

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S C OF E (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hixon, Stafford

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124304

Headteacher: Mr Philip Cummings

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Baxter
25217

Dates of inspection: 2-5 July 2002

Inspection number: 198792

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 controlled
Age range of pupils: 4-11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
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Stafford
Staffordshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Boulton

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25217	Paul Baxter	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9883	Brian Silvester	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs English Art and design Music	
12108	Michael Chislett	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school caters for pupils aged between four and 11 years. It is situated in the village of Hixon about six miles from Stafford. Pupils come from above average social and economic backgrounds. Most pupils live in or near Hixon, although several travel from farther afield. The school is below average in size with 150 full-time pupils; 80 boys and 70 girls. Twelve children aged under five attend part-time. Almost all the pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds and speak English fluently; no pupils need support for English as an additional language. Most children start in the reception year with above average skills, but this can vary significantly from year to year. Four pupils (an above average proportion) have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average, but contains a wide range of needs. The percentage eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has grown considerably in size with up to 14 pupils entering at different times in a school year. It has suffered instability in recent years due to the illness of key staff and a relatively high staff turnover.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Peter's provides a sound education for its pupils. It has done well to develop good teaching and learning after a difficult period. Guided by an experienced headteacher, strengths such as the Christian and community ethos and positive attitudes and relationships, have been sustained. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has been improved and standards are rising steadily. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily, and in response to an increasing proportion of good and better teaching, more pupils are performing well in lessons. Insufficient resources in information and communication technology (ICT) and ongoing weaknesses in management; for example, in assessment and in strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, continue to restrict pupils' achievement. However, a renewed commitment to teamwork is enriching leadership and management and provision. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and religious education by the time they leave the school.
- The school's very good links with the community help to widen the pupils' learning experiences.
- The pupils demonstrate good attitudes and relationships that strengthen their learning.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers of younger pupils, in particular, are very knowledgeable about the pupils' needs, and teach basic skills very effectively.
- Literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented well, helping pupils to achieve in all subjects.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the procedures to eliminate bullying are promoted well by the headteacher and staff and are good overall, contributing strongly to the positive ethos for learning.

What could be improved

- The standards reached by the pupils by the end of Year 6 in ICT are below average and insufficient resources are restricting the opportunities for pupils to develop and use their ICT skills in support of learning across the curriculum.
- Procedures for assessing the pupils' work and using these to inform future planning and teaching are unsatisfactory, inhibiting the teachers' ability to raise the pupils' achievement.
- Inconsistent procedures for homework, marking, managing pupils' behaviour and subject co-ordination lack effective leadership and management strategies to ensure positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Not all the accommodation is used efficiently to support the pupils' independence in learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has grown in size since the time of the previous inspection in November 1997. Overall improvement has been broadly satisfactory. Teaching and learning has been improved significantly from satisfactory to good and literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented successfully. Key issues of the last inspection have been addressed, but not fully. Standards and provision have been improved well in design and technology and religious education, but not sufficiently in ICT. There is more challenge for higher attainers, but required improvements to whole-school assessment procedures, the co-ordination of subjects and the accommodation, although positive, have not been accomplished to the full. The curriculum for children in their reception year has been improved well. Management strategies have not always involved staff and governors effectively and inconsistencies in provision have restricted improvement. However, with good teaching and learning now, and with a stronger commitment to team leadership and management, the school is improving and standards are rising. The school has the capacity to continue this improvement.

STANDARDS

The table 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			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	B	D
Mathematics	A	B	B	C
Science	A	A	C	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The proportion of pupils with special educational and behavioural needs has increased and often varies from year to year and influences the overall standards reached by pupils from one year to the next. This is a contributory factor in the less than favourable comparisons with similar schools last year. Overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics have risen at a trend that is above that found nationally in recent years. Inspection shows that standards continue to rise. The appropriate targets of Year 6 pupils' attainment set by the school are being achieved and standards are above average overall for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Good teaching and learning in lessons is promoting above average standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and religious education at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school. Except in ICT, where standards are below average at the end of Year 6, standards are average in all other subjects. Children achieve well in the reception class and pre-reception group, exceeding expectations in most areas of learning, except in personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development, where their attainment matches expectations. Achievement is satisfactory overall, through the remainder of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers also achieve satisfactorily, but achievement in science, art and design, design and technology and religious education is good. Achievement in ICT in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory due to insufficient resources.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show good attitudes and play a full part in the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave well, particularly out of lessons, but at times silly behaviour in a couple of classes, notably when pupils experience several changes of teachers, restricts learning.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously; for example, in developing and

	maintaining the garden, and this supports their good learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory; broadly in line with the national average, but reduced by holidays taken in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in reception and Years 1 and 2 is typified by very good planning of the curriculum and by the teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of younger pupils. As a consequence, pupils settle well into school life and build consistently on their previous learning in these classes. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, although good overall, is more variable and is weakened on occasion by significant changes of teachers and inconsistent adherence to the school's behavioural policy in response to pupils' needs. The pupils' learning in these classes has been improved recently by the introduction of English lessons for separate year groups and specialist teaching of the different subjects; for example, in art and design, design and technology and music. Across the school, teachers are more proficient in challenging potentially higher attainers and meeting the individual requirements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and this is helping to raise standards. English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy are taught well and teachers and learning support assistants emphasise these skills well to promote the pupils' learning across the range of subjects. Teachers are providing more investigative opportunities in science now, using the new garden area, and this is helping to raise the pupils' understanding. Due to the timing of the inspection in relation to the school's cycle of planning it was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching in geography and history. The teaching is satisfactory in ICT, but limited resources in this subject restrict the pupils' learning. Teaching is good in all other subjects where judgements are made. The teachers interact well on a day-to-day basis with pupils and verbal feedback is strong, but procedures for setting homework and marking the pupils' work are not applied consistently in all classes, and this is restricting the impact teaching should have on the pupils' acquisition of skills. Overall, however, inspection shows that good teaching and learning now is raising the pupils' attainments.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; good for children in their reception year and strengthened by very good community involvement and supported by good literacy and numeracy strategies and links with local educational providers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; meeting the needs of individual pupils and promoting their achievement effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall and in all aspects, but inconsistent whole-school implementation of the behaviour policy weakens the ability of temporary teachers to sustain a higher standard of pupils' behaviour.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall with strong procedures for eliminating bullying. The staff provide effective pastoral care, but several procedures are not implemented consistently, including assessing the pupils' work and recording attendance accurately.

The school has a good partnership with parents. By assisting in school and helping to supervise pupils during visits, through their support of the development of facilities such as the new garden and through their involvement with the Parents', Teachers' and Friends' of the School Association, parents, staff and governors are working well together for the benefit of the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall; good pastoral leadership by the headteacher and positive contributions from the new deputy headteacher and senior managers are encouraging good teaching and learning throughout the school. Procedures for assessing pupils' work, homework, marking and for supporting the pupils' behaviour are inconsistent due to ineffective management strategies. With encouragement from governors and staff, the headteacher is seeking to promote a more effective corporate approach to management to rectify these weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall; not fully informed in the past, but strengthened by clear direction from a capable Chair and vice-Chair and improved information now. Strong efforts to improve their effectiveness, but weakened by statutory omissions in their annual report to parents. Good support of staff during a difficult period for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; the school monitors the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests effectively, but weaknesses in assessing the pupils' work in school are limiting evaluation and improvement of standards across the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory in the main, but insufficient resources for ICT are restricting the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills to the full.

The accommodation is of good quality. In recent years it has been enriched by the provision of the new garden area and improvements to the hall and dining area. A new ICT suite is planned, but there is scope to utilise other areas of the school even more efficiently in support of the pupils' learning. The governors are now well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their decisions are based effectively on the principles of best value. The school is staffed and resourced satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The children like school. Their children make good progress. They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the school works closely with parents. The range of activities outside lessons. The quality of the information provided by the school about how their children are getting on. The amount of work given to pupils to do at home. The behaviour of some pupils.

The inspection team support most of the parents' positive views expressed above, but find achievement overall is satisfactory. Homework and the information supplied to parents in the pupils' annual reports and in the governors' annual report to parents could be improved. Inspectors consider the range and quality of activities outside lessons to be generally satisfactory, but there is scope to consider providing a few clubs for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school works closely and effectively with parents, but the behaviour of a small minority of pupils should be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over the last few years, the numbers of pupils seeking entry to the school has grown substantially, and, as a consequence, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the overall level of prior attainment of the pupils within the different year groups have varied significantly. Generally pupils have entered the school with attainment that is above average compared to the national picture. Standards in personal and social and creative development tend to be those that are least developed with standards in communication, language and literacy at a higher level.
2. Children soon settle into school life, aided by a beneficial part-time introduction in the pre-reception group. On entry to full-time school in the reception class children achieve well in most areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The biggest gains are made in their personal and social and communication skills. They also develop positive attitudes towards school and respond well to the carefully planned, good quality teaching, which helps them to follow established routines that support their learning.
3. The children respond positively to the strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and develop these skills progressively. Learning is successful and pupils continue to achieve well in most areas of learning prior to entering Year 1, when their attainment is above average in most areas except in their personal and social and creative skills, where attainment matches that expected of pupils of this age.
4. The results of National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments in recent years for Year 2 pupils have varied between above average and very high in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting consistently good teaching and learning. Teachers' assessments in science are very low in relation to those found nationally, indicating weaknesses in developing the pupils' experimental and investigative skills. The proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding expectations in reading, writing and mathematics matches those found nationally. Potentially higher attainers would appear to be doing better in science, however, than average or lower attaining pupils, perhaps also reflective of skills learned at home as well as at school. Last year's National Curriculum test results compare well with the performance of pupils in similar schools, being either above average or average.
5. Inspection now shows that by the end of Year 2 standards are above average overall, especially in English, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average and continues the trend of recent years with attainment being sustained at least at above average levels in response to consistently good teaching. Achievement is satisfactory overall through Years 1 and 2, with an increasing number of pupils who are achieving well. The teachers have improved their planning and teaching methods as a result of their effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has raised standards in these aspects. Most pupils now use their developing skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics successfully, in response to the teachers' prompting and encouragement, to extend their skills across the range of subjects. This is seen to good effect; for example, in design and technology and in religious education, where standards are much higher than those identified at the time of the last inspection. The teachers have also increased the emphasis on practical investigation in science and this has raised standards and pupils' achievement successfully.
6. Results in the National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 6 in recent years have fluctuated from year to year and have varied from average to well above the national average in the subjects tested. In the main, they have matched the slightly rising trend found nationally. Overall standards have been sustained at a level that is never less than above average and the pupils' performance has been equally successful in English, mathematics and

science. Pupils have mostly performed at appropriate levels in relation to their previous scores in earlier Year 2 national tests. However, in comparison with similar schools in 2001, the pupils' performance was average in mathematics and below average in English and science, indicating that more pupils were capable of attaining higher standards.

7. Inspection findings are more positive, however, and indicate an improved performance from potentially higher attaining pupils in response to targeted questioning by the teachers, especially in literacy and numeracy. Most pupils are building effectively on their previous learning and, in response to good teaching, an increasing proportion are achieving well. Inspection evidence now shows that the pupils' attainments in Year 6 are above the national average overall, especially in English, mathematics and science. Standards are mostly either above average or average in all other subjects where judgements are made, except in ICT where standards are below average due to the insufficient level of resources and restricted opportunities available to the pupils to acquire appropriate skills.
8. This analysis shows that standards of attainment have increased significantly since the last inspection when they were found to be mainly average. Some of this improvement can be attributed to an increasing number of pupils starting school with higher levels of skill. Evidence shows that improvements to the planned curriculum and good teaching have also promoted higher standards.
9. Pupils achieve well through Years 3 to 6, in science, art and design, design and technology and religious education for these subjects have received whole-school emphasis in recent years. Achievement is satisfactory overall and particularly in English, and mathematics. Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT. There has been some improvement in the quality of teaching and learning this year with the introduction of year group and specialist teaching. The introduction of the year group teaching of English in Years 5 and 6 has also strengthened planning and is helping teachers to develop more effective investigative and problem solving approaches to learning. These ways of learning are also now being promoted effectively in mathematics and science lessons. Standards are rising as a consequence in these three subjects. Learning in lessons is also improving and it is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
10. The agreed targets for pupils in English and mathematics by Year 6 are appropriate and reflect the different levels of attainment shown across the year groups in the school. They are securely based on a careful analysis of National Curriculum test results. However, expectations of pupils' attainment in several other subjects are not supported by consistent assessment procedures and this is limiting the teachers' efforts to improve the pupils' achievements in all areas.
11. The teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy consistently and to good effect. This has helped to raise expectations generally of what pupils should and can attain and standards have risen as a consequence. A recent whole-school focus on writing is having a positive effect now on learning in lessons and an increasing number of pupils are achieving well in relation to their previous starting points. Overall attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing and spelling is at least above average by the end of Year 6. Opportunities to enrich the pupils' literacy skills are developed well across the full curriculum. In Year 4, for example, when discussing the structure of compositions in music, and in geography in Year 5, when sharing observations about the differing components of an urban environment compared to those of a rural community like Hixon.
12. Standards in mathematics are above average by Years 2 and 6 reflecting satisfactory achievement over time and effective teaching. Teaching and learning has been promoted effectively through the school development plan, but there is scope to raise achievement through more specific subject co-ordination and evaluation. Pupils' skills are improving, however, increasing their ability to use and apply them effectively in other areas of learning; for example, by measuring ten-centimetre square tiles accurately in art and design and by representing data about gravity as line graphs in science

13. Most pupils with special educational needs benefit from additional sensitive attention from learning support assistants and by having their needs targeted and met effectively through strategies outlined in their individual education plans. There is little recorded evidence of differing attainment between boys and girls. Observation of a few lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 shows that less effective management of the silly behaviour of some boys, whose ability to concentrate would appear to also be unsettled by several changes of teachers due to staff illness, restricts their learning in lessons. In the main the school is a well-organised community where all pupils are included equally in their learning and where potentially higher attaining pupils are challenged with increasing effectiveness to improve their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils are keen to attend the school and play a full part in its life, including the sound range of extra-curricular activities. They have a good attitude to their work and this helps their concentration and quality of learning. Pupils from the full range of prior attainments and backgrounds generally listen well to their teacher, follow instructions and get on well with the work given. They are keen to answer and raise questions. Pupils take pride in their work, some of which is displayed around the school. They are enthusiastic learners and concentrate well. Their good attitudes make a significant contribution to their academic and personal progress. In a few instances, in a couple of classes in Years 4 to 6, attitudes of a small number were less positive. In these cases some pupils did not listen and talked instead of working quietly. All children in the pre-reception group and in the reception class behave well and also show positive attitudes to their work and being at school.
15. The behaviour of the pupils, in class and around the school, is satisfactory overall. Parents are generally pleased with the standard of behaviour achieved, but in the parents' questionnaire and the parents' meeting, concerns were expressed. Standards of behaviour were occasionally lower in the Years 4, 5 and 6 classes. In a couple of these classes, a minority of pupils, mostly boys, did not obey their teachers and persisted with a low level of disruption that affected the learning of the whole class. Some of the misbehaviour was linked to the standard of teaching in the class and to the significant change in the teachers due to staff illness. In the main pupils had clear awareness of others and knew the difference between right and wrong. There was no serious misbehaviour or bullying, showing the pupils' good moral development. There were no exclusions in the year before this inspection and this was the same as at the previous inspection.
16. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Pupils work and play together well, demonstrating good social development. They are willing to share, take turns and work in pairs and groups. Older pupils are very willing to help the younger ones. Pupils listen to each other and show respect for the views and contributions of others. The good relationships in the school have a positive impact on the learning of the pupils.
17. The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. They respond well to the opportunities given to take responsibility. They carry out duties in class and around the school; for example, they take registers to the office, pick up litter and ring the bell. In class 2 a pupil is chosen to be a 'Very Important Person' (VIP) for the day. The older pupils help to organise games on the field at play-time and show positive awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Pupils help in the Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association fund-raising and assist with the 'Poppy Day' collection. Achievement, in and out of school, is celebrated in assemblies. Pupils show initiative by originating ideas for raising money for charities, like 'Red Nose Day' and 'Comic Relief'. They practise dancing and then present their performance to the rest of the school. Their willingness and consideration for others when taking part in these activities reflects their good spiritual and cultural development that aids their learning.
18. The level of attendance is satisfactory. Attendance in 2001/02 was 95 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. Although this represents an improvement overall compared to the previous year it is lower than that found at the time of the last inspection. The main reasons for absence are illness and holidays in term time. The school is working hard to discourage

parents from taking holidays in school time by identifying such absence as unauthorised. Pupils are punctual, but a few do arrive late and one or two are often late. Most pupils attend regularly and punctually, and this has a positive impact on the attainment and learning of the pupils concerned.

19. The positive attitudes and relationships have been maintained since the last inspection, but the school has grown in size and now caters for a greater range of pupils' behavioural needs, consequently, the overall standard of behaviour has declined.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. It contributes significantly to the effective learning pupils make in the school. Teaching was good or better in two out of every three lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good in one in eight and occasionally it was excellent. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Overall this represents a significant improvement over the mainly satisfactory teaching and learning seen at the time of the school's previous inspection. Since then, and despite instability in teaching staff due to increased pupils, promotion and long-term illness of staff, improved curricular planning and increased professional development and support have contributed to the better quality of teaching now seen. Good learning in lessons is now helping an increasing proportion of pupils to achieve well as they move through the school.
21. Teaching and learning are almost always good in the reception class and it is consistently good or better in Years 1 and 2. The teaching in these classes is typified by the teachers' very good knowledge of the curricular and social needs of younger pupils and by their skills and thoroughness in planning and preparing successful lessons. It is always underpinned by warm relationships between staff and pupils and by good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. These have a consistently supportive influence on the pupils' learning; for example, as in a design and technology lesson in the reception class and pre-reception resource area where young children developed their creative and design skills using a wide range of materials. Linked to their overall theme of holidays and travel, children used their outline sketches successfully to make cardboard and paper ships and aeroplanes and explored their ideas further using sand and technology. Their enthusiasm and ideas were used to extend their vocabulary skills, when discussing the contents of a suitcase with their teacher. Similarly, beneficial discussions were also developed in Years 1 and 2 where the teachers' warmth in responding to the pupils' ideas also supported a challenging degree of expectation that extended the pupils' thinking. For example, in an excellent science lesson in Year 1, where the questioning was particularly challenging and in a good design and technology lesson in Year 3, when the teacher raised the pupils' confidence of their knowledge of movement by reviewing their scientific knowledge of pneumatics.
22. These qualities were also seen in most lessons in Years 3 to 6, but not with such a high degree of consistency. Although good overall, a level of instability in teaching staff continues, at times, to have a restrictive influence on the quality of teaching and learning in the classes for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Just under one tenth of the lessons observed during the inspection were undertaken by temporary teachers and occasionally such change had a disruptive effect on the pupils' concentration. Its occurrence has been substantially reduced in recent terms by the positive introduction of the teaching of English to Years 5 and 6 pupils separately. This development has also increased the level of challenge offered to all pupils, especially to potentially higher attaining pupils, and has helped to raise standards in all strands of the subject. The implementation of specialist teaching of foundation subjects, such as art and design, design and technology and physical education has also had a beneficial impact on the pupils' attitudes towards learning. Led by the good example of the headteacher, teachers are united and effective in eliminating serious antisocial behaviour such as bullying. Teachers are not supported as securely in managing lower levels of distracting behaviour, and at times, particularly in one unsatisfactory lesson, several pupils - mainly boys - still behave in an immature, 'silly' fashion. Specialist teaching to pupils in Years 3 to 6 is promoting the pupils' basic skills and is also having a positive effect on standards, especially in design and

technology where standards have increased from below average at the time of the last inspection to above average now.

23. Parents, while convinced that teaching was good, were not sure that homework was always consistently set, effectively marked and discussed and used to raise standards. Inspectors found that the school's well thought out homework policy is not implemented consistently across the school. A few teachers set homework effectively, but continuity has been disrupted by changes to the teaching staff and lacks clear management strategies to ensure its appropriate implementation. As a result, pupils are not developing a clear awareness of the value of homework, and parents are not always able to support their children's learning as much as they would wish. This is restricting the pupils' learning.
24. Overall, teachers show at least good subject knowledge in most areas of the curriculum throughout the school, including in the key areas of English and mathematics. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good and this has a substantial impact on the progress pupils make in lessons and to their achievements over time. Teachers plan opportunities across the curriculum to ensure that pupils reinforce and refine literacy and numeracy skills acquired in English and mathematics lessons. This was seen in a Year 1 visit to the church when the pupils' vocabulary was enriched successfully by the clear use of terms such as 'communion', 'baptism' and 'artefacts'. Most lessons are challenging. Teachers in almost all classes have high expectations of their pupils. Work is appropriately matched to pupils' capacity and need, especially in English and mathematics lessons, as in a Year 6 English lesson, for example, where the pupils worked at their own level to explore the use of reading journals as a way of considering different texts.
25. The headteacher has been rigorous and effective in supporting the development of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Colleagues have been successful in introducing these methods consistently. Most learning objectives are clearly promoted by the activities teachers select for pupils and these enable teachers to evaluate appropriately what pupils have learned. Planning is more consistently supportive in reception and Years 1 and 2 classes for it has more detail to promote continuity in developing pupils' skills.
26. The teaching in science is good and is strengthened by an increased emphasis on practical investigation. The development and use of the new garden area has been a beneficial feature where the pupils extend their observational skills, enrich their research skills and increase their understanding. Standards are increasing across the school, especially by the end of Year 2, as the teachers promote first-hand observations.
27. The teaching is good in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education and reflects the teachers' and, at times, the learning support assistants' personal skills and interests in these subjects. Teaching is satisfactory in geography and history in Years 3 to 6 and in ICT across the school, partially because sufficient resources do not always support teaching. This is certainly the case in ICT where resources for teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and limit the pupils' skills. Learning is still weakened by too few computers in ICT. The teachers plan sufficiently for ICT skills to be taught or computers to be used to support work in other subjects; for example, by using control technology to create moving models in design and technology. Due to the timing of the inspection in relation to the taught curriculum there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching overall in geography and history. Evidence from displays and the pupils' work indicates sound provision.
28. The school has worked with some degree of success to improve the quality of day-to-day assessment since its last inspection. This is promoted well through oral interaction; for example, during class discussions at the beginning and end of lessons where links with previous lessons, learning intentions and reviews of new learning, respectively, underpin successful learning. They are not supported sufficiently through the teachers' marking of the pupils' work where ways of improving are not always recorded clearly to inform future teaching and learning. A positive feature is the development of increased opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. This was seen to good effect in English and art and

design where ideas were shared and enriched. Ongoing assessment of pupils within lessons is satisfactory overall; it is a strong feature of work in the reception class, but is not promoted as consistently across the school. Learning objectives are identified clearly in teachers' planning and are routinely shared with pupils. However, assessment against these objectives is not always recorded in order that pupils can be helped to understand what they have achieved.

29. Teachers and learning support assistants take careful account of the targets for pupils with special educational needs in their planning. The targets are clear and achievable. Pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment and particular needs in numeracy and literacy. This ensures that tasks are matched appropriately to pupils' needs. Pupils have good support from teachers and learning support assistants. This is sometimes on an individual or small group withdrawal basis, as well as when pupils receive additional care and attention whilst working with the rest of their class. Careful records are maintained and there is good liaison between all support and teaching staff.

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

30. The school's curriculum is broad and meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education and provides a daily act of collective worship. Appropriate time is allocated to all subjects with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT). This subject is under-represented, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and to this extent only the curriculum lacks balance. Overall, the curriculum provides satisfactorily for pupils' intellectual development and their personal development is promoted effectively through the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. An appropriate programme for personal and social and health education is in place to support personal development and this includes appropriate reference to drugs and sex education. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. All subjects are taught separately, although teachers develop links across the curriculum when relevant.
31. The school provides a good range of learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage classes. Planning is securely based on the six Early Learning Goals set out nationally. Activities are appropriate for the age group and are suitably practical.
32. At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was found to be broad and balanced, although religious education and design and technology did not meet requirements as they do now. Requirements for ICT have broadened and increased considerably since 1997. ICT is now, for example, expected to be taught in conjunction with every subject in Years 3 to 6. That the school has not kept up in this area does not reflect less activity or teacher commitment in that subject, simply that investment in hardware and infrastructure is necessary.
33. The school has adopted non-statutory national schemes of work for most subjects, modifying and supplementing these to maximise local opportunities. The long-term curriculum plans based on this guidance provide firm foundation for medium-term planning. In some cases, such as history, geography and science, revision will be necessary to ensure adaptation to different mixed-aged classes in the next school year. Across the school planning for all subjects contains sufficient detail for each week. In some subjects, such as history, geography and ICT, too little account is taken of pupils' prior learning when plans are developed. Not all co-ordinators are able to have a full impact on planning in their subjects in order to increase progression and continuity between classes and this is restricting pupils' achievement.
34. Some subject policies, such as those for history, geography and religious education are out of date and the schools needs to instigate a programme to review them.
35. The school recognises the value of investigative work and independent learning. Good opportunities are taken with the restricted ICT equipment to research CD-ROMs and the Internet. The library is used effectively to develop research skills, but there is scope to increase opportunities to promote pupils' independence in learning.

36. The school grounds are used very well to support learning, particularly in science, geography and art. The high quality development of the garden and environmental area has promoted personal and social and health education through pupils' involvement in developing, maintaining and improving it. Teachers take very good advantage of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum, particularly in history, geography and religious education. The school contributes to and draws upon the local community for considerable enrichment. Projects include support for 'Guide Dogs for the Blind', a local hospice, 'Stafford in Bloom' and local recycling. Pupils' development as members of a widening interlinked community is significantly enhanced in this way.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because pupils receive specific help in most numeracy and literacy lessons. They are included well into the life of the school and supported by carefully planned programmes. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support staff review individual education plans together.
38. The school has a straightforward policy to promote equal opportunities. It includes appropriate guidance to ensure race equality. It does this well and no inequalities were observed during the inspection.
39. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities extends the curriculum. At present, the pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy football, netball, cross stitch and gardening/environment clubs. There are no opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to take part, although the learning of all pupils is enriched by the planned visits.
40. The provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good and provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection. It is now good. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to reflect upon their work and behaviour. They consider the beauty of the world when they go into the inspiring garden or look at the attractive rose beds. In the garden, and in other lessons, pupils are encouraged to relate their learning to a wider range of issues. For example, in science teachers ask pupils 'Why do you think that happened?' and in English 'What do you think made that person act in that way?'. They encourage pupils to express their own ideas and feelings about people's actions. Displays around the school demonstrate to pupils that their work and contributions are valued and respected.
41. Moral development is promoted well because the school fosters values such as honesty and fairness and respect for truth and justice. They consider the needs of others when they raise funds for causes around the world. Pupils know that there is a code of behaviour that is promoted by the school. The school works hard to develop an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can practise moral decision-making, but there are inconsistencies in the application of the behaviour policy. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this is reinforced well by the award of house points and certificates for doing good things. Rewards recognise and comment upon the positive aspects of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils are delighted to gain recognition of their achievements and most respect the sanctions that are in place. Year 6 pupils are aware that they should set a good example to younger pupils and good relationships in the school help staff to provide pupils with good examples on which to model their own behaviour.
42. There is good provision for social development that reflects the school's concern for inclusion. This is because the school encourages pupils to consider their contribution to the community. For example, pupils have many opportunities to join in community events, such as the jubilee party. Pupils take part in services in the local church and join in team or national competitions and sporting events such as the mini-Commonwealth Games. They learn to live with others in another setting when on a residential visit and meet with pupils from other schools. Pupils learn how important it is to be a member of a team in a school production. During the year pupils make a number of visits to museums and places of local interest. These develop pupils' awareness of expectations of behaviour in society. Pupils are given responsibility for speaking to visitors about the garden and for formulating their own questions to ask visitors. They work in

pairs or small groups in many lessons because they are encouraged to share ideas and support each other in their group work.

43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Stories, music, literature and art from this country and diverse cultures are used well throughout the school to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural imagery and language. Visits to museums, art galleries and local towns extend pupils' cultural awareness. In religious education pupils reflect upon Martin Luther King's dream and think of their dreams. Several of these include hopes for peace in the world. Pupils learn to value other faiths and cultures in religious education and the opportunity to speak with someone from Pakistan about his faith is a very important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are prepared effectively for life in multi-cultural Britain. Pupils' participation in major national events and their learning about authors, musicians and artists give them a good knowledge of their own culture and heritage.
44. There are good links with the partner secondary school. In particular, St Peter's has joined with other consortium primary schools to establish a series of cross-phase projects to prepare Year 6 pupils for transfer. These ensure the pupils' smooth transfer to their next stage of schooling.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them sound support and guidance. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. Governors and the headteacher carry out thorough termly inspections of the buildings and grounds and their findings are reported to the governing body. There is also a joint health and safety policy for the whole site, which includes the school and the other buildings on the campus. A committee meets twice a year to discuss any joint issues of concern. As well as the health and safety inspections a number of risk assessments are carried out effectively. Fire drills are held termly and there is a joint fire drill with the other buildings on the campus. The school has a well-equipped medical room and two qualified first-aiders. The nurse comes into school to carry out health, vision and hearing checks, interviews parents and assists with sex education for the pupils. The school encourages healthy eating and is part of the national scheme to provide fruit for the infant pupils.
46. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. The headteacher is the person responsible for its implementation and he has received the necessary training. The Chair of Governors is the named child protection governor. There was whole-school training on child protection issues four years ago and training for the new staff is planned for the autumn term. The midday assistants are advised about child protection issues.
47. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The personal development of the pupils is monitored by their class teachers. Informal records are kept and this information is passed on to the next teacher as the pupils move through the school. The pupils' personal development is referred to in their annual report. It is supported by the satisfactory opportunities the school gives pupils to take responsibility, and these have a positive impact on their achievement.
48. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory because registers are not always marked correctly. Attendance is monitored by the class teachers, and if there are any concerns about patterns or length of absence they are reported to the headteacher. If a pupil, whose attendance is giving cause for concern, is away without a known reason, parents are contacted on the first day of absence. The education welfare officer (EWO) is involved, when necessary, and carries out home visits on attendance and punctuality issues. Except in special cases, there are no incentives for good and improved attendance.
49. The school's procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. There is a suitable behaviour policy, which contains an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. These procedures, however, are not consistently applied across the

school and are not prominently displayed around the school. Because of this, the policy is not as effective as it could be in maintaining a good standard of behaviour. Incidents of bullying are infrequent but, when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly. A record is kept of incidents and, where necessary, parents are involved.

50. In the previous inspection report it stated that relationships were very good, the provision made for support, guidance and pupils' welfare was good and that the school successfully promoted good behaviour. Since that inspection, the school has grown considerably in size and has suffered due to ongoing changes to staff, many due to illness. Leadership and management have not developed consistent whole-school strategies to support temporary teachers in these aspects, hence the school has not been able to maintain these standards.
51. Teachers and learning support staff know pupils with special educational needs well, assessments are carried out thoughtfully and the staff involved with the pupils are aware of their targets and programmes. Relationships between staff and pupils are good so that learning takes place in a purposeful and supportive atmosphere. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice and is aware that there are some changes to current organisation required when the revised Code of Practice is in place next term. There is effective liaison with outside agencies when required.
52. No overall judgement was made at the time of the last inspection, but a key issue was to clarify assessment procedures and to use these assessments to plan work for pupils of different attainment levels. This issue has been partly addressed. Teachers routinely plan suitable work for pupils of different attainment levels, but assessment procedures remain unclear in some subjects and, sometimes, between classes. Teachers are not clear what the school policy for assessment requires.
53. The results of National Curriculum standard tests in Years 2 and 6 and the results of non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 in English and mathematics are analysed satisfactorily. In writing in Year 5, this has been supplemented by a more detailed analysis of pupils' work and the setting of group targets. Staff absence and changes have prevented this effective model from being extended to other year groups. Pupils do not yet have individual targets for improvement in any subject and the school has rightly identified this as an urgent area for development.
54. The effectiveness of assessment is too variable in other subjects. It is good, for example, in design and technology where pupils are involved in self-review against agreed criteria. Knowledge and understanding is assessed satisfactorily in science, but there are no agreed criteria for judging progression in investigative skills across the school. Similarly, in history and geography there is no agreement or mechanism to assist teachers in assessing skills of geographical enquiry or historical interpretation. Consequently, teachers do not have a complete picture on which to modify schemes of work for groups or individuals. Assessments in ICT are not co-ordinated effectively. Some teachers keep useful records of work covered and skills gained, but there is no school-wide system to ensure progression and development in the pupils' learning, and assessment in this subject is unsatisfactory.
55. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' work and achievement in most lessons is good in Years 1 and 2 with teachers using questioning and feedback effectively. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, where these features are less consistent. There are good examples of constructive and evaluative comments in marking; for example, in English in Year 6 and science in Year 5, but this is the exception rather than the norm. The school's marking policy is not applied consistently and too much work is marked with, at best, only general feedback. Few ways forward are indicated, restricting the impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents are supportive of the school and the links between the school and parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The quality of information provided is satisfactory. Regular newsletters and information letters are sent out

and good use is made of the school's noticeboards. There are termly class newsletters, which give an outline of the curriculum to be taught. There are three parents' evenings per year. The one in the autumn term deals with target setting, and the spring and summer parents' evenings allow parents to discuss their child's progress with their class teacher. Information evenings for parents on curriculum matters, like science and homework, are organised. The school has a very good homework policy, but the provision and marking of homework is inconsistent across the school, especially in the junior classes. Parental help for their child's work at home is good. Many pupils have access to a computer at home. Each pupil has a reading record and this sometimes forms a line of communication between school and home.

57. Of the small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire, a minority of parents stated that they were not happy with the amount of homework provided and the inspection evidence supports this view. A minority of parents were also concerned about the range of extra-curricular activities provided. Inspectors concluded that the provision of extra-curricular activities was satisfactory, but more could be done to provide more outside lessons for the infants. Not all the statutorily required information is supplied in the annual governors' report to parents.
58. The written annual reports to parents are satisfactory overall. The pupils' attainment and progress is stated clearly in English, mathematics and science. The school has identified the need to improve these by focusing more sharply on progress and achievement rather than work covered in all subjects and by including specific targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. The report forms for July 2002 have been redesigned to emphasise this more effectively.
59. The parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Links are supported by an appropriate 'Home-School Agreement' and parents' involvement has a good impact on children's learning, both at school and at home. The Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association (PTFA) is very active. They hold a wide range of fund-raising and social events, including a Promises Auction, bingo, film shows and summer and Christmas fayres. The money raised is used to improve the school. Recently, PTFA money has been used to purchase physical education equipment and to help fund the new computer suite. The 'Village Events' committee is also very supportive of the school, reflecting the confidence placed in the school by the local community. Parents also collect vouchers to obtain resources for the school. These additional resources are beneficial to the learning of the pupils. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and around four help each week. More parents are involved with trips and sporting events. Parents are invited to special events, like sports day and concerts. The school obtains the views of parents by the use of questionnaires. The results of these also show that the parents are broadly satisfied with the school.
60. Parents who have children with special educational needs are kept fully informed and have regular opportunities to discuss targets and reviews with the school. Generally the school has the confidence of the vast majority of parents who welcome the school's efforts to include all pupils equally. A small minority of parents of potentially higher attaining children recognise the teachers' increasing expectations, but feel that there is scope to challenge their children even more to raise their attainment.
61. In the previous inspection report it stated that there was a good partnership with parents and an active PTFA. This is still the case, but the quality of information is less effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher leads well in terms of establishing a clear educational direction. His personal example, supported well by the deputy head teacher, governors and staff, helps to maintain the positive ethos of care and consideration. The school's values, aims and practice are based on strong Christian principles, inclusion for all and very good links with the local community. These underpin the pupils' effective learning and ensure good racial equality and harmony.

63. The standards attained by the pupils are rising in response to good teaching and learning in lessons. However, a significant part of this successful teaching and learning is due to the personal effort and skill of the teachers, including the headteacher, and it is not always supported fully by established leadership roles and effective management strategies. Standards are moving in an appropriate direction, but in recent years not all pupils have achieved as much as they should. This has been due in part to the significant disruption caused by ongoing instability of staffing resulting from continued staff absence through illness and by changes to key personnel, even though the headteacher has been effective in employing capable temporary staff. At the same time the school has grown substantially in size and now serves a greater proportion of pupils with behavioural and special educational needs. Existing strategies of management have not always supported the staff to best effect in these circumstances and not all the key issues of the last inspection have been rectified fully.
64. In recent terms the experienced headteacher has shown an increased willingness to share and delegate more responsibility with colleagues. This has strengthened planning for improvement and has also led to improved teaching methods and groupings of pupils. For example, grouping pupils in Years 5 and 6 for English lessons is helping to challenge all pupils equally, especially potentially higher attainers, and this is raising standards. In addition the provision and teaching and learning in design and technology, religious education and for children in their reception year have been improved well since the last inspection.
65. Leadership is less effective in ensuring that staff are fully supported by clear procedures in ensuring consistent care and welfare of pupils; for example, in completing attendance registers accurately and developing and using assessments of the pupils' work, including marking, to inform future curriculum planning and teaching. Assessment was an issue identified for improvement by the previous inspection. It has been addressed effectively in English and mathematics, but not in most other subjects and there are other outstanding issues from the last inspection, such as raising standards in ICT and improving subject co-ordination.
66. In a climate of uncertainty, policies and procedures have not always been developed and embedded quickly enough to anticipate and prevent problems. This is the case both in subjects like ICT, and in aspects of the pupils' care and guidance, including the management of behaviour. The new partnership forged between the headteacher and senior managers and governors now show positive signs of improvement in this key aspect of the school's work. Many initiatives are recent and are welcomed wholeheartedly by all the school's community. These are helping to ensure that the school now meets its clearly stated aims and values in everyday activity.
67. As a level of stability returns to the staffing of the school there is growing delegation to teachers who have management responsibility, particularly when areas for improvement are identified within the school development plan. The deputy headteacher, the co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage for younger children and co-ordinators of English, art and design, design and technology and music are effective in their roles. However, other members of the senior management team and several subject co-ordinators, especially in mathematics, for example, although often supported by the work of the headteacher, are not given sufficient time themselves to perform their duties fully. These senior managers and co-ordinators have worked effectively, but mostly in their own time, to develop their subjects. Development so far has been positive, but several co-ordinators get little time to assess the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects or to measure the impact that curricular development or spending has had on the pupils' standards. Managers' roles are also capable of further development in the management of funds for their aspect and subject areas. At present, financial control is not widely delegated. These weaknesses are limiting further improvement.
68. The school has improved its ability to meet the needs of pupils from different backgrounds and levels of prior attainment. It includes all pupils effectively. The co-ordinator and assistant co-ordinator for special educational needs are supported fully by the designated governor, and together they provide effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. Specific funding in this area is spent appropriately and supports a good team of sensitive learning

support assistants. Development is planned effectively and includes regular updating of the staff's professional training. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage of learning (for children in their reception year) provides good leadership and has established a beneficial part-time pre-reception group, which helps all children to settle quickly into school life.

69. The governing body, especially the Chair, vice-Chair and staff representative, have worked hard in recent years to support staff through the difficult period of uncertainty. Their role in leading and managing the school has generally been effective, but they have not been sufficiently informed or involved, until recently, in plotting the future direction of the school, and this has led to the inconsistent levels of support available to the staff of the school. Inspection shows that where colleagues have collaborated fully, as in the development of the new garden resource and in refurbishing the hall and dining areas, improvement has been more successful. Where levels of responsibility have been defined less; for example, in explaining the development of the school in the governors' annual report to parents and in extending provision to raise pupils' performance in ICT, provision is not yet satisfactory. The governors' annual report fails to meet the statutory requirements in several areas, notably by not informing parents about the provision for disabled pupils and about the progress made in addressing the key issues for improvement identified by the last inspection. Evidence now shows that governors take an increasingly active role in evaluating the effectiveness of the school and the quality of the provision, especially the accommodation, and are more proactive in helping to shape the direction the school should take. Their encouragement of the teachers in raising the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils is a good example of how increasing expectations are helping to raise standards.
70. The school plans appropriately for improvement. There are sound systems in place to monitor and evaluate its performance. National Curriculum tests are analysed carefully. For example, the school is aware of the impact of the pupils' differing levels of prior attainment in each year group and it has taken sufficient action to improve the situation; for example, by introducing year group teaching of English in Years 5 and 6. School development planning is detailed and establishes clear success criteria. These are now based securely on raising levels of pupils' attainment, representing a significantly stronger approach to development planning than at the time of the last inspection. It deals with longer-term goals, as well as the present year's targets, and is a positive instrument for improvement. Outcomes of planning are beginning to feed through to bring about effective school improvement. Planning reflects educational priorities, apportioning finances according to costs that have been carefully established. Specific grants to promote literacy and numeracy, for example, and to support pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately, so that all pupils achieve at least satisfactorily.
71. Financial control and management are satisfactory. However, the headteacher has been slow to delegate responsibility to the staff. The governing body's finance sub-committee includes several professionals; they now have full access to available information and their expertise is being put to more effective use. At present, given the weaknesses in management strategies mentioned earlier, there is still scope to improve the quality of information upon which decisions are made, especially to bring planned development, such as the proposed ICT suite, to an earliest completion, to aid the pupils' learning.
72. The headteacher and administrative assistant ensure effective day-to-day management of funds and the school's use and management of new information systems is satisfactory. At times the headteacher's reluctance to delegate more responsibility to colleagues has limited his ability to respond to the increasing bureaucratic demands placed on managers; for example, raising the profile of ICT and requiring individual performance targets for staff. He has been successful in developing effective performance management for teachers, but this has reduced his capacity to promote improvement across the range of subjects. However, as a result of sharing more information with the governors and senior managers, decisions are increasingly based upon a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have a clear understanding of and know how to obtain 'best value' and this is supporting the school's sound financial position despite the high maintenance costs associated with its large accommodation and facilities.

73. When all are present there is an appropriate match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and they are used well to sustain good teaching and learning in all classrooms. However, the school is still restricted by ongoing staff absence through illness. The headteacher does well to sustain generally good teaching and learning in all classes, by employing capable supply staff and through his own teaching, but some pupils occasionally have their learning disrupted by this unavoidable instability. The accommodation is good overall. Facilities outside the classrooms are particularly spacious and are generally well cared for. Classrooms, hall, dining and entrance areas have all been refurbished in recent years and detailed plans have been drawn up to create a new ICT suite in a redundant changing and shower room. There is still scope, however, to bring more areas of the school into more efficient use; for example, store and changing rooms, particularly to promote the pupils' independence in learning. Outside provision is very spacious and has been enriched significantly by the new garden that provides a rich environment to promote the pupils' creative and scientific skills. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory. Art and design, design and technology and physical education are particularly well resourced, but resources for ICT are unsatisfactory and limit the pupils' skills.
74. Overall, the school provides a sound and improving quality of education and the pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Consequently, the school provides sound value for money. A healthy proportion of good teaching and learning in lessons is now promoting higher standards, and inspectors judge that the school is well placed to continue this improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(*) Issues already identified for development by the school.

(P) Key issues of the previous inspection

75. In order to continue the development of the school and to bring all aspects of the pupils' attainments to an appropriate standard, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. (*) (P) Raise the pupils' attainments and achievement in ICT at the end of Year 6 and improve its contribution to the wider curriculum by:

- ensuring that teaching and learning in the subject is resourced sufficiently;
- providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in ICT and to use these consistently to support learning across the curriculum as they move through the school.

(See paragraphs 146-152.)

2. (P) Develop and implement more effective and manageable procedures for assessing pupils' work and strengthen its use to inform future teaching and learning by:

- raising the quality and consistency of the teachers' marking;
- reviewing and refining existing procedures to achieve consistent practice across the school.

(See paragraphs 52-55.)

3. (*) In order to promote consistently good procedures throughout the school, for example in the setting of homework, marking the pupils' work and managing pupils' behaviour, implement a more effective corporate approach to the leadership and management of the school and strengthen existing tiers of senior management and subject co-ordination by:

- (P) empowering subject co-ordinators in the monitoring, evaluation and development of provision and standards in their subjects;
- involving staff and governors in evaluating the effectiveness of the school;
- enabling colleagues to play a greater role in agreeing the priorities for development.

(See paragraphs 62-74.)

4. (*) (P) Continue to seek improvements to the accommodation provided so that pupils have good opportunities to learn from practical work and independent research.

(See paragraph 73)

In the context of the school's developing strengths, the following points should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the information provided in the governors' annual report to parents fully meets the statutory requirements.
- Ensure that the pupils' annual reports contain sufficient information about how the pupils can improve their attainment and achievement.
- Ensure that the pupils' attendance is recorded in full accordance with the statutory requirements.

(See paragraphs 48, 56 and 69.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	28	9	1	0	0
Percentage	2	11	64	21	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)	156
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

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	22

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.25

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	8	12	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	19	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	95 (92)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	20	18	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	90 (100)	75 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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	8	13	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	20	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (89)	86 (94)	95 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	19	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (89)	90 (89)	100 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Key Stage 1 and 2 figures are omitted where there were fewer than 11 boys or 11 girls in the year groups.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	150
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	367,799
Total expenditure	371,757
Expenditure per pupil	2,462
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,550
Balance carried forward to next year	10,592

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	154
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	33	6	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	28	11	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	22	17	11	0
The teaching is good.	44	39	6	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	39	11	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	11	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	44	6	6	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	33	17	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	56	28	11	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	44	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	50	11	11	6

Other issues raised by parents

Very few parents responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting, but discussions with parent-representatives during the inspection revealed positive support for the school.

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

76. There were 13 children in the pre-reception class at the time of the inspection, all attending for mornings only. There were 21 children in reception all attending on a full-time basis. Children are admitted to the pre-reception group in January and May, after their fourth birthday. Some children have two terms in pre-reception, some only one term and other children enter reception directly from a nursery or playgroup. They all move into the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. Both classrooms are attractively decorated and children have a stimulating and supportive start to their school life. The attainment of most children on entry to the current reception class is above the levels typical of children of this age. The attainment on entry varies and some groups in previous years had typical levels of attainment. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across all the nationally recommended areas of learning. By the end of the reception year, the majority of children achieve above the levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy expected for their age.
77. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (pre-reception and reception) is good because of the good quality of teaching and the wide range of opportunities in all the areas of learning. The two teachers plan together very well and organise their themes to stimulate children from both classes. Children gain in confidence and staff prepare them well for Year 1. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children in this age group. They are equally successful in meeting the needs of children from the range of prior attainments and backgrounds. They plan very carefully to ensure that children's learning builds systematically on what has gone before and prepares them for what they will learn next. Staff use assessment information thoughtfully to identify children's needs and for tracking progress from entry into pre-reception. There are very good relationships with parents, some of whom help in school and on trips. Their support is valued and used well. The outdoor area is being developed to provide opportunities for physical and imaginative play and the school is aware that this is an area for further development. The issues raised at the last inspection have all been dealt with satisfactorily and there is now a smooth transition between pre-reception and reception because of the good teaching in both classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. The majority of children enter pre-reception with personal and social skills that are typical of those found nationally. Children achieve well because teaching is good with a clear emphasis placed on the development of independence and working together. This helps the majority of children to attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year. For example, children know the routines for calling the register and sitting at the table at snack times. They are learning to stop their play when the teacher rings a bell. Sometimes children need skilled intervention by adults to follow instructions or play together, but on most occasions children work well together. When new children come for their 'induction' mornings at the end of the summer term, they are quickly integrated into activities with children who are already in pre-reception. For example, two played together at the sand tray and another boy was included in the imaginative play in the beach area.
79. In reception, again in response to good teaching, children build successfully on the progress made in pre-reception and attain at least the expected levels by the end of the reception year. The concentration of most children improves as their interest in work develops. Children are able to sit and listen to stories or the introduction of an activity because these are presented in an interesting and skilful way. Most children share and co-operate well, but there are a few children who need additional support and guidance to accept the need for taking turns. Children are very keen to work. They are developing a sense of pride and self-worth in what they can achieve because of the praise and recognition they receive from the teacher. Children usually work well in a small group. They move confidently around the school; for example, when going into assembly or into the dinner hall at lunch-time.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Most children enter pre-reception with at least typical levels of language and communication skills. The teacher places a good emphasis on the development of good speaking and listening skills. Children with higher prior attainment speak in sentences and ask simple questions. Some children are shy and reticent at first, but as they grow in confidence they are more willing to speak and participate. Some children find it very difficult to wait for a turn when others are speaking, but they are learning to put up their hands. When they are interested in their work some do not listen to instructions to stop, but they are learning to respond to a bell. Staff work hard and successfully to improve children's understanding and response to language through imaginative play and early reading or writing skills. Most children try hard to write their names and some form letters correctly without support. Others select their name from the wall and copy it onto a label or letter. Children enjoy looking at books and listen very attentively when the teacher reads from a book. She uses questions skilfully to involve children and extend their thinking and answers. For example, when on the playground she asked them to find a curved line and then asked for a shape with a curved line. After thinking hard, one child responded, 'A semicircle'.
81. Good assessments of children's work and writing are passed on to reception. This ensures that good teaching and learning builds on skills developed in pre-reception and enables teachers to see the progress children make. By the time they reach the end of their reception year, the majority of children achieve above the expected levels and are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum. They recognise words, read simple stories and name letters and sounds from the alphabet consistently. Children make good progress in learning words from the books they read, and this helps them with their writing. Higher attaining children write on lines, with well-formed letters. They use capital letters and full stops and write at length. They look in the dictionary for words beginning with 'ch'. Some children are not yet able to construct a sentence as confidently, but the teacher ensures that tasks match their abilities. They still have some challenge. Children are encouraged to read their work to others and the listeners are expected to remain quiet and listen. Some children still find this difficult because they have so much they want to share with the class.

Mathematical development

82. Most children in pre-reception achieve well because this area of learning is taught well through practical tasks. The teacher plans thoughtfully and imaginatively to develop children's mathematical language. For example, with everyone sitting down for snacks a child was given some beakers to give out to one table. He hesitated because there were not enough to go around. 'Have you enough beakers or too many?', the teacher asked him. 'Not enough', he replied. 'I need one more.' The teacher uses every opportunity to encourage children to count and think about number problems. Children know how many of them are allowed at each activity and they sequence the events of the day from getting up, with few errors.
83. Children in reception build on their understanding of numbers because the good teaching continues. The majority of children achieve above the expected levels by the time they are five. Children count up to 20 reliably and enjoy the actions that are made when every fifth number is spoken. Children know that 19 is less than 21 and order five numbers between nought and 21 without difficulty. Higher attaining children complete addition and subtraction sums up to ten, forming numbers correctly. They match numbers one to 100 on a 100 square quickly and confidently. Lower attaining children match numbers to groups and try to improve their writing of numbers up to nine. In a physical education lesson children extend their understanding of 'under', 'over', 'through', 'up' and 'down' as they travel around the apparatus. The teacher plans interesting and enjoyable numeracy lessons, using many of the methods employed in the numeracy strategy. Skilful questioning enables her to assess the children's level of understanding and to extend their thinking.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children in pre-reception achieve satisfactorily because the teacher plans to stimulate learning and attract children's interest and curiosity. For example, they had a 'magic' bubble maker and asked why some bubbles were big and why they had colours in them when they blew them around the playground. They listened thoughtfully to the sound of the sea making 'a sloshing sound' against the rocks. The children calculated by experimenting with how much rice they could put into containers to make sounds like footsteps on a stony beach. They listened to water splashing in a bottle and were aware that the noise was different from the tape. Children work well and purposefully together when they use construction kits, and fit pieces together with great care. The teacher ensures that children make discoveries every day by using a 'discovery box'. She plans learning opportunities carefully.
85. In the reception class the teacher continues the development of children's understanding and knowledge through a wide range of exciting opportunities. Teaching is good and the majority of the current group of children achieve above the expected levels by the time they reach the end of their reception year. Children plan sensibly what they need to take with them on a holiday. As they pack a suitcase they think of the initial sounds of the items they choose. Children have a good understanding of the types of holiday they can take and all the components of a good beach holiday. They learn how trees grow, where creatures live and increase their knowledge of the world about them when they go to Cannock Chase for their teddy bears' picnic. They make very good models of vehicles with a range of construction toys and interesting models with a wide range of materials that they glue and stick together carefully. Children use the computer confidently to word-process their writing and to listen to stories. They are aware that they have control of what happens on the screen and enjoy pressing the mouse to select a program or turning a switch to increase the volume.

Physical development

86. There are good opportunities for physical development in pre-reception in the hall and outside in the playground area. Children look forward to the weekly sessions on the apparatus and run, jump, hop and skip around the large playground. They enjoy the freedom of moving around such a large area and have races with each other in safety. Children throw and kick balls, hit them with a bat and delight in chasing after them. They jump with two feet together around the playground, following the lines with care and playing a game of hopscotch. Children's skill in using tools improves as they practise cutting out pictures and making models. Opening a suitcase requires some skill for little fingers, but children manage this well because of their determination. Children use tools effectively when they make patterns and models with play dough or make collages. The majority of children show a good level of skill in fixing construction equipment together.
87. By the end of the reception year, in response to good teaching, the majority of children attain above the expected levels for their age and achieve well in this area of learning. They climb and swing on ropes and go in and out of wall bars when the apparatus is set out in the hall. There is a good level of challenge in the groupings of the apparatus and one pupil demonstrated very good skills in stretching in and out of a ladder with ease and grace. The rest of the class applauded his efforts. One boy climbed on a rope from one bench to another and there were gasps of admiration when a girl jumped safely with crossed feet from a trestle. The level of skills evident in the lessons is high and children clearly enjoy the challenges. There are no wheeled toys for children to use outside and the school is aware of the need to develop the outside provision further. Children's skills with tools and materials continue to improve in reception as they meet other challenges with confidence.

Creative development

88. Teaching in this area of learning is good overall. Children in pre-reception achieve well because of the range of opportunities to develop skills. Children painted with care, using a brush thoughtfully and selecting colours deliberately. Adults' questions helped them to concentrate

well on their task and extended their thinking. Children made colourful collages with a mixture of materials. They enjoyed singing and joined in action rhymes with enthusiasm. Children explore all forms of imaginative play both inside the classroom and in the playground. The exciting and stimulating beach area is extremely popular and children plan their play there well. In the playground children played together in the playhouse or, because of the intervention of the learning support assistant, developed exciting games that involved following lines around the playground and pretending that they were on journeys.

89. Children in reception have a good understanding of colours and mix them confidently. The majority of children will at least attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year. They painted their own picture of a blue and green sea very effectively because a parent encouraged them to look at a picture in a book as they painted. Children wove a delightful large pattern in a range of sea-coloured fabrics. They followed instructions to go under and over the main threads. They thought deeply when the teacher skilfully questioned them about which material they were to use next and how long it should be cut. At the end of the afternoon, children described their work to others, explaining how they did it and asked a girl why she tied a group of materials together in one corner. 'I made a circle of waves', she told everyone proudly, and this was a very apt description of her work. Children enjoyed music and knew the names of most instruments used in the lesson. They sang well and marched around the class with one child drumming, keeping in time well. Children joined in the singing in assembly well, often learning the words of songs as they joined in the singing. Children continued to develop ideas and relationships through social and imaginative play. The beach area is a very good stimulus for ideas and language.

ENGLISH

90. Most pupils attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 2 in speaking and listening and reading. They are in line with national averages in writing. By the end of Year 6 the pupils' standards are above average in all aspects of English. The good teaching and careful match of activities to pupils' age and previous attainment enables pupils to consolidate and extend their learning systematically as they move through the school. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were above the national average in reading and well above the average in writing. However, interpretation of the results is difficult because of the small number of pupils involved each year. The results of one pupil, or any pupils with special educational needs, can affect the overall outcome significantly and this is why, for example, the standard in writing is lower this year. Similarly, because of the increase in pupil numbers over the past few years, any upwards or downwards trends are not clear, but the overall levels of attainment have been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. No significant differences between the performance of boys and girls were observed during the inspection.
91. There have been good improvements since the last inspection:
- the literacy strategy has been implemented effectively;
 - good support from the local education authority to develop pupils' language skills;
 - use of national initiatives to provide additional support for lower attaining pupils;
 - there is effective planned use of literacy in other subjects;
 - careful analysis of information from tests and assessments ensures that the progress and attainment of each pupil is monitored;
 - teachers use interesting and stimulating resources well;
 - regular monitoring of writing has been introduced as part of a whole-school focus on writing;
 - teaching in English is now good;
 - teachers meet the needs of pupils from different backgrounds and prior attainments and include them effectively.
92. Areas for development include:

- there is some good practice in the marking of pupils' work. However, this is inconsistently used throughout the school;
 - a review of the reading and reference books in the school and the library.
93. All pupils achieve at least satisfactorily and some achieve well, especially in speaking and listening. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because of the good teaching and support they receive. Staff take good account of the targets in their individual education plans and set them appropriate tasks. They encourage pupils to concentrate and gain confidence as they make steady gains in learning. Higher attaining pupils have more challenging work and this gives them the opportunity to extend their thinking and debating skills effectively.
94. Standards in speaking and listening are above average overall by the end of Years 2 and 6, although some pupils do not have good listening skills. Teachers work hard to improve these by speaking clearly to pupils and asking them to wait and listen to instructions. They listen to all that pupils say very carefully. Pupils are very keen to contribute and some find it difficult to wait for their turn to speak or to start their work. At the end of lessons pupils read out their work confidently and the majority of pupils listen well. However, there are pupils who need to be reminded to finish their own conversations and listen to the speaker. Teachers encourage pupils to respond to questions appropriately and extend simple answers well. This encourages pupils to extend their thinking skills. Language skills develop effectively through an emphasis on using many adjectives in Year 2 when pupils create a monster from the teacher's description. They listen extremely well to complete this task successfully. Lower attaining pupils benefit when the teacher works out with them the construction of questions for characters in a book because they are able to verbalise their answers before writing them.
95. As they move through the school pupils use technical and specific language in science and make relevant comments and predictions about authors and the books they write. Older pupils engage in very sensitive discussions about a teenager's problems in one book and use a good range of vocabulary and examples to describe the books they are reading. They speak with clarity and enthusiasm when talking about the garden project or their cross-stitch embroidery. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors.
96. Attainment in reading is above that expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. The good teaching of letter sounds, names and patterns in the reception classes provides a firm foundation for pupils to make good progress with their reading skills. Pupils learn the skills of working out new words at an early stage and they use the methods taught quite systematically. They progress quickly from reading simple stories to reading longer and more difficult books. Pupils enjoy poetry and using rhyming words. Pupils take their reading books home regularly and parents support pupils' reading well. Pupils select books from the school library and higher attaining pupils use a local library regularly because they want a wider choice of reading material. Group reading sessions are well organised and most pupils try hard to follow the books whilst others are reading so that they are able to come in promptly. Pupils know how to use wordbooks, dictionaries and a thesaurus. They know how to use reference books to carry out research and are learning the skills of writing what they find in their own words. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, benefit greatly from the structured support they receive in individual or small group sessions. They value the opportunities to work with a learning support assistant on specific programmes because this gives them time to practise and improve their reading skills. Pupils in Year 6 are involved in a two-week project on reading journals that will be continued in their secondary school. This is a very interesting project and pupils are enjoying the analytical approach to reading modern classics. The emphasis on creating questions about the book and the author is particularly successful because it extends pupils' understanding of the structure and development of novels.
97. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have standards in writing that are typical of what is expected nationally. The school identified the need to improve writing and put in place strategies to do this. Good monitoring of the work of pupils in Year 5, before additional support was given to the group at the end of the year, showed that pupils made good progress because of the support. There is now a whole-school focus on writing and teachers know the levels at which

pupils are currently working. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 begin to use a joined script for writing and have a good understanding of punctuation and written questions they are asked about stories. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and for subjects such as religious education and history. Average and lower attaining pupils do not use capital letters and full stops consistently, but all work is legible and handwriting in specific lessons is good. Pupils in Year 1 achieve well with their written work. They write stories independently, sometimes using a story map, and select a good range of vocabulary. Pupils write brief, but interesting book reviews and character profiles. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs have good support from the teachers and learning support assistants. This encourages them so that they grow in confidence and self-esteem.

98. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a legible style of handwriting. However, a few pupils do not consistently use a good style of handwriting in their daily written work and this carelessness sometimes appears in the spelling of words and crossing out in an untidy way. When pupils copy out their draft work this is usually done well. Pupils write imaginative stories and study a wide range of interesting literature that is carefully chosen by teachers.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils build on their learning effectively as they move through the school because teachers plan lessons that are interesting and stimulating. They make learning fun because there is always some challenge in the activities, but tasks are achievable for all pupils. Teachers explain to pupils what they are to learn in the lesson and discuss with them what has been achieved. The use of time targets during the lesson helps pupils to remain aware of the time and understand that a task has to be completed before the end of the lesson. Skilled learning support assistants work well with teachers and give quality support in lessons. They help lower attaining pupils to share in discussions and contribute to the lesson. Teachers ask questions sensitively and this encourages pupils to join in discussions and extend their answers. The marking of pupils' work is not consistent, although there is some marking of very good quality. In the best marking, pupils can enter into dialogue with the teacher, see how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.
100. The subject is led and managed well and information from assessments is used well to ensure that work is matched well to pupils' individual abilities. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and is constantly seeking to raise standards for all pupils and improve resources. The current library provision is also satisfactory. The teaching of pupils in year groups ensures that pupils are all covering appropriate activities for their age. Pupils benefit from any special events; for example, book days and visiting theatre groups. These stimulate interest in aspects of English and enrich pupils' learning. Performances at Christmas and the end of the summer term are very good opportunities to extend speaking and listening skills. There is some effective use of ICT in English, both for word-processing and for language work. Some pupils in Year 6 complete homework on the computer and this is used well for their magazine, 'The Sixer'. English supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because of the opportunities for working together and the wide range of literature, plays and poetry used in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

101. Standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average. This has been accomplished largely as a result of:
- the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - improved consistency in teaching and a stronger continuity in learning for the pupils;
 - number and using and applying mathematics are emphasised effectively.
102. Trends in national test results since 1998 show increasing standards in the attainment of Years 2 and 6 pupils, matching the rising trend found nationally. Observations of lessons, discussion with pupils and an examination of the pupils' work showed that most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their previous attainment. In response to an increased number of

pupils with special educational needs the school has strengthened the support offered to these pupils; as a consequence, they achieve satisfactorily. The last inspection identified insufficient challenge for higher attainers as an area for improvement. In response the teachers have raised their expectations and set appropriately challenging work for these pupils, who also achieve satisfactorily now. The pupils' performance in recent National Curriculum tests, including this year's, shows that an increasing number of pupils are achieving well and that standards continue to rise in response to good teaching.

103. By the end of Year 2 pupils have developed above average facility in number. They add and take away numbers up to 100 effectively and show a good understanding of place value. Their knowledge of shape and space and of fractions such as halves and quarters is above expectation and they handle data using simple bar graphs accurately. Measuring skills are progressing well due to an increased and consistent emphasis on practical work using weighing, handling money and measuring capacity. Most pupils across the range of attainments build well on their previous learning. By Year 6 pupils have attained at least average knowledge, skills and understanding in number. Higher attaining pupils use long multiplication and multiply decimals accurately. Average attaining pupils add and subtract decimals with increasing accuracy and lower attainers show positive attitudes, set their work out neatly and also acquire close to average skills in using number. All pupils make good progress in using and applying mathematical skills and respond to the increasing emphasis on practical investigation and problem solving. They show above average skills in measurement and in shape and space. Several pupils work at higher than average levels and show a good understanding of probability, area and percentages. In general an increasing number of pupils are beginning to achieve well in response to the teachers' expectations. Skills in handling data are limited, however, by the insufficient opportunities available for pupils to learn by using computers – the result of insufficient resources that the school is seeking to rectify in the near future through the creation of an ICT suite.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school; it ranges from good to very good. As a consequence, pupils are learning well in lessons. Teaching and learning have been strengthened this year as a result of improved stability in the teaching staff and by ongoing refinement and improved implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy promoted by the headteacher. This improved provision has not had sufficient time to impact fully on pupils' achievement, and as standards continue to rise so will the achievement of the pupils over the longer term as they apply their improving skills. All teachers plan thoroughly and in appropriate depth. They use questioning skilfully to all pupils from across the full range of prior attainments, to motivate and enthuse pupils. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 the teacher drew a clock face and challenged the pupils to match the multiples of five against the numbers around the circumference. All teachers, including temporary teachers, have good subject knowledge and promote the pupils' thinking through well-thought out activities linked to the pupils' previous attainment. For example, in a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher set group work at four different levels to challenge the pupils effectively. The teachers emphasise the pupils' mental calculation skills successfully at the beginning of lessons using good pace and rigour to sharpen the pupils' responses and to develop their numeracy skills effectively. This was seen to very good effect in a lesson in Year 1 where the teacher deliberately set the challenge and invited pupils to respond. They did so enthusiastically, occasionally mimicking the teacher's example respectfully, by illustrating their understanding of subtraction in the same way, namely, 'I've got nine – I left one at home!'.
105. Teachers begin their lessons by making effective links with previous learning, and share the learning objectives precisely with pupils. This ensures that there is an opportunity for pupils to assess their attainment during the end part of the lesson discussion.
106. Increasingly teachers invite pupils to explain their strategies for solving problems and this is steadily improving the pupils' understanding and use of number. Most pupils enjoy the subject and sustain concentration well. Occasionally a few boys, often when their confidence is affected by changes of teachers, lose concentration and need frequent reminders to focus their attention

and this restricts learning. In the main teachers are effective in promoting the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes in lessons and this aids learning.

107. Teaching and learning are not supported to the full by existing assessment strategies. For example, the quality of marking is inconsistent for teachers do not readily identify ways of improving to the pupils. Whilst teachers and learning support assistants have useful discussions with pupils about their work not enough of these are sufficiently recorded to have full impact on future planning and lessons. A few teachers set homework effectively in full accordance with the school's policy, but a few do not and this creates a level of inconsistency that limits the positive impact work at home can have on pupils' learning. The headteacher and senior teachers now monitor and evaluate the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and use their findings to set realistic and appropriate targets for pupils to attain by Year 6. Evaluations of test results are also used to review and improve provision and this is promoting the raising of standards.
108. Pupils use their numeracy skills to help learning in other subjects; for example, when they measure card, paper and wire when making moving models in design and technology, when studying shape and form in art and design and when measuring gravity and presenting this data in science. Literacy skills are enriched through class discussions and during the 'quick-fire' mental calculations sessions at the beginning of lessons. Teachers are diligent in promoting correct mathematical terms such as 'prediction', 'probability' and 'calculation' and this strategy is effective in extending the pupils' vocabulary.
109. The curriculum is appropriately planned and provides sufficient progression to support the systematic development of the pupils' skills. In the past the subject has benefited from a strong whole-school emphasis with the headteacher supporting individual teachers. This approach has been aided by the clear guidance and funding provided to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and was effective when the school consisted of three classes. Since the number of pupils and staff has increased this form of management has been less successful and the role of the co-ordinator has not been established effectively. Current co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the whole school and this is limiting the impact she can have in continuing the drive to raise pupils' achievement. Inconsistencies in homework, marking and in the use of assessment have developed as a direct result of ineffective subject co-ordination. Where the co-ordinator has had a bigger influence, in Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is planned in greater depth, offering more support to teachers and continuity in learning to pupils.
110. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory. Provision for pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding through ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 due to the insufficient resources for ICT.

SCIENCE

111. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 are above average overall and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Evidence from the inspection indicates that Year 6 pupils demonstrate above average knowledge and understanding and average skills of investigation. The pupils at the end of Year 2 also attain above average standards, which is a significant improvement this year. These standards are also much higher than those measured by the National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 and 2002 and those found at the time of the last inspection. This has been achieved by:
- improved teaching that is mostly good and sometimes excellent;
 - a stronger emphasis on investigation;
 - good use of the new garden/environmental area.
112. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Although only a limited amount of teaching was observed during the inspection, there is ample evidence that good teaching in all classes contributes considerably to this. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar and pupils

with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils also achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very carefully planned and is good and occasionally excellent. It is made clear to pupils what they are learning about and methods are chosen well to stimulate interest and understanding. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, pupils were invited to predict whether either a shiny or a wooden spoon would be visible in a completely dark room. They were subsequently able to test their predictions using a dark box and the classroom store cupboard. They showed great interest in the lesson and, subsequently, chose to explore a range of reflective materials.
114. In a Year 2 lesson on sound, the teacher engaged pupils' interest immediately by recapping what had been previously learned and linking the experiment that was coming to a recent church visit and observation of the organ. The work was supported further by a related scientific display in the classroom, celebrating pupils' scientific thinking about the investigations about sound as well as a previous project on rotting materials.
115. Teachers use questions effectively to encourage pupils to probe their learning and extend their understanding and these also develop the pupils' literacy skills successfully. In the Year 1 lesson on light; for example, the teacher's careful questioning led the children to offer the understanding that, in order to be visible, an object must reflect light. This lesson made a strong contribution to pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress within lessons in Years 1 and 2 are used to modify the lessons that follow.
116. The quality of the teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 was also good overall and the teachers planned with similar care to develop knowledge, understanding and investigative skills. Investigation skills were less successfully promoted, since agreed strategies to assess and develop this area are not in place. Nevertheless, a good start is made in Year 3, and in an investigation on shadows, pupils showed that they could predict results and set up and control a simple investigation. Year 6 pupils responded well to a lesson testing the stretch of an elastic band as increasing mass was added. The structure of the investigation was prescribed, but pupils co-operated well, recorded accurately and worked with care. The lesson required pupils to draw on their numeracy skills, perform accurate calculations and to construct graphs to suitable scale. There are no agreed systems to ensure that assessments of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 are used to inform curriculum planning and hence, progression in investigative skills is hindered. Marking is variable and pupils do not always receive helpful critical feedback on their work.
117. The development of the school's garden and environmental area has resulted in an impressive resource for natural science and investigative work. Pupils keep logbooks of frogs' life cycle and changes in the plants and other wildlife. Year 4 pupils have studied the habits and preferences of woodlice, designing and carrying out experiments to test predictions based on careful observation. For these experiments, they controlled for variation, collected data and interpreted the results through graphs. Good observational drawing and good use of an electric microscope linked to a computer further enhanced this work. The limited ICT equipment, including the digital camera, is used effectively to enhance science.
118. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The present co-ordinator is leaving and school-wide forward planning for the subject has been identified in the school improvement plan. The acting co-ordinator has identified the need to support the development and assessment of investigative skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The introduction of some specialist teaching in these years has enabled a start to be made in monitoring standards and progression in pupils' work, but more needs to be done. Other than the environmental area, resources are satisfactory, with adequate good quality equipment to service the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

119. By the time they reach the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils produce work that is above average because of the good teaching they receive. The high standards have been maintained since the last inspection through imaginative planning and thoughtful development of topics; for example, sculpture with natural materials. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve well because of the support and attention given to meeting their needs.
120. Pupils in Year 2 followed up a visit to a church by creating very attractive, colourful stained glass windows. They paid much attention to detail in their drawings. Pupils made 'Golden Jubilee' pots with clay and produced interesting medallions, using a range of tools to create individual designs. When asked by the teacher how he tackled his work in the lesson, one pupil commented, 'I thought... it didn't work... I thought again... made it into a square... and then shaped it'. He thought through the process very effectively. Pupils in Year 1 experimented with colours, shapes and textures to create their own delightful collages in the style of Andy Galsworthy. They recalled his work in very clear detail and immediately produced spirals and lines in pastel, which echoed his designs well. Pupils reproduced their designs in papers and materials very successfully. All work was carried out with interest and good levels of concentration.
121. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were given a very clear brief for their task of designing ten-centimetre tiles with a relief pattern that a visually impaired person could feel to identify parts of the garden. They were given time limits for each stage of the task and listened carefully when told that workers are often paid for how much they do in a set time. This gave them an unexpected insight into the world of work and their productivity increased. Pupils worked thoughtfully on their designs of leaves, creatures and flowers and, when the teacher praised one pupil for giving her leaves additional texture by marking them, they realised that this was an important feature of the tiles they were making.
122. In Year 4 pupils work with natural materials, including mud from a field, to create their original designs in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They collect their materials very carefully because 'Andy Goldsworthy does not destroy the environment, he makes it look better'. The work produced is of a very high standard and very good use is made of photographs of the stages of their work in the final display. Pupils in Year 3 make good observational drawings of animals and produce lively, carefully painted portraits of animals.
123. Pupils enjoy art and design lessons. They have a good understanding of the ways in which different artists use colour, line and shape effectively. Numeracy, especially measuring skills, is supported well. The pupils are confident and tackle tasks boldly. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive and the freedom to create their own valued designs. Teachers question pupils perceptively and pupils think about their work before expressing their opinions or respond to the task clearly. Such discussions make a positive contribution to the pupils' developing literacy skills.
124. Teaching and learning are good because work is presented imaginatively and always has a good level of challenge. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils are included in the activities. Teachers encourage pupils to use their sketchbooks and this helps less confident pupils to rehearse their ideas and skills. Art is used extensively to extend work in other subjects, such as religious education and history. This helps pupils to build on their skills well as they practise them in other topics. ICT is used effectively in most classes for pupils to experiment with colours, lines and shapes. The digital camera is used well to inspire and help pupils with designs.
125. The subject is led and managed well and there is an enthusiasm amongst the staff for producing high quality work. Resources for the subject are good and artistic experiences such as visits to galleries, churches and museums provide invaluable opportunities for learning new techniques. Two and three-dimensional work is displayed well around the school and art and design makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Observations of lessons, evaluations of teachers' planning and pupils' work and discussion with pupils and staff indicate that most pupils are on course to reach standards that are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and potentially higher attaining pupils also achieve well and derive equal benefit from the teachers' careful and consistent emphasis on pupils planning and recording their ideas as a prelude to model making. Pupils now have a good awareness and understanding of the design process of planning, designing, making and evaluating and this has raised standards significantly since the last inspection. Then the subject was a weakness; it is now a strength throughout the school.
127. The pupils' designing skills are promoted successfully in all classes through food technology. By preparing and then cooking biscuits, cakes and bread, pupils develop their good understanding of the design process. Pupils in reception, Years 1 and 2 are introduced to the design process of planning, designing and making effectively from an early age. The teachers develop strong links between work in art and design and design and technology. The pupils learn the difference between artistic creativity and designing for a purpose. They use sketchbooks effectively to develop drawing skills then use them to design models using 'designing, evaluating and comparing frames'. The pupils draw and plan their ideas appropriately before making them, initially by using a variety of construction apparatus. Often they examine their favourite toys to study how they are made and use card, paper and glue to create models such as ships and aeroplanes. They have access to a good range of construction equipment that they use to design and make moving machines. The pupils evaluate their designs orally and effectively and this assists their literacy skills by extending their vocabulary and understanding of terms such as 'movement'.
128. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve well in developing their knowledge and skills in the design and making process. Increasingly teachers use a digital camera to explore how objects move and how models could be refined and improved. Pupils in Year 3 use 'investigative sheets' to develop ideas for photograph frames and also refine and improve their ideas through discussion. Work in this subject involves close links with work in science and the pupils make 'moving monsters' incorporating parts moved by pneumatic pumps. By Year 6 pupils use ICT, in the form of control technology, to make floor robots move and to formulate their own designs of models that incorporate moving parts. For example, by working in pairs or groups they create sophisticated models such as rescue boats, jungle tanks, wicked robots and haunted houses, all of which incorporate parts that can be controlled through electricity and ICT. These creations show the above average standard of their design and making skills. Pupils work effectively either in groups or individually and enjoy discussing and refining their ideas to improve their finished products. All the pupils enjoy their work and are equally involved and have appropriate opportunities to contribute during the design process.
129. No lessons were observed during the inspection in Years 1 and 2, but observations of good lessons in Years 3, 5 and 6 and evidence from discussions with teachers and pupils and from photographs and finished models show that teaching and learning is securely good overall. The teachers plan carefully to ensure that all strands of the subject are taught systematically as the pupils move through the school. This supports good continuity in learning and helps the pupils to develop above average skills. In the lessons observed, the teacher shared the learning objectives clearly with the pupils and this aided their understanding and enabled learning to develop well. For example, in Year 3 the teacher made good links with previous work in a science lesson and this helped the pupils to use pneumatic pumps as an energy source in their models of moving monsters. The teachers showed good knowledge, emphasised the design process well and used resources effectively, as in Years 5 and 6 when demonstrating how to use control technology to move floor robots. In all the lessons observed, the teachers managed the pupils' behaviour effectively and warmly, and in response the pupils showed interest and a great deal of enthusiasm and these undoubtedly supported their creative ideas and good learning.

130. The subject was identified as a key issue requiring improvement by the last inspection. Since then it has received good whole-school emphasis and development has been carefully planned, resourced and implemented. Leadership and co-ordination has been successful. The curriculum has been improved and it now provides appropriate breadth and balance. The teachers assess the pupils' work effectively in lessons through oral discussion, and observations of the pupils' finished models supports appropriate ongoing assessment of the pupils' skills and understanding. The teachers know the pupils' capabilities well, but they do not always record them and this limits their use to inform future teaching and planning.
131. Resources for the subject are generally good, although there is a shortage of ICT equipment to support design work fully. The pupils' numeracy skills are promoted well through measuring activities linked to model making; for example, the lengths of wires necessary to make connections. The pupils' literacy skills are extended well through discussion and by using the design sheets to record ideas for the future and to evaluate the quality of finished models. The use of ICT to extend the pupils' work is effective, but it is at an early stage of development in several classes. Recent work in controlling mechanisms using computer software in Years 5 and 6 and in using the digital camera to share ideas are making a valuable contribution to the pupils' ability to give expression to their own ideas. The pupils enjoy their work in the subject and this promotes their positive attitudes towards school and enriches their learning.

GEOGRAPHY

132. The attainment of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, achieve satisfactorily over time. The standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
133. Pupils in Year 1 gain a broad appreciation of the prospects of travel, the world and an introduction to other countries through the travels of Bradley Bear. They are introduced in this way to ideas of distance and scale and given opportunities to explore their understandings of places and environments. These activities support their numeracy skills.
134. Pupils in Year 2 are able to read local Ordnance Survey maps, locate their own village and interpret and identify many features, using the key. They demonstrate good local knowledge in doing so, reflecting the priority that the school gives to studying places that can be visited.
135. Older pupils extend their local knowledge appropriately by comparing their locality with others. Year 5 pupils study Plymouth and Year 6 study Tocuaro, a village in Mexico. Their descriptive writing enriches their literacy skills effectively.
136. Too few lessons were observed to give an overall evaluation of the quality of teaching, but the indications from teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussions with pupils are that it is at least satisfactory over time in Years 1 and 2 and broadly satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Two lessons were seen in the latter key stage. In one lesson, with Year 5 pupils, good teaching linked the study of land use in part of Plymouth with interpretation of an aerial photograph and a matching Ordnance Survey section. The teacher had thoughtfully drawn these resources from the Internet. Good questioning was used well to enable the pupils to develop their exploration of land use and compare it with their own locality. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked on volcanic landforms as a background to Tocuaro in Mexico. Other pupils researched aspects of family life in the Mexican village using reference books and the Internet. This lesson was meticulously planned and demanded considerable preparation by the teacher to marshal this good range of resources. Although some researched information was pooled in the discussion at the end of the lesson, there was too little requirement in this lesson for pupils to compare and contrast their findings and to think as geographers.
137. The quality of teachers' marking on pupils' written work is variable. In general, pupils are given too little feedback on how to improve their work and develop their geographical skills.

138. The curriculum meets statutory requirement and is conscientiously planned. Good opportunities are taken to extend pupils' cultural awareness, such as an Indian afternoon in Year 4. The new and enthusiastic co-ordinator has undertaken a thorough assessment of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. She has planned a curriculum review in the autumn term to reconsider progression in the units of work in the subject. Sensible plans are in hand to extend the use of the extensive school grounds to include orienteering. The environmental area offers many opportunities to enhance geography, including collecting ongoing data about climate and its impact. Importantly, the co-ordinator has identified the need to assist colleagues with the assessment of pupils' progress in geographical enquiry skills, such as those already identified in Year 5 planning. She has also recognised the need for support if she is to monitor the subject effectively, since she teaches part-time without release and co-ordinates history as well, which is an unsatisfactory agenda.
139. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. The school is beginning to make good use of ICT through the Internet, although e-mail projects with distant localities have yet to be developed. The geography section of the library contains too many out-of-date books. Good use is made of the local education authority's 'Humanities Resource Centre', in Stafford, for loan collections.

HISTORY

140. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. For the oldest pupils they were judged to be higher at the time of the last inspection. However, there remain many strong features in teaching and learning in the subject, and the findings of this inspection are that a significant decline is not indicated. Pupils' achievements in the subject are satisfactory throughout the school regardless of gender, prior attainment or special educational needs.
141. By the end of Year 2 pupils have an appropriate understanding of changes over time. Year 2 pupils know about important features of Queen Victoria's reign and can discuss differences between then and now. They have a good understanding for their age about the time of the Second World War and have considered it through studying the three St Peter's Schools and the lives of evacuees. They are able to compare the validity of different forms of evidence, considering, for example, why a photograph might be more reliable than a painting.
142. During Years 3 to 6 the pupils' appreciation of local history is developed well; the village and its environs are used effectively as first-hand sources. Year 4 pupils, for example, considered a range of local photographs and historic maps to identify the changes and research the events of the last sixty years. Farther afield, the 'Ancient High House' in Stafford was used for a costumed Tudor day for Year 3. Years 4 and 5 took part in a 'Saxon and Viking day' in which staff and students dressed in 'Dark Ages' costumes and spent the day learning about life from those periods. Year 4 also use the Internet for 1851 census material to compare Victorian Hixon to that of the present day.
143. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is conscientiously planned to offer stimulating starting points and links to other subjects. Occasions to extend the pupils' cultural awareness are taken well to extend pupils' understanding, such as the 'Golden Jubilee Day'. The pupils have many and varied opportunities to use their developing literacy skills to present their ideas - by writing as evacuees in Second World War, for example.
144. No overall judgement about the quality of teaching can be made as it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and only two lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. Judging from the impact of teaching over time, it is at least satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning gives good attention to the subject, paying particular attention to the need to bring the subject to life. Displays demonstrate the good interest that the subject holds for staff and pupils, and pupils' work and discussion indicates that the subject is valued and enjoyed. The quality of marking in the subject is unsatisfactory and is highly variable. At its best, as in the sample of Year 4 workbooks, it offers specific praise and clear pointers for pupils to improve their work. However, this quality of written comment is rare.

145. The co-ordinator is new to the role and is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. She has rapidly gained a good overview of the maintenance and development needed to ensure that standards are maintained and improved. She has rightly identified the need to update the policy and reconsider the make-up and sequence of units of work as year groups are reorganised. She has correctly identified the assessment of the skills of historical interpretation as requiring attention in order to increase further the standards of teaching and pupils' learning in the subject. Since she teaches part-time without release and co-ordinates geography as well, this is a demanding agenda.
146. Resources for learning are satisfactory, particularly since such good use is made of the locality. ICT is not used to best effect in supporting the pupils' learning for there are insufficient computers to give the pupils appropriate opportunities to research. Prominent timelines in two classes in Years 3 to 6 provide an additional support to aid the pupils' understanding of the chronological passing of time and enrich their numeracy skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

147. Currently standards for pupils in Year 2 are close to the national average, which represents satisfactory achievement from the reception class. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection, when standards were found to be below average for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Since that time, standards nationally are higher and more is expected of pupils in the range and depth of ICT understanding and its application. Pupils in Year 6 are, for example, expected to use e-mail and the Internet, make presentations using text, pictures and sound, control events and use sensors to measure physical change. There is too little good quality ICT equipment to enable all this to happen as it should. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have too little sustained opportunity to develop and apply their skills in all these areas and, consequently, standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. Above all, pupils have little opportunity to make independent decisions about when and how to use ICT in their work, and to select appropriate applications for the task in hand. As a result, and despite some good individual instances, older pupils' achievements in ICT are unsatisfactory. These limitations in ICT affect all groups of pupils and there are no discernible differences in achievement for boys, girls or pupils with special educational needs.
148. Judgements are based on an observation of one lesson aimed at teaching ICT skills and of pupils working on computers during lessons. In addition, pupils' work on display and in other subjects was scrutinised and pupils in Years 2 and 6 were interviewed.
149. This evidence indicates that all pupils in Years 1 and 2 cover the range of experiences required by the National Curriculum and that the development of associated skills is satisfactory. This is easier to ensure than in Years 3 to 6, since the ratio of computers to pupils is higher. Year 2 pupils, for instance, experience a wide range of teaching programmes, use the Internet for research, have experience of presentation and publishing software and conscientiously contribute to the keeping of their own records.
150. Year 3 and 4 pupils' work shows evidence of a similar range, including the use of databases and the interrogation of CD-ROM encyclopaedias. Some attention is paid to developing pupils' ICT skills, but there is no system to ensure consistent development between classes within Years 3 to 6, and different teachers record assessments in different ways. Year 6 pupils use the Internet to research aspects of history and geography, control floor robots with software and, in some cases, demonstrate sophisticated publishing skills. Through all these means and others, ICT also contributes to learning in other subjects. While these contributions are valuable, the lack of equipment means that this cannot be developed as well as it should be and at appropriate levels of attainment. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, the pupils' lack of prior experience of the mathematical software chosen, meant that the teacher had to spend too much time with two pupils on the computer rather than extend the work of other groups, and this limited the learning of several pupils.

151. Taken altogether, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school and is limited by lack of opportunity and equipment rather than any shortfall in the teachers' knowledge or enthusiasm. Planning for the subject is based effectively on the national non-statutory scheme of work to ensure balance and basic coverage. Teachers introduce ICT activities with enthusiasm and confidence and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to their learning. In the ICT lesson observed with Year 5 pupils a careful introduction ensured that pupils understood the objectives of the lesson, how this would be achieved and how the ICT would be used in local studies. However, it was necessary to begin the lesson in a cramped office, since this was the only connected computer that could be used without disturbing other teachers. Pupils then used all the computers in the remaining classes to do their research, which meant that these could not be used to support learning in other lessons at the same time. Finally, the end of lesson discussion was conducted in the reception class, where there was neither a monitor nor large screen display to aid the review of what had been learned. It was to the pupils' and teacher's credit that the disturbance to other lessons was minimal and that the learning lesson objectives were achieved.
152. Co-ordination of the subject is improving from a barely satisfactory position. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory. The school has a satisfactory range of software that makes a positive contribution in extending the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities are very restricted, however, by the insufficient number of computers. The new co-ordinator has ambitious, but appropriate plans, to redevelop a disused area of the school to establish a suite and larger network, including facilities that can be used independently by older pupils. He has identified the need to improve assessment and record keeping and to build on the teachers' well-founded confidence to take the subject forwards. Recent training for teachers in ICT skills and in the application of the subject across the curriculum has had a positive impact on teacher confidence and pupils' learning.
153. The school has a satisfactory policy for Internet safety, but it relies on adult supervision. This will need to be reconsidered before the plans for ICT impact on provision. In particular the revision should address pupils' own education in Internet safety.

MUSIC

154. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily overall. Most pupils achieve well in listening to, and in composing, music. The average standards at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily because of the good teaching that builds well on previous learning.
155. Pupils in Year 2 show good recall of details from their previous lessons when looking at a picture of a street with many different kinds of houses. They listen carefully to the playing of the song about this and join in quickly, singing sweetly and with good diction. All pupils are learning to play the recorder and follow the teacher's demonstration of the fingering for each note by watching carefully. Boys and girls enjoy this because they are able to follow the letter notes on the score and some are reading the notes on the lines of music. Their playing in a group is good because of the good teaching of fingering and breathing.
156. By the end of Year 6, pupils use their skills effectively to compose an accompaniment to a popular song. They rewrite some of the lines in the song to make it appropriate for them to perform in the concert at the end of the term. They have some amusing and very apt suggestions. They enjoy singing these during the lesson. At the end of the lesson they review what they have learned and are clear that they have acquired a new skill in adapting a piece of music. Pupils in Year 4 listen well to part of 'L'Arlesienne' and talk confidently about the tone and different moods of the music. They create their own graphic score using an interesting range of sounds for the pictures and practise songs that have different patterns of lines of music. These activities also strengthen the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

157. Pupils enjoy music in school. In assemblies, lessons, and through concerts, pupils build up an interesting repertoire of songs. They reflect upon the words in hymns and sing confidently to the tape or guitar. Pupils like to listen to music and play instruments or match movements to words.
158. Teaching and learning are good because lessons are planned carefully to include a range of activities and are delivered at a brisk pace. Several teachers are skilled musicians and pupils like to sing or play along with them. Music for listening to, and for assemblies, is chosen very carefully to match a theme and pupils know that they are expected to listen and think about what they hear. Teachers build well from pupils' previous learning and tell them what they are to learn next.
159. The subject is managed and led well and the co-ordinator ensures that there are sufficient resources to match the demands of the curriculum as currently taught. He is aware that more instruments are required to replace some older ones. A few pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument with teachers who visit the school and they share their skills with the rest of the school in concerts. Pupils proudly sing to members of the community at Christmas and in services in the church. They join in enthusiastically in workshops with other schools and when professional musicians come to the school. Learning with others is fun. ICT is used effectively to encourage pupils to complete their graphic scores on the computer and to provide mini-discs and videos of pupils' levels of performance as they move through the school. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. Most pupils attain average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. An increasing number of pupils are performing at higher levels in team sports such as 'tag rugby' and 'playground hockey' as their opportunities to develop such skills are extended through competitions with other schools. Teachers are beginning to promote skills more specifically and this is helping to enrich learning lessons. Over time most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Observations of potentially higher attaining pupils indicate, though, that several could perform at higher levels if expectations and opportunities to explore ways of improving were more consistently offered.
161. The teachers are careful to stress the importance of safe practice and encourage the pupils to warm up and cool down effectively during all lessons, whether undertaken indoors or outdoors. As a consequence, most pupils acquire an appropriate understanding of the impact of exercise on their bodies and show a good awareness of safe practice. The teachers promote warm relationships, value the pupils' efforts and activities during lessons and encourage the pupils' social skills productively. In response the pupils show good attitudes to their work and behave and relate positively towards each other in lessons. The pupils particularly enjoy team games and even though they occasionally lack sufficient awareness, of when to pass the ball quickly in netball, for example, they nevertheless are happy to release the ball to team members. Pupils in Year 2, show average skills when controlling a football, run and move with appropriate agility and co-ordination during races and throw and catch beanbags effectively. Most have a well-developed competitive spirit that could be used to raise skills even more. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 throw and catch a range of differently sized balls capably and several have above average skill. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate average skills in holding balances and when moving from one piece of apparatus to another during gymnastics, but their movements lack the polish and control needed to attain a higher standard.
162. Dance, games and gymnastics plus athletics (preparations for a 'mini-Commonwealth Games') were observed during the week of the inspection and evidence is also based on observations of pupils at play, from curriculum plans and discussions with pupils and staff. These show that the pupils experience and enjoy a good range of activities, including swimming, and learn to co-operate and compete happily. The school provides good extra-curricular opportunities in sport and these are well supported by staff and members of the local community and are well

attended by the pupils. These activities enrich the pupils' skills and also have a beneficial influence in promoting the pupils' positive attitudes towards school.

163. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranged from satisfactory to good in the lessons observed. The teachers promote good attitudes in all lessons and stress the importance of safety effectively. The teachers show good knowledge and are increasingly emphasising individual skill. This is effective, but there is scope to raise expectations of what pupils can attain in this subject. Most teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well, but occasionally a few boys get overexcited and need reminders of how to concentrate. In the main teachers are effective in keeping pupils on task. Teachers use learning support assistants well to motivate and encourage pupils, especially those pupils with special educational needs, and all pupils are included in the full range of activities. The teachers use resources well and also make equally good use of the school's spacious hall and outdoor facilities. Teachers adapt their strategies well to interest pupils, as, for example, when outdoor athletics became an indoor event due to inclement weather. This willingness to sustain activity promotes an effective progression in the pupils' acquisition of skills. The teachers involve pupils usefully in their learning, as in a Years 5 and 6 gymnastics lesson, in setting up a complex range of apparatus, which the pupils did effectively. Pupils in a Year 4 outdoor games lesson were also required to organise their own teams and initiate a game of netball. These approaches developed the pupils' independence well in terms of promoting sporting activity, but expecting pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work was seen less often, limiting achievement. One exception was a dance lesson in Year 4 where the teacher promoted good learning by encouraging the pupils to consider each other's movements and how they could be improved.
164. The curriculum is planned effectively to ensure appropriate breadth, balance, equal opportunity and access. It includes all the required strands, and swimming skills are taught satisfactorily. Discussion and demonstration are key elements in all lessons and these promote the pupils' communication and literacy skills positively; for example, when sharing ideas about how to sequence movements in dance or how to use arms to support balance when completing standing jumps during indoor 'mini-Commonwealth games'. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has improved her skills through additional training. By promoting the teaching of skills, mobilising parents to finance additional resources for younger pupils and supporting extra-curricular clubs and inter-school sports, she provides effective leadership. Efforts to establish high standards in the subject are restricted, however, by the insufficient time available to the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and the attainment and achievement of the pupils across the school. Facilities and resources for learning are good. Teachers are using a digital camera to good effect in several subjects, but there is little evidence to show that it is used effectively in this subject; for example, to teach specific skills. Work in the subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' attitudes and spiritual development by raising their confidence and increasing their enjoyment of school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. Standards are generally above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Years 2 and 6. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, which found them to be in line with expectations in Year 2 and below expectations in Year 6. This has resulted, at least in part, from the high profile that the subject now has in the school and the good support given to teachers' planning by the local education authority's scheme that accompanies the locally agreed syllabus. As a result, the curriculum has good breadth and balance and meets requirements.
166. Pupils achieve well in the subject throughout the school, including those with special educational needs. Potentially higher attainers also achieve effectively in response to the regular opportunities to reflect on the influence that religious belief and practice can have on people's lives.
167. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and evaluations of the pupils' work show that pupils throughout the school develop a good awareness and respect for Christianity and other

faiths. Studies in Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism promote their knowledge of religious belief and about the associated customs and rituals. This is developed most consistently in Year 2. Here; for example, pupils explore the parts of their own church and of other Christian denominations through visiting. This forms the basis of a vocabulary and understanding that they then apply to discussion of a synagogue and Jewish prayer rituals. Such work also extends the pupils' literacy skills effectively. The care taken by pupils over their models of Jewish prayer boxes demonstrate their respect and positive attitudes in this subject.

168. Older pupils demonstrate similar positive attitudes and respect towards the views and beliefs of others. In a very effective Year 6 lesson, for example, a practising Muslim living in the village gave a powerful and sensitive first-hand account of what his beliefs meant to him. Pupils' questions were thoughtful and direct, demonstrating attention, respect and reflection upon their own lives. This was a very successful lesson that promoted the pupils' above average knowledge.
169. The range of inspection evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is generally good throughout the school and over time. This is consistently so in Years 1 and 2 and is more variable with older pupils. It is carefully planned throughout the school. A good lesson in Year 1 centred on a visit to the village church. Assisted by the vicar, the teacher gave pupils first-hand opportunities to test their knowledge and understanding of baptism, communion and the artefacts of the church, and these supported good learning.
170. An ambitiously planned lesson in Year 4 and 5 required pupils to reflect on the parables of the 'Good Samaritan' and the 'Precious Pearl' and their meaning for Christian believers. The ambition of the lesson, which included drama and role play, was not matched by clear structures to support the thinking and co-operative work of the pupils involved, and the learning was less successful.
171. Assemblies contribute significantly to religious education with opportunities taken well; for example, to extend the pupils' knowledge of the Bible and explore the impact of Christian values on everyday life.
172. The co-ordinator has a passion for the subject and expertise to match. She has limited opportunity, however, to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but she applies good strategies to her informal work in this area to ensure effective leadership of the subject. For example, she considers teachers' planning and knows where more detail is required in order to ensure that both attainment targets receive appropriate emphasis. She discusses ongoing work with colleagues and has identified the need to consider the outcomes for pupils and to involve governors in the monitoring of the subject and the updating of the out-of-date school policy for the subject.
173. Resources for the subject are good, particularly since the school makes effective use of places of worship and visitors within the locality. The use of ICT is underdeveloped, however, due to the insufficient opportunities available for pupils to conduct research using computers, and this is restricting the pupils' skills in this aspect. Work in the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.