artefacts, as in a Year 2 lesson, which ensures that pupils know that these found

objects tell us about the past. The management of pupils is kindly but firm. One excellent lesson was seen in a Year 5/6 class. In this lesson, a highly skilled teacher showed very good subject knowledge of the topic and managed the lesson so effectively that learning was driven along at a great pace. The pupils reflected his enthusiasm. They listened attentively, attacked their task with enthusiasm, discussed sensibly with each other and behaved very well. Two pupils who were unsure initially were given additional guidance so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made similar progress.

150. The subject is used well in some, but not all, classes to practise and develop pupils' writing skills. For example, Year 2 pupils write accounts of the Montgolfier brothers and Year 6 write pen portraits of members of the Tudor dynasty. When writing about a year in the life of an Egyptian farmer in Year 6 a higher-attaining pupil shows a mature writing style in such phrases as, *'Consequently the river subsides...'*

151. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily but has been unable to monitor or evaluate teaching and learning regularly. She provides a good role model in her own teaching and in her subject knowledge. Pupils' learning in the infants is greatly enhanced by the content and quality of the displays of a wide range of artefacts. Visits are used effectively and make a big impression. Year 6 pupils speak with knowledge and enthusiasm about their visit to Ironbridge. Pupils' knowledge and understanding increases well because of the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of individual teachers and a good range of opportunities to learn. However, there are no secure, consistent procedures for checking whether pupils acquire skills as swiftly as they could.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

152. A new ICT suite has recently been built and equipped through the efforts of the parents in raising money to match the funding from the Education Action Zone (EAZ). This has had a significant effect on improving the quality of provision. Improvements since the last inspection are now considerable and are having a profound effect on the rate and extent of pupils' learning.

153. Because of the timing of the inspection, it was not possible to see all aspects of the subject being taught and, for sound reasons, examples of pupils' work in all aspects were not available. Nevertheless, in those aspects for which there is evidence, pupils' standards match those expected nationally. Because of the improved provision, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving good results in relation to their prior attainment. A strong feature of the subject is the increasing use being made of its potential in many other subjects, such as science, art and design and history: this helps pupils to develop their competences in meaningful contexts.

154. Pupils in Year 2 use the mouse confidently to log on and to access programs through the use of icons. They use simple programs correctly to collect data and to choose between alternative ways of displaying their information, for example pictograms or tally charts. This is a good link with the work they have done in mathematics lessons. Year 6 pupils use the skills they have learned – entering and manipulating text and incorporating images – to devise a PowerPoint presentation about their science work. They move confidently between windows, sometimes using shortcuts. They access the Internet to obtain further examples of clip art and maximise or minimise windows appropriately. Throughout the school, however, pupils' typing skills are too slow for them to derive maximum benefit from some aspects of ICT work. Basic skills, including the importance of posture, would benefit from extra emphasis, especially for the younger pupils.

155. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and, in the very near future, teachers are due to receive a major input to help them to develop their expertise further. There are examples of excellent teaching in the juniors. Generally, teachers' knowledge of the programs they are to use is good, which means that lessons are well structured and purposeful. They plan their work carefully. Since the recent improvements in hardware and software, there has been a need to ensure that all pupils receive full entitlement to all aspects of the required curriculum and to cover gaps in learning as a result of previous weaknesses. As a result, teachers are not yet able to plan work that is matched closely enough to the differing needs and aptitudes of individual pupils. This is understandable but is an area for development as time and priorities permit.

156. Teachers plan tasks that pupils find relevant and interesting, as in the Year 5/6 PowerPoint lesson, mentioned above. The specific use of ICT in subjects such as science, history and art and design helps pupils to concentrate and to work productively and means that there are no behaviour management problems. Pupils have very good, and sometimes excellent, attitudes to work and behave very well indeed throughout the school. Where teaching is most successful, it is because the teacher has very good subject knowledge, which he shares with infectious enthusiasm, motivating pupils to achieve highly. The level of continual and sustained challenge and the teacher's expectations, are very high. Pupils work exceptionally hard and make very good gains in learning because learning is well structured over a series of lessons and they are able to integrate what they have learned previously.

157. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. His levels of personal expertise and enthusiasm are high – he even makes himself available on line at specified times on Sundays for pupils in his class who have questions about their homework! In addition, he is fully involved in writing detailed schemes of work based on national guidance to support colleagues' efforts both in this school and more widely within the EAZ. He is very well aware of what is needed to move the subject further and, with the support of all his colleagues, is very well placed to achieve the school's aims. It is appropriate that he intends to develop the broadly satisfactory assessment procedures further and to monitor more formally the quality of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

158. Only two lessons were observed during the time of the inspection. An analysis of planning and of pupils' recorded work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that overall standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are broadly similar to those reported in the previous inspection, overall, although standards in the infants are not as high as reported then. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory.

159. Throughout the school pupils enjoy singing. In whole school assemblies, they sing in tune and with good volume. Words of songs are heard clearly because of pupils' clear diction. The recorded music used to accompany the pupils is lively and lifts the singing effectively so that pupils' voices are set off well. The pupils know a good range of songs. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to listen attentively to recorded music. Infant pupils begin to develop a sound understanding of some of the musical elements. In a lesson observed, pupils were trying hard to increase and decrease the tempo of the song they were singing and were accompanied by some pupils playing percussion instruments. With practice and assistance from the teacher virtually all the pupils made satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed a secure sense of rhythm and clap

accurately in time to the music. They make satisfactory attempts at composing their own music and recording it through writing chosen symbols to represent sounds.

160. In the juniors, most pupils develop further control of their voices and sing a good range of songs with some awareness of the musical elements of the pieces they are singing. They undertake simple musical compositions, exploring and recording variations in pitch and dynamics. When listening to music, pupils correctly identify the different elements within the music, such as texture, and change their own performance accordingly. This was observed in a lesson when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were performing as an orchestra using various body parts to create a variety of sounds. Discussion with Year 6 pupils show they are familiar with the work of a number of famous composers, such as Bach, Chopin and Mozart, and know some facts about their lives.

161. Pupils, including those with SEN, are given the opportunity to learn the recorder and there is a thriving recorder group. A peripatetic music teacher visits once a week to give violin lessons.

162. The teaching and learning of music are satisfactory. In the lessons observed, the pupils were well managed and relationships were good. Pupils responded well to this and their attitudes and behaviour in the lessons were good. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. They ensure that pupils understand the importance of listening carefully in order to appreciate the sounds they hear and this helps them to perform as a group. They join in well with discussions about music and most join in enthusiastically during singing or when performing, with the result that they achieve satisfactory levels of attainment. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to perform music to a wider audience, such as at Christmas concerts and at music festivals in the local area.

163. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and, as yet, is not fully established in her role. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in music in order for her to have a clear understanding of what is happening in the school. There is an appropriate policy for music, which the previous co-ordinator updated in line with national guidance. Assessments undertaken are only informal and do not provide sufficient information about pupils' progress to enable them to develop their musical skills and abilities to the greatest extent. Resources for music have recently been increased and are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of ICT resources to support work in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. Because of the arrangement of the timetable, it was not possible to observe all aspects of physical education during the inspection week. However, evidence from teachers' planning and from discussions with pupils and teachers, and that gained from observations in lessons, indicates that overall standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment. The same evidence indicates that all aspects of the National Curriculum are being undertaken satisfactorily. Standards and progress are similar to those identified in the last report and the rate of improvement has been satisfactory.

165. In the lessons observed, teachers ensured that an appropriate amount of time was allocated to 'warming up' and 'cooling down' activities. However, health and safety issues and the need for pupils to be aware of the effects of exercise on the body are not consistently undertaken in all lessons throughout the school.

166. By the end of the infants, pupils are beginning to understand that their bodies react to exercise and that exercise causes your heart to beat faster. They are aware of the need to 'warm up' and 'cool down' at the beginning and end of lessons and to handle equipment safely and sensibly. In a lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were exploring the way different body parts could be used for sliding and rolling. The majority of pupils were developing satisfactory control and co-ordination in their movements. They discussed the differences between their performance and that of others and thought sensibly about ways in which performance could be improved. Overall, pupils in the juniors build satisfactorily on the skills they learn in the infants and have a greater degree of control and co-ordination in their movements. However, occasionally, insufficient subject knowledge by some teachers means that teaching does not always place sufficient emphasis on the development of specific skills, which leads to unsatisfactory learning within the lesson. Year 6, pupils talk fairly knowledgeably about the effects of exercise on their bodies and its value to health and fitness.

167. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to learn to swim. Records and discussions with pupils indicate that by the time they leave school nearly all pupils are able to swim and have suitable awareness of water safety.

168. There are good opportunities for pupils to benefit from after-school sporting activities. Football, netball and cross-country take place in the autumn and spring terms and athletics, cricket and rounders in the summer term. This provides a positive contribution to developing pupils' social skills and take-up rates are good.

169. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers generally give suitable attention to safety in using equipment and pupils co-operate efficiently to set the apparatus out and clear it away. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils co-operated well in getting a range of equipment out to practise athletics and needed very little need of support from the teacher. They had a satisfactory understanding of the 'rules' and the need to participate fairly. They demonstrated good attitudes and tried hard to improve on their previous performance. Generally across the school, instructions are clear and pupils respond appropriately to these and mostly perform with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Teachers give positive encouragement to pupils and this improves their self-esteem and confidence. However, sometimes teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' skills through demonstrating good techniques which could further improvement their performance. Pupils co-operate well together, behave well and are willing to help each other where necessary.

170. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. However, there has been no opportunity for him to monitor teaching and learning in the subject and to be fully effective in his role. Assessments undertaken are only informal and provide insufficient information about pupils' progress to enable them to develop their skills and abilities to the greatest extent. The hall is too small for the older and larger pupils to extend their skills fully and safely. During the inspection, no use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the subject was observed.