

INSPECTION REPORT

MARLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Congleton, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111040

Headteacher: Mrs A Gadsden

Reporting inspector: Mrs C A Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 28th-30th January 2002

Inspection number: 221941

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Gartside
Date of previous inspection:	14 February 2000

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9479	Mrs C A Field	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development What should the school do to improve further?
9146	Mr M Brennand	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15414	Mr D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
6752	Mrs J Dickins	Team Inspector	Special educational needs in the main school and the Unit provision Science History Religious education	
12145	Mrs T Patterson	Team Inspector	Equal Opportunities English as an additional language English Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2818	Mr G Warner	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Design and technology Music	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Congleton in Cheshire. Pupils who attend the school come from across the town and from a mixture of private and local authority housing. Most pupils are from White European backgrounds but a very small number have a different heritage, for example Black or Chinese. There are 205 pupils on roll: 122 boys and 83 girls aged between three and eleven years. The school currently provides for an additional 38 children part time in its nursery. Children's attainment on entry into reception is broadly average. About 29 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average when compared to other primary schools. Some two per cent of pupils come from homes where Cantonese is the main spoken language, but these pupils do not receive specific help to learn to speak English and are able to undertake the same studies as their classmates. Some 29 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. Four of these pupils have a statement of special educational need in place. The proportion of pupils in school with special educational needs is above average. In addition, the school makes provision for 12 pupils all of whom have statements in place for moderate learning difficulties. During the inspection a major buildings project was underway that disrupted the normal pattern of usage of some areas of the school and the headteacher taught for most of the time to cover staff absence.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marlfields Primary is an improving school that has a very positive ethos. Children are successfully encouraged to think of others first, and this good principle is underpinning the very harmonious and tolerant relationships. Teaching is good overall with some particularly effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy that are enabling pupils to make good progress in developing basic skills. The headteacher is giving strong and determined leadership that is focused on making the required changes to drive forward improvement. Staff morale is good and the governors are growing in their role as 'critical friends' of the school. Parents have a high level of confidence in the school and the quality of education it provides. The school no longer has serious weaknesses; it is effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has set out very clear expectations for forging ahead with improvements.
- Teaching is good, staff morale is high and all are united in their determination to fulfil the school's good set of aims.
- Standards are improving and are above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history by Year 6.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for their lessons, are well behaved and develop very good relationships with one another and their teachers.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs in school is good. Those with moderate learning difficulties receive high quality support that helps them to make very good progress against their individual targets.
- The good attention paid to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is assisting them in developing caring attitudes, positive self-esteem and in becoming responsible future citizens.
- Parents hold positive views about the education being provided, and the school is forging an

effective partnership to the benefit of pupils' education.

What could be improved

- There is a shortage of resources in information and communication technology (ICT) that is limiting pupils' development in some aspects of ICT, and too little attention is paid to using ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- The procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are developing, however the use of assessment to guide curricular planning is inconsistent.
- The role of subject co-ordinator is not yet rigorous or influential enough in the drive to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school previously underwent a full inspection in February 2000 and was found to have serious weaknesses that related to leadership and management. The standards being achieved were also requiring some improvement, as were links with parents. Since this time there has been a new headteacher and deputy headteacher appointed, and a significant turnover of staff. The school has made good improvement to the issues raised during the past two years. Current key priorities centre on improving provision for the youngest children in school, widening opportunities for writing, developing assessment and extending the use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. These are appropriate targets. The LEA continues to give good support to the school's development. This inspection judges the school to have good capacity to sustain its effective rate of 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, (known as SATs by parents).

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	A	A*	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	D	A	A	
Science	B	C	A	A*	

The standards achieved by eleven-year-old pupils in the 2001 SATs were well above average in all tested subjects. When compared to similar schools the results place the school amongst the top five per cent in English and science. The school's rate of improvement in standards is above the national average.

The standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the 2001 SATs were well below those of similar schools in writing, average in mathematics and above average in reading. Results have improved since 2000.

The school has exceeded the targets set by the LEA every year. The targets set for 2002 SATs are challenging and reflect the school's ambition to achieve above average results that include all pupils, including those from the special educational needs unit.

The youngest children in school start in nursery with below average attainment and by the start of Year 1 have made good progress throughout the Foundation Stage to reach average standards across all of the areas they experience. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make good progress because of the good provision made. Pupils in the Unit make very good progress against their individual learning and behavioural targets because of sustained high quality support. Higher-attaining pupils are not always given sufficient work to tax them, nor to enable them to achieve at the level of which they are capable. Inspection findings judge standards to be average throughout the school in ICT, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education and above average in art and design. In Year 2 standards are average in all other subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics, science and history. Both boys and girls make equally good progress during their time at Marlfields Primary, particularly so in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 because of consistently good quality teaching. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the same good quality as all other pupils and generally build knowledge and skills in English at the same pace as their classmates.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and try their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds learn and play together successfully. The school rules are well understood and upheld. Last year three temporary exclusions were made that were fully warranted.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are tolerant and very supportive. Pupils are very willing to take on roles of responsibility. The School Council is a very positive feature.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality and attendance are improving because of the school's effective strategies.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection and two thirds was of good or better quality. The good quality teaching identified in the previous report has been sustained despite the high turnover of staff. An effective programme of training is supporting improvement as is the feedback given by senior managers as a result of much more focused monitoring. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage has improved to reach a consistently good level and teaching in ICT is now satisfactory overall in all years, however there is a continuing need for staff development. Good teaching is proving particularly effective in assisting those pupils with special educational needs to make good progress against their individual targets in both main stream and the Unit. The work of support staff in assisting pupils' skills development in literacy and numeracy is having a very positive impact. There are some weaker elements in teaching that slow down learning for the higher-attaining pupils and particularly in the middle years of school. These centre around inconsistencies in planning,

assessment and target setting. The school has yet to find ways for staff to share the features of the best teaching and learning in school; this is a missed opportunity to support improvement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Strengths lie in the range of experiences provided in art and in the quality of the extracurricular programme. There are shortcomings in the ICT curriculum due to a narrow range of resources. The curriculum for higher-attaining pupils lacks consistent challenge.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The support given to these pupils is a positive aspect in assisting the good progress they make against their individual targets.
Unit provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	Very good. All aspects of the Unit provision are of high quality. Pupils' needs are given very good attention and the staff ensure that personal talents are brought to the fore at every opportunity.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school's very caring ethos is very apparent in all areas of its work. Pupils from different backgrounds learn successfully together and are helped to become rounded and responsible young citizens. <i>Round Robin</i> assemblies are very positive times in which pupils' spiritual growth is well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for child protection, attendance, behaviour and for ensuring pupils' welfare and personal development. There is unsatisfactory use of assessment to guide planning to ensure that lessons are consistently set at the right level for different pupils, particularly high attainers.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good. The school is successful in keeping parents up to date about its life and work and communication is very good. A growing number of parents are working as volunteer helpers in school and others are supporting their children's education with homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is providing strong leadership that is motivating and driving others to success; she is well supported by the able deputy. The staff are united in their determination to give the best possible education to all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are committed and supportive; many have regular contact with the school through class links. They have begun to look more critically at the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A useful start has been made by senior managers in evaluating how well the school is doing against a range of indicators. Some subject co-ordinators are not yet playing a large enough part in checking up on standards and quality in the subjects they manage.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes efficient and effective use of staffing, accommodation and resources. Financial controls are secure. The principles of 'best value' are appropriately applied in all major decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Pupils make good progress.• Teaching is good and there are high expectations.• Parents are well informed about pupils' progress.• Parents find the school approachable.• School is well managed and led.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing of significance

Parents hold positive views about the school and say how much it has improved in the last twelve months. The inspection team tends to agree with all of the positive views expressed above.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Standards are improving and are above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history by Year 6.
- Standards are average in ICT, however pupils' progress is hampered in some aspects of the subject due to resource shortages and because not enough use is made of ICT across the curriculum.
- Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage, including their time in nursery; this is an improvement since the school was last inspected.
- The headteacher's introduction of systems and structures to support good teaching is a positive feature in helping lift standards; though there is more work to do on planning and assessment.
- The inspection team judges the school to have good capacity to sustain improvement and meet the challenging target it has set.

1. The school was previously inspected in February 2000 and was found to have serious weaknesses that related to leadership and management. The standards being achieved were also found to be requiring some improvement. Pupils' progress during their time at school was found to be inconsistent.
2. Since September and the appointment of the current headteacher, there has been renewed impetus to forging ahead with improving the top priority of raising academic standards. The impact of her very good leadership is clearly evident in the good progress that has been made in improving many areas of the school's work in the last few months. Much effort has been given to developing a culture in which people feel valued, and morale is now good. Good attention has been paid to enhancing resources in the nursery and reception classes and to bringing the two classes together as a cohesive Foundation Stage; progress in the nursery is no longer an issue.
3. The headteacher has established structures and systems geared to supporting consistent practice, for example there are now policies and schemes of work in place to assist teaching and learning in all subjects. Writing has been given significant emphasis and there are good strategies for promoting pupils' literacy skills. Standards in writing are beginning to lift but the school is aware that there will be no quick fix to securing the highest standards in writing. The school development plan places the raising of academic standards as its top priority and the headteacher has set in motion a programme of monitoring and evaluation that is supporting good improvement. The LEA has given good support to the school during this time and continues to do so. Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the SATs have rapidly improved, though they are not as positive for seven-year-olds. Target-setting work has just begun and requires more focus to become fully effective. Planning though satisfactory is not yet as good as it could be in identifying the level of work expected from different pupils across the subject they learn, especially higher-attaining pupils. Assessment systems are not yet up to speed in supporting the next steps in learning. These aspects are crucial to the management's drive towards becoming an A* school.
4. The standards achieved by seven-year-old pupils in the 2001 SATs were well below those of similar schools in writing, average in mathematics and above average in reading. The standards achieved by eleven-year-old pupils in the 2001 SATs were well above average in all tested

subjects. When compared to similar schools the results place the school amongst the top five per cent in English and science. The performance of boys is not as good as that of girls in school or boys nationally in English. There is no significant variation in the other two tested subjects. The school's rate of improvement in standards is above the national average. This is a key indicator of its effectiveness. The school has exceeded the targets set by the LEA every year. The targets set for 2002 SATs are challenging and reflect the school's ambition to achieve above average results that include all pupils, including those from the special educational needs unit.

5. The youngest children in school start in the nursery with below average attainment and, by the start of Year 1, have made good progress throughout the Foundation Stage to reach average standards across all of the areas they experience. Good teaching enables the children to increase the skills with which they handle numbers, to move and control their bodies, to build good reading habits, work creatively and to grow as confident and independent young people as they extend their awareness of the world about them. Good teamwork that draws from employed staff and voluntary support, including governors, ensures that the children have very positive role models to assist in their personal growth.
6. The school makes appropriate provision for different groups of pupils. Of particular note is the very high number of boys in school, many of whom have special educational needs. The inspection team looked very carefully at how well different pupils were achieving and found no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Indeed both are equally enthusiastic about school and try very hard to do their best work. There is a small number of pupils in school who speak Cantonese at home. None of them have support to learn English as all are competent users of English and were observed to make a similar rate of progress to others in their class. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make good progress because of the good provision made. The school is drawing widely on a range of strategies to support literacy development, for example they are using the *Codebreaker* initiative to increase pupils' phonological awareness and to help some catch up on what they have missed in the past when the quality of the education being provided was not as good. Pupils in the Unit make very good progress against their individual learning and behavioural targets because of sustained high quality support and a very stimulating curriculum. Higher-attaining pupils are not always given sufficient work to tax them nor to enable them to achieve at the level of which they are capable. This shows itself particularly in the middle years in school, both in lessons and in the work sampled in pupils' books.
7. Inspection findings judge standards to be average throughout the school in ICT, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education and above average in art and design. In Year 2 standards are average in all other subjects and in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics, science and history. Both boys and girls make equally good progress during their time at Marlfields Primary, particularly so in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 because of consistently good quality teaching. The boost given to pupils' learning in Year 6 has a positive impact on their performance in SATs tests, but more could be done to enable learning to build up incrementally from the Foundation Stage onwards. Those pupils with special needs who benefit from well-conceived individual education plans which include precise targets that are regularly reviewed are making consistently good progress. This good practice in target setting can usefully serve as a model to support improvement for other groups. The next challenge for the school is to ensure that all pupils learn at good rates in every year and across the subjects they study. The school is aware of the need to ensure that opportunities to extend literacy skills, particularly speaking, writing and research skills, are maximised across the curriculum, for example to give time to extend these in history, geography and religious education lessons.

8. The standards pupils achieve in basic skills are good overall. In all classes, both literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced with confidence and are supporting well-structured lessons that enable effective learning. Pupils of all ages have attentive listening skills. They generally listen carefully to the teacher and follow instructions well. In all classes the pupils speak with confidence and are willing to respond when asked a question, but few opportunities were observed where pupils voiced their own opinions or put forward well-reasoned arguments. Reading skills are average at the end of the infant phase and at a good level by the end of juniors. The school is aware of the need to spend more time in one- to-one practice sessions with struggling readers and to record how well individuals are developing their reading skills. Older pupils take significant pleasure from sharing books and enjoying stories and poems. Their good range of experiences beyond school enhances the level at which pupils appreciate what they read, often gaining understanding beyond the literal. For example, most of the pupils who read to inspectors were members of the their local library and owned a wide range of books themselves. This is a positive feature in view of the fact that the school's own library is in real need of additional material to support pupils' independent research and enquiry. Writing skills are good by the end of school but weaker in infant classes. Older pupils sequence their ideas well and choose interesting words to enliven writing. Spelling and handwriting are weaker aspects, however; spellings are too often inaccurate and the youngest pupils have yet to form a comfortable grip that gives them good pencil control. Pupils have a reasonable recall of number facts and an appropriate understanding of shape, space and measures. By the age of eleven most can work quickly and accurately when working with numbers. Problem-solving skills are developing well.
9. Pupils' skills in the use and application of ICT have improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. There were several aspects of ICT that gave concern and these have been addressed within the confines that a limited range of computer hardware and software can accommodate. The school hopes to have a new ICT suite before long. Class- based computers are put to reasonable use in fostering cross-curricular use of ICT but there are missed opportunities, for example insufficient use is currently made of ICT to support science work. Pupils achieve sound quality work in word processing, graphics and data handling. Some of the work undertaken with the Internet is of good quality, especially in Year 5, but younger pupils have very limited access. Older pupils are not yet up to speed with control technology because of the limited availability of resources; these are key issues for the school to address.
10. The inspection team can already see the impact that the improved educational provision is having in other areas, and judges the school to have good capacity to iron out the inconsistencies reported above, and to continue to raise academic standards across the board.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development are good.
- Pupils try hard to think of others first and have respectful and very tolerant relationships.
- There are no evident tensions in school; pupils from different ethnic backgrounds tend to get along well together; very occasional problems are soon resolved.
- Attendance is broadly satisfactory and is improving because of the school's effective strategies.

11. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained this aspect of its work as a strength. Parents say their children are happy to come to school and are keen to learn. They recognise the strong family values that are being promoted and see this as underpinning pupils' good behaviour. The inspection team agrees with parents' views. The school motto of 'In our school

we think of others first' was very evident in the respectful and tolerant relationships amongst the pupils. There are no evident tensions in school; pupils from different ethnic backgrounds tend to get along well together. Very occasionally, name calling leads to pupils' falling out but these problems are soon resolved. The school has a zero tolerance to race issues and bullying, and pupils told inspectors they feel safe and secure at school because of this.

12. Pupils have good attitudes to lessons, are mostly well behaved and are finding learning enjoyable. Behaviour is good both in class and at play. In the lessons seen, attitudes and behaviour were good or better four times out of five, and never less than satisfactory. Pupils are polite and helpful, and they treat each other and learning resources with care and respect. They are quiet and sensible in class, and willingly follow class routines. The pupils with moderate learning difficulties, some of whom have particular behavioural problems, are generally indistinguishable from their peers. When they are included in whole-school activities they take a full role, for example when joining in the assembly that had as its theme *teeth* they were observed to really enjoy the rap sung by a Year 6 pupil. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to share their own talents too, for example when leading the choir with a solo performance. There have been three occasions when the school had to demonstrate its refusal to accept violent aggressive behaviour for the protection of its pupils and temporarily exclude a pupil. This situation is ongoing. No evidence of anti-social behaviour was seen during the inspection.
13. Relationships between pupils are very good. The school is justifiably proud of the caring way pupils respect, understand and help their classmates with special educational needs. Pupils learn from the very good relationships they experience with all the adults who teach and support them. This is a notable feature of their good personal development. From their arrival in the nursery, they are helped to become independent, and this quality is developed through the school in work and in the monitor duties they carry out and through the work of the School Council. Some pupils in Year 3 have written booklets entitled *Myself* in which they have recorded personal thoughts about friends, family and special things that show the importance of relationships. Year 6 demonstrate leadership qualities when they organise fund-raising events for the less fortunate. Pupils' generous response to charitable giving indicates their compassion, and they clearly have a well-developed sense of justice and fair play. They are confident young people who are well prepared for their next steps in life.
14. Attendance is broadly satisfactory and is improving. The level of unauthorised absence is low. Punctuality has improved but for a handful of pupils social circumstances create problems with full attendance and arrival on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- Teaching is good overall and sustains the strengths found previously.
- During 65 lessons observed during this inspection none were unsatisfactory.
- There is a levelling out of learning in Years 2 and 3, as teaching is mainly satisfactory in these year groups.
- Very good relationships underpin the effective management of pupils.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective, especially in the school's Unit.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are being taught well as the school is implementing national strategies efficiently.
- Teaching in ICT which was found to be unsatisfactory eighteen months ago, is now satisfactory, although staff training is still required.

- Children are well taught in the nursery and reception classes.
- Not enough attention is paid to undertaking marking that is evaluative and developmental and the use of ongoing assessment practice.

15. Teaching is good overall and sustains the strength found in teaching at the time of the previous inspection eighteen months ago. Then the school was found to have serious weaknesses due to management issues but teaching was judged to be good overall. Shortcomings identified in the teaching of ICT have been given good attention. Inconsistencies in marking and in the match of work for higher attaining pupils were flagged up in 2000 and are still in evidence today, although the school has made improvement to both and is continuing to do so.
16. Teaching was 100 per cent satisfactory or better in the lessons observed during this inspection and resulted in the majority of pupils achieving well. Parents have positive views about the teaching in the school, which are confirmed by inspection evidence. Most parents support the school's homework policy by helping their children with reading at home as a result of the clear guidance given by the school. Governors also give the school positive support to teachers by taking up their link roles to classes very seriously. Their support for teaching was clearly evident as they took part in a number of lessons during the course of the inspection.
17. A number of positive features are present in the teaching and subsequent learning throughout the school:
 - very good relationships ensure that there are positive learning outcomes for pupils;
 - an effective programme of training in the development of teachers' knowledge and understanding enables the full curriculum to be taught with confidence;
 - basic skills in most subjects are being well taught;
 - pupils are being well managed, with good quality support positively underpinning good progress made by pupils with special educational needs;
 - pupils respond with interest and high levels of concentration and work purposefully as a result of the interesting range of tasks provided through teachers' thoughtful planning.
18. The weaker elements in teaching have common features that particularly lead to higher attainers not always maximising their achievements and these are:
 - inconsistencies in planning and assessment;
 - the lack of precision and accuracy in target setting so that pupils know what they have to do in order to improve;
 - insufficient opportunities for the best features of teaching and learning to be shared and so influence more consistently good practice.
19. Teaching is now improved in the Foundation Stage so that the children are making consistently good progress. It is more consistently good at this stage and in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. Good progress is made in all of these classes whilst satisfactory progress is being made in Years 2 and 3 where there are some inconsistencies in teaching. In otherwise satisfactory lessons there is often a lack of different levels of work being prepared so that higher attainers are not being stretched appropriately. Expectations of pupils are not high enough in the middle years of school. Marking in books is variable; where it is best it shows the pupils exactly what they need to do in order to improve the standards in their work. Where practice is best in the school the ways to improve the standards are made clear to pupils by sympathetically effective marking. This very best practice in teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared. Senior managers have begun a timetable of monitoring and evaluation that is effective in identifying quality. The next step is to involve more people such as the subject and phase co-ordinators in observing work in classrooms. These are important considerations to be made for improvement to move forward at a consistently good pace.

20. In the 65 lessons observed during this inspection, teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality overall. In 52 per cent of lessons, teaching was of good quality and in 14 per cent of very good quality. Two per cent were excellent. Much of the best quality teaching was found in work with special educational needs pupils. Some particularly good teaching was seen in art and design and is leading to high levels of achievement. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The good quality is a reflection of the integrated nature of the work of teachers and support staff. They all know the needs of their pupils well. The individual education plans enable appropriate action to be taken to make the pupils' learning effective.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the Unit is particularly effective with very good support being given so that pupils' improvement in learning is being maximised. Teaching is particularly effective here because teachers give good attention to making sure that the level of work is being matched to the pupils' level of understanding. At the same time there is some extra challenge so that learning is being pushed on. In these lessons, teachers distribute questions skilfully so that pupils have good opportunities to contribute to one another's learning. This ensures the full involvement of pupils. They concentrate well, work hard and become mature learners. They enjoy lessons. Good progress ensues in consequence in these lessons.
23. The skills of literacy and numeracy are being taught effectively. The school is successfully implementing the national strategies. Planning is tied in closely to following national guidelines but does not always have enough adaptation in order to fully meet pupils' individual needs. Class teachers give good attention to the promotion of basic skills across the curriculum, for example there is well-promoted use of technical vocabulary in subjects such as music. They often use teaching assistants to hear pupils read but this system needs to be monitored more closely to ensure that individual pupils are not missed or remain on the same book for too long. Literacy lessons typically begin with teachers and pupils reading chosen texts and where most teachers take every opportunity to involve pupils through distributing well thought-out questions widely. This is usually followed by purposeful group and individual activities that create good opportunities for pupils to work productively. Numeracy skills are being promoted systematically in numeracy and other lessons. In science lessons pupils use their mathematical knowledge well to estimate and measure accurately.
24. Teaching and learning in ICT are now satisfactory. This is an improvement. Although there are still some gaps in what is being taught and learnt, there is now much better coverage of the skills that are needed by pupils. This is giving them better support that is not yet fully harnessed for fuller development across a number of subjects. However there is a continuing need for staff development in ICT. Most teachers provide good hands-on opportunities for pupils in practical subjects such as art and design, which is a strength in consequence.
25. This is also a particularly effective feature of the provision made for children under five. They benefit from the practical nature of many of their activities. Staff in both nursery and reception classes work as informed and thoughtful teams. The school is now ready to join these teams together as a whole team. There is clear understanding of young children's needs. These are being well met as they are being provided with a varied and interesting range of learning experiences. This gives appropriate support to ensuring that children have formed good working habits by the time that they move into Year 1.

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

- The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, and art experiences are rich and rewarding, however ICT provision requires further development.
- The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good, however the curriculum for higher-attaining pupils lacks consistent challenge.
- Short-term planning is not sharp enough in identifying specific objectives for learning.
- The quality of personal, social, moral, and cultural education is good. However, there is a missed opportunity to celebrate Asian cultures, which could be a highly relevant addition in view of the heritage of some pupils currently in school.
- The extracurricular programme of activities, educational visits and visitors to the school is very good.

- 26 In the previous inspection report the curricular opportunities offered to pupils were said to be broad and balanced. Statutory requirements were met. The picture is similar today but there have been improvements too. The literacy and the numeracy provision is now good, as is equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school has introduced a range of initiatives which provide further basic skills support for pupils. The additional literacy lessons given by learning support assistants are effective because they are well structured and offer pupils in lower juniors the opportunity to work in small groups to consolidate their learning. The early literacy lessons for Year 1 pupils, which have been introduced this term, follow a similar pattern. Pupils benefit from the interesting sequences of short activities and the warm relationships in the small groups. A phonics-building programme known as *PIPs* and a scheme called *Codebreakers* are also usefully supporting literacy development for lower-attaining pupils, whereas the *Springboard* scheme provides support for numeracy skills. Booster classes in English and mathematics are also scheduled to accelerate the progress of targeted pupils in Year 6.
- 27 The inconsistencies in curriculum planning identified at the last inspection have now been addressed. All subjects have appropriate policies and schemes of work and medium-term plans are regularly monitored by co-ordinators. There are still shortcomings in some lesson planning however, where the needs of the full range of pupils are not set out precisely; this results in some higher-attaining pupils not always being sufficiently taxed in their studies. Pupils in the school are given worthwhile experiences of religious education and all National Curriculum subjects with the exception of ICT. The art curriculum is a strength because a wide range of rich experiences are provided for pupils. Evidence of how well pupils achieve is found in the high quality displays around the school. The black and white printed textile display based upon carefully observed drawings of buildings in the locality is a lovely example of how good provision leads to high standards of work. ICT is not a well-developed subject due to the limited resources available. The school does not yet have an ICT suite and ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects. Homework though, is making a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- 28 The school is giving high priority to physical, health, social and citizenship education (PHSCE) as an area for development in the current school development plan. There is a comprehensive action plan which is already being implemented; for example, a School Council has been established and circle time has been introduced this term. Teachers are incorporating PHSCE

into their curriculum planning so that pupils can be prepared well for their future roles in society. Appropriate arrangements are made in school for sex education and drugs education.

29. There is a good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage; this is based upon the Early Learning Goals for pupils of this age. Although children in the nursery and reception classes benefit from a balance of learning experiences, particular emphasis is appropriately given to personal, social and emotional development and to communication, language and literacy development.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school was good at the last inspection. It is still good because these pupils together with those who have statements for moderate learning difficulties and provided for in the Unit, experience a full and interesting curriculum at an appropriate level. The use of learning resources to provide for pupils with special educational needs is consistently good at all stages. The quality of support given by teaching assistants in lessons is good and ensures that the pupils they work with learn well and make good progress in their learning within the whole curriculum of the school. The needs of these pupils are recognised and trigger an appropriate response. Individual education plans (IEPs) have improved since the previous inspection and are now clearly detailed with realistic targets of what individual pupils are to achieve. However there is no formal timetable for the review of IEPs and IBPs for pupils at the school-support level. The headteacher will be establishing a timetable for meetings between herself, the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and individual class teachers in the near future.
31. The range of extracurricular activities was very good at the time of the last inspection and is still very good. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to visit places in the immediate locality and beyond. The programme of sporting activities, residential visits and visitors to the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
32. The last inspection found that the school made good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has been maintained. Evidence from this inspection finds that the values and attitudes promoted reflect the aims of the school. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered appropriately through the acts of collective worship, religious education lessons and through poetry, music and art. The school has a policy of teachers swapping classes for collective worship on Tuesdays, which not only supports spiritual development but also promotes good relationships within the school and enables teachers to work in classes other than their own. The school fosters a respectful climate in which pupils from different backgrounds learn successfully together and are helped to become rounded and responsible young citizens. These *Round Robin* assemblies were observed to be very positive times in which pupils' spiritual growth is well promoted. Spiritual and social development is further developed through visits such as to Trinity Methodist Church by Year 6 and nursery pupils to join in the *Tiny Tots* service. Visitors from the community are also welcomed to the school to participate in assemblies.
33. Moral development is promoted very well through the school's code of behaviour. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and know what is right and what is wrong. The good behaviour and the very good relationships with staff and with each other illustrate this. There is a special 'treasure box' book and nominated pupils are entered into it for a variety of achievements such as good work or kindness, and they are commended by the school community in Friday assemblies. Many effective opportunities are provided for pupils to develop social skills and take responsibility for tasks in the classroom and around the school. Monitors for example, take responsibility for the overhead projector and chairs in the hall, and

they carry out their tasks efficiently. The recently formed School Council provides pupils with experience of a democratic process and encourages a sense of responsibility. The extensive programme of extracurricular activities makes a very positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Teamwork and an understanding of fairness are developed through the sporting activities such as netball, rugby, football, cricket and rounders. The residential visits such as the one to Brecon last year also provide direct experience of working with others and solving problems together.

34. The school promotes pupils' cultural development in numerous ways but particularly through the comprehensive programme of events. A group of pupils with parents and friends of the school enjoyed a performance of *Joseph* at a local theatre last term and a year ago a visit was made to Stratford to see *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Pupils also take part in events within school such as *National Poetry Day* and book weeks. Tony Ross visited the school last July and has clearly contributed to the pupils' understanding of poetry writing; another poet is due to visit in March this year. Lessons also contribute well to pupils' cultural development. The art produced by pupils but inspired by Seurat and the designs based upon the work of William Morris illustrate the good provision that the school makes. In a Year 3 class pupils enjoyed the experience of an African pounding song and African drums, but otherwise there was little evidence of the development of multi-cultural awareness.

HOW GOOD IS THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT?

- High quality provision is being successfully maintained for pupils in the Unit.
- The pupils received very good teaching and support during the week of inspection despite the class teacher being absent from school.
- The range of pupils' abilities and learning and behavioural needs is very wide. This represents a major challenge to the staff that they meet very well.
- Pupils play a full part in the life of the school.
- The school receives good support from external agencies that report how well the school responds to their suggestions and advice.
- The Unit provides good value for money.

35. The Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties provides places for up to 12 pupils all of whom are supported by a statement of their educational need. An experienced teacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for the main school, and a full-time teaching assistant staff the Unit. This is the same level of staffing as reported at the time of the previous inspection in 2000, when teaching was judged to be very good and pupils' progress good. These high standards have been maintained well. Teaching is judged very good overall and learning is good. The overall quality of learning experiences available to pupils is very good. The pupils received very good teaching and support during the week of inspection despite the class teacher being absent from school. The Unit is judged to have improved well since the time of the previous inspection.
36. Pupils in the Unit have full access to the National Curriculum and the national literacy and numeracy strategies appropriately influence lessons. However, one of the great strengths of the staff is their ability to build skills, knowledge, and understanding incrementally. This was seen to result in good learning in a very good mathematics lesson when pupils began by identifying and sorting coins, then moved on to addition and subtraction while the more able pupils used different methods to interpret and solve money problems. Good learning was obvious in this lesson and pupils were much more secure in their knowledge by the end of it. In science and English, teaching was equally successful at promoting good levels of learning. In a very good English

lesson, the book *Worry Guts* was used very well to stimulate interest and attention. The boys in particular were very enthusiastic about the character and plot. The teacher stopped frequently to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and modified or reinforced points which they seemed unsure of. Basic skills are well reinforced and pupils had good opportunities to identify punctuation and key words. A significant strength of teaching in the unit is the very effective partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant; this was seen in all lessons but particularly in a science lesson. Dividing the pupils into two groups meant that all could take part in the experiments and contribute to the discussion about the effect soap had on the surfaces and which vehicles rolled further. Teaching and learning in other subjects was good. Staff used and reinforced the correct use of subject vocabulary in all lessons and this helped pupils talk about their work well. A highlight of the week was the visit of the mayor when pupils learnt about 'special people'. This lesson provided a good opportunity for pupils to listen, ask questions, and hold their own election for mayor. In this way, they are learning about what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society.

37. The range of pupils' abilities and learning and behavioural needs is very wide. This represents a major challenge to the staff that they meet very well. It is clear from pupils' statements that staff have to extend the more able, encourage and support those with autistic tendencies and improve the behaviour and attitudes of others, whilst also catering for those with moderate learning difficulties. Staff rise to the challenge well. They are helped in their work by individual education and/or behaviour plans (IEP's or IBP's) which include very specific targets and criteria for success. Staff also know pupils very well and this means they can use the most appropriate strategies to engage the full attention of individual pupils. They handle pupils' frustration and occasional outbursts of unacceptable behaviour calmly and effectively so that the good working atmosphere in the unit is sustained.
38. The school receives good support from external agencies that report how well the school responds to their suggestions and advice. The Unit is well managed, however the SENCO has no regular planned release time but time is made available for her to assess pupils, contribute to reviews, and attend meetings in or out of school as necessary. The headteacher is planning to address these issues more formally as soon as the circumstances allow. The specific finances made available to the Unit are effectively spent and good value is accrued.
39. Pupils play a full part in the life of the school. They perform in assembly, sing with the choir and go on day and residential visits to improve their learning and personal development. All pupils in the school benefit from the presence of the unit, which provides a good model of how to meet special educational needs effectively. Staff in the main school benefit from easy access to advice and support, although these meetings need to be formally timetabled to enable staff to plan effectively. There are good strategies in place, which enable staff to consult and work closely with parents to the benefit of everyone concerned. Parents speak very highly of the work of the Unit. Inspection findings fully support the views of parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare, behaviour and attendance are good.
- Arrangements for health and safety and first aid are good.
- Educational support and guidance is good overall but is hampered by some failings in the monitoring of the academic progress of individual pupils.
- There is unsatisfactory use of assessment to guide planning to ensure that lessons are consistently set at the right level for different pupils, particularly high attainers.

40. The last time the school was inspected in 2000, this aspect of provision was regarded as good and this standard has been maintained and improved upon. Just over twelve months ago the school's aims were revised so that they now promote the whole development of the child, including good attention to promoting social and personal skills alongside academic achievement. A particular strength is the provision for pupils with special educational needs and moderate learning difficulties. There is very good provision made for pupils in the Unit who are well integrated in the daily life of the school. Staff are constantly looking to identify pupils' talents and this approach means that most are developing high levels of self esteem. All pupils in the school benefit from the presence of the unit, which provides a good model of how to meet special educational needs effectively.
41. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school has devised its own child protection policy which provides clear guidance. The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer and she is ably supported by the nominated governor. Knowledge amongst staff of her role is also good. Arrangements for health and safety and first aid are good. The school's health and safety policy is an addition to the LEA guidelines and it gives clear guidance that supports good practice. Accident reporting procedures are good and there are three first aiders, all of whom are up to date with their training. Concerns raised at the last inspection relating to the open pond, open corridors and unfenced reception playground have now been addressed. The major building work which is currently being undertaken will further improve the fabric and hence safety of the site. The building works on site is being very well managed, and there is little disruption to the smooth running of the school. The school development plan has targeted healthy eating as an area for improvement. Fruit is available instead of crisp snacks at breaks, and lunchtime meals are well balanced. The pupils told the inspectors how much they enjoy these improvements; they enjoy their lunches and mix well together. This makes for a worthwhile social experience.
42. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registers are taken promptly and the time is used in a number of imaginative ways. In reception, children indicate what lunch they will be taking by recording their choice on a white board. In Year 5 they do their multiplication tables and in the Special Needs Unit the register was called in French by the support assistant, with pupils responding in French too. All of these provide a good start to the day. Registers are returned promptly to the secretary who follows up any absences with a first day telephone call to home. This procedure has been introduced since the last inspection and has done much to improve the level of attendance, which is now satisfactory. An indicator of the school's growing success is demonstrated by the fact that last term fifty pupils gained certificates for full attendance. Timekeeping is generally good although parents expressed concern that, whilst the school day officially finishes at 3.20pm, the lack of a school bell means that they are invariably left waiting until after 3.30pm to collect their children. This causes problems when they have other commitments.
43. The procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. A behaviour and discipline policy is consistently implemented with a positive emphasis. Incidents of bad behaviour are fully recorded, initially by the class teacher. More serious misdemeanours are logged by the headteacher. Sanctions and rewards are consistently applied and discussions with pupils confirmed that they are aware of them. The house system allows for merit awards for good behaviour, good work or acts of kindness. In addition there is a 'treasure box' which is used to reward those children who work behind the scenes supporting the school's ethos. The good standard of behaviour is evidence that pupils have responded well to the school's efforts. There are currently no exclusions.

44. Educational support and guidance is good overall but is hampered by some failings in the monitoring of the academic progress of individual pupils. Since the last inspection a useful policy has been written that sets out the school's expectations of assessment, recording and reporting but this is not yet fully implemented. The school has brought forward assessment as a priority in the school development plan, and the deputy who is leading on this has put together a well-conceived action plan to achieve improvement. However, there is currently a mixed collection of assessment data that is not used to good effect for tracking whether pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. This is a problem in many classes, but specifically in Years 2 and 3 where teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment, whether from tests or their own informal observations, when planning the next steps in learning. Seldom do teachers evaluate the progress pupils have made in lessons against the objectives set or against the personal targets set for individuals. The unsatisfactory use of assessment data is most marked with higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 3, who are not given enough challenge to enable them to progress to the higher levels of which they are capable. Despite this, the use of personal targets in English, and to a lesser extent in mathematics, does help pupils to know what they need to do to improve their standards. The pupil profile system means that procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Together with these formal records there is the School Council and house system both of which provide staff with the opportunity to judge pupils' development. In addition, the emphasis on looking for the positive qualities in each child means that everyone is given a chance to develop their talents. Staff know the pupils well and parents are very positive about this point.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- The school has improved significantly the links with parents since the time of the previous inspection and these are having a positive impact on pupils' education.
- Parents hold positive views about the school and quite a few give voluntary support in school; many more support homework but meetings are not yet well attended.
- The school provides good quality information, for example the recently produced class pamphlets are a very positive feature. The reports to parents on their child's progress, though adequate, are not consistently used to identify targets for improvement.

45. The partnership with parents was identified as a key issue following the previous 2000 inspection. Since then the school has worked hard to cultivate a positive and supportive partnership with parents, such that parents now have high levels of confidence in the school. The questionnaire sent out by the school as part of this inspection process painted a positive picture, with parents expressing particular pleasure at the progress which their children make, the quality of teaching, the links between home and school and the ease with which they can approach the school with concerns. The inspectors' meeting with parents was also positive with particular reference being made to the improvements in management which has resulted in higher morale amongst staff and a subsequent rise in the self-esteem of pupils.
46. The school now has good links with parents. Both the headteacher and staff place great value in the partnership with parents and operate an 'open door' policy. This has helped to build trust, and provides parents with an opportunity to raise concerns, which they feel are responded to in a positive way. All children have a homework diary and where these are used they provide a valuable means of communication between school and home. Curriculum meetings are not well attended, but there is a good turnout to teacher and parent meetings. In addition consultation meetings for parents of children with special educational needs are very well supported; the

review meetings which took place on the first day of this inspection were seen to be very helpful by those parents involved.

- 47 The impact of parents on the work of the school is good. This starts in the nursery where parents are encouraged to become partners in their children's education. To that end many remain with their children after the start of the school day to read a story. In the infants and juniors well over 20 parent volunteers regularly help with school visits and hearing pupils read. One parent was observed giving specific guidance to a pupil on sequencing a story, which indicated that she was well briefed to undertake this role. The number and quality of the parents who become involved in the school results in a positive impact on learning. The Parent Teacher Association is very active in organising social and fundraising events in support of the school.
- 48 The quality of information provided for parents is good. Newsletters are produced half-termly and they adopt an open and friendly style. The information is valued by parents, as are the regular letters detailing forthcoming events. Teachers prepare their own pamphlets detailing the topics to be covered in their class in the term ahead. The governors' annual report to parents is an upbeat document with a friendly and informative tone. The headteacher has a range of ideas for improving the prospectus and for reflecting fully the school's ethos and aims. A post card has been produced of very high quality and originality that sets out many facts about the school and has been circulated throughout the community as part of the school's marketing campaign. This shows the importance that the school is giving to improving communication. Reports to parents on pupils' progress are satisfactory but they tend to be rather general with little specific comment about the standards being achieved. More information on the level each child's knowledge and understanding, together with the setting of targets to address areas of weakness, would improve their value.
49. The contribution of parents to their child's learning at home is good. Curriculum meetings covering SATs and target setting have been held, though these were not well attended. Whilst some parents raised concerns about homework, the school has issued a homework diary to all parents, together with information on the programme of homework. Conversations with pupils indicate that homework is regularly set and the inspection team made particular note of the quality of homework in mathematics, which is both thorough and well marked, and the extended project work in Year 6 science. Two parents' evenings are held annually at which the turnout is good. Parents need have no worries about homework; the inspection team judges the school's strategy to be very effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The former serious weaknesses in school management have been removed.
- The headteacher is providing strong leadership that is motivating and driving others to success; she is well supported by the able deputy.
- There is a growing sense of teamwork amongst staff and the governors to bring improvement, however subject co-ordinators do not have enough opportunities to monitor the quality of education and standards in other classes
- Managers and the governors put the pupils' interests first; a useful start has been made in evaluating how well the school is doing against a range of indicators.
- The school gives satisfactory value for money and there are bright prospects that this will improve in the future.

50. The school previously underwent a full inspection in February 2000 and was found to have serious weaknesses that related to leadership and management. These weaknesses centred on strategic planning, the ranking of improvement priorities and the headteacher's management of new projects and initiatives. The structure of management was another weakness as there was no effective senior management team, the role of subject co-ordinators was unsatisfactory and the governors had a limited sphere of influence. The governors appointed an acting headteacher in January 2001 to help turn the school around. In September 2001 the present headteacher took up her post.
51. The new headteacher has clearly made a very effective start to the challenge of turning serious weaknesses into successes. Staff morale has been raised and a new sense of belonging to a team committed to improvement has been fostered. The headteacher leads the school by example and is not only a very good manager, but is a very good classroom teacher as well. She has a very clear vision of where she expects the school to be within the next four years and this determination has been adopted by other staff as they work with good unity to advance the interests of the pupils.
52. In building an effective team, the headteacher has been assisted by the able deputy headteacher who is also new to the school. Together, they form the first tier in the new structure for school management and their partnership is working well. The next tier of management includes the co-ordinators of the infant and junior phases. These middle managers are growing into the role of ensuring that systems and procedures are applied consistently across the school and they have taken part in a programme, albeit limited, of monitoring standards, teaching and learning. The outcomes of this have been shared with the staff and some adjustments made to the curriculum and teaching methods to ensure that the shortcomings that have been identified are corrected.
53. The subject co-ordinators have had a very limited management brief in the past. This has been extended so that they are budget holders and managers and have responsibility for checking planning and examining pupils' work. With the exception of the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy, their role does not extend to the direct monitoring of lessons in other classes. Where such monitoring has taken place, some effective practice has been developed that identifies strengths and aspects for improvement, and evaluates and feeds back to staff the findings. Most co-ordinators are ready for a broadening of their role into accountability for standards, progress and the quality of education. Managers have drawn up a plan of enhanced monitoring but it could be broadened to identify what will be achieved and also draw in more people. For example, the ICT co-ordinator is keen to make a start on her direct monitoring, scheduled for the second half of the spring term 2002, but religious education, music, geography and history will have to wait for quite some while later. So far, there has been very limited assessment of pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels in the subject they co-ordinate and this work could be progressed quite speedily. The SENCO is a successful manager. She is well aware of the recent changes to the Code of Practice and has already identified the areas where change needs to be introduced. This is proceeding appropriately. The next step for the SENCO is to have planned release time from her class teaching role in the Unit to enable full monitoring of special educational needs provision throughout the school.
54. The governors have moved from a being group that was not kept informed about the performance of the school to a group that is much more involved. Whilst governors are still working to improve their role as the body which keeps the school under close review, they are supportive and proud of the advances made by the school in recent months. They keep a watchful eye on budgetary matters and are making strides in their contribution to school

improvement planning. They do not yet examine the most important original performance data in a bid to check that the school is as successful as others in the locality or across the country. However, they do receive good quality information on school performance from the headteacher. Thus, governors are becoming more knowledgeable about the school and are following the principles of 'best value' in public service in order to ensure that the pupils and their parents are getting an effective deal from the school. Governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met and that they publish all the necessary information to keep parents informed about the school.

55. Whilst the governors are building their knowledge of the school, the headteacher already has very good insights into how well it is doing. She carefully evaluates data such as the SATs results and has been instrumental in the introduction of a system of target setting and tracking to ensure that all pupils make the best progress possible. This has considerable merits but is clearly at an early stage of evolution. Thus, whilst appropriate data is collected, challenging targets are set and the tracking process is slotting into place, there are still things to do to ensure that pupils' progress is consistent and maximised through rigorous assessment system, for example, the refinement and enhancement of assessment procedures so that they produce the necessary information at the right time in all subjects to keep track of progress is an aspect that is critical for success. Similarly, the use of marking to identify how well pupils are doing in relation to their personal targets is at an early stage of development and there are considerable inconsistencies in practice at the present. Nevertheless, there is a will to make the necessary improvements and the prospects for better monitoring of standards and progress look good.
56. The school uses its finance wisely in the interests of the pupils. This was not always the case in that financial management left something to be desired in the past and the burden of ensuring financial probity rested on few shoulders. Today there are some legacies of the casual approach to financial planning and management in the past. The school has not had a full audit recently and earlier audit reports are missing. Thus, the effectiveness and security of financial procedures are something of an unknown factor in school management. The indications as to rigour in financial management are positive however. The secretary, for example, has established a very tight fiscal management system in the day-to-day management of the budget. It is evident that finance is matched well to school priorities and this can be tracked through the school improvement plan, which is used to prioritise spending plans soundly. The school spends well the additional funds that it receives for particular uses, such as the operation of the special educational needs unit and for boosting standards. In practical terms, there are no shortages of resources, including staffing and accommodation, but there are desirable enhancements to the library, resourcing in ICT, the accommodation for physical education and learning resources in other subjects that managers would like to pursue.
57. The school is increasingly successful in meeting its aims and no longer has serious weaknesses; such has been the good improvements made. Standards could be yet higher and progress more consistent but the ethos for learning is good and pupils gain benefit from their time in school. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for the comparatively high amount of money it spends on each pupil's education. The prospects for further improvement are good. Marlfields Primary school is clearly a school on the move because leadership and management is now a strength, and there is renewed energy and commitment amongst all members of staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve the provision in ICT by:

- planning the use of ICT to support learning in all subjects, especially the data handling element of mathematics and science;
- continuing the effective programme of staff training;
- developing systems to assess, monitor and evaluate performance in ICT;
- pressing ahead with the good action plan.

Paragraphs: 9, 24, 27, 53, 113, 120, 122, 125

2. Build on the useful start made in improving planning and assessment procedures by:

- insisting on a consistent format to curricular planning, including evaluation throughout the school that can be checked by senior management on a regular basis;
- ensuring that all teachers pay sufficient attention to setting clear learning objectives in lesson planning for the range of pupils they teach in all subjects;
- evaluating on a regular basis how well different pupils achieve in their lessons and using this information consistently to set suitably challenging future work, especially for higher-attaining pupils;
- ensuring that the targets currently set for every year group in English, mathematics and science are regularly reviewed and adjusted upwards as necessary;
- widening the use of targets specifically in teachers' marking so that it takes account of pupils' progress, confirms the key learning points and sets further realistic targets for individual pupils to improve;
- sharing individual targets with pupils and their parents so that they can play a full part in assessing and reviewing individual progress;
- finding regular opportunities to share the features of the best practice in school.

Paragraphs: 3, 6, 7, 15, 18, 27, 44, 55, 83, 88, 92, 94, 98, 113, 119, 122, 134, 138

3. Making the role of all subject co-ordinators more rigorous and influential by:

- setting out explicitly what is the role and remit of subject co-ordinators in contributing to the educational direction of the school;
- setting out a plan that clearly shows what monitoring is to take place and what it is expected to achieve;
- giving time and opportunity for subject co-ordinators to observe lessons being taught in the subjects they lead on, so that they have better insights into planning future improvements;
- involving all subject co-ordinators in regular assessments of pupils' achievement against National Curriculum levels in the subject they co-ordinate.

Paragraphs: 19, 52, 53, 99, 105, 110, 115, 119, 126, 131, 134, 139

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	34	21	0	0	0
Percentage	2	14	52	32	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	93.5
National comparative data	93.9

School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	18
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (74)	81 (48)	88 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	14
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	25	26	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (74)	81 (85)	75 (70)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	22	20	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	19
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (70)	81 (67)	86 (82)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	15	19
	Girls	17	16	17
	Total	35	31	36
Percentage of pupils	School	83 (70)	74 (67)	88 (82)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	159
Any other minority ethnic group	40
NB information not supplied by parents	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.5
Average class size	32

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	552,893
Total expenditure	536,464
Expenditure per pupil	2,446
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,383
Balance carried forward to next year	20,057

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	49	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	45	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	67	32	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	40	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	46	44	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	40	3	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	31	5	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	46	6	0	15

NB ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

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

- The school has improved the provision made for the youngest children since the time of the previous inspection.
- Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they move into Year 1.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. There is good support given by learning support assistants and voluntary helpers, including governors.
- The management of the Foundation Stage is good.

59. The school has improved the provision made for the youngest pupils since the time of the monitoring visit by HMI in October. All children in both the nursery and reception classes make good progress. Particularly good attention is paid to the special educational needs of some children throughout the Foundation Stage. The school is well placed to continue this improvement in the near future. The closer working relationship of the teachers and support staff in the nursery and reception classes supports the current improvement. The barrier of the design of the building found at the time of the last inspection has been removed. The outside play area is safe and helpful towards developing physical and social skills particularly. It also means that nursery and reception classes are able to join together effectively for some activities. A much better environment has been created to provide a higher quality of education and provision overall is now good. Good focus is given to basic skills. Children are achieving standards that could be expected for the youngest children in the school. The nursery teacher is providing good leadership for developing the work of all who contribute to the learning of children in the Foundation Stage.
60. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is made through a mixture of part-time places in the nursery and full-time places in the reception class. Twenty-two children attend the nursery in the morning and sixteen attend in the afternoon. Twenty-one children attend full time in the reception class. Children are admitted to the nursery soon after their third birthday in either the morning or afternoon. They transfer to the reception class in the year in which they become five. The school responds positively to parental choice in accepting children into the nursery for either the morning or afternoon.
61. Overall the ratio of adults to children is good. A number of volunteer helpers, including governors and parents, offer significant amounts of support. The learning support assistants give regular, invaluable support to teacher colleagues. All of the people who give classroom support are fully informed and clear about their roles in improving children's learning. They form a well-informed teaching team.
62. The school's assessment of the children's attainment on entry to the nursery shows that it is below average in all areas of learning. By the time that children finish in the Foundation Stage and transfer into Year 1, most children are able to achieve the Early Learning Goals as set out in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Some are near to achieving these goals. The children make good progress in the earliest stage of their education largely because of the very good provision in both the nursery and reception classes. There is consistently good teaching that is sometimes very good and ensures that children are making good gains in their learning. Methods are well matched to needs. Emphasis is appropriately given to developing skills and confidence in speaking and listening. This eventually enables them to make strides in

other areas of learning. Purposeful talk is encouraged and exciting activities prepare the children for moving on in their learning. Both nursery and reception class teachers have a good grasp of the curriculum requirements and a clear understanding of how young children learn.

63. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The well-informed co-ordinator works hard to ensure that the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage curriculum are understood. Planning by nursery staff is carried out jointly as is planning by reception class staff. The next step of joint planning by both nursery and reception class staff is already agreed. However, there is not enough opportunity for the co-ordinator to follow through and monitor effectively so that she is aware of what is being achieved by the children across the key stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is good overall. It is given appropriate priority in the nursery. As a result of this emphasis the children begin to make good gains in their learning. All staff, including voluntary helpers and a link governor, manage the children well by being good role models. Children begin to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups in the nursery. This pattern of working together continues throughout the Foundation Stage in the reception class. They are sometimes boisterous when they start their time in nursery but through skilful teaching learn to sit and listen carefully. This is a tribute to the high quality of the relationships that are quickly established and retained between adults and children. This quality of relationships then establishes itself between the children.
65. In the morning nursery, children come in with parents and carers. They are warmly greeted by staff. They quickly settle into using table-top and floor toys such as jigsaws and garages. A number immediately move to the little pigs houses that have been made as a part of their development of knowledge and enjoyment of traditional stories. Adults supportively engage children who are playing alone. Children move around with good levels of confidence. Children's social skills are then well developed as they are drawn together to work in groups. The group working with the link governor moves outside into the building site that has been set up. They work with real bricks and cement to build a secure house, learning about site safety, and make a plan before discussing what they need in order to make a successful building. In the afternoon nursery, staff work with great skill at snack time to ensure that the social skills needed by a less mature group of children are encouraged appropriately. They talk to one another as well as to the children, who respond positively to the good role models that staff give them.
66. In the reception class they are able to build constructively upon their nursery experiences. They are able to work together in pairs and small groups without teachers and support staff having to intervene in the way that they are working at their tasks. For example, two children give very positive support to one another as they make stable chairs for Goldilocks to sit on out of boxes and glue. They proudly show their successful efforts to their teacher who is able to praise their independence as well as skill. Children in the reception class confirm their growing maturity as they sit in a circle and discuss kindness and sharing together. The learning support assistant records their discussion for the teacher to later put this onto her laptop computer. This is then presented to the children as a more permanent reminder of what they need to be thinking about as they work amicably together. Children sustain their concentration well as they do this because they also move in and out of the circle to prepare for lunchtime. Children are ready for their work in Year 1 as a result of the close co-operation between Foundation stage and Year 1 staff. They are working well along the pathway to achieving the Early Learning Goals by the time that they move into the Year 1 class.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Children start in nursery with below average skills in this area of development. This is more marked in the afternoon nursery children, many of whom are younger and less mature. This is emphasised by the way that they talk to adults and to one another. For example, at snack time expressions such as 'Me tired' and 'Me want', when children are wanting to lie on the floor or take another piece of fruit, are followed up by staff. The teacher sensitively pays good attention to asking questions of children to elicit what they know. She works patiently in order to sharpen their listening skills. In the morning nursery, the teacher draws children together to develop listening skills carefully before they begin a range of activities with a number of adults. The teacher works with a group at a time in sequencing the story of the three little pigs in booklets that have been prepared with writing on the cover but then have blank pages. Many children can sequence the story in pictures whilst others need the teachers support to add words. Other children work with the support assistant on making dough or with the student in a role-play enacting the story of the three little pigs. The role-play eventually has an audience of other interested children. The children carrying out the role-play have confidence and confirm their ability to structure words accurately in order to make the story clear and sequential.
68. In the reception class, children use this skill to support them in developing their language and communication abilities as they begin preparation for involvement in the literacy hour. They share the big book of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They easily identify words that the teacher has blanked out. They are able to respond accurately to well-distributed questions because the teacher paces work carefully to give maximum opportunity for many to become involved. They confirm their understanding of the development of the story when they move into their role-play. They are able to take on the roles of the bears and Goldilocks and use the language of the story because they are being well supported by the learning support assistant. The joint planning carried out between teacher and support assistant pays good dividends as children's skills are being well developed. Children are clearly being well prepared for work in Year 1 as they move confidently towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Mathematical development

69. When children come into nursery the assessment that has been made for the first time this year shows that skills are below what could be expected in this area of learning. The teacher and support staff compensate for this as they work with children in small groups to develop their skills. The carousel of activities helps them to give the children time to assimilate the knowledge needed to be successfully developing mathematical understanding. They learn to estimate before confirming accurately as they make dough before creating models of one of the three little pigs. They ask, 'How do we do it?' and then guess how much flour they will need. They then measure out accurately and add water. Red and white paint is added in careful amounts in order to make pink before the models can be formed. All the while the children are adding and taking amounts away in order to make appropriate amounts.
70. The practical nature of the learning is consolidated successfully in the reception class. At registration time the children build up a graph to show who is having meals and sandwiches. They carefully place Velcro backed illustrations onto a white-board chart. Their understanding of the differences between one set of numbers and another visibly grows as the chart does. They concentrate well as a whole class as the teacher prepares them well for working in the pattern of the numeracy hour. They count forwards and backwards with the help of a large

hundred square. They are able to do this confidently as a whole class up to fifty because they give one another good support. They move into a number of activities that continue to develop their understanding effectively. One group works with the class teacher forming number sentences where numbers up to ten add together to equal an amount. This activity is well supported practically because toy bears are given to them to use as support material. Another group works successfully with the learning support assistant in comparing sizes of objects, whilst some work independently in the water and sand trays finding figures of bears. They add them together by size and colour with good levels of accuracy. They are well prepared for their work in Year 1 as they move towards achieving the Early Learning Goals successfully.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Many children enter nursery with limited general knowledge of the world. The teacher and staff provide a good range of activities to support the development of knowledge appropriately. This is often started through the interaction between adults and children. They find out about the designs that are needed before they can begin to build a safe house with bricks and mortar. They are able to identify cement as a material that will help them to join bricks together successfully. They work well together taking turns in the preparation, mixing and shaping of flour and eggs into cakes. They talk confidently about what will happen to the mixture when it goes into the oven. This is because they have been carefully prepared by the parent helper working with them, who has been well briefed by the teacher. They complete the process effectively as they decorate the cakes with icing and sweets. They build constructively in their free play as well as making up railway tracks that move trains in the correct direction. They also begin to use the computer to support their recognition of words and achieve success as they interact with the sound program.
72. A similar carousel of activities in the reception class ensures continuity and progression in the children's learning. There is opportunity to work with adults but also to work independently so that progress is also being suitably made by the children. They find out about the senses as they taste, smell and feel before they look at a number of different objects. Others work with the support assistant making sensible bow ties and hats through their choice of suitable materials. Others work independently but with good levels of confidence as they make a safe seat out of boxes and glue. The computer is also used with equal measures of confidence. Children are well prepared for Year 1 work as they confidently move along the stepping stones of the Early Learning Goals.

Physical development

73. Children in the morning and afternoon sessions of the nursery are being given appropriate opportunities to develop their physical skills. A number of children have quite small stature when they start as three year olds. Consequently physical skills are more limited. They are sympathetically addressed through the carefully structured range of activities presented to them to help their development. They are able to make use of the attractive outside play area to develop movements that are safe but stretch their abilities. They use large toys such as bicycles and trolleys with confidence. They move around the large classroom space with equal measures of confidence. They also have appropriate opportunities to accustom themselves to using the larger hall space effectively. The finer physical skills are also given an appropriate amount of attention. They mix things together as they make dough and cakes. They form letters carefully when they are 'writing' their stories with the teacher, who pays good attention to their letter formation skills.

74. Children in the reception class join those in the nursery class at times in the outside play area. They are able to demonstrate their growth in skills as they move around using the slide with confidence. They also make good use of the hall space as they sequence their movements on a range of apparatus. They confirm appropriate ability to travel, balance and land with accuracy as they move around the hall. The teacher demonstrates movements well to the children who join in energetically. A polished performance is being encouraged by the teacher and support assistant to ensure that children are being well prepared for Year 1 as they work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

Creative development

75. Children's creative development is being effectively encouraged in both the nursery and reception class through other areas of learning. In the nursery, children make reasonable sketches of the houses that they want to build in the outside building site that has been sponsored by a local building firm. They are able to capture the essential elements of the features of a good, solidly built house in their sketches. They paint self-portraits and pictures of other members of their families, paying attention to the shape of figures but with limited understanding of size. They sing familiar songs joyfully at different times such as when they are eating snacks together and before going home.
76. In the reception class they play creatively in the sand and water trays. They make and use puppets to tell imaginative stories to one another. They join in singing with classes in the hall. They make a good contribution to the tunefulness of the singing. Their enthusiasm is shown by their knowledge of the words and of the way that the tune moves up and down whilst also making loud and soft sounds. This joint work with Years 1 and 2 children prepares them well for their future work in Year 1. It also takes them well along the pathway of achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

ENGLISH

- Standards in English are broadly average at the end of the infant stage.
- Standards in English are above average at the end of the junior stage.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes to their English lessons and different groups of pupils tend to make similarly good progress overall. Higher- attaining pupils could be given more challenging work in some lessons, especially at the end of the infant phase.
- The management of the subject is good

77. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection because a number of the issues raised then have been addressed, for example listening skills, reading skills and standards of presentation have all improved. The National Literacy Strategy is now well established, and planning arrangements are effective. This means that pupils experience an appropriate range of writing opportunities, however there are still limitations in personal writing and sustained writing of which the co-ordinator is aware. Staff are currently working on the improvement of their marking practices to ensure that the school policy is fully implemented. Standards achieved in SATs since the last inspection show improvement in both reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Reading at the end of Year 2 was above average when compared to similar schools in the 2001 SATs but well below average in writing. There have been significant improvements in SATs for 11 year olds results in the same period. Pupils achieved well above the national average in English and they achieved the highest standard when compared to similar schools in 2001. Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes to their English lessons and make

good progress overall, and those with special educational needs receive good support that enables them to make good gains. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the same good quality as all other pupils and generally build knowledge and skills in English at the same pace as their classmates.

78. The inspection finds that in both infant and junior stages there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls in English. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average in speaking, listening and reading but below average in writing. At the end of Year 6 attainment in speaking and listening is average but reading and writing standards are above the national average. In English pupils make satisfactory progress overall in infant classes and good progress in junior ones. This good progress is mainly due to the consistently good quality of teaching and therefore learning in the upper part of the school.
79. The majority of pupils listen attentively in literacy hours and respond to questions from their teachers very well. Most class discussions generate the expected level of confidence in using language, and pupils are steadily increasing their vocabulary. The use of standard English though is not well profiled and junior pupils are infrequently asked to comment upon each other's views in lessons, which inhibits the progress they are able to make in expressing their own ideas and challenging others. Pupils learn to read satisfactorily and guided reading sessions with their teachers contribute very positively to their understanding of more challenging texts as they move up through the school. Opportunities for pupils to read regularly to an adult on an individual basis contribute significantly to their progress, particularly when there is discussion about the text but these opportunities are not regular enough for some pupils, and practice is inconsistent throughout the school.
80. Year 2 pupils can write independently but they are not yet showing the expected level of knowledge about basic punctuation and spelling in their work. They have confidence in tackling unaided writing tasks and more-able pupils are beginning to show interesting ideas. One boy, for example, writes at some length and refers to 'the quietest part of my mind'. There is though too little understanding about organising their writing. In Year 1, pupils are progressing well because they have experience of a good range of work, which is often helped by support mechanisms such as word banks and writing frames. An example of this is the reading log where pupils record the title of their book, their favourite part of the story and their favourite characters. One child writes 'I like the lambs because they are like snow'. In Year 6, pupils have a very good range of writing opportunities. There is an obvious enjoyment in the use of words when a pupil writes, 'His face was invaded by freckles.' and another describes 'shallow dust-covered stairs'. These examples show good progress in choice of vocabulary for communicating ideas. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in acquiring writing skills as they move up through the school due to the good match between their needs and the tasks they are set.
81. Presentation of work is improving because there is a whole-school focus on handwriting. Regular practice is helpful in raising standards in letter formation and size but too little attention is paid to sitting and writing positions. In the junior phase there are clear conventions for starting new work, which leads to good habits. The standard of presentation in Year 6 displays, such as the letters from Macbeth to his wife on 'parchment', is very good.
82. Throughout the school pupils have positive attitudes to English. In lessons they concentrate well and behaviour is good. Many pupils, boys and girls, say that they enjoy reading. Almost all pupils apply themselves to their tasks, and have very good relationships with staff and each other.

83. English teaching across the school is effective overall. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to the teaching of basic skills. In the last three years of the junior phase, teachers have particularly high expectations of pupils and provide them with well-structured opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. The quality of teaching is consistently good or better in these lessons. Good planning ensures that literacy skills are used well and further developed in other subject areas such as history and science. The picture towards the end of the infant phase and the beginning the junior phase is less buoyant because pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging activities and higher expectations of more-able pupils are not made clear. Target setting is at an early stage of development in the school and is not yet fully linked into the planning, learning and assessment cycle. Therefore the potential impact of this on pupil progress and attainment is not yet fully realised.
84. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator shows clear vision and direction in relation to the junior stage and has made a good start in taking on her whole-school role. Appropriate priorities for development are clearly identified. She is well organised and provides good guidance for colleagues. There is a strong commitment to providing rich literary experiences for pupils to improve their learning. This is achieved for example through thoughtful choice of texts in class, through visits to the theatre and through visitors to the school. The library is much improved but is still under development. There are plans to extend research facilities for pupils.

MATHEMATICS

- Standards are rising well and are above average by the age of eleven.
- The school's strategy for numeracy is working well.
- Teaching is good in mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes and in the unit make good progress. The higher-attaining pupils could be taxed more by their work.
- Planning and assessment systems are not yet feeding consistently into the target setting process.
- Mathematics is a well-managed subject.

85. At the time of the previous inspection in 2000, the school had made improvements in mathematics that had resulted in broadly satisfactory standards in infant classes, but standards were still below average by the end of the juniors. That same year, the SATs results for mathematics were disappointing as they were well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. There was evidence of underachievement of boys and not enough pupils were attaining the higher levels in the SATs. Since 2000, the school has made good improvements in mathematics and this has resulted in improved standards overall.
86. In 2001 the mathematics results in the SATs were below the national average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The school analysed these results carefully and made some timely changes to the curriculum and teaching to ensure that standards continued to rise. At the same time, a new system of target setting and tracking was introduced that is being used increasingly to monitor the effectiveness of the progress made by individual pupils. At present, standards at the end of the infant years are judged to be average and those at the end of the junior years are above average. In part, the difference in attainment between the SATs last year and the current picture is due to differences in the ability profile of the Year 2 and 6 classes. For example, in Year 6 this year there are five pupils who have been identified as requiring special educational needs support for mathematics. These pupils are making good progress with their work but are unlikely to achieve the expected level in the 2002 SATs. As

they account for about 15 per cent of the age group, this will affect the final standards this year. There is, however, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 this year working at the higher level 5 and so, on balance, standards are above average at the end of the juniors.

87. Attainment is similar in each of the four strands of mathematics¹. Pupils develop good skills in mental arithmetic, some of the work is completed against the clock to keep skills sharp and many of the older pupils are quite speedy in calculation. The ability of pupils to interpret written problems has been identified by the school as an aspect of mathematics that requires improvement. Whilst younger pupils in particular have more difficulties in solving problems, the older ones are developing good strategies to make problem solving more efficient. For example, in the Year 6 lesson observed on fractions and their equivalence in decimals, about a third of the pupils found their own ways to prevent their partner completing a row of successive decimal numbers. One girl identified that her partner had recorded 0.2 and 0.5 on her number line. When her turn came, instead of converting a random fraction to a decimal and marking that on the line, she calculated that 0.5 was five tenths and 0.2 was two tenths. She then chose three tenths as her fraction in order to block her opponent making a row of three consecutive values. At the same time, many other pupils were making random rather than calculated choices.
88. Teaching quality in mathematics is satisfactory in infant classes and good in junior ones and is judged to be good overall. There is much evidence that teaching is strongest in Years 5 and 6 and this has a profound impact on progress, which is accelerated at the end of school. The profile of teaching is flatter from Years 2 to 4, though it is always satisfactory in these years. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that a similar pattern of teaching has been in place since last September. There are three linked aspects of teaching that, whilst satisfactory, would stand enhancement:
- Planning is not used enough to identify the specific learning outcome for each ability group.
 - There is inconsistent sharing of targets for learning with pupils in lessons and infrequent review by the pupils themselves of progress towards these targets at the end of the session.
 - The marking of work to show how well pupils are meeting their targets is inconsistent.
89. There are more strengths in teaching than there are aspects for enhancement, particularly the management of pupils, teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, teaching methods, the use of resources, the contribution of non-teaching staff and volunteers and the quality and range of homework. The teaching of basic skills is good and the school's numeracy strategy is having a good impact on standards.
90. The strengths of teaching are reflected in pupils' learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in infant classes and good progress in the juniors. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes because their support is well focused on their individual needs. There are particular strengths in learning by pupils with statements in the special educational needs unit. Their enthusiasm and enjoyment is rewarding for all involved and there is a sense of fun in their learning. Like their friends in other classes, especially Years 5 and 6, these pupils work hard and produce good amounts of work.
91. Higher-attaining pupils are not all doing as well as they could. This stems from uncertainties of expectation. Planning has general learning objectives, but there is no clear expectation recorded there of what the higher attainers are expected to achieve. In some cases, planning for higher

¹ The four aspects are mathematical investigation and problem solving, number and arithmetic, shape and measure and data handling.

attainers focuses on the activities or indicates that higher attainers will complete more or harder examples of the same work. Planning for higher attainers does not focus on their needs as learners and the different ways in which these pupils build advanced skills and knowledge. The school has plans to improve the provision for higher attainers and is beginning the process of identifying the very top achievers in mathematics in order to meet their needs more fully.

- 92 Mathematics is a well-managed subject. The co-ordinator has had good opportunities to monitor standards and the quality of education in all classes in school, and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject. She has worked hard to develop the assessment and target setting and tracking procedures in mathematics. Refinement is required in each of these, a fact recognised by the school, but there is every prospect that good improvement to mathematics will continue in the future. There is clear, shared commitment to good standards amongst the staff.

SCIENCE

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve high standards at the age of eleven years.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and try their best.
- Planning needs to be more sharply focused and marking is inconsistent in helping pupils to understand how they can improve science achievements.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress against the targets set for them. The higher-attaining pupils could be challenged more by their work.
- The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and has identified strengths and weaknesses in lesson planning and provision for pupils to carry out investigations.

93. In the 2000 report, standards in science were reported to be above average, teaching good, and progress very good in the juniors. These high standards have been maintained well. In 2001, twice as many pupils as seen nationally achieved Level 5. At Key Stage 1 in 1999, standards in science were below average, teaching good, and progress satisfactory. These standards have improved and are now broadly average. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. By the age of eleven, the pupils' performance in science is better than in English or mathematics and standards are improving at a faster rate than nationally. During the inspection, these standards were confirmed. Pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002 are likely to attain well above average standards in science, and improvement is evident across the year groups because of good teaching based on a good scheme of work and effective leadership. In some classes, pupils that are more able need to be given work that is more demanding. This would enable them to demonstrate the full range of their ability. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or their good enthusiasm in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs respond with the same levels of interest as the rest of the class. They are fully included in all aspects of work in science. A start has been made on monitoring learning and this is to be extended to teaching in the near future.
94. Pupils are making satisfactory progress from an average starting point when they join the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their starting point in the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from the same good quality as all other pupils and generally build knowledge and skills in English at the same pace as their classmates. Pupils in the infant classes who have the potential for higher attainment are not always given enough challenge in their work. In Year 1, pupils have learnt about the different parts of the body and label diagrams neatly. There are a number of worksheets in their books but they are all relevant. Teachers reinforce their high expectations of these young pupils by expecting them to make suggestions as to how to tackle scientific problems. Pupils have learnt

to record their work effectively in simple pictures and text. Pupils in Year 2 learnt what forces are employed to make toys move. Teachers made sure they had good opportunities to experiment with movement as they test vehicles and measure the length travelled. Pupils complete an interesting piece of work on electricity by recording the different outputs that can follow, for example electricity as a source of energy in, light or heat. Pupils were introduced to a new topic on change in an imaginative manner using chocolate and bread. As they discussed the topic with their teacher it was evident that most pupils already had a sound grasp of the effect heat has on these two products. The teacher also planned to explore the more challenging idea of whether the bread was lighter when it was toasted. There was potential for learning to be good in this lesson but there was too little opportunity for pupils to work out how to record their work. Pupils are not being taught strategies to enable them to take some responsibility for their own learning and consequently they are too dependent on adults.

95. Pupils in Year 4 have learnt some of the basic principles of water resistance and carry out an experiment to find out which shape makes the most effective boats. The teacher set the class a challenge to make a ball of Plasticine float. They responded with creativity and enthusiasm. Because of skilful questioning, pupils identified the key features of a successful boat, added to their scientific vocabulary and began to explore the competing forces of gravity and up-thrust. They understand very well the need to control test conditions to make sure their test is fair. The teacher made very good use of pupils' contributions to the discussion, including errors, to reinforce learning well. By Year 6 pupils are very competent scientists the most able pupils producing work of very high quality. They can read charts, diagrams, and graphs competently and draw the relevant conclusions. This was seen to work well in the Year 6 lesson on how to care for your teeth. Pupils learn about and understand the similarities and differences between solids, liquids, and gases. Teachers give good attention to experimental work. Pupils are learning that water can be a solid, a liquid, or a gas. They also know that changes in materials can be reversible or irreversible. Literacy and numeracy skills are very effectively enhanced as pupils produce extended project work on a given topic. The brief that was provided by the teacher to guide their work brought together research skills, scientific knowledge and understanding in a very effective manner. Pupils were expected to complete some of this work as homework and there was very good evidence of their using a range of sources, including the Internet to gather evidence. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will produce work of good quality; this was confirmed during the examination of pupils' books. Many pupils' books were examined during the inspection and they contained writing, diagrams, charts, and labels of a high standard.
96. All pupils are enthusiastic and keen learners. Pupils with special educational needs learn as well as the rest of their class. The good co-operation between pupils was seen to be very effective in Year 6 when pupils worked in groups to create posters, poems and radio interviews to promote care for your teeth. They shared their work with the rest of the class and some performed for all the junior classes in assembly. This leads to very good levels of personal development. Pupils are well behaved because they are interested in their tasks. They enjoy their work in science whether it is looking at the chocolate or trying to float their boats.
97. On the evidence of lesson observations, planning and pupils' previous work, teaching and learning are good overall and never less than satisfactory. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of effort and behaviour. The pupils are clear about what they are expected to do and learn in the lesson, which proceeds at a brisk pace and maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Time is used effectively between whole-class and group work, discussion and activity, leaving adequate time for sharing what pupils have learned

by the end of the lesson. Teachers manage the class and prepare and organise the lesson well so that pupils learn to work collaboratively and concentrate on interesting tasks.

98. Weaker teaching occurs when the same work is set for all pupils in a class and they are not given the opportunity to take some responsibility for their own learning. This restricts the level they can attain in the lesson. Lesson planning is satisfactory but learning objectives are sometimes too general to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able. Lower-attaining pupils are usually well supported so that they can reach the highest possible standards. All work is marked but the comments do not always help pupils to understand how they can improve or what they need to do next.
99. The science curriculum is effectively led by the co-ordinator. A new scheme of work and planning format are in place, an improvement since the previous inspection. He has begun to monitor learning and planning and has identified that experimental work needs more emphasis. He has introduced an assessment system and is compiling a subject portfolio. It is planned to monitor teaching in the near future.

ART AND DESIGN

- Standards are above average and progress is good with some very good examples of artwork produced, especially in the last two years in the juniors.
- The curriculum is rich, relevant and rewarding.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Management of art and design is very effective; assessment, monitoring and evaluation are not well established.
- The use of art and design to enhance pupils' understanding and enjoyment of cultures from outside Europe is limited.

100. As in the school's first inspection report, there are many strengths in the provision for art and design and in the standards achieved. The school has built well on past successes, with the result that the art and design curriculum is now richer and more rewarding and some work is of high quality, particularly at the end of the juniors.
101. Standards are above average throughout the school. This is shown by the work on display about the corridors that shows how pupils perfect their skills, techniques and knowledge, and produce artwork of great attractiveness and finesse. The Year 5 work on William Morris textile designs, Year 4 work on black and white images of Congleton, and Year 4 work based on the pointillist style of Seurat are examples of work that would not look out of place in a public exhibition. The good standards in art and design are also demonstrated in the gaining last year of a national art award that was presented at the Tate Modern Gallery in London.
102. Skills development is consistently good from Year 1 to Year 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the level of expectation is high, skills are taught well and resources used effectively. Pupils are managed well in lessons and show considerable enjoyment, enthusiasm and motivation to do their best. Behaviour and relationships are other strengths that contribute to the effectiveness of learning. There are some shortcomings in planning that relate to the identification of specific things to be learned and teachers do not always share targets for learning with the pupils or review them at the end of the session. However, teaching quality is good and is a strength of the school because of its consistency and effectiveness in bringing good progress in learning.

103. Pupils work hard in lessons; they are creative and productive. This applies to pupils with special educational needs and to the higher attainers. A Year 6 lesson to create artwork based on that of Kandinsky is an example of the good teaching and learning that takes place in school. In this lesson the pupils worked hard to develop interpretations based on their first drafts in their sketch books. These drafts would do justice as the final artwork in many schools, such is their quality. However, in this lesson, the pupils were intent on doing even better. They enlarged these sketches into large scale artwork that showed good use of tone and shade, careful balancing of the elements of the design and the careful wielding of paint brushes to produce a wash effect rather than a wedge of colour. Some of the results had a three dimensional quality that ensured that the image stood out from the page. This lesson was enjoyed by all and the sense of good achievement was manifest and justified.
104. The curriculum for art and design is rich, relevant and rewarding. The work makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, though there could be greater emphasis on the multi-cultural dimension of art and design. There is a missed opportunity to celebrate Asian art, for example, which could be a highly relevant aspects in view of the heritage of some pupils currently in school.
105. Art and design is well managed and there is clear educational direction for the subject. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and, although she has yet to have opportunities to monitor the subject directly, she is well informed of its strengths and aspects for improvement. She accepts that assessment is the next priority for improvement and is determined to build on the strengths of the subject in the interests of the pupils. Art and design has a bright future and is a good model for subject development across the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- There has been reasonable maintenance of standards in design and technology since the previous inspection.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- Teaching is sound and provides pupils with enjoyable learning opportunities.
- The co-ordinator has devised an appropriate action plan to make improvements but has had limited opportunity to develop her leadership role, for example she has not yet monitored the quality of teaching and learning or the standards being achieved.

106. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This average level has been maintained since the last inspection. The school's concentration has necessarily been upon literacy and numeracy. This has impeded the further development of design and technology. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for developments in the subject, she has a clear plan of action for future developments. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in increasing their skills in design and technology. They understand the need to follow through the whole process of designing, making and evaluating. They show confidence in their ability to make a variety of end products such as cards and puppets in different year groups. They use a range of materials and strategies to ensure the effectiveness of their products.
107. There was little opportunity to observe lessons during the course of the inspection but on the basis of a scrutiny of work on display and discussion with some pupils it is clear that teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils have a good recall of all of the learning opportunities that they have been given in design and technology lessons. They are able to build skills in infant classes on the good range of experiences given in the nursery and reception classes. In these classes they

construct a house made of bricks as part of their study of the story of the three little pigs. The link governor works with them as they learn effectively about safety on a building site. They wear hard hats and protective waistcoats. They plan thoughtfully what they are going to build and use real materials to create a valuable model of a safe house. In the reception class they also use their story of Goldilocks to support some imaginative design work on making a strong chair for Goldilocks to sit on. Children enjoy producing Christmas logs and cakes that also support their mathematical skills of estimation and weighing. Pupils cut carefully in infant classes as they make and assemble different parts of pop-up cards. These skills are then further developed as they assemble and join papers together in Year 1 to make effective finger puppets.

108. The finer skills of sewing are well developed in junior years as hand puppets are made out of felt and sewn together accurately by pupils from the special needs unit. Year 4 pupils design and assemble books with moving parts that are both accurate and consolidate much of their previous learning. Pupils in Year 6 successfully bring together a number of their skills as they work with an adult to produce the theatre and the puppets for a Punch and Judy show. They feel that this is purposeful learning if it is going to be shown to younger pupils. There is however, some lack of momentum in design and technology work in Years 2 and 3 where pupils learning opportunities are less effectively harnessed because of a more limited range of experiences.
109. Pupils enjoy their design and technology work but are less enamoured of the design and evaluation aspects. The making is completed readily but they do have an understanding that it is necessary to follow through the whole process if success in making is to be assured.
110. The co-ordinator has made a sound but steady start in managing design and technology. She has two other areas of responsibility, including that of managing the Foundation Stage of learning. However, there is a clear plan of action formed with an identified need to carry out a comprehensive audit in order to establish an appropriate prioritisation of action to be taken. There has been no opportunity to develop the role through the monitoring of teaching and learning that would support this process.

GEOGRAPHY

- There is a broadly satisfactory picture of provision, progress and standards in geography.
- Geographical knowledge and skills are built satisfactorily.
- Too much work is worksheet based and this does not allow for the consistent development of writing or research in the subject.
- Higher-attaining pupils could do better if work were more consistently challenging.
- The curriculum is not monitored enough to ensure the systematic development of skills and knowledge year on year; this is a weakness in management.

111. The situation in geography reported in the school's first inspection report has been sustained. Today, as then, standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils, including those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, and teaching and learning are sound overall.
112. Boys and girls build satisfactory levels of skill and knowledge in geography. From the first steps in Year 1 to identify what makes a settlement the place it is, to the comparisons made between Congleton and places further afield in the middle years, and to the study of, for example, how rivers influence settlements in the older juniors, pupils add to their skills and knowledge at the

expected rate. The study of William Bear's adventures around the world in Year 1 and the study of Ordnance Survey maps in Year 3 are examples of where knowledge is built satisfactorily. In the latter, for example, pupils were able to use their studies of maps to design an imaginary settlement with some features that they had identified earlier.

113. Opportunities for personal research from primary and secondary sources are more limited than in many primary schools, as much geographical knowledge is given rather than found. The development of writing skills in geography is an aspect for improvement. There is some over-use of worksheets, which means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to find their own ways to express their knowledge and ideas. The emphasis on worksheet completion also reduces the pupils' initiative to find out things for themselves. This is a factor in the comparative lack of challenge in the work for higher-attaining pupils.
114. The curriculum is balanced and broad enough to enable pupils to build the necessary skills and knowledge. It is rooted firmly in the national guidance for geography and conforms to the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is evidence that from time to time work is repeated in successive years with not enough development to ensure that existing skills and knowledge are added to.
115. The management of geography is satisfactory, though the co-ordinator has not had sufficient opportunities to directly monitor standards and the quality of education in other years. School managers have identified assessment as the other core priority for geography and there is shared commitment to making the necessary improvement.

HISTORY

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils' good literacy skills mean they can take full advantage of the range of work in history.
- Teaching is good overall, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils make satisfactory progress, including those who speak English as an additional language, but some pupils, usually the higher attainers, are given tasks to do that do not always fully extend their capabilities.
- Boys and girls respond equally well in lessons. Those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting point when they join the school. They are fully included in all aspects of work in history.
- The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and checks coverage of the scheme of work but has not yet extended her leadership role to monitor standards, teaching and learning.

116. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in history were average at the end of Year 6. Current standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils' good literacy skills mean they can take full advantage of the range of work in history. Teaching is good overall particularly in the juniors. Pupils are well managed and staff make good use of resources to motivate pupils. Learning is satisfactory overall. Most pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress but some pupils, usually the higher attainers, are given tasks to do that do not require them to use all their abilities. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where the work is more demanding. Boys and girls respond equally well in lessons. Those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting point when they join the school. They are fully included in all aspects of work in history.

117. Overall, teaching is good and learning satisfactory. Pupils gain satisfactory knowledge and understanding about the main periods of British history. Because pupils' research and literacy skills are good, much of the work seen by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. Teachers give good emphasis to the development of chronology. Time lines are in use across the school and particularly detailed ones for the Victorian era were seen in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 construct simple timelines based on three significant features (the Great Fire of London, Florence Nightingale, and the Millennium Dome). They also demonstrated the ability to sequence the main events of the Great Fire of London correctly and record them neatly. Pupils in Year 6 study the Victorian age in detail. They develop appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding of their lives, and compare and contrast them with the present day. Teachers improve pupils' learning in history by making good links with other subjects. For example, in Year 1 pupils studied a range of old kitchen items such as a flat iron and made very carefully observed drawings that showed good attention to detail, while in Year 6, pupils used ICT to record a dialogue between a Victorian child and a child of the 21st century. These demonstrated that pupils know and understand how daily life has changed. Pupils also recreated in art and design their own version of a Victorian sampler. This work showed much careful attention to detail. In Year 6 the teacher gave pupils an example of entries from a census and pupils demonstrated their ability to extract information well. The teacher then brought this work up to date by asking the pupils to devise suitable questions for a census to be taken now. This led to some very interesting responses that showed pupils have a good understanding of current issues.
118. Teachers make good use of a range of literacy techniques to support work in history. In Year 2, pupils write a sequence of illustrated sentences (story boards) to document the main events in the life of Florence Nightingale. In Year 5, because of the good explanation and guidance provided by the teacher, pupils know the difference between primary and secondary sources and undertake research about the Ancient Greeks with skill and enthusiasm. The teacher explains carefully how to set out a bibliography correctly. She used pictures to explain how pupils can use them to make inferences. Because the lesson was well resourced and the tasks imaginative and carefully explained, pupils settled to work eagerly and achieved well. The teacher catered effectively for the different needs of pupils in her class by setting different tasks and making very clear how much work she expected from each group. In this way all pupils had to work hard and achieved well against their previous levels. The teacher planned the lesson well to capitalise on the use of the Internet for research, to reinforce recent work in literacy lessons and to provide an interesting homework task. Two pupils successfully accessed an interactive encyclopaedia on the Internet and downloaded information about Ancient Greek houses. The teacher supported pupils written work effectively by the use of writing frames that improved the standard of their work.
119. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in history. They work hard and are committed to raising standards. Visits and visitors enhance teaching and learning in the subject because they motivate pupils well. There are, however, areas where improvements are required. Planning is satisfactory but objectives for learning tend to be very general and are not specific enough to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teachers know their pupils well but formal strategies for assessment are unsatisfactory. Marking does not focus on historical knowledge and understanding but tends to comment on effort or literacy skills. Neither does it make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. Literacy skills are effectively advanced through work in history. Work is generally set for the whole class. Some tasks are extended for the higher-attaining pupils, and the teacher or support staff often support lower attaining pupils effectively. The work is not always challenging enough, however, to ensure that higher-attaining pupils reach the highest possible standards in developing skills, knowledge and understanding about

history. The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and checks coverage of the scheme of work but has not yet extended her leadership role to monitor standards, teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- Good improvement has been made to ICT since the previous inspection.
- Standards are average and progress is now satisfactory in the aspects for which the school is resourced.
- Management of the subject is good.
- There are still shortages of resources that mean that not all aspects of the subject can be taught effectively. This affects progress and standards in those aspects.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum, for example to develop writing, is not consistent.
- Systems to assess, monitor and evaluate performance in ICT are in the early stages of development.
- There is a continuing need for staff development in the subject.

120. The 2000 inspection report charted the satisfactory progress that the school had made in improvements to information technology, as this subject was then called, since its first inspection when provision and standards were serious weaknesses. The pace of improvement has gathered momentum since 2000 and has been good during this period. Standards are improving well because pupils have better and more consistent opportunities to learn about ICT. Whilst there are still things to complete, ICT is a secure part of the curriculum. The school has put together a well-conceived action plan for improving ICT and is hoping to secure much needed resources in the near future.
121. Inspection evidence shows that standards in ICT are average at the end of the infant and junior years. This is a qualified judgement, however, as there are still some shortages of resources, particularly in terms of equipment for computer control and modelling and in access to the Internet. Thus, by the age of eleven, pupils achieve average standards in word processing, data handling and graphics and design. At the age of seven, standards in control and modelling are also as found in most primary schools. However, by the age of eleven they are below average. On the other hand, standards in the communication element of the subject are not high enough until the last two years in school, when progress accelerates because Year 5 and 6 pupils make good use of the Internet. In the aspects of the subject which the school can resource properly, progress is sound in the infants and good in the juniors.
122. Teaching quality is satisfactory in infant classes and good in the juniors. The level of subject knowledge, confidence and understanding amongst staff have all increased in the last two years. However, these vary from teacher to teacher and there is still a need for focused staff development. The staff have just commenced their nationally sponsored training in ICT and it is evident that they are all committed to improvement in order to give pupils better chances to succeed. At present, the teaching of basic skills, the management of pupils and the use of homework to support learning in ICT are developing as potential strengths. Subject planning does not identify clearly enough the expectations of what particular skills and knowledge the pupils will learn, marking is not very informative about how to improve and there is not much sharing and reviewing of targets for learning with the pupils in lessons. The school understands that these are aspects of teaching for improvement and has incorporated them into its staff development training.
123. Learning quality reflects that of teaching. In general, progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because staff have greater subject knowledge and confidence. Pupils with special educational

needs have as many opportunities to learn about ICT as other pupils and they are given good support in their work, so they make steady progress. Older pupils generally show good attitudes to the subject; they work productively and behave well.

124. The curriculum for ICT is much improved over that found in 2000 or before. There is a firm focus on the systematic development of skills through the school. In word processing, for example, it is possible from the study of pupils' past work and that on display to identify how the first attempts to write their own names in the reception class are developed successfully into the word processing of lengthier text in the middle years of school. The choice of interesting fonts and other features to make the text visually appealing in Years 5 and 6 demonstrates that pupils continue to add to their store of skills and knowledge at an appropriate rate.
125. The higher-attaining pupils could be given more taxing work and more opportunities to use ICT as a powerful means of research and investigation. Subject planning is not consistent in the identification of what is expected of such pupils. Additionally, whilst the first steps have been taken to produce a system of skills assessment in ICT, this is not yet in consistent use, and so teachers have imperfect information on which to plan the level of difficulty in the tasks set for pupils of all abilities.
126. The management of ICT is good and has resulted in better provision and standards. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future and gives staff a good lead in the use of ICT across the curriculum. This is another aspect of the subject that the co-ordinator has identified for further improvement, as is the overall level of resourcing. There are long-term plans to establish a computer suite and shorter term plans to introduce a projector and possibly an interactive whiteboard. These moves are intended to ensure that there is more consistent good quality provision in ICT. The progress made to date suggests that the subject is well on track to become a key part of the overall curriculum.

MUSIC

- Standards are average at Year 2 and Year 6.
- Good teaching throughout the school supports the pupils well in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress as they enjoy taking part in a range of musical activities.
- The subject is well led but the co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning through direct observation.

127. Standards are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to that found at the previous inspection. The very clear direction for the subject enables teachers to work with confidence in order to sustain these standards. Peripatetic, specialist teachers enhance the musical experiences for a number of pupils from Year 2 onwards as they learn to play instruments as diverse as violins and French horns. As a result of the very worthwhile musical experiences, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Everyone, including those with a variety of special educational needs, enjoys their music making. Pupils from the special needs unit take part in the school choir; this is a reflection of the school's positive policy of giving opportunities for all to be involved in its musical activities and for individuals to show off their talents to the full. The quality of the range of musical opportunities makes an important contribution to the pupils' social and spiritual development.
128. In Year 1, pupils benefit from working with the well-informed co-ordinator as their class teacher. They are already securely composing rhythms with long and short sounds. They are able to perform their compositions with confidence. Their good progress is demonstrated as

they use percussion instruments to perform their compositions after they have initially clapped them out. They are able to do this because they have written them out very carefully so that they can read them as musicians read music. They listen thoughtfully to one another in order to improve their performance. This gives them real pleasure and enjoyment. Apart from individual pupils engaging in instrumental violin playing in Year 2, pupils in infant classes join in enthusiastically as they sing together with good voice control. Performing actions to the songs supports pupils in pitching notes with greater accuracy.

129. The pupils continue to enhance their composing and performing skills throughout their junior classes. In the special needs unit there are pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. Skilful teaching supports these pupils as they knowledgeably introduce tempo into their compositions after they have chosen their own musical instruments. This retains the impetus in their learning and supports development of concentration levels in an enjoyable way. Pupils in Year 3 combine musical and physical skills together as they interpret music in their movement to an *African Pounding Song*. In three different groups they show mature understanding of pulse, rhythm and ostinato in their movements. They are accompanied sensibly and confidently by another two groups of pupils playing African mini drums and maracas. As well as developing musical and physical skills in an accomplished way, this also supports their knowledge and understanding of another culture. Throughout junior classes pupils maintain a music book that confirms the continuity and progression in their work. Junior classes also join together to sing joyfully, with a reasonable measure of skill. They are given a good lead by the school choir, which includes confident solo singing by a pupil from the special needs unit.
130. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned. Resources are used effectively. Support is given successfully, not only by teachers and support staff but also by voluntary help. This includes support from well-briefed governors who have links with classes throughout the school. Teachers use correct musical language, such as ostinato, so that pupils' technical musical language becomes proficient. As a result of the varied and interesting activities provided for them, pupils have very positive attitudes to music and they behave sensibly in their lessons.
131. The good progress made by pupils is mainly due to the confidence with which teachers engage them in music making. Teachers are well supported by a useful scheme of work and the help given by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She gives good leadership to the subject, which is well placed to raise standards even further. There has been no opportunity as yet for the co-ordinator to monitor the strengths and weaknesses throughout the school by direct observation of teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Average standards for seven and eleven-year-olds have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- A good policy and a good scheme of work are in place to support teaching and learning.
- Resources for the subject are much improved and are now adequate.
- Extracurricular opportunities are very good and enhance pupils' learning experiences.

132. The sound standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained. On the basis of the limited number of lessons observed, progress in physical education is judged to be satisfactory overall throughout the school. The new scheme of work and the medium-term plans show that pupils have opportunities to build skills and knowledge appropriately in all of the strands of physical education. There are now sufficient good quality resources to support the delivery of the subject.

133. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are gaining valuable experience of working with a partner. In an indoor games lesson pupils in Year 2 confidently practised travelling with a ball. Most pairs worked steadily at improving their techniques for sending and receiving the ball and the expected progress was made, although opportunities for self-assessment were missed. Some boys already show a good level of skill but their progress was constrained by the lack of appropriate challenge for them in the task set and to some extent by the limited size of the hall. In Year 5, pupils thoroughly enjoyed their warm-up sessions because routines are brisk and fun. In one lesson observed, they entered into the 'quack quack jump' sequence, for instance, with gusto, and this motivated them to work hard in their lessons. They understand the need for warm-up and cool-down activities and show satisfactory awareness of safety issues. Pupils in Year 5 are given suitably challenging tasks and rise to the high expectations of their teacher. They are supported in their development by appropriate teaching points and have regular opportunities to reflect, evaluate and improve their work as lessons unfold. In a games lesson there was good progress in ball control because pupils were asked to analyse technique and discuss improvements. In a gymnastics lesson pupils worked on sequences of movement which involved rolls and balances. One boy, for instance, gave a very good demonstration with imaginative starting and finishing positions and a well-controlled side roll as part of his sequence. At times the class became a little lively but quickly responded to the teacher's reminders about noise levels. The quality of teaching of physical education in the school is satisfactory overall.
134. Physical education is managed satisfactorily at present but is a subject on the move. The scheme of work is still in the first full academic year of implementation and therefore it is too early to judge the full impact. The co-ordinator monitors subject planning and indications are that the scheme is working well. As yet there is no system for recording formative assessments of pupil progress and no opportunity to monitor lesson delivery. The co-ordinator is committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and has successfully explored links with the community and secured valuable sponsorship for new equipment. Staff have benefited from *Top Play* and *Top Sport* training and resources have been further enhanced by participation in this scheme. Tired equipment, for example mats, is systematically being replaced as funding becomes available. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in physical educational activities. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in extracurricular activities and school teams. Twelve girls in the netball club, for example, worked hard after school to improve their fitness and skills. They look very professional in their new bibs and are well supported by two staff. Other after-school activities include football, rugby, and cross-country running, and athletics, cricket and rounders in the summer term. The activities programme available on residential visits includes sailing, canoeing, zip wiring and rock climbing and therefore provides rich physical development opportunities for pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- The programme for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make sound progress.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they show good respect for the beliefs and values of others.
- Planning is not sufficiently focused on setting learning objectives for different pupils to work towards, and marking is not yet helping pupils to understand how they can improve or what they need to do next.
- Otherwise effective leadership is hampered by not being able to gain insights into the standards, teaching and learning across the school.

135. The 2000 inspection judged that standards in religious education were about average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There was no clear judgment about progress but teaching and learning were satisfactory and sometimes good. Leadership was ineffective. Improvement since then has been good. Standards have been sustained, teaching is good overall, and learning is satisfactory with some accelerated learning in Years 1, 5, and 6. Boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs respond with the same levels of interest as the rest of the class. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar gains in learning to others in their class and have full access to the curriculum. These different groups of pupils are fully included in all aspects of work in religious education. The co-ordinator is keen to improve the subject, and has introduced some imaginative ideas for recording pupils' achievements.
136. The current provision for religious education is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. As a subject, its place in the timetable is secure and the staff show very good commitment to it. Teachers make good links between work in religious education lessons and everyday life. Consequently, pupils are gaining a good set of principles to live by. This was seen to work particularly well in Year 6 when pupils explored moral dilemmas they may encounter, such as bullying, racism, theft, and vandalism. Their responses made it clear that they understand that life is full of opportunities to make choices. They also demonstrated good awareness of the many pressures that may influence them to make the wrong decision. The class teacher had the confidence to share her personal convictions and this opened up the debate so that all could talk about the many challenges and pressures that face them everyday. In junior classes pupils add to their knowledge and understanding of world faiths. For example, in Year 6 they learn about Sikhism and the teachings of Guru Nanak and why he is held in such high regard. In Year 3, pupils are introduced to stories from the Old Testament such as *Noah's Ark* and learn about the significance of harvest and Christmas in the church year. In Year 4, pupils learn about the life and work of Mother Teresa and through skilful questioning and the good use of resources begin to appreciate the special nature of her work in India. Although it is an area for expansion, visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning in religious education.
137. In Key Stage 1, teachers provide different opportunities for pupils to record their responses. In Year 1, pupils have contributed to a series of class books, for example, 'Has anyone been kind to you today?' and compared 'Ordinary Days, Special Days and Holy Days'. Using this approach, the class teacher has successfully encouraged her young pupils to write and illustrate their work and in this way extend their literacy skills. She has just introduced individual 'My Belief' books, which very obviously demonstrate the importance she attaches to the subject. When introduced to the Bible one pupil says 'It's the 'God on the front' book.' Pupils in Year 2 use their developing literacy and geography skills to compare and contrast Christmas in Mexico and Britain. Pupils also learn about the features in churches and following a visit to the local church drew and wrote about what they saw. All pupils are encouraged to do this, for example a pupil drew the font carefully and wrote, 'I like the Font becau I gut christered init.'" Although the level of spelling is low, the pupil's sentiments are very clear, while more-able pupils wrote neat, accurate letters of thanks to the church for the visit. Teachers plan activities in other subjects to support work in religious education, so these pupils also made church-window Christmas cards in design and technology.
138. Teaching is good overall. Pupils are well managed and a real strength is the commitment of all staff to make the subject relevant to the lives of pupils. This is seen to work well in the sharing of values and beliefs, the sensitive way in which staff receive pupils' contributions and the very good emphasis on tolerance and respect. Learning overall is satisfactory but accelerated in

Years 1, 5, and 6. This is because some pupils, usually the higher attainers, are not given tasks to do which require them to use all their abilities in response. Almost all work seen included the same activity for all pupils who responded in a way that reflected their ability to record. While literacy skills were often well fostered, it also meant that those pupils who would have been capable of using a different range of skills were not asked to do so. For example, there were few opportunities to select how the written work would be completed: some tasks were so defined they limited pupils' responsibility to make decisions and did not allow the more-able pupils to express the full range of their knowledge and understanding. No examples of personal research were seen. One reason why this happens is that assessment in religious education is unsatisfactory. Teachers have little information about pupils' knowledge and understanding on which to base their planning. Marking varies considerably across the school. The best marking is reflective and is designed to make pupils think more carefully about their responses but most comments relate to effort or literacy skills rather than to the content. Pupils model themselves on their teachers' good example and all pupils are positive and responsive in lessons. Teachers expect pupils to be respectful to the beliefs and values of others and they demonstrate this well in the way they listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and handle religious objects with care.

139. The subject co-ordinator monitors planning but has no opportunity to observe teaching and learning in other classes. She has very good ideas of how the subject should develop and is keen to ensure that world religions are studied throughout the school.