

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Christ Church CE Primary School**

Leamore, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104220

Headteacher: Mrs A M Carlisle

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Kerr  
23583

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 230252

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Christ Church CE Primary School
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harden Road Leamore Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS3 1EN
Telephone number:	01922 710080
Fax number:	01922 710080
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss A Morris
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23583	Mr Peter Kerr	Registered inspector	Science Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
08971	Mrs Judith Hesslewood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school care for its pupils How well the school work in partnership with parents
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education English as an additional language	Equal opportunities Special educational needs
27369	Mrs Carolyn Powell	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Geography History	
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections  
Juniper House  
23 Abbots View  
Abbotswood  
Cinderford  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 3EG*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	6-9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	10-13
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	13-14
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	15-16
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	17-18
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	18-19
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	19-21
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	21-22
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	23-26
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	27-43

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Christ Church is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school and nursery. It is situated in Leamore, an urban area of high unemployment on the outskirts of Walsall. The school is of average size and has 242 pupils on roll aged from three to 11 years old; of these 26 children attend the nursery class on a part-time basis. There are 104 pupils, 43 per cent, who have special educational needs. This is well above average. Nine per cent of these pupils have significant levels of need. A higher proportion of pupils than average have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties related to reading and writing. Eleven of them also exhibit challenging behaviour. Almost 40 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. Eight pupils, just over three per cent, speak a language other than English as their first language, namely Hindu and Panjabi, and this is higher than in most schools. They are all fluent in English, however. Children entering the nursery have below average attainment. The school aims to provide a broad and balanced education within a Christian ethos.

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

This is a good school. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Pupils achieve standards in English that are below the national average, but these are improving. In mathematics, standards are average and in science they are above average. There has been a great improvement in many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. The school is well led and managed, it makes good use of the resources available to it, and provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- A very good ethos and excellent teamwork permeates the school.
- The quality of teaching is good, with very good contributions from teaching assistants.
- Assessment and marking in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology, is good.
- Provision for the care of pupils and their personal and spiritual development is very good.
- The headteacher, senior managers, and governing body provide good leadership and management.

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

- Standards in spoken aspects of English.
- Standards in geography, history, art and design at Key Stages 1 and 2 and music at Key Stage 2.
- Attendance.
- The space available for teaching.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents, and carers of pupils at the school.*

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

The school was last inspected in March 1998. The key issues noted in the previous report included the need to:

- raise standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology;
- improve the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership and management.

The school has made very good improvements in these key aspects of its performance since then. Teaching has improved in Key Stage 1, especially in terms of managing pupils' behaviour, and the governors play a much more active role in the management of the school. There have also been very good improvements in the range of books available, and in reducing noise levels, however, the partitions installed have further reduced the space available for teaching. Some progress has been made in addressing the remaining two key issues of raising standards in art, history, geography, and music, and improving the use of assessment to inform planning, but more improvements are needed in these areas. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools <sup>1</sup>
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	D	B
Mathematics	E	E*	C	A
Science	C	E	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
average	B
below average	C
well below average	D
very low	E
	E*

The school's good results in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>, are the outcome of sustained improvements in provision since the last inspection. Some key points to make about the trend in the school's results are:

- the school performs very well overall compared to similar schools;
- a high number of pupils attaining Level 5<sup>3</sup> contributed to the good results in mathematics and science, demonstrating good learning for higher-attaining pupils;
- the school's ambitious, but attainable, targets show that the trend of improvement is set to continue;
- pupils with special educational needs did much better in the science test than in the other subjects;
- the below national average results in English reflect the children's well below average attainment in literacy when they start school;
- an influx of pupils from another local school that closed had a detrimental affect on the results in 2000.

The school's results in the National Curriculum tests, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1<sup>4</sup>, in reading, writing and mathematics, are well below average, but are now improving rapidly, through much improved teaching.

Standards are below expectations, at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, in spoken English, art and design, and history, and geography. Standards in music are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

The particular strengths found throughout the school during the inspection are:

- continuing improvements in standards in English, mathematics and science;
- standards in English are improving steadily. Although currently below average, they are on course to be in line with the national average by 2003;
- pupils achieve well in mathematics and science, especially investigating and experimenting;
- standards in information and communication technology have improved rapidly and are now average;
- standards in design and technology, physical education, and religious education, are also average;
- pupils of all abilities, including higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well;
- pupils who speak a language other than English at home achieve well. Many of them are in the higher-attaining groups, however, their understanding of words that they may not be familiar with is not closely monitored.

By the end of the reception year, children in the Foundation Stage<sup>5</sup> are achieving standards that are below average in all the areas of learning, except in physical and personal and social development, where the children's attainment is in line with expectations.

<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

<sup>2</sup> Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

<sup>3</sup> Level 5 is the level above the expected Level 4 for average attaining pupils at the end of Year 6.

<sup>4</sup> Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

<sup>5</sup> The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and they generally try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave very well around the school most of the time. Good behaviour in lessons helps pupils' learning. There were three temporary exclusions during the previous school year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop very good relationships and accept responsibility gladly. This reflects the very positive ethos in the school.
Attendance	Well below average, because of the very poor attendance of just a few families, despite the best efforts made by the school to get these pupils to attend.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. In all but one of the 68 lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good or better in two-thirds of lessons, and in 12 of these lessons teaching was very good or better. One excellent lesson was seen. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but is not sufficiently linked to the 'stepping stones'<sup>6</sup> of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. The teaching of English and mathematics is consistently good throughout the school, accounting for pupils' good performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Teachers ensure that the pupils learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well and apply them to their studies in other subjects. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak a language other than English as their first language. However, teachers do not check the latter group's understanding of unfamiliar words closely enough. Higher-attaining pupils are also provided for well in lessons. The main strengths in teaching are:

- good relationships. Teachers use their good knowledge of the pupils to improve their self-esteem and motivation. They manage the pupils well, making good use of humour to relax and encourage them;
- a brisk pace to the lessons, with plenty of challenge, encouraging intellectual and creative effort from girls and boys of all abilities;
- excellent teamwork between teachers and support staff, making support staff feel part of the team. This provides valuable extra support for pupils and helps them sustain concentration;
- teachers' good subject knowledge underpinning the preparation of relevant activities and searching questioning that make the pupils think;
- good opportunities for pupils to explore, express, and develop their own ideas.

The best lessons contain most of these strengths. The quality of learning is good in these lessons because the pupils are highly motivated to work hard and sustain concentration. In less successful lessons, the main weaknesses are:

- too few opportunities for the pupils to respond creatively or express themselves fully, explore their own ideas, or to work independently. Teachers direct the pupils too much towards expected answers and responses;
- in history, geography, art and design, and music, lessons do not build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding, and skills. In these lessons, pupils work hard, but the gains they make in their learning are less strong because their efforts are not challenged towards appropriate attainable goals. Often, the work set is too hard for them;
- teachers' subject knowledge in music.

<sup>6</sup> 'Stepping stones' are the carefully graduated steps within the Foundation Stage curriculum, which enable teachers to track children's progress in each area of learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound overall. Improvements are needed in planning for some subjects. Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education, and activities outside lessons, is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early. These are met through good individual educational programmes and very good support from staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are fully integrated and achieve as well as their classmates. There is a need to monitor these pupils' understanding of words that are specific to the English culture more carefully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good provision for pupils' spiritual development reflects the school's strong Christian ethos. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and good personal relationships permeate the life of the school, underpinning all its work. The pupils are led to a positive appreciation of the cultural richness of the wider society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Very good procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare and for eliminating bullying, and promoting good behaviour and attendance.

The school has a very productive partnership with a few parents, but many do not participate actively.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction with a focus on raising standards within a Christian ethos. The deputy headteacher and key subject co-ordinators give very effective support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and are very supportive. They ensure that all legal obligations are met and do their best to improve the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is very aware of how its standards compare with all schools and those of a similar nature, and continually strives to improve its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher and governors have reduced a considerable surplus of funds by well-targeted spending to improve provision.

The caretaker and cleaning staff keep the building and site in very attractive order. However, the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory because some teaching areas are very cramped. This limits the progress that pupils can make. The temporary classroom is inaccessible by wheelchair, precluding attendance by a physically disabled pupil. The school is doing its best to remedy this situation. There is a full complement of teachers and a generous allocation of very effective teaching assistants. Resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value well to all its spending.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• School helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They are made welcome and feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations.</li> </ul>	No significant issues were raised.

The inspection confirms the very positive views of the school expressed by the very few parents who returned the questionnaires and attended the meeting.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the nursery with well below average attainment in language and communication skills, including mathematical language. Their attainment in other areas is below average, except in physical development, where it is average. They make sound progress through the nursery and reception classes. However, their attainment remains below average when they begin Year 1 in: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They make good progress in their personal and social development to achieve average standards by the time they start Year 1. Children in the Foundation Stage with special educational needs, and those who speak a language other than English at home, are provided for well and make good progress.
2. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the school's results are much lower when compared to other schools, than the results at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2001, they were very low in reading and writing compared to all schools, that is in the lowest five per cent nationally, and well below average when compared with similar schools. The trend over the past four years has been one of well below average or very low standards in both subjects, with lower standards in writing than in reading. School-based assessments show that standards are also well below expectations in speaking and listening. These results reflect the well below average attainment in language and communication skills that the children have when they enter the school. The inspection evidence confirms below average attainment of pupils in Year 2, but improving standards. In mathematics, the test results are much better. They are in line with the national average and well above those in similar schools. The inspection evidence confirms that standards are now in line with expectations in all areas of mathematics at this stage. Indications are that, at this school, it is the pupils' delayed development of language and communication skills that hold them back. The results of the teachers' assessments in science, in 2001, were also well below average. The inspection found, however, that standards in science are now in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1.
3. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved steadily since the last inspection, except in 2000. The results were very low that year because many of the pupils who took the tests had well below average attainment and had joined the school, during Key Stage 2, from another local school that had closed. The trend in test results from 1996 to 2000 was above the national trend. The results in 2001 were very much better than in 2000 and the trend from 1997 to 2001 was in line with the national trend. The overall picture is one of better than average progress. The school has set ambitious, but realistic, targets to bring standards in English in line with the national average and maintain the above average standards in all three subjects, when compared with similar schools.
4. At the end of Key Stage 2, the results in the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, were below the national average, but they were not far below. The percentage of pupils who achieved above-average results was, in fact, in line with the national average, reflecting the school's success in catering for the more able pupils. A contributory factor to the below average results of the school was that more pupils than average achieved lower than average levels in the tests. These pupils had special educational needs related to reading and writing. They made good progress and achieved well in relation to their previous attainment. Although the pupils continue to experience residual difficulties with speaking, reading and writing well into Key Stage 2, the school's improved provision for all aspects of English is securing good progress. Standards being achieved by pupils currently in Year 6 are at a similar level to last year, but in Year 5, standards are in line with expectations. The school's targets reflect this, indicating that standards in English will be in line with the national average by 2003. This represents very good progress made by pupils from their well below average starting point. Compared with similar schools, the school's results in English are above average. Pupils use their reading and writing skills effectively to aid their learning in other subjects. The below average literacy skills of the lower-attaining pupils affects their ability to record their work in other subjects, but they are given good support to further their understanding

despite this difficulty. Pupils listen attentively, but they do not express themselves as fluently and fully as pupils of this age in other schools.

5. Standards in mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 2, have improved significantly, from the very low results in 2000, to average results in 2001. Standards are well above average compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher than expected level was well above average, even when compared to all schools, reflecting good achievement by the school's more able pupils. Compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils achieving a higher than expected level was very high, that is in the highest five per cent nationally. This confirms the good quality provision that the school makes for those pupils who have high ability in mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining the standards expected for their age, indicating a continuation of the positive trend. Standards are good in all aspects of mathematics, and the pupils apply their knowledge and skills well in other subjects.
6. The school's science results at the end of Key Stage 2 are very good. Apart from in 2000, when the results were low because of the special factors affecting that year group, referred to earlier, the school has performed at, or above, the national average since 1997. In 2001, the results were above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools. More pupils than average achieved a higher than expected level, helping to improve the results, and reflecting good provision for this ability group. Unlike in English and mathematics, no pupils achieved a significantly lower level than expected. This indicates very good support for pupils with special educational needs when taking the tests. The standards be achieved by the pupils currently in Year 6 are also above average. In addition to the expected knowledge and understanding, the pupils have good experimental skills. However, a shortage of space in the classrooms in Key Stage 2 inhibits the development of more advanced experimenting skills for the more able pupils.
7. The test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that boys have achieved better test results than girls have over the past four years in all three subjects, but particularly in English. Nationally, boys' results lagged slightly behind girls over this period in English. In this school, the girls' results lagged slightly behind the boys. This trend is consistent, except in 2000, when the girls' results were better than the boys' result, however, the inspection found no evidence that there were any aspects of the school's provision that favours boys. One possible explanation is that the differences in performance in the tests reflect differing expectations for girls and boys within the local community. The school is aware of this possibility and does all it can to encourage girls to take an interest in their schoolwork and achieve as well as they can. Girls and boys have equal access to all learning opportunities and are supported equally in lessons.
8. The school is aware of the need to identify and provide for gifted and talented pupils. Currently, there are no pupils on roll in this category. Pupils have been identified in the past and provided with appropriate support to achieve according to their ability. Appropriate individual targets are set for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress towards these. Pupils who speak a language other than English at home achieve well. Many of them are amongst the higher-attaining pupils in their year group, however, some of these pupils, especially those from Asian backgrounds, do not understand some of the words and terms that they read because they are not used at home. The school does not monitor this aspect of the pupils' progress closely enough.
9. Pupils make good progress overall through the school. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average in mathematics and below average in English, and science. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in science and in line with expectations in mathematics. Standards in English are below average at this key stage, but are on course to be in line with the national average by 2003. Standards in information and communication technology are now in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and the pupils of all abilities are achieving well. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The pupils do not yet use their computer skills sufficiently, however, to aid learning in other subjects. Standards in design and technology have also improved and are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. In physical education and religious education, pupils achieve well and reach average standards throughout the school. Particularly effective leadership and management in these subjects have ensured that the good teaching that now permeates the school secures equally good learning. Pupils do not achieve as well in art and design, geography, and history, as they do in the other subjects, and

standards remain below expectations at the end of both key stages. This is largely because curriculum planning is not based on secure assessments of the pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills. In music standards are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and below at the end of Key Stage 2.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. Punctuality has also improved. However pupils' attendance has remained static, despite improvements in the school's systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Because of improvements in attendance nationally, the school's attendance rate is now well below the national average. Persistent absence amongst a few families account for much of the problem, however.
11. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They are enthusiastic, and keen to participate and please the teachers and assistants. Pupils maintain their concentration throughout, because teaching assistants ably provide good consistent academic and behavioural support. Pupils are motivated to do well because of the very good relationships fostered between all members of the school community. This, together with the use of humour, and a good understanding of individual pupils' circumstances, raises pupils' confidence to learn, and increases their self-esteem. Because teaching is lively and provides a variety of stimulating activities, pupils remain attentive throughout the lesson. Good examples were seen in many lessons, particularly in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education, and religious education. Pupils listen well to adults and each other, however, their answers to questions and contributions to discussion are often short, since teachers do not always allow sufficient time for, or encourage longer, more considered responses.
12. Pupils' behaviour is good within lessons and often very good in assemblies and during lunch. Good behaviour and self-discipline are effectively fostered because staff consistently praise and reward pupils and apply sanctions fairly. Pupils and parents are confident that reported incidents of bullying and name-calling are dealt with effectively. A number of pupils who moved to the school because of bullying elsewhere have not experienced any problems at Christ Church. The three fixed-period exclusions, which occurred during the previous school year, were handled correctly. The atmosphere in the school is remarkably free from any signs of oppressive behaviour, sexism, or racism.
13. Pupils of all ages are very clear about the impact of their actions on others. A good example was when pupils in Year 6 realised the effect on others if their particular playground design was voted in. Similarly, they considered the impact their charitable contributions would have on pupils less fortunate than themselves. Pupils move around the school in a well-supervised and orderly manner, particularly during changeover periods from the hall through the library, and when coming in after breaks. They care for their school and its equipment and materials. Pupils show a good understanding and respect for other people's feelings, values, and beliefs, because of the very good spiritual and moral education they receive in religious education lessons, and in acts of collective worship.
14. Opportunities for pupils to work together are provided in many lessons, and pupils are taught how to work constructively in pairs and groups. Older pupils enjoy serving as house captains and some help the younger pupils at lunchtime. Initiatives to consult with pupils in schemes for improvements to the school grounds are progressing well. However, opportunities for pupils to use their initiative, or to become more independent learners are limited. In the Foundation Stage, children respond well to the good opportunities they have to develop their initiative and personal responsibility. They achieve the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of their education, before they leave the reception class.
15. The school's attendance rate is well below the average for primary schools nationally, although it is not so unusual for similar areas. A small number of families account for a large number of the absences. A significant number of pupils with low attendance rates also have special educational needs. The school is very concerned about the affect these absences have on the pupils' learning. The headteacher has tried very hard to persuade these parents to get their children to

school more often, but with only limited success. The number of families involved has decreased, but the most serious offenders continue to keep their children at home when they could be in school. There is no unauthorised absence, however. The main reasons given for absence are low-level illness such as headaches, sore throats and tummy upsets, together with time off for medical and dental appointments. Holidays are also taken in school time, mostly during September and October.

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

16. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved since the last inspection. At that time, there was a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and a relatively low proportion of good teaching. During this inspection, all but one of the 68 lessons seen was at least satisfactory, and, two-thirds of these were of good or better quality. Eleven very good lessons were seen and one excellent lesson, whereas, at the time of the previous inspection, none of the teaching was judged better than good. A significant improvement in teaching, throughout the school, is in the consistency with which teachers use marking to show pupils how to improve.
17. In the Foundation Stage, responsibility for teaching is divided between the teacher in charge of the reception class and the nursery nurse in charge of the nursery. In this inspection, only the quality of teaching undertaken by qualified teachers is judged and reported on. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. The main strengths in teaching at this key stage are the good teamwork between the teacher, nursery nurses and teaching assistants, high expectations and good management of the children. The classrooms are well organised, with plenty of practical learning activities attractively laid out. The main area for development is in the planning of activities based on assessment of the children's existing skills against the 'stepping stones' of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. These carefully graduated steps enable teachers to track children's progress in each area of their learning. In some lessons and activities, the expectations for the children are too high; they are expected to move on to more formal work too soon.
18. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very much better than it was at the time of the last inspection, when one quarter of the lessons that were observed then were unsatisfactory. In this inspection, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the 21 lessons seen, good or better in three-quarters of them, with three of these being very good. In Key Stage 2, 33 lessons were observed. Of these, two-thirds were good or better, with eight being very good, and one excellent. The proportion of very good or better teaching is a great improvement since the last inspection. On only one occasion was the quality of teaching and learning judged unsatisfactory. This was because of a teacher's lack of experience in adapting the activities planned for an outdoor physical education lesson to indoors because of inclement weather.
19. Good and very good teaching was observed across the school. The main factors characterising the best teaching that was seen are:
  - good relationships. Teachers use their good knowledge of the pupils to improve pupils' self-esteem and motivation;
  - a brisk pace to the lesson, with plenty of challenge, encouraging intellectual and creative effort from pupils of all abilities;
  - very good teamwork, with support staff providing valuable extra support for pupils which helps them sustain their concentration and effort;
  - good management of pupils, with a relaxed style and use of humour to engage and encourage them;
  - good subject knowledge underpinning the preparation of relevant activities and searching questioning;
  - opportunities for pupils to explore, express and develop their own ideas.
21. In an excellent English lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher set very high, but achievable, expectations for pupils to analyse the style of writing used by journalists. As a consequence, the more able pupils were able to describe exactly how a journalist might use pronouns, and used examples in their own writing. The learning was excellent for pupils of all abilities, because of the sharply focused questions and full involvement of the teaching assistant in supporting individuals and groups. Similar success was achieved in a very good science lesson in Year 3, in which the pupils engaged in enthusiastic discussions about how to test rocks for hardness, following a lively,

challenging introduction. In this lesson, the pupils responded very positively to this opportunity to engage in discussion and debate with their friends. Pupils make very secure gains in their learning in this type of lesson because of the high level of involvement, and the intellectual effort they have to make to sort out and express their ideas.

22. There are two main areas for development in teaching. The first applies to all subjects. In some lessons throughout the school, teachers lead the pupils towards a set answer, rather than encouraging them to suggest possible answers that they could check for themselves. The pupils learn the required facts in this way, but do not deepen their understanding as much as they could through discussion and investigation.
23. The second area applies particularly to geography, history, art and design, and music. Although teaching is satisfactory in these subjects, learning is not as effective as it could be. The lessons that are planned in these subjects are often not matched to the pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, and skills. This is, largely, because there are no clear assessment procedures in place to provide the teachers with this information. As a consequence, learning is slowed down. Often, the tasks the pupils are given to do are too demanding because they have not mastered earlier skills. In music, this problem is compounded by teachers' lack of subject expertise.
24. The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics is good. In both subjects, lessons are based on secure assessments of the pupils' progress. The pupils are grouped, according to ability, and given tasks that suit them. The teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects. They use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively to provide interesting and challenging lessons. Teachers target questions to particular pupils, helping them to gauge the pupils' understanding. The good variety of practical learning activities that teachers organise is based on these assessments. The quality of teachers' marking is particularly good in these subjects. They acknowledge success and achievement, point out important mistakes, and indicate how the pupils can improve. Teachers also use opportunities to develop the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. They draw attention to the different styles of writing that can be used, such as note taking, and reinforce grammar and spelling rules that are being learned in literacy lessons. When opportunities arise in science, design and technology, and geography, the pupils are encouraged to take measurements, calculate, and draw graphs. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from good quality teaching in small groups, for literacy and numeracy, because of the extra teacher employed to keep infant class sizes below 30. They develop skills rapidly in these lessons, because of the extra attention and the focus on a narrower ability range in each group.
25. The quality of teaching is consistently good in science and information and communication technology. Very good leadership and management have provided a curriculum tailored to the needs of the school in each of these key subjects. As a result, teachers plan lessons based on where the pupils are, to take them forward in measurable steps. For example, in science, the government guidelines for the subject have been amended to take into account the need for pupils to revisit each topic, more often than recommended, because of the pupils' lower than average starting points. The teachers know how well the pupils are doing, but they do not, as yet, have manageable assessment procedures to keep a useful written record of this. Although computer skills are taught well in information and communication technology lessons, teachers do not yet provide enough opportunities for the pupils to use these skills to help their learning in other subjects. The effectiveness of some science lessons is reduced by the limited space available for pupils to undertake investigations and experiments either individually or in small-groups.
26. Teaching is good in design and technology, physical education, and religious education. In these subjects, good leadership and management have ensured good teacher expertise and lessons that are planned to suit the pupils' needs. However, the use of assessment information to inform the planning of lessons is not a consistent feature of teaching in these subjects.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. They receive good quality support, both from the classroom assistants and the class teachers. Work is usually matched very well to these pupils' needs, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a result, they grow in self-confidence, learn well in lessons and make good progress towards their individual learning targets. Pupils who speak a language other than English at home generally

make good progress and do not need specific help in the majority of lessons. However, insufficient care is taken to ensure that these pupils always understand unfamiliar words.

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

28. The children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a wide range of practical activities in all the areas of learning for children of this age. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a wide and interesting range of learning activities to support pupils' academic and personal development. This reflects very good improvement since the last inspection, which reported that:
  - the school did not provide an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum;
  - there were significant weaknesses in many subjects;
  - planning did not ensure continuity in some subjects from year to year.
29. The headteacher and subject coordinators have worked hard, and successfully, to review and improve practice over recent years, with the result that there are now schemes of work for all subjects. The subsequent very good improvement in the overall quality of planning has contributed to good achievement by pupils in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, and religious education. There is room for further development in the planning of work in geography, history, art and design, and music. This is because teachers have not yet succeeded in organising activities in these subjects at the right level of difficulty for their classes.
30. Since the last inspection, the school has placed appropriate emphasis on raising standards in English and mathematics, through the implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy. Literacy is also promoted effectively through teaching in other subjects. Pupils also use their numeracy skills in other subjects, but these are not as strongly promoted as their literacy skills. The curriculum for information and communication technology is much better than it was. It now provides a secure framework for the systematic teaching of computer skills. The pupils make some use of these skills in other lessons, but the use of computers as a tool for learning across the curriculum is at a very early stage of development.
31. Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education is good. The main strengths are:
  - the 'Healthy Schools' project, which is running successfully and has a positive effect on the pupils' attitude to their diet;
  - that pupils are given opportunities to consider and improve the quality of their environment through the 'Eco Schools' programme;
  - a gradual and sensitive promotion of drug awareness from an early age;
  - a developing scheme of work, which enables the pupils to explore other moral and social issues, such as family relationships and sexual development.
32. The school makes every effort to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all that is offered. All policies have a statement relating to equal opportunities and the school implements the local education authority's overall policy. Pupils who speak a language other than English at home are integrated very well and supported and make good progress.
33. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are provided for all pupils about whom teachers and the headteacher have concerns. These are reviewed regularly. Teaching assistants have a good knowledge of pupils' individual needs and provide much of the good quality support.
34. The community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Some positive features of this are:
  - strong links with the local church;
  - visitors to the school, such as the school nurse, the Bostin Arts and theatre groups;
  - visits to local places of interest, such as Bescot stadium and the Roman museum at Wroxeter;
  - the 'Share' group, which has led to a number of parents taking up professional training;

- training opportunities provided by the school for students on work experience, nursery nurse, or initial teacher training.
35. Provision for extra-curricular clubs has improved since the last inspection and is now good. A stimulating art club caters well for pupils in Key Stage 1. The after-school activities, including music, sports, computer and games clubs, are popular and well supported. The school football team participates in the local league, providing valuable competitive experience for the pupils involved. However, there are no adventurous or residential experiences offered to further enhance the curriculum.
  36. Many experiences are provided to enrich the pupils' learning and extend their understanding of the world outside school. There are good links with a number of local secondary schools. Pupils are prepared well for their transition to these schools through preparatory visits. Links with the church and training establishments for teachers and support staff have been maintained since the previous inspection. A visiting artist worked effectively with pupils in Year 3 to create an impressive totem pole. The school choir sings with others at a regional event and pupils regularly support various charities. In addition to the school's provision, many pupils attend the Scout, Brownie, Cub, and Beaver groups that meet in the evenings in the school hall.
  37. Good provision is made overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. A major feature of this provision is the opportunities pupils have to improve their spiritual development. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural awareness are good and have shown good improvement.
  38. Values and beliefs are taught well in religious education lessons. There is a strong Christian ethos that embraces everyone within the school. Although there is no specific planning for this aspect across the curriculum, spirituality is such an intrinsic part of school life that the mission statement is woven into the curriculum. The school values pupils both as individuals and as part of the community. One expression of this is the 'portrait galleries' outside each classroom, where each pupil depicts him or herself using a variety of media. Spiritual areas to encourage pupils to reflect on important issues are arranged carefully in each classroom and used as a focus for classroom assemblies. Daily acts of collective worship fulfil all legal requirements and also encourage reflection and consideration for the feelings and values of others.
  39. A strong moral code is part of the fabric of the school. It is implicit in the expectations teachers have of their pupils. Class rules are discussed and prominently displayed. The school promotes a strong sense of trust, honesty, fairness and respect for others. All members of staff are good role models for these values. Pupils are taught to clearly distinguish between behaviour that is right and wrong. They are given good opportunities to reflect on and discuss inappropriate behaviour.
  40. All pupils have opportunities to exercise responsibility, and these are extended in Year 6. Teachers encourage their pupils to show courtesy and awareness for others; it is an expectation rather than something to be continually applauded. Very good relationships are fostered in lessons, with boys and girls working well together. There are frequent, planned opportunities in many subjects for pupils to work and discuss together in pairs and small groups. These activities work well because pupils are interested in each other. There is a good response to collections for charities that focus pupils' attention on people in need in the wider world.
  41. The school actively encourages its pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity around them. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when this area was found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils study several major religions and visits are made to local places of Christian worship. The school is active in music and dance and has been selected to act as the lead school in a bid for a local centre for performing arts. An Asian member of staff willingly acts as a role model for her own particular culture, giving the pupils first-hand experience of it through someone they know. Different aspects of culture, both past and present, are reinforced through literacy and history lessons, supported by visits to a range of museums and galleries, although the range of music and art available for the pupils to appreciate is rather limited.

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

42. The school continues to provide a very good, caring environment for its pupils. All staff, working together as a team, provide support, guidance and care, which actively promotes the welfare, academic progress and self-esteem of all pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel secure, happy and valued and this makes a very positive contribution to the quality of their learning, attitudes and behaviour.
43. Overall, the procedures for child protection and pupil welfare are very good. The school complies with the local authority's child protection procedures. The school uses a good child protection policy that outlines staff responsibilities and procedures. All staff have had recent training. The headteacher is the designated, named teacher for child protection issues. The school is very capable in this area and has wide ranging experience of dealing with other agencies regarding the welfare of a number of pupils, some of whom are on the child protection register.
44. Comprehensive health and safety policies are implemented consistently. Fire drills are carried out on a termly basis. Advice on safety issues has to be regularly reinforced in physical education and science lessons because of the cramped nature of the accommodation and large class sizes. Careful consideration is given to the care of pupils with specific medical needs. Every reported knock and graze is recorded and treated appropriately. All known bumps to the head are taken seriously, recorded, and reported to parents. Toilet and hand-washing facilities are exceptional, beautifully tiled from floor to ceiling, and gleaming. Regular inspections of the school building and grounds are undertaken and a full report presented to the governors' building committee for action to be prioritised and taken. The pupils' use of the Internet is closely supervised to ensure that they do not gain access to unsuitable sites.
45. Arrangements for lunchtime supervision are very good. Pupils are well but unobtrusively supervised in the dining hall, where a good atmosphere for social interaction is fostered. Each class has its own designated lunchtime supervisor, and liaison between teachers and lunchtime supervisors, at hand-over times, is very effective. Pupils eat and play well together. Opportunities for structured outside play are provided through markings on the playground and the provision of play equipment.
46. Procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance are very good. Teachers, office staff, the headteacher, and the educational welfare officer, work together to maintain an up-to-date picture of each pupil's attendance, correlated with their academic and personal circumstances. Absence and punctuality are monitored daily by teachers and office staff. If the reason for absence has not been notified by the close of morning registration, office staff telephone parents to verify the pupil's whereabouts. The educational welfare officer is notified immediately of problems with the pupils whose attendance she is monitoring. She makes home visits and, very often, she brings pupils into school with her later in the morning. A wide range of initiatives has been tried in order to improve pupils' attendance. The posting of individual attendance information on the hall wall, in the form of football league tables, has raised awareness amongst pupils, who are challenged to improve their position this year. Further schemes, begun in September, rewarding improved class and individual attendance and punctuality, are showing initial signs of improving pupils' overall attendance rate.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. These procedures are rooted so well into school practice as to be almost invisible. Following the previous inspection, the school introduced a policy of assertive discipline, based on praising good behaviour and using appropriate sanctions for poor behaviour. This policy is effectively and consistently implemented throughout the school. Parents and pupils fully understand the policy and procedures and feel that rewards and sanctions are applied fairly.
48. Pupils' academic progress is monitored and supported well through whole-school assessment and tracking systems for English, mathematics and science. The appropriate marking of pupils' work, particularly in English, together with target setting in conjunction with pupils and parents, effectively raises pupils' attainment. Pupils' personal development is monitored by staff informally. Behavioural and welfare concerns are noted and shared with the headteacher. The school successfully encourages individual and team efforts through the awarding of house points. Pupils'

individual records of accumulation of house points, and subsequent awards, are accurately maintained. An area for further development is the provision of more systematic opportunities for older pupils to develop their maturity and confidence. For example, they do not regularly read with younger pupils or take part in formal forums, such as a school council.

49. The assessment co-ordinator has worked hard and successfully to improve assessment procedures since the last inspection. The main strengths of the strategies are:
- good assessment systems throughout the school in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology;
  - careful records of each pupil's test results from entry to the school, which are passed on from year to year;
  - the use of the information gathered from these tests to predict future performance and to set targets for improvement which are shared with parents and pupils.

These procedures help teachers to plan work for future lessons and to identify groups of pupils, or individuals, who need extra help. In other subjects, and in the Foundation Stage, assessment procedures are more informal and do not provide good quality information to guide teachers' planning.

50. Pupils who have special educational needs are cared for well. Procedures for identifying and monitoring pupils with special needs are well established, and individual education programmes are carefully written for each child at a very early stage. There is a close, working partnership with parents and outside agencies. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities, including after-school clubs. For example, one pupil, with specific learning difficulties, was seen happily playing a number game with other pupils in the after-school mathematics club. However, the mobile classroom is not accessible for wheelchairs, and this prevents one pupil from attending the school.

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

51. The school continues to work hard at involving all parents as partners in their pupils' learning, however, many parents choose not to take advantage of this opportunity.
52. The few parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, and attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting, have a high regard for the school and its work and are very supportive. They say that their children are making good progress. They state that their children like school and it helps them become mature and responsible. Parents are made to feel welcome and are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. They say that teaching is good and teachers have high expectations. The inspection team wholeheartedly endorses the positive views expressed by the parents.
53. The quality of information provided to parents about the school and its work, particularly that relating to pupils' progress, is very good. The attractive prospectus now fulfils statutory requirements. Eye-catching information leaflets, regarding work to be covered by each class during the year, are prepared and distributed to every pupil. Parents and carers are offered three consultation sessions annually, and two reports covering their children's progress and attainment are also issued during the year. The interim progress report, issued before the parent and child consultation meeting in the spring term, gives brief information in the form of the National Curriculum levels achieved. This document provides a good basis for discussion at the meeting. Non-attendance at parents' meetings is followed up and teachers make every effort to engage parents in their children's learning. End of year written reports give very detailed information on:
- the curriculum covered in lessons;
  - the pupil's achievements;
  - targets for improvement in English and mathematics;
  - how parents can help.

These provide parents with a clear and comprehensive picture of their children's progress.

54. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are consulted at an early stage and kept fully informed of their children's progress. They are invited to share in all decision-making about future targets and provision. However, they do not always attend the meetings to which

they are invited. Parents of younger pupils are actively encouraged to read books with their children. Home reading programmes are encouraged. Teachers are available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Many parents are comfortable with this informal contact and the school builds on these relationships at every opportunity. The 'SHARE' initiative is a good example. The overall purpose of this initiative is to encourage parents to play games and talk to their children at home, in order to extend the work begun in class and to make learning fun and an integral part of parenting. The project began by inviting parents of pupils in Year 1, but has expanded to include parents of children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2. When parents help at home, or in school, their children's attitudes and progress improve. The lack of suitable room limits what the school can do to involve parents more closely with their children's learning.

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

55. Leadership and management are good. This is a vast improvement since the last inspection, when this aspect of the school was unsatisfactory. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction. A strong feature of the leadership is the close and productive relationship between the head and her deputy in providing a strategic view to guide school improvement. The senior management team then provides a very clear framework within which carefully staged developments can occur. All the teachers fulfil their various management roles enthusiastically, although not all subject co-ordinators have, as yet, had the time and resources to fully develop their subjects.
56. The school's aims and values are very clearly reflected in all aspects of its work. The spiritual element of the school's mission statement is very strongly represented in its daily life. The clear focus on raising expectations and standards established by the headteacher and her team underpin the very good improvements that have been brought about in the school's performance in the national tests. All members of staff are fully involved in, and committed to, the school's aims. Excellent teamwork is a key feature in the school's success. The ethos of the school is one of joint endeavour towards a common goal in a supportive family atmosphere.
57. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Many of the governors are closely involved with the school and devote much of their time and effort to improving it. They have a clear picture of the school's strengths, and areas for development, derived from visits, reports from the headteacher, and conversations with staff and pupils. They are very active in pursuing the school's interests, whether with the local education authority, or within the community. For example, they know that accommodation is a key area for improvement, and are pressing the local authority hard to obtain the funding needed to extend and improve it. The governors fulfil all legal responsibilities and have been instrumental in the very good improvements to the grounds in recent years.
58. An integral part of the drive to raise standards, since the last inspection, has been a sharper focus on monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching. The improvements reported here reflect the success of this strategy. The school has concentrated its efforts, up to now, on the basic subjects of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. The very good monitoring and support of teaching and learning in these subjects have helped to bring about substantial improvement. The teachers are very self-critical and continually try to improve in all aspects of their practice. Now that the school has established a firm basis of good teaching and learning, and good standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, time and resources can be devoted to the subjects that have been relatively neglected, for instance, art, music, history, and geography. The inspection findings are that this should now be a priority.
59. Systems for monitoring teachers' performance are well established. All teachers are part of a clear structure that enables them to review their practice and set targets for improvement with a team leader. The headteacher works with the governors to establish her own targets and supervises the staff procedures appropriately. There are good methods in place to support the induction of teachers new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, who quickly become part of the whole-school team.

60. The school's educational priorities are supported well through good financial planning. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The school development plan is clearly focused on raising standards. All areas are fully costed in terms of time, personnel and monetary resources. Critical appraisal of financial priorities is a strong feature of governors' budget-setting meetings. The budget surplus held at the time of the previous inspection has been carefully spent during the intervening years. An enhanced and stimulating learning environment which benefits all pupils and staff, has been created, with spending on:
- improvements to the fabric and décor of building, particularly the toilets;
  - good quality furniture, resources and equipment, particularly for the Foundation Stage;
  - improvements to the grounds that have enhanced pupils' learning and leisure facilities, which are ongoing.
61. The school secretary and administrative assistant run the school office very effectively. Regular meetings between the headteacher and secretary ensure that all monies are efficiently and appropriately administered.
62. In order to raise standards, the school has invested well in employing teaching assistants, who have become an indispensable part of the teaching team. Money spent on creating a computer suite, buying books and fitting out the library, has contributed effectively to the school's educational priorities.
63. All recommendations made in the most recent audit report have been acted upon. The school makes good use of information and communication technology in its financial management, its analysis of information, and in its general administration. Computer technology is not yet used to the full by all staff, as they are still awaiting training to develop their information and communication technology skills. Specific grants for improving school effectiveness are used well for their designated purpose. For example, good use has been made of additional money to support literacy, and a grant from the single regeneration budget was used to develop the playground.
64. Although most of the school building is fully accessible for the physically impaired, a pupil who uses a wheelchair is no longer able to attend the school because there is no access to the mobile classroom, which houses his year group. The headteacher and governors are doing all they can to remedy this situation as quickly as possible to ensure full equality of opportunity.
65. Members of staff are generally deployed very efficiently, and excellent use is made of teaching assistants. This has made it possible to maintain single year-group classes and ensure that, for the majority of lessons, there is a minimum of two adults to each class. The adults plan together very effectively to provide continuity and consistency for the pupils. Very generous staffing levels in Year 2 allow pupils to be taught in comparatively small groups, and this has contributed to the rise in standards, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Members of staff employed to work with pupils who have special educational needs are appropriately deployed and provide good support. Teaching assistants are highly valued and are guided towards training on an informal basis. However, there is no formal system for ensuring that they are all made aware of the full range of professional development opportunities open to them.
66. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Although the outdoor area is very attractive, the indoor facilities are overcrowded. In some instances, this situation limits the teaching strategies that can be used, and therefore adversely affect learning. The delightful, spacious grounds, which include a flat playing field, wildlife area, small adventure playground, and even board games on the picnic tables, are used well and enhance pupils' learning. In the main building, dividing walls have virtually eradicated the noise distraction criticised at the last inspection, but have created new problems. These include overcrowding in several rooms and a lack of water for art and design lessons. The classrooms for Years 5 and 6, with their larger furniture, are particularly cramped and the lack of space inhibits activities such as experimental work in science. The temporary classroom, in which pupils in Year 4 are based, is also very small for the number in the class, and access to and from it is via other classrooms and can disrupt lessons. Other weaknesses in the accommodation have a lesser effect on pupils' learning, but still impinge on their further good progress. These include:

- staff having to share their staff-room with parents, visitors, and pupils, because of the lack of any other area for meetings;
  - the 'corridor' nature of the hall, which is distracting for pupils during physical education lessons;
  - a lack of adequate storage areas throughout the school
67. Despite these difficulties, much time and effort goes into keeping the school attractive and welcoming, including the new, very deluxe, children's toilets. The caretaker and cleaning staff play a major role in maintaining the buildings to a very high standard, and the staff add the finishing touches with attractive displays.
68. Overall, the four principles of best value: compare, challenge, compete, and consult, are used to good effect in both the educational and financial management of the school. The school compares its standards, both with similar schools and those nationally, and challenges staff and pupils to improve their performance. In the purchasing of goods and services, options are compared to find the best value through open competition when appropriate. For example, three tenders for resurfacing the car park were scrutinised and a governor's expertise was then used to select the most cost-effective tender. Parents are regularly consulted, through letters, on plans to improve the school's facilities, and annually, through a questionnaire, on their perception of the school's work. Older pupils are also invited to suggest improvements to the playground. These pupils consult not only other classes for their views on the designs, but also contact companies, to obtain cost comparisons on suitable materials. However, the school does not, as yet, have a formal method of consulting with pupils, for example, through a school council.
69. In view of the below average attainment of children when they start school, the good standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, and the efficient way the school manages its resources, the school now provides good value for money. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

70. In order to consolidate the improving performance of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- θ Raise standards in spoken English by:
    - providing more planned opportunities for pupils to speak in a variety of formal and informal groups;
    - encouraging teachers to build more opportunities into their lessons for pupils to express themselves fully, for example, by asking open-ended questions and giving pupils the time and support they need to give extended responses.  
*(Paragraphs 2, 4, 11, 21, 98, 103 and 118)*
  - θ Raise standards in art and design, geography, history, and music, by:
    - tailoring curriculum guidelines to ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills in each subject;
    - creating suitable systems for determining the level of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in each subject, so that appropriate starting points for lessons can be determined;
    - providing the co-ordinators in these subjects with more time and resources to monitor, evaluate, and improve standards, teaching, and learning;
    - improving teachers' expertise and confidence in music.  
*(Paragraphs 9, 23, 29, 55, 124, 134, 135, 145 and 150)*
  - θ Continue efforts to improve attendance. *(Paragraphs 10 and 15).*
  - θ Continue efforts to provide enough space to accommodate all the activities that the school wishes to provide for its pupils.  
*(Paragraphs 6, 25, 54, 57, 64, 85, 136 and 163)*

*Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:*

- Improve the planning in the Foundation Stage to take account of the 'stepping stones' for assessment purposes. *(Paragraphs 74, 75, 76, 77 and 95)*
- Make greater use of the computer suite and information and communication technology equipment in classrooms to support day-to-day learning across the curriculum. *(Paragraphs 25, 30, 63, 103, 114, 125, 128 and 163)*
- Create more opportunities for pupils to learn independently throughout the school. *(Paragraphs 14, 22, 48, 80 and 120)*
- Continue efforts to provide wheelchair access to all classrooms as quickly as possible. *(Paragraph 64)*
- Ensure that pupils who speak a language other than English at home understand fully what they hear and read. *(Paragraphs 1, 8, 27, 32, 85, 98 and 135)*
- Improve assessment procedures in non-core<sup>7</sup> subjects. *(Paragraphs 23, 121, 124, 135, 156 and 164)*

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Non-core' subjects are subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	32	23	1		
Percentage	1.5	16	47	34	1.5		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	229
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		84

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	79

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	10	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*	-	-	-
	Girls*	-	-	-
	Total	17	17	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (73)	57 (61)	83 (67)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*	-	-	-
	Girls*	-	-	-
	Total	23	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (61)	83 (67)	97 (61)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

\*\*The number of boys and girls taking the tests has been omitted from the table, as there were ten or fewer girls in the year group.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	20	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	12	12	17
	Total	25	25	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (52)	71 (33)	91 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	10	12	17
	Total	22	25	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (42)	66 (42)	83 (58)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	4
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	186
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

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

*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)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Average class size	

#### **Education support staff: YR– Year 6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1536

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	504,896
Total expenditure	490,055
Expenditure per pupil	1,993
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,302
Balance carried forward to next year	41,143

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	242
Number of questionnaires returned	37
Percentage of questionnaires returned	15

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	22	5	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	70	24	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	27	8	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	38	3	0	5
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	22	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	41	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	24	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	11	5	3	11

## **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**

71. Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the education provided for nursery and reception children nationally. The newly established Foundation Stage curriculum, for children in the nursery and reception, replaces the previous curriculum for the early years.
72. The environment for children in the Foundation Stage is attractive and welcoming. Children are admitted to the nursery in the year in which they are four and most transfer to reception the following year. A gradual introduction to the nursery, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start. At the time of the inspection there were 26 children in the nursery, attending either a morning or an afternoon session, and 29 children in reception all attending full time.
73. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment overall and well below average attainment in language and communication. By the time children reach the end of the reception year, although making satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage, their attainment remains below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. However, in the areas of personal, social, emotional and physical development, children make good progress and attain average standards by the end of the reception year. Children who have special educational needs receive good support during their time in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress. Most parents bring their children to school on time and are confident that their children are happy and cared for well.
74. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and provides for all the areas of learning. Most aspects are covered throughout the day, but the reception timetable is constrained by subject-based lessons as well as the daily literacy and numeracy lessons. These lessons are not appropriate for all children in the reception classes. This means that some children do not make sufficient progress because the work is too hard for them, and others move too fast without achieving all the necessary 'stepping stones'; particularly in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Termly planning is generally too complex. It consists of topic areas that make assumptions about the level of understanding of the children that are not always justified. Day-to-day planning is not linked closely enough to the 'stepping stones' to ensure that lessons and activities are pitched at the right level in both the nursery and the reception class.
75. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. These include an early assessment of children as they enter the nursery and another assessment as they transfer to reception, and another when they start in Year 1. Profiles of children's work are compiled and regular observations of children are made. However, the assessments of children are not sufficiently organised and planned for through the nursery and reception class to ensure that work is at the right level and suitable for every child.
76. The leadership in the Foundation Stage is good. This stage in children's education is treated with equal importance in the school and all staff are aware of the recent changes. The co-ordinator has sought information and outside support in order to improve the curriculum in the nursery and reception classes. She is aware of the need to relate assessment more closely to the sequence of levels within the Early Learning Goals<sup>8</sup>, known as 'stepping stones'. These assessments can then be used as a tool to record children's progress and provide an appropriate range of activities.
77. The quality of teaching in all areas of learning is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, in both the nursery and reception classes. Teachers and support staff talk to children during their activities, developing children's speaking and listening skills well. Relationships are very good throughout the Foundation Stage, which is reflected in the good progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development. Where teaching is too prescribed or not sufficiently

---

<sup>8</sup> The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

well matched to the needs of the children in relation to the 'stepping stones', their learning slows. Where teaching is more successful, work is provided at the right level, giving children the opportunity to make choices in a planned way or stimulate their imaginative and creative development. In the formal literacy and numeracy lessons, the work is often too demanding for some children. Their interest wanes and so does their rate of learning. In some areas of learning, lessons are not effective enough in enabling the children to learn through stimulating but structured experiences. For example, in the creative area, tasks are sometimes too fixed, limiting the children's choice and creativity.

78. The fenced outside area for all children offers good opportunities for imaginative and adventurous play. Apparatus can be erected, and there is sufficient room for children to ride bikes and use wheeled toys. Resources in the reception class are plentiful and of very good quality. In the nursery, resources are sufficient but need extending to meet the needs of all areas of learning. The toilet facilities for nursery and reception children are excellent, making a significant contribution to the good personal, social and emotional development of children.
79. Support staff provide a good level of help to teachers throughout the nursery and reception class. They are involved at each stage of the planning process and complement the teachers in their approach with a good level of expertise.

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

80. Most children enter the nursery class with below average skills in personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress, so that by the time they leave the reception class, they achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Although older children do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence in the organisation of their work, and in their selection of resources, they are confident in the understanding of their daily routines.
81. In both classes, the children feel safe and secure and display a good level of trust in the way they relate to the staff, confidently leaving their parents and carers. They have a good sense of belonging and share their experiences with others, for example, as they play in the 'supermarket' and 'health centre'. They behave well and are clear about what is expected of them throughout the sessions. Children mostly concentrate and work hard, particularly when the activities are relevant and interesting. In 'circle time'<sup>9</sup> children in reception learn to be aware of their own feelings and listen to others. They develop appropriate levels of independence and responsibility in dressing, undressing and matters of personal hygiene.

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

82. Although standards are below average by the end of the reception year, children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning.
83. Children make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills, from a level, which is well below that expected of children of this age. For most of the children, their weak communication skills inhibit the progress made in other areas of learning. This needs to be the starting point of all lessons. The emphasis on the 'literacy hour' for all children in the reception class is inappropriate, as most children have not yet achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Children's progress in this area is measured through the following three aspects:

#### ***Speaking and listening***

84. In both the nursery and reception classes, children enjoy listening to stories. In the nursery, children talk and listen to each other in their activities, especially as they 'pretend' in the 'supermarket' and home corner. There are good role-play activities such as the 'health centre' in reception, and the use of puppets to stimulate children's use of language is also a good feature.

---

<sup>9</sup> 'Circle time' is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

## *Reading*

85. Although children make satisfactory progress, many have still to reach the appropriate goals for their age in this area of learning. Children enjoy stories such as 'This is the Bear' and 'Peace at Last', joining in with the repeated refrain. They sing a range of songs and rhymes on a daily basis throughout the Foundation Stage. By the end of the reception year, many children know their initial sounds. Each classroom has a book trolley, although these are not incorporated into a library area where children may sit and read. The children borrow classroom books on a regular basis. However, while this encourages them to enjoy books, many are damaged, which does not encourage the children to handle books with respect. Some children know the books they like most and a small number recognise words that are familiar. Children with special educational needs, and those who speak a language other than English at home, are identified, provided for appropriately, and make good progress.

## *Writing*

86. There are good opportunities, provided in both the nursery and reception, for children to develop their writing skills. Younger children are able to practise their writing in a variety of ways, for example, when drawing lines and circles as they 'write' their names. They experiment with paint, and make a shopping list in the 'Supermarket'. Older children practise in the writing area and when note taking in role-play activities. All children have writing materials that are within easy reach. Many children make good attempts at writing their own name.

## ***Mathematical development***

87. By the time they reach Year 1, many children have still to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning, although they make sound progress throughout the Foundation Stage.
88. Children sort out number problems, particularly in the nursery, when they count during the singing of number rhymes, and playing three beats on the tambour. They play with sand and water, but this is incidental, and not planned in a way that develops their thinking or increases their mathematical development. Older children recognise numbers to ten and identify the missing numbers in a number line. There are good examples of staff developing children's mathematical concepts throughout the day, for example, through helping them to use the correct vocabulary, when weighing and measuring.

## ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

89. Many children come to the nursery with only a few ideas of the world around them but are very aware of their own immediate environment. From this beginning, children make satisfactory progress through the key stage, but do not reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year.
90. As part of a useful theme on materials, nursery children made a large robot display. This helped them to appreciate the variety of materials as they investigated and explored. In reception, children learn to name parts of the body as an introduction to their scientific understanding of the world. They learn about the environment in a 'sound' walk around the school using a range of senses and care for 'Sidney', a giant land snail. They are aware of change as they look at autumn leaves and talk about what is seen and what they are doing. By the time they start Year 1, they are well prepared for studies in science.
91. Methods of joining materials are illustrated in the joining of 'funnybones'. Children purposefully construct buildings using building blocks having a good idea of what want to achieve. All children use the computer and operate the 'mouse', some with understanding and accuracy. These experiences prepare them well for design and technology, and information and communication technology.
92. In 'circle time' children have opportunities to share events and 'special times'. However, there is insufficient emphasis placed on developing children's awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

There are very few pictures and books, or little play equipment, for example, to support this aspect of learning throughout the Foundation Stage.

### ***Physical development***

93. Children's progress is good in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, children have reached the levels expected for their age.
94. All the children have opportunities to practise their skills outside and climb and balance using a climbing barrel in the nursery classroom. They make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of the reception year, they can use equipment in the hall with appropriate control and confidence. The outside area gives the children opportunities to control their bikes and to share games that need more than one to play. Children move well in activities in the hall. They travel in various ways, as they jump forwards and backwards over a rope demonstrating a good level of control. All the children help to clear away at the end of lessons and use tools, such as scissors, with care and developing control.

### ***Creative development***

95. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year however, they do not reach many of the Early Learning Goals. Many of the activities are very closely prescribed by the teacher, limiting opportunities for children to develop their creativity. In the nursery, for example, children work with a range of media, such as 'icing sugar fish', but on occasions these activities are too teacher-directed and the fun of experimenting is missed. In the reception class, children have too few opportunities to choose from a wide variety of materials to make models, draw and paint and to try different colours. However, they make good progress in other aspects of this area when working in supervised groups with staff. For example, they try to represent Kandinsky's concentric circles using paints or the computer.
96. The children's musical development is satisfactory. They make good progress in singing songs and rhymes during the day in the nursery and reception rooms and they learn to tap out rhythms to match their names. They also play games to identify objects by sound and some children name instruments successfully. They enjoy playing instruments in organised groups, but musical instruments are not sufficiently available for them to experiment with in the classrooms.

## **ENGLISH**

97. There was a significant improvement in test results in 2001 at the end of Key Stage 2, when standards rose to above average, when compared with similar schools, although they remained below the national average. Inspection findings indicate that standards are continuing to rise. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve standards closer to national expectations and the pupils in Year 5 are now reaching standards securely in line with expectations for their age group. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in the 2001 tests were well below average. However, inspection findings suggest that here too, standards are beginning to rise. The pupils of all abilities throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those who speak a language other than English at home, are now achieving well. This is because:
  - the two co-ordinators provide clear and effective leadership for the subject;
  - the school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy since the last inspection;
  - the quality of teaching has improved and is now good, and teaching assistants provide very good support;
  - there are good systems of marking and assessment in place and teachers use these well to improve standards.
98. Standards in spoken English are below average, though improving, and standards in listening are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Throughout the school, teachers provide opportunities for their classes to develop speaking and listening skills, both in English lessons and other subjects, through question and answer sessions, or discussion in pairs or small groups. Where this takes place, it has a positive effect on achievement. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, a

child talking about the 'Billy Goat Gruff' story in the 'Big Book' suggested, 'I think he might say, "Don't eat me, I'm too fat".' By the end of Year 2, most of the pupils listen carefully, and with understanding, and many use whole sentences when giving answers. Most of the pupils express ideas through the use of short phrases at this stage, and a significant number restrict answers to single words, which is below expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, teachers expect all of their class to listen intently and respond accurately. The vast majority try very hard to supply complete answers and a small minority do very well. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, for example, where the teacher had high expectations of the pupils' ability to use technical vocabulary, one child suggested, 'The events are in chronological order. The writer uses bullet points and bold print.' However, many pupils find the use of technical vocabulary difficult because they come into school with under-developed communication skills and are, therefore, beginning from a low level. The school's plans to place greater emphasis on the development of pupils' spoken English are in the early stages of development. There are still not enough activities specifically designed to develop and improve these skills.

99. Standards in reading in Year 6 are still below average compared to national standards, but are in line with expectations in Year 5. Most pupils enjoy reading and are achieving well when compared to their prior attainment. The good teaching of basic reading skills, combined with the effective support that the school provides in reading, has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Younger pupils in Year 1 recognise letter sounds and individual words. They hold their books correctly and use pictures, and their knowledge of sounds, to assist them when reading words of which they are not sure. The shared reading sessions, where pupils are encouraged to read fluently and with good expression, successfully develop their reading skills. Teachers also devote a part of their lunchtime to make sure that all pupils can enjoy reading individually to an adult. By the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils are able to explain the difference between an author and an illustrator and read simple texts with some accuracy. The higher-attaining pupils clearly enjoy reading stories, they demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read, and say what they think may happen next. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils with average and higher attainment read independently, fluently, and with good expression, from a range of texts. When asked, they explain clearly what their book is about. One higher-attaining pupil, for example, had a very clear understanding of the different styles of writing used by Roald Dahl, J K Rowling, and Jacqueline Wilson. Pupils scan text for detail, and use reference books or computers to find information. The lower attaining pupils are less independent and rely on some support from an adult.
100. Although standards in writing are still below average in Year 6, they are in line with expectations in Year 5, reflecting the steady progress that the school is making. Pupils achieve well in writing throughout the school because the basic skills are taught effectively. Teachers also plan additional lessons specifically for extended writing, including skills such as instructional writing, or using story grids. From Year 1 onwards, teachers make pupils aware that writing conveys meaning to themselves and to other readers. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write for a range of audiences and in different forms. For example, they write clear accounts of imaginary or real events with accurate spellings and punctuation, as in, 'I was going to school when a horrible monster grabbed me but I pushed it away.' Lower-attaining pupils at this stage need help from adults or use word banks to build simple sentences. The pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2. In Year 5, for example, they begin to develop a more creative style of writing and produce poetry in the style of writers such as Alan Ahlberg. In Year 6, they use computer skills to edit their poems, as in:

'Lion  
A fierce predator,  
A rapid sprinter,  
A fearsome creature,  
A patient mammal,'

and add pictures and graphics to their work.

101. By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the pupils attempt to divide their longer pieces of work into paragraphs, and many use speech marks correctly. Standards of handwriting are below average. Pupils' achievements in this area are satisfactory, but inconsistent, reflecting the differing expectations of teachers, and the variable quality of their handwriting, particularly on white boards.

Teachers promote the use of extended writing in other subjects across the curriculum, such as science, where the pupils write at length about the planets in the solar system.

102. The quality of teaching is good, overall. The main strengths are:
- good planning based on the National Literacy Strategy;
  - very good relationships in the classrooms;
  - the generally high expectations that teachers have of their pupils that they should work hard. This results in pupils' good attitudes to the subject;
  - very good co-operation between teachers and teaching assistants. This is particularly effective in the organisation of group reading for pupils in Key Stage 2, and in making good use of the library;
  - very thorough marking of pupils' work, which helps them to improve.
103. In the good lessons that reflect many of these strengths, the quality of pupils' learning is also good. The pupils make great efforts to improve and therefore gain skills rapidly. They sustain concentration, produce a good quantity of good quality work and have a good awareness of how well they are doing. In less successful lessons, the pace of learning is slower because the pupils are less clear about what they have to do and put in less effort. The main reasons for these lessons being less successful are that:
- too much time is spent discussing rules for writing rather than practising the skills;
  - time is sometimes devoted to copying down targets for the lesson, which slows progress, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs;
  - teachers miss opportunities to emphasise the need for clarity of speech.

The latter point is an area for development beyond lessons, as many such opportunities are missed during the course of the school day. Pupils use computers effectively in information and communication technology lessons for word-processing and other means of improving their learning. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to have access to computers as a matter of course in lessons. The library is used well when it is available for reference and study, but is too often in use as a teaching area to be utilised to best effect as a learning resource.

104. The very good leadership of the two co-ordinators has placed the school in a strong position to improve standards further. The main area for development is to implement the planned strategy for developing spoken language skills as soon as possible.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils attain standards expected for their ages in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics, such as space, shape and measures, and data handling. This is the result of good teaching and very good management of the subject. Mathematics has a high profile in the school, leading to pupils' positive attitudes and successful learning. The pupils are set mostly challenging tasks, which motivate and excite them to work hard and to have confidence in their own abilities. When the pupils start in Year 1, their levels of attainment are below that expected for their age, but the good progress that they make as they move through the school results in them attaining standards in line with national averages by the time they leave the school. The National Curriculum test results, in 2001, taken by pupils at the end of both key stages, confirm this and when the results were compared with similar schools, standards were well above average at the end of both key stages. At the previous inspection, standards at the end of both key stages were below average. There has, therefore, been very significant improvement over the last few years.
106. There were considerable differences between the achievement of boys and girls in 2000. At Key Stage 2, the girls were achieving better than the boys. This was noted and addressed by the school. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, girls improved satisfactorily, but the boys made significant improvements; the equivalent of two and a half years of work. As a result, there are, currently, no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys.

107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are becoming very confident with numbers to 100, and even the lower-achieving pupils in Year 2 count enthusiastically in hundreds to 1000. Even at this early stage in the year, most of the pupils in Year 2 can:
- mentally recall the two, five and ten times tables;
  - count forwards and backwards in one and tens;
  - order two-digit numbers, for example 17, 25, 43, 86;
  - recognise numbers and words, for example  $20+9$  is 29;
108. These pupils are learning to apply their knowledge and understanding of numbers to word problems, such as finding the cost of five cakes at seven pence each. In other areas of mathematics, pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of flat shapes, such as squares and triangles, and solid shapes, such as spheres, cones and cylinders.
109. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress during their time at the school. In 1998, these pupils achieved standards that were well below national expectations in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 1, but they are now achieving standards in line with expectations for their age. The majority of these pupils can:
- work with numbers greater than 1000, and to three decimal places;
  - multiply three-digit numbers together in a number of different ways;
  - reduce fractions to their lowest form and convert improper fractions to proper fractions;
  - use doubling and halving strategies in a variety of calculations, including working out 25 per cent, 50 per cent and 75 per cent;
  - identify range, median and average, plot data on a variety of simple graphs, and understand basic probability;
  - sort shapes such as parallelogram, rhombus, and trapezium, by the number of parallel lines, and work out the perimeters of compound shapes;
  - plot and identify co-ordinates, including the use of negative numbers;
  - solve word-problems and use complicated timetables and world time zones.

Each year group has already covered an impressive amount of work this term and there is good progression from one year to the next.

110. The quality of teaching is good overall and teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught consistently well, with pupils in Year 2 having the advantage of being split into two relatively small ability groups. Good attention is paid to the teaching of correct mathematical terminology. As a result, pupils in Year 2 understand and use a variety of words for multiplication, such as 'times', 'lots of', and 'multiplication'. They even understand 'repeated addition'. This high expectation helps pupils to use a range of mathematical language confidently when explaining how they reach an answer. For example, a pupil in Year 2 explained 'I had to find the *total* of how much four stickers cost'.
111. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is also good, but less consistent than in Key Stage 1. The quality of the lesson seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. The overall good teaching enables the pupils to progress well. Lessons start with concentrated mental and oral mathematics in which pupils have to apply what they already know to answer the teacher's skilled questioning. For instance, in Year 3, based on the pupils' secure knowledge of addition and subtraction to 20, they were expected to make inverse calculations with three numbers by giving alternatives to, for example,  $7+8=15$ . Words used to describe the problem were cleverly varied to keep the pupils alert and motivated. In Year 6, pupils rapidly counted in nines and then, using this knowledge, in nineties and nine hundreds. This was quickly followed by the identification of multiples of nine-plus-one and nine-minus-one on individual target sheets. The lively pace of these lessons excited the pupils and they worked extremely hard. Where teachers relied on verbal interaction only, and the pupils did not use aides, such as digit cards, individual white boards, or target boards, the learning was less effective, and the pupils were less involved and motivated.
112. In most lessons, teachers' detailed planning, based on careful assessment of pupils' previous work, ensures that each task provides the right amount of challenge to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Work is very carefully marked, and the teachers' valuable comments clearly show the pupils what stage they are at in their learning. Teachers also make it clear to the pupils

what the next step in their learning will be. At the end of lessons, most teachers effectively recap what has been learnt through a quick-fire question and answer session. In the better lessons, pupils are eager to share their newly acquired knowledge, keen to explain their reasoning, and excited to hear about the next lesson. Where teaching is less effective, questioning is too general and teachers do not motivate and excite the pupils.

113. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Work is matched well to their abilities and they receive good support in class, particularly from the teaching assistants who are well aware of their needs. Pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve very well in mathematics and do not need any specific support.
114. Mathematics benefits from very good leadership, which provides clear educational direction for the subject. The co-ordinators have ensured that teachers are competent and confident in their knowledge of mathematics. Very good assessment procedures track each pupil's progress so that those who begin to under-achieve are quickly identified. This ensures that appropriate support can be given at an early stage. Realistic targets are set for individuals and for year groups. Resources are good, but as yet, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce mathematical vocabulary and skills in other subjects. For example, pupils use graphs and tables to represent their results in science experiments and show historical periods on time-lines. Overall, very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

115. The inspection confirms that, as demonstrated in the tests in 2001, pupils' attainment is above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is well above average when compared with the results of pupils from similar schools. These good results are brought about by the good teaching and good leadership and management of the subject. Pupils make good progress overall, although the results of the teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 are lower in comparison with other schools than pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6. This is partly because pupils have gained greater confidence in their use of language and can, therefore, explain scientific ideas more confidently by the end of Year 6. The more consistently good teaching in Key Stage 2 is also a contributory factor.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of the basic facts about the natural world, materials, and forces. They also have acquired the rudimentary skills of scientific enquiry. They know, for example that:
- plants and animals can be grouped according to features that they can recognise, such as the colour of a flower or the number of legs of a creature;
  - plants have different parts, for instance, petals and roots, that serve specific purposes, such as attracting insects and providing food and water;
  - animals move for different reasons, for example, to escape danger or find food;
  - all animals change with age and have certain ways of caring for their young;
  - materials have different properties that make them useful for different purposes;
  - different materials are affected in different ways by heat;
  - light and sound require sources to produce them, for example the sun or a vibrating drum;
  - a power source, connecting wires, and an outlet, are necessary to produce a simple electrical circuit.
117. Pupils learn through observation and experimentation right from the start. For example, in Year 1, pupils examine objects around them to discover the materials they are made of. Good teaching at this stage shows pupils how to represent and communicate what they have learned, through drawings and diagrams. Individuality and independence is encouraged so that the more able pupils produce more sophisticated diagrams and explanations. They also use mathematical graphs and charts to illustrate their work. For example, in Year 1, pupils made a block graph to show how shoe sizes increase as pupils get older. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a good range of scientific vocabulary for their age. For example, they describe materials as hard, soft, or clear. The most able pupils use the terms 'liquid' and 'solid' to describe what happens when wax melts,

whereas the average and lower-attaining pupils use the term 'water' instead of 'liquid'. This illustrates the way the lack of general vocabulary holds back some pupils' progress in science at this age. The pupils are also beginning to understand the basic principle of a fair test, in that everything, apart from what is being deliberately changed, must stay the same.

118. Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stage 2, as they learn through investigation and experimentation. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 2. Their understanding of a fair test has been very strongly consolidated. They discuss, with confidence, which elements of an experiment they should vary and which they must keep the same. They make accurate measurements and record their results using a suitable variety of tables, graphs and charts. They use scientific ideas to explain the results of their experiments. For example, they use their understanding of friction and air to explain why shoes grip the floor surface and why parachutes slow down a descent. Their knowledge of forces is particularly good. For example, they clearly understand the difference between weight and mass, using the terms 'Newton' and 'gram' correctly. They predict the results of experiments on the basis of their knowledge, for example, that bubble-wrap would be the best sound insulator. They give good scientific reasons for their choices, such as, 'because bubble wrap is a thick material that will absorb the vibrations of the sound'. These explanations reflect a secure understanding of the ideas involved. There was no written work available on which to make judgements about the pupils' knowledge of the natural world, but conversations with them revealed a sound understanding in this area. They know the main organs of the human body and their functions, for example, and use this knowledge to explain why the pulse increases during exercise. The pupils' difficulties with literacy continue to hinder their progress in explaining ideas that they clearly understand, well into Key Stage 2. For example, a pupil in Year 4 explained insulation by stating, 'does not let the hotness from getting in'. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The teachers and teaching assistants are very aware of the pupils' individual needs, and give them the support they need to accomplish the tasks they are set. They are aware of the needs of pupils who speak a language other than English at home, but do not consistently check their understanding of words and phrases that could be misunderstood.
119. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The key strengths in teaching that have led to pupils' good overall progress and levels of achievement are:
- good subject knowledge that informs good questioning, making the pupils think;
  - group discussions to encourage the pupils to learn for themselves;
  - very good teamwork between the teaching assistants and teachers so that the pupils gain the maximum benefit from the adults supporting them;
  - very good relationships with, and good management of, pupils, so that the best use is made of lesson time;
  - good preparation and use of a wide range of resources to make lessons interesting;
  - high expectations of pupils' effort and presentation, leading to good standards in pupils' books and little unfinished work;
  - very good marking of pupils' work by teachers that acknowledges pupils' effort and progress and points out how they can improve.
120. The most successful lessons proceed at a fast pace, with plenty of involvement by the pupils and use of humour by the teacher. In these circumstances, the pupils become confident, independent learners. For example, pupils in Year 3 came up with very good ideas for comparing the hardness of rock samples after a lively introduction that challenged them to think for themselves and to express their ideas clearly. In some lessons, the teachers keep too tight a rein on the pupils, directing their thinking and limiting opportunities for them to learn through discussion with their classmates, and through trial and error. This is particularly true for the older pupils, because there is insufficient room in the classrooms and working areas for them to engage in the kind of independent and extended experimenting that they should undertake in order to acquire more advanced skills. For example, to achieve a higher than average level of attainment, pupils should be able to test their own ideas using materials and equipment they have selected for themselves. The space available makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to organise this. Pupils are taught relevant information and communication technology skills, but are not given sufficient opportunities to use them as a matter of course in lessons.

121. The subject benefits from the very clear educational direction, and good guidance and support for staff, provided by the co-ordinator. There is a wide range of good quality resources available for lessons at each stage. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson, in which many of the pupils had their own individual trays and tongs to heat materials over a candle to observe the effect. Good health and safety procedures are followed in lessons so that the pupils are safe and secure when experimenting. The assessment procedures, currently in use, track pupils' progress in terms of National Curriculum levels, but are not helpful in setting individual or group learning targets. The co-ordinator is designing a different system, based on simple descriptions of knowledge, understanding, and skills. This is intended to be easier for teachers and parents to use and understand, and more useful in involving the pupils in their own learning and setting specific targets. Overall, very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Standards have risen, teaching is of higher quality, the curriculum is better organised, and leadership and management are much more purposeful.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122. Although standards remain below expectations at the end of both key stages, the progress that pupils make has improved and is now satisfactory. This is because there is now a scheme of work that follows the government guidelines for art and design. As a result, pupils' skills are beginning to develop through the school. However, the improvement in the rate of pupils' progress is more evident in the work of pupils in Key Stage 1. There are more gaps in pupils' knowledge in Key Stage 2, due to previous inconsistencies in the programme for art and design. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress because they receive good support from staff, who are alert to their needs and have a good level of expertise.

123. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. However, the work on display, and in the school portfolio and pupils' folders, reflects satisfactory teaching and learning. This evidence provides sound examples of the pupils' response to a variety of ideas, and some examples involving the practising of techniques, such as creating tones of colour. However, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are unable to explain a pattern or texture. They also show little understanding of the terms print, collage, or sculpture. Three lessons were seen in Key Stage 2, involving a collage self-portrait, sketching a still life composition in pencil, and testing techniques in pastel. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have had little previous experience to help them in their art and design and, consequently, they work at a lower level than is expected. In Year 6, pupils collect ideas and explore a variety of techniques in order to represent movement in a pastel drawing. They use pastels effectively, with many producing good examples in their sketchbooks. This shows sound improvement in:

- the opportunities for pupils to express themselves in a variety of media;
- the commencement of a programme of skills development;
- developing pupils' skills in observational drawing;
- the familiarisation and understanding of technical language such as line, tone, movement;
- using a sketchbook in order to collect, practise and test ideas and techniques;

The accelerated progress made by pupils in Year 6, however, fails to make up for the wide range of experiences that pupils have missed as they have moved through the school.

124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are more confident in the way they present aspects of artwork. They encourage pupils to compare their work with each other, make improvements and adapt their own composition. However, lessons are taught at a level that matches the year group within the scheme and not the level of pupils' achievement. Skills have not been developed systematically through the school. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in art and design is very new and is not used to plan work at an appropriate level. Pupils behave well, especially when lessons are relevant and well matched to their level of understanding.

125. Information and communication technology is used infrequently, but is employed well in Year 6 to illustrate movement in various artists' paintings. Resources are sufficient at the present time, but will need to be increased as confidence and expertise grow. Good use is made of visiting artists, introducing exciting ideas to the art and design curriculum. The accommodation for art and design is unsatisfactory. Some classes have no sinks and some teaching areas are too small.

126. The improvements in the subject are mainly due to the co-ordinator's enthusiasm for art and design and the good support she gives to colleagues. The co-ordinator is developing the knowledge and expertise of staff in order to raise standards. She also organises an over-subscribed art club each week for pupils in Key Stage 1, improving the school's provision for talented pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

127. Standards were judged to be below expectations throughout the school at the time of the last inspection. Since then, the school has placed an increased emphasis on raising standards. Consequently:

- design and technology has received higher priority, leading to good improvements in teaching and learning;
- an appropriate scheme of work is in place;
- teachers in every class plan a full range of design-and-make projects, according to the scheme's guidelines;
- pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who speak a language other than English at home, are achieving well throughout the school;
- standards by the end of both key stages are now in line with expectations.

128. Teachers now plan opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to examine sliding mechanisms in order to make, for example, animal puppets, which can be operated against a background. They go on to disassemble wheeled vehicles and design one of their own, which will 'travel around the world'. In Key Stage 2, the evaluation and adjustment of designs takes on greater significance and the range of products becomes increasingly challenging. Pupils in Year 3 make a survey of sandwiches. They design and produce one of their own and test it on potential 'customers'. The pupils currently in Year 3 have recently completed this project. They fully grasped the importance of discussing and planning their work and of making their product attractive to potential consumers, although the quality of their designs could have been better. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a range of interesting activities, such as evaluating and making reliable structures, and designing an electronically controlled fairground ride. The use of computers is not yet well established in this subject.

129. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. This is because the co-ordinator has organised in-service training to develop colleagues' subject knowledge and confidence. All teachers have a good understanding of the design-and-make principles. Teaching is lively, energetic, and imaginative. A typical example of this was seen during a Year 4 lesson, where the pupils were involved in designing a Christmas book. They responded to the good teaching by showing interest, enjoying the lesson, and trying their best. Teaching could be further improved by teachers:

- insisting on higher quality of labelling and presentation by pupils through each stage of the design process;
- making sure that lessons do not go on for too long so that pupils lose interest.

130. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has placed the school in a potentially strong position to raise standards further by:

- continuing to develop the useful portfolio, now in place, along with other manageable means of measuring pupils' progress;
- ensuring that the older pupils have opportunities to work with more sophisticated tools and equipment.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

131. Standards in geography and history are below expectations at the end of both key stages. It is evident from inspection evidence that there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly at Key Stage 2. Skills have been inconsistently taught at both key stages.

132. The progress pupils make through the school has, however, improved and is now satisfactory. This includes the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those speaking

English as an additional language. This is due mainly to the new schemes of work and improved confidence of the teachers. Inspection judgements are made on the basis of two geography lessons seen in Key Stage 1, one history lesson in Key Stage 2, examining books and displays, and talking to pupils and teachers in both key stages.

133. In geography, pupils in Year 1 are establishing sound early skills and understanding in local studies. They know the difference between leisure and work in places local to the school, focusing on an appropriate level within the scheme. In discussion with pupils at the end of the key stage there is little evidence of their previous learning. They are, however, aware of their own environment, explaining that there is a great deal of traffic and it is noisy. Evidence in books shows that pupils have studied the fictional Isle of Struay, in geographical terms, but that they did not make the connection with geography and considered the topic to be literacy. By the end of the key stage, pupils' awareness of the differences between past and present is below expectations. They explain the basic idea of Remembrance Sunday, for example, but are unable to relate the event to a period in history, place events in the correct sequence satisfactorily, or relate stories from the past.
134. By the end of Key stage 2, pupils have some understanding of the significance of past events. For example, they use some examples from the local area in their explanation of how the environment has changed. However, they do not develop a satisfactory understanding of the sequence of historical events or how the past relates to the present. For example, when studying the 'Ancient Greeks', pupils in Year 3 made comments such as: 'they don't wear shoes', or 'they live in different houses', but they did not refer to the similarities and differences between this way of life and their own. Older pupils provide facts concerning aspects of life in the Victorian, Tudor, and Roman periods, but without recognising the significance of the changes that have occurred.
135. The quality of teaching in history and geography is satisfactory, but is insufficiently based on the assessment of what pupils know, understand, and can do. This limits the ability of teachers to plan lessons at an appropriate level so that pupils can build on their skills through the year groups. The resources provided for lessons do not always match the level of the work within a year group. Sometimes, lessons are planned around the available resources, rather than to teach the appropriate skills for the age of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make the same progress as other pupils relative to their prior attainment. Those pupils who speak a language other than English at home are fully included in all activities, but teachers do not consistently check their understanding of words and phrases that may be strange to them.
136. The resources for these subjects are adequate but require extending and updating. More pictures of the local area are needed and resources for both subjects need sorting and organising in a more manageable way, in order to make the subjects more effective. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Pupils know how to use the library for reference, but do not have sufficient opportunities to do so independently because it is often in use as an extra classroom.
137. The leadership of both subjects is satisfactory. Subject managers fully recognise the needs of their areas and have the capacity to implement the necessary changes as long as time and resources are made available.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

138. The previous report indicated that standards were too low because the pupils did not have regular enough access to computers and equipment was out of date. Since then, there has been very good improvement in pupils' attainment. Standards are now securely in line with expectations at the end of both key stages, and the pupils of all abilities are achieving well. This is because:
  - the governors have made good use of specific grants, subsidised by the school's budget, to provide a computer suite;
  - teachers are now using this facility very effectively for the development of pupils' computer skills;
  - an appropriate scheme of work is in place, together with a developing system of assessment;

- teachers now plan an adequate range of activities to meet the demands of the National Curriculum.
139. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of the pupils use computers confidently and independently. When they go into the computer suite, they log on without any help from adults and competently retrieve files, or saved work, from previous lessons. They use computers for a variety of purposes. In Year 1, for example, pupils use word banks to help them with their science work on the human body. In Year 2, they produce a set of instructions for making a bird and cage 'spinner', using the shift key for capital letters and the return key for creating a vertical list. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' word-processing skills are well developed and a small minority of pupils demonstrate speed and skills reflecting standards above the expectations for their age. Most of the pupils load, edit, and save their work, and close a program independently, whilst a few need help from adults.
140. From Year 3 onwards, pupils begin to appreciate the wider uses of computers. For example, they use software to gather information about their classmates' favourite hobbies, food, or colours. They then make further use of the program to organise and interpret the data they have collected. The pupils in Year 4 use modelling programs as a tool for art and design by creating 'brush-stroke' pictures and repeating patterns and images to design their own Christmas wrapping paper. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use computers regularly to look for information in the course of their work. In order to do this, they confidently gain access to the Internet to operate search engines. They use these, for example, to create an animal 'book' combining sounds, graphics, and page links for teaching the alphabet to children in reception. To achieve this, they use the Internet to find photographs, accompanied by sounds, which they successfully save for future use. Many pupils explain, very clearly, the process they are following, using the correct technical vocabulary. The majority of pupils use computers independently and look for an alternative routes to find information if they are unsuccessful at first. A minority, who have had relatively little experience in the use of information and communication technology, still rely on the help of adults or classmates at this stage.
141. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. The main strengths are that teachers:
- plan a range of interesting activities in the computer suite to develop pupils' skills and confidence;
  - make good use of the projector to show their class what to do next;
  - allow maximum time for the pupils to have 'hands on' use of computers during lessons;
  - provide good opportunities for the pupils to work together and talk constructively about their work.
- Consequently, pupils throughout the school are very responsible and cooperative when using computers. They help each other out when in difficulties and treat equipment with respect. They are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to learn more. On a small number of occasions there are not enough computers available. This results in too many pupils sharing one machine and slows down the rate of progress. Although skills are taught effectively in information and communication technology lessons, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use them in other subjects where it is appropriate. They do this well on some occasions, for example, when pupils in Year 1 used computers to look for loud and quiet sounds, but this is type of activity is not incorporated in planning as a matter of policy.
142. The subject is led very well by the co-ordinator. He has phased in the various elements of the National Curriculum, enabling the pupils to gradually develop sufficient skills, year on year, to meet the demands of the curriculum. He has worked hard to support colleagues and to encourage the use of the computer suite on a regular basis. He has been closely involved and influential in the planning and management of the very good improvements in the subject since the last inspection.
143. The school is now in a strong position to raise standards further, but recognises that that there are areas for further development in order to do so. These are:
- to encourage and enable teachers to make more use of the computer suite and classroom computers to support the pupils' day-to-day learning in subjects across the curriculum;

- to ensure that the equipment in the computer suite is properly maintained and reliable, so that all pupils have equal access to a computer during lessons.

Pupils use computers in some lessons to find things out, but this is not a consistent feature of their learning. Pupils with special educational needs use computers to for word-processing, but there is no systematic use of information and communication technology to enhance their learning.

## MUSIC

144. Pupils attain standards in music that are below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, but are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. This represents some progress since the last inspection, when standards were judged below average throughout the school. The planning of lessons ensures that all pupils experience the full National Curriculum programmes of study for music. This is beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils in Key Stage 1 showed expected levels of attainment in lessons in the aspects of music being taught. For example, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated the ability to keep to a 4/4 beat. Many of the pupils in Year 2 play their parts in a group accompaniment to a song, accurately, coming in on time and keeping to the beat. In Year 6, pupils sing in tune, but do not have the expected range of musical skills for their age. For example, they do not organise themselves very readily to produce group compositions, and many of them do not keep a steady beat during a performance. They clearly lack the guided practice that is necessary to develop these skills. Pupils in Years 4 and Year 5 show a similar lack of experience and skill in composition and rhythm work.

145. Contributory factors to the below-average attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 are:
- teachers' lack of subject expertise;
  - insufficient guidance for teachers on how to plan lessons that build pupils' skills systematically;
  - the absence of any assessment of the pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, and skills.

As a consequence, the good teaching skills deployed in some lessons fail to achieve good learning, and pupils do not progress as well as they could.

146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good class teaching was observed in Year 3 and Year 6 and there was also some good teaching of small groups in Year 2. None of the lessons observed was unsatisfactory. However, it is clear that the good teaching skills that the teachers have are not sufficient on their own to bring about the improvements that are needed to raise standards. The lessons are planned in detail and include practical tasks. However, these activities are not usually aimed at the right level, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers often assume skills the pupils do not have. The visiting specialist teacher experienced this difficulty during the inspection when teaching a Year 4 class some new rhythms. The pupils clearly needed a lot more practise than he had expected on more basic rhythms.

147. The factors that make the good lessons effective, and which are missing in some lessons are:
- brisk, clear explanations by the teacher of the learning objectives and activities;
  - good preparation of instruments and organisation of the pupils into groups;
  - high expectations of pupils' behaviour, co-operation, and effort;
  - plenty of opportunities for pupils to experiment and work together.

Even in these lessons, however, learning was not as effective as it could have been. Opportunities were lost to use pupils' own efforts as the basis for their learning. Uncritical praise leads to an acceptance of whatever the pupils do and, therefore, to slow progress in some lessons. Teachers do not move around working groups intervening to suggest improvements, or to get the pupils to listen critically, and evaluate and improve their own work. This compounds the effect of not having any assessment procedures in place, as teachers are not making accurate day-to-day assessments to guide their planning. There is little use yet of computers to enhance pupils' learning.

148. The local education authority's peripatetic music teachers make a valuable contribution to the school's provision. As well as giving instrumental tuition on brass and strings, they teach lessons in Year 4. These lessons serve the purpose of identifying those pupils whom the specialists think would benefit most from instrumental tuition. The availability of instruments on loan encourages those pupils from families in poorer circumstances to give their talents a chance to develop. The instrumental teaching observed was of good quality and is clearly benefiting the pupils concerned, who make good progress.

149. The enthusiastic co-ordinator arranges a wide variety of musical experiences to enrich the curriculum. This includes a choir, which gives the pupils the opportunity of performing with other

schools, together with professional musicians and singers, to a large audience. Their voices have even been recorded on a CD. The local brass teachers also visit the school to give an entertaining demonstration of how their instruments work, which is well received by the pupils. Such experiences greatly enhance the pupils' personal development, giving them an insight into life-enriching possibilities of music.

150. The co-ordinator has provided curriculum guidelines to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum in music. However, there is clearly a need to provide teachers with more detailed guidance on how to convert these guidelines into lessons plans that will build systematically on their pupils' existing skills. More staff training will also be required to provide teachers with the confidence and expertise to do this effectively.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

151. Standards in physical education are as expected for pupils at the end of both key stages, although in some aspects of their work pupils in Year 6 achieve standards above these. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys. The school has improved a number of aspects of physical education, some of which were criticised during the last inspection. These improvements are:
- better teaching overall;
  - each class now has two lessons per week, instead of one long one;
  - the noise from physical education lessons in the hall no longer interrupts other lessons;
  - assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress by teachers has very recently been introduced.
152. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are enthusiastic about physical education and work hard in response to good, enthusiastic teaching. They are also beginning to think about and improve their performance in response to good questioning by the teachers and selected demonstration by adults and other pupils. The pupils are able to control their movements to a standard expected for their ages. Pupils in Year 2 respond well to the rhythm and tempo of music. In Year 1, pupils have the necessary throwing and catching skills to enable them to work with a partner. Teachers' confidence and knowledge ensures lessons are mostly well structured, including helping the pupils understand the need to warm up before physical activity and cool down afterwards. Good links are made with other areas of learning, for example, science. In a dance lesson in Year 2, pupils were asked to feel their increased heart rate during the warm up period, and unanimously answered 'oxygen', when asked what they were breathing in. Both lessons seen in Key Stage 1 had elements of really good teaching, but both ran out of time to give all groups the opportunity to perform. Pupils also need to be given opportunities, especially in dance, to be more creative and not limited by adult interpretation.
153. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching. The teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory, because the teacher did not successfully adapt the planning to cope with a transfer from outside to inside necessitated by rain. Even in this lesson, however, the pupils were enthusiastic and mostly listened well to the teacher's instructions. In the very good lessons, pupils' evaluative skills are well developed. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to consider how they can improve their performances. In a Year 3 gymnastics lesson, pupils worked hard to develop sequences of movement and, during demonstrations by each ability group, they were helped by constructive comments from their classmates to work on good starting positions, controlled movement and balance, and to finishing techniques. In another lesson, pupils in Year 6, working in small groups on basketball skills, competently discussed ways in which they could improve their team performance. In this aspect these pupils are performing above expectations for their age. Their skills of throwing and catching, as well as their understanding and use of different ways to pass a basketball, are broadly in line with what is expected at their age.
154. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education greatly improves the pupils' progress and learning. It was very evident that, where the teacher lacked expertise, the lesson plan lacked detail, tasks were insufficiently challenging, and little effort was demanded of the pupils. By contrast, in the very good lessons, the planned activities built on good assessment of

the pupils' previous attainment, skills and techniques were taught systematically, and the pupils worked in ability groups. This resulted in very motivated pupils who were very keen to work hard physically, think about what they were doing, and improve their performance. Throughout these very good lessons, careful attention was paid to all aspects of the pupils' safety.

155. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to go swimming for a few weeks every year. This enables the majority to be confident and safe in the water and to reach the minimum requirement of being able to swim 25 metres.
156. The co-ordinator sets a good example in the promotion of good teaching, but, as yet, has not been influential in the monitoring of planning and teaching throughout the school. One or two individual teachers are using assessment very well to monitor pupils' progress, but this is not sufficiently established throughout the school. The school has chosen not to participate in adventurous activities, nor to have residential events. However, the curriculum is enhanced with a popular games club, where sports, such as basketball and cricket, are played. Boys and girls are also encouraged to try for the school football team, and, from time to time, the netball and rounders teams play against other local schools. These activities all play a significant part in pupils' social development. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak a language other than English at home, are fully included in all activities and make good progress.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving standards which are slightly above that expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with expectations for their age. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and pupils now make good progress in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. This improvement has been brought about since the implementation of the new locally agreed syllabus, which systematically helps the teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, from year to year. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in Key Stage 1.
158. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to accept that people hold different religious beliefs and worship in different ways and in different places. By the time they leave the school at the age of 11, pupils have studied various aspects of the Christian faith and compared these to beliefs and practices in other major faiths. They also learn to understand, from an early age, that what people believe affects the way in which they live their lives, and that this can also affect other people.
159. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Consequently, these pupils have good knowledge and understanding. Effective teaching methods are used to motivate and interest pupils. For example in Year 1, pupils have learnt about Christian baptisms and how Sikh babies are named. In one lesson seen, pupils enthusiastically recalled details of a Sikh baby's naming ceremony then acted it out. This very effectively reinforced pupils' developing respect for other faiths and cultures through:
- the provision of appropriate clothing for the priest and the baby's parents, which will subsequently be used in the role-play corner;
  - taped music of the priest singing from the Holy Book, The Guru Granth Sahib;
  - the involvement of a Sikh student and a pupil in the class to verify the correct procedures for selecting a name, using the letters from a book;
  - the correct pronunciation of important words;
  - the sharing of special food prepared by the Sikh student.
160. In Year 2, pupils continue to develop their understanding of how different people worship and compare the Jewish Sabbath to a Christian Sunday, learning that Jews worship in a synagogue and Christians worship in a church. They are also learning that both Christians and Jews believe all life comes from God. In a very effective lesson in Year 2, the teacher evoked a calm, spiritual atmosphere with a beautiful picture of trees. Through skilled questioning, pupils' knowledge was used to make comparisons between people and trees and what each can provide to help people. The pupils responded very thoughtfully and produced a wide range of vocabulary to express their good understanding of friendship and how they can show it to others. Pupils' motivation was very well maintained as they wrote their words on leaves to create friendship trees. This work is to be

extended in future lessons when pupils learn about the Jewish festival of Tu'b'Shevat, a new year for trees.

161. As the pupils move through Key Stage 2, good long-term planning and teachers' expertise ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is increased systematically. It also ensures that pupils effectively develop respect and understanding for other beliefs and cultures as these are constantly compared with aspects of Christianity. This continuity helps pupils develop a strong awareness that people of most faiths believe in one God, called by different names. In learning about the biblical version of creation, pupils in Year 3 develop an awareness of the Christian belief in a loving father figure and in the shared beliefs of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Good links are made with other subjects on occasions. For example, during the inspection week, pupils used their knowledge and understanding of the Christian creation story to make comparisons with what they had learnt in history about the beliefs of the Ancient Greeks.
162. In Year 4, in their study of Islam, pupils learn the importance and routines of Muslim daily prayer. This helps to extend their biblical knowledge as well as giving them a very good grasp of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith as represented through the five pillars. By Year 5, the majority of pupils know the name used for God in most of the major faiths and how and where people worship. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is extended further by learning about Hinduism and how Hindus believe that God, Vishnu, can take on many forms, and that all religions have special stories about how God helps and supports his followers. This good groundwork, systematically and well taught in previous years, is used in Year 6 as basis for the pupils to look at inspirational leaders from different faiths. They have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to explore how faith has influenced people like Mother Theresa, Ghandi and Yusuf Islam who was previously known as Cat Stevens.
163. A strength of the overall good teaching is the attention paid to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Written work is marked carefully, with valuable comments that leave the pupils in no doubt as to what they do well and where they need to improve, for example, in spelling, punctuation, and handwriting. For instance, one teacher wrote the comment: 'I am pleased with your work. You made some great contributions to your group's discussions'. A good range of writing styles is used, such as narrative in the retelling of stories, lists, and note taking. As yet, there is insufficient use made of information and communication technology, and few opportunities for the pupils to use CD-ROMs for independent research. The use of the library by pupils is also restricted because it is so often used as a classroom.
164. The co-ordinator makes a significant contribution to the good teaching of this subject and leads from the front through her expertise. However, teachers' assessment and monitoring of the progress made by individual pupils is only just beginning, and is an area which needs to be developed, particularly in Key Stage 2, in order to raise standards further.