

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lichfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124258

Headteacher: Miss H McKay (Acting)

Reporting inspector: Mr J White
17242

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th November 2001

Inspection number: 243281

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sturgeons Hill Lichfield Staffordshire
Postcode:	WS14 9AW
Telephone number:	01543 510778
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Baker
Date of previous inspection:	15 th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17242	Jeff White	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities; English as an additional language; Science; Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22248	Glesni Thomas	Team inspector	The foundation stage; Special educational needs; Art & design; Design & technology	
3692	David Hill	Team inspector	English; Geography; History	
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics; Music	
20891	Sean O'Toole	Team inspector	Information & communication technology; Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
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	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is above average size and located close to the centre of the city of Lichfield. The accommodation is on two sites and includes a Victorian building (the annexe) some distance from the main school building where pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are taught. The number on roll is 440 (214 girls, 226 boys). Pupils are drawn from the local area and further afield and mainly live in high social class households. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Pupils are predominantly white and about three percent are of minority ethnic, mainly of Bangladeshi, heritage. Only a few pupils are at the very early stage of learning English as an additional language. Thirty-three pupils are on the special educational needs register, a figure well below the national average. Three pupils have statements of special needs, a figure also below average. Sixty pupils are in the reception year. Children are admitted into the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they become five. Some have attended the school's nursery unit which is open during the Spring and Summer terms and most have had some pre-school education. Attainment on entry is well above average in English and broadly above average in other areas of learning. Currently the deputy headteacher is acting headteacher. The turnover of teachers has been high in the last two years. Although the school has no problems in recruiting permanent teachers it has had difficulty in providing continuous supply cover for teachers on sick leave. The school has received an achievement award for its results in the national tests.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils aged seven and eleven achieve at least good standards overall in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory standards in the vast majority of other subjects. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils are keen learners, have positive attitudes and usually behave very well. The acting headteacher, well supported by the governors, has given good leadership during a potentially very difficult time for the school. They are well aware of the weaknesses that need addressing. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- High standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained in the national tests for pupils aged eleven.
- Pupils in Year 6 currently achieve high standards in English.
- Behaviour and relationships are very good overall.
- Spiritual and moral development is promoted very effectively.
- The acting headteacher has led the school well during a very difficult period and is well supported by governors.

What could be improved

- The most able pupils are too often not given hard enough work.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and not enough use is made of assessment results to plan pupils' work.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved satisfactorily since it was last inspected in September 1997. Since 1998, high standards in the national tests, in English, mathematics and science, have been maintained at age eleven. At age seven, standards in the tests in reading and writing have also remained high. The results in mathematics have varied more widely but in 2001 were above average. The current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining better standards overall in English, mathematics and science than at the time of the

last inspection. Standards in most other subjects are similar but they have improved noticeably in history throughout the school. In general, pupils are making better progress overall. The overall quality of teaching has improved and, unlike in the last inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. More challenge is provided for able pupils but there remains scope to challenge the most able even further. Provision for special educational needs is not as effective as it was mainly because of staff changes. The special needs co-ordinator has not been at the school long enough to have had a significant impact. The school's response to many of the key issues identified in the last inspection report has been too slow until very recently. The acting headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors are working well together to improve curricular planning and monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, and are aware that much more remains to be done. The need to improve assessment arrangements continues to be a significant issue. Good improvements have been made to the accommodation in the main school building and in the annexe.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	A*	A	A

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

The results show that the school has maintained high standards over time and it has achieved well in comparison with the average in similar schools. Its trend in performance has been broadly in line with the national trend and in 2001 its statutory targets were exceeded. At age seven, standards in the tests have remained high in reading and writing. They have fluctuated more widely in mathematics but in 2001 were above average and better than the previous year's results. The high standards in English are generally reflected in the work of the current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 but the most able infant pupils do not achieve as well in reading as they do in other aspects of the subject. In mathematics and science standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. The difference between these standards and the test results is mainly because the most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could do. Standards in history are good at age seven and eleven. In art and design and in design and technology standards are good in Year 2. In the work seen in other subjects standards are satisfactory overall. In much of the work the most able pupils and those with special educational needs are capable of achieving better. Children in the reception classes are on course to exceed the goals for their learning by the time they enter Year 1. They particularly make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, and in mathematical development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave very well.
Personal development and	Relationships are very good. Pupils' personal development is good and

relationships	they respond well to taking responsibility and giving their ideas.
Attendance	The attendance rate is well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Please note that the school's part-time nursery provision was not operating at the time of the inspection so the judgement on teaching of the youngest pupils relates to the reception year only.

Throughout the school no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics but there is more very good or better teaching in literacy than in numeracy. The vast majority of lessons are well structured. Teachers promote very good relationships and their discipline is usually effective. They manage discussions well and their instructions and explanations are invariably clear. The use of well-focused questions is a feature of much of the teaching. Assessment results are not used consistently to help plan pupils' work. Most pupils' needs are generally met well but often the most able are capable of more rigorous challenge. The individual education plans for the relatively few pupils with special educational needs lack precise targets and are under used in the teaching. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language but their needs are not identified clearly enough. Infant and junior pupils almost always work diligently and often with sustained concentration. They settle to work quickly and follow instructions well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is unsatisfactory. Pupils' needs are not identified precisely enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The needs of the very few pupils with English as an additional language are not identified clearly enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good and it is very good for spiritual and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The overall care is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory because it has recently begun to improve. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are successful. Monitoring of attendance is very thorough. Procedures for assessment, and the use of assessment results to plan pupils' work, are unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has led the school well during a very difficult period. The staff are beginning to work much more closely as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have relatively recently become increasingly more involved in the life of the school. They give good support to the acting headteacher and now fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Evaluation of teaching, learning, and pupils' progress and attainment is in its infancy but is improving.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control is very efficient and good use is being made of funding to help the school improve.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in the library provision that are restricting pupils' opportunities for independent research. Teachers and pupils cope well with the lack of space in the annexe and mobile classrooms. Resources for information and communication technology are too limited. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behaviour is good. • Teaching is good; most children are expected to work hard and they make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are not well informed about their children's progress. • The school has not worked closely enough with parents and they have not been comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. • The range of extra-curricular activities is not interesting enough.

A significant minority of parents also feel that the school has not been well led but is improving under the leadership of the acting headteacher. Several parents also expressed the view that the most able pupils often found the work too easy. The inspection team endorses the vast majority of parents' views. Although the range of extra-curricular activities is good for junior pupils there is very little for infants.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Children enter the school with well above average skills in English and broadly above average skills in other areas of their learning. Given the lack of continuity in pupils' learning, because of the high turnover of staff and the problems of the headship, the school has done well to maintain high standards in the national tests for pupils aged eleven. The trend in performance in English, mathematics and science has matched the national trend and in 2001 the school's results compared well with those in similar schools. Overall standards in English in the current Year 6 are similarly high and they are above average in mathematics and science. Generally English is taught more effectively than mathematics and science. There is scope for the most able pupils to be challenged further especially in mathematics and science. In the national tests for seven-year-olds the school has also done well to maintain high standards in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics have fluctuated more widely. In 2001 they were above the average compared to all schools and in line with the average in similar schools. However, they were better than the previous year's results. The current pupils in Year 2 are attaining well above average standards in speaking, listening and writing and above average standards in reading. Standards in reading would be better if pupils were given more challenging reading matter. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in mathematics and science. In the work seen in Year 2 and Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection when they were average. There are no significant differences in attainment and achievement between boys and girls.
- 2 The vast majority of children in the reception classes achieve well in personal, social and emotional development, and in mathematical development. They are on course to well exceed the expected learning goals in these areas by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. Children are on course to exceed the learning goals in these areas. The most able children are not achieving as well as they should be in reading because not enough is expected of them.
- 3 The teaching in English is good overall and often better. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make good progress in speaking, listening and writing. Pupils in Year 2 participate well in class discussions and listen attentively. They use a good range of vocabulary. Even though pupils have good knowledge of letter sounds and word building skills their progress in reading is not as good as it should be because they are too often not given challenging enough books to read, especially the most able. Progress in writing is good and pupils in Year 2 write independently in a range of forms including well-written stories. They form letters well and make good use of punctuation. Junior pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening. Generally, they express their views clearly and pay attention to the needs of listeners. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of subject-specific language, for example, in science. Progress in reading is also good and by Year 6 most pupils are capable readers and many have advanced skills. Their knowledge of authors is good. It is very apparent that they have been well supported by their parents. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in writing and in Years 5 and 6 progress is very good. Most pupils write in a good range of forms including poetry, story and non-fictional accounts. They usually make good use of grammar and punctuation. Information and communication technology (ICT) is under-

used in many year groups throughout the school but word processing is developing well in Years 5 and 6.

- 4 Progress in mathematics is satisfactory in Year 1 but improves in Year 2. Pupils in Year 2 are developing good knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measures. Importantly, they are improving their speed of mental recall of number facts. Progress over time is good for most pupils in the juniors and by Year 6 pupils make good use of their well-developed skills to convert, for example, fractions into decimals and percentages and to calculate areas and perimeters accurately. Measures and calculations are used well in science. Throughout the school ICT is under-used to develop pupils' mathematical skills. Also, the most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve complex number problems. The small amount of work seen in science in Year 1 was as expected for pupils' age. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress overall and undertake suitable scientific enquiry, for example, in investigating electric circuits. They use scientific terminology well, make sensible predictions and record their findings in a number of ways. Progress slows in Years 3 and 4 mainly because the work does not build on what pupils already know and can do. In particular, the most able pupils are not challenged enough. Good progress is made in the upper juniors in enquiry skills and scientific knowledge particularly in materials and their properties and physical processes.
- 5 In general, standards in most other subjects are in line with expectations for pupils' ages and have been maintained since the last inspection. However, good teaching in history has helped standards to rise. Other improvements for pupils aged seven include observational drawing, the use of media in art and design, and skills in design and technology. The lack of assessment in ICT means that, in general, pupils' work has not consistently built upon the good skills they have brought from home. As a result their progress over time has not been as good as it could be. However, in the lessons seen in the upper juniors achievement was good because of effective teaching. In the last inspection there was not enough evidence to judge standards in religious education at age eleven. Provision for the subject has improved and pupils in the current Year 6 reach the expected standards.
- 6 The school has more pupils with above average prior attainment than is often found. Their overall achievement in lessons is satisfactory and often better especially when the teaching has high expectations of their performance. However, the lack of use of assessment to help plan their work results in uneven progress over time and the school is not well placed to ensure they are making the progress of which they are capable. Often the very highest attainers are not challenged enough and they frequently find the work too easy.
- 7 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) do not always make as much progress as they could. Some benefit from additional literacy support or work in a very small group and make good progress because of the extra help they receive. Often, even without additional support, they attain average standards. For instance, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, almost all pupils named on the SEN register successfully expanded abbreviated notes into standard English prose, without any extra help. Other pupils, with greater need and more accurately identified as having SEN, do not make the progress they should because their work is not planned in small enough steps to build on what they have already achieved. There are very few instances of pupils on the SEN register improving their performance and moving to a lower level of need.
- 8 The school has very few pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). In lessons when the teaching is especially effective they make similar progress to their

peers. However, there were occasions during the inspection when they barely participated and were not encouraged enough to do so. Consequently they made little or no progress. Their needs are not identified clearly and there are no targets for their performance. The school is therefore not in position to know whether they are achieving well or not.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' good attitudes, very good behaviour and relationships, and good levels of personal development have a very positive impact on their achievements. These qualities have been maintained at similar levels to those described in the previous inspection report. Attendance is very good; pupils are very keen to come to school and talk with enthusiasm about their activities. Pupils arrive promptly and this enables lessons to start on time.
- 10 Pupils in the reception classes have settled into school well and have quickly adapted to routines. They pay very good attention in lessons. They respond very well when changing from one activity to another and move with a minimum of fuss. They are very eager to co-operate. Throughout the school pupils generally show good attitudes to learning in lessons and concentrate well. In about a third of lessons their attitudes were very good or better. Positive attitudes are often promoted by the stimulation and interest provided by the teachers. For example, in a well-taught science lesson in Year 6 pupils were very keen on undertaking an investigation about air resistance. Even though they worked in cramped conditions they sustained their concentration and interest well. Pupils participate eagerly in their work and in the daily life of the school. A good example is their obvious joy in singing in music lessons and assemblies. The majority of pupils with SEN have positive attitudes to their work and some are able to exercise a good degree of independence and persistence. During the inspection a group of three pupils, two of whom had statements of SEN, spent half the literacy hour working with a learning support assistant. She set tasks for them to complete while she worked with a different group. The three pupils returned to their classroom and, showing a high degree of motivation, independently and successfully finished their work. This gave each of the three a good sense of achievement.
- 11 Behaviour is usually very good. One pupil has been excluded on a temporary basis over the last two years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and are developing very good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils indicated no concerns in these areas. When Year 5 and 6 pupils visit the new school for worship they set a fine example for younger pupils by sitting very attentively and behaving very well.
- 12 Pupils' personal development is good. They undertake duties and responsibilities keenly. For example, the "librarians" talk confidently and enthusiastically about how they carry out their duties. However, the weaknesses in the libraries restrict pupils' opportunities for initiative in research and independent work. Although there is currently no school council, pupils have responded well to the opportunity to give their ideas on how they would like to see the school improved. Year 4 pupils act as special friends to the new starters in the reception classes and this helps the younger children to settle quickly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 13 Ten teachers have been at the school for less than two years and several for less than a year. At the beginning of the current term the school had a fortnight without any

teacher absence because of sick leave, the first time in over two years. The school has had problems in providing continuous supply cover for teachers on sick leave. At the time of the inspection the teacher covering for staff absence in one of the Year 6 classes had not taught in the school before. Despite these difficulties and the potential discontinuity in pupils' learning the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall and better than at the time of the last inspection. It was very good or better in one in five lessons and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

- 14 Teaching in the reception classes is good in most of the areas of learning and has improved since the last inspection when much of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Because of the good teaching most children are on course to exceed the goals for learning expected when they move into Year 1. In communication, language and literacy the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good but is satisfactory overall. Children's speaking, listening and writing are fostered well but given their skills on entry to the school, not enough is expected of the most able children's reading.
- 15 The established teachers and those appointed in the last two years have worked well together to implement the national literacy strategy effectively. Almost all the teaching seen was good or better. Pupils' writing skills are developed well because they are given good opportunities to write in different forms and in other subjects apart from English. Effective questioning at the beginning of lessons is a feature of the good or better teaching and ensures both good pace and sustained interest in pupils' learning. For example, in a good lesson in Year 3 the teacher's careful questions helped pupils to understand the difference between dialogue in a story and in a play script. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the pace of pupils' learning was brisk because the teacher set timed tasks, for instance, in writing an autobiographical account. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' discussion. The most able pupils in Year 1 and 2 are not given consistent challenge in their reading. The national numeracy strategy has also been implemented well in the main. Pace is usually good in the opening sessions on mental work and is helping pupils to improve the speed of their mental recall of number facts. For example, in a good lesson in Year 6, pupils raced against the clock to complete a range of multiplication tasks. In an excellent lesson in Year 5 the opportunity for pupils to solve complex problems was a significant feature. However, this is not consistent practice, especially for the most able pupils. ICT is under-used to enable pupils to develop their mathematical skills further.
- 16 Most lessons are well structured and provide opportunities for pupils to work as whole classes, in small groups and individually. Most teachers manage discussions well, for example in history in Year 4 and in science in Year 6. Often teachers' good use of subject terminology helps pupils to talk confidently about their work. Also their instructions and explanations are suitable clear. Usually, discipline is calm, measured and effective. Only on a very small number of occasions were pupils not managed as well as they should have been. Teachers' good use of resources contributed well to pupils' learning in history and science. A significant characteristic of the excellent teaching was the very high expectations of all pupils' performance including the most able. However, too often more could be expected of the latter pupils. In general, the use of assessment to help plan pupils' work is unsatisfactory although there are examples of better practice. Teacher's marking is inconsistent and its main weakness is the lack of clear targets to help pupils improve.
- 17 Teaching of children with SEN is inconsistent overall. The underlying weakness is that, for historical reasons, teachers' knowledge and understanding of how best to cater for SEN are underdeveloped. Teachers are beginning to gain skills in writing appropriate personal targets for pupils but they do not focus precisely enough on what pupils need

to learn next. Lesson plans often do not include reference on how pupils' needs will be met. Nevertheless, there are examples of some teachers meeting pupils' needs well and consequently promoting good learning. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are well deployed and usually well briefed. On occasion, however, potential difficulties posed by lesson content had not been identified so pupils did not make enough progress. LSAs often note progress but consistency has yet to be established in procedures to track and monitor it. Learning support is provided in classes and in appropriate withdrawal settings. There is little evidence of ICT being used to support pupils with SEN.

- 18 Because the needs of the very few pupils with EAL are not identified clearly enough teachers are often unsure how best to cater for them. In some of the lessons little attempt was made to ensure they participated actively.

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

- 19 The curriculum in the reception classes is securely based on the national guidance for the foundation stage and provides appropriately, and often well, for pupils' physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. A good balance of adult and child-directed activities is provided and support staff are well briefed and well deployed. Good strides have been made in developing suitable planning procedures and the two reception teachers co-operate well on this. Because assessment is not consistently thorough lessons are not always planned with sufficient challenge to allow the most able to make the progress of which they are capable. In the rest of the school the curriculum is satisfactory and includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. There have been some improvements since the last inspection but in the main they have been relatively recent. The acting headteacher and staff, with the very useful help of a governor, are updating curricular policies and schemes of work to help provide continuity in pupils' learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Its consistent format and approach are beginning to have an impact not only on raising teachers' expectations but also on ensuring that previous learning is extended from year to year. However, more remains to be done to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. The school has adopted national guidelines for most subjects and they are used satisfactorily. It has its own scheme of work for art and design but pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not developed consistently throughout the school and consequently there are gaps in pupils' learning. There has been good improvement in the curriculum for religious education since the previous inspection. All classes are now taught the subject in sufficient depth and this has helped to raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and personal faith and has a good effect on their spiritual and moral development. However, there is insufficient guidance for staff on developing ICT and this results in some uneven progress in pupils' learning.
- 20 A suitable balance of time is given to the teaching of most subjects but the too limited equipment and space for ICT inhibit learning in some aspects of the subject. Literacy skills are developed well in the whole curriculum, for example, there is some sensitive and imaginative writing in history and religious education. Teachers are also successful in promoting pupils' numeracy skills not only as part of the numeracy strategy but also in other subjects such as science. Despite greater challenge in the work of the most able pupils, since the last inspection, they need more opportunities to apply their number skills to solving complex problems.

- 21 A range of interesting extra-curricular activities enhances junior pupils' learning opportunities. Seasonal sporting activities including football, netball, rounders, athletics and cricket and are much enjoyed by the pupils. Those with artistic interests have good opportunities to join the choir, learn to play a musical instrument and take part in the drama club. The oldest pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Several parents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of extra-curricular opportunities for infant pupils.
- 22 Provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory. There is little significant variation between the performance of boys and girls in national tests. Pupils work together well, regardless of ability, gender or ethnic origin. The curriculum for pupils with SEN has shortcomings because IEPs do not have well focused targets. Although all pupils have access to the full curriculum, insufficient account is taken of the needs of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. The needs of those learning EAL are not always identified or met appropriately. In general, the curriculum is sufficiently challenging for most pupils but insufficient demands are made of the most able, for example, in science and mathematics.
- 23 Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school has identified this as an area for further development to ensure consistency between year groups. In the best examples, pupils are involved in discussion about their own health and well being and encouraged to comment on how they might be good citizens. The school informs parents and involves them appropriately in their children's sex education. The school nurse plays a pivotal role in supporting the school in its work in this area. There are also satisfactory arrangements to make the pupils aware of the dangers of harmful substances and the benefits of medicine and drugs.
- 24 Links with the community and with the parish church are strong and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils regularly attend church services, pupils are encouraged to read aloud and the choir leads the singing very well. Local clergy and church workers are regular visitors to the school. At harvest the pupils collect produce and give it to the elderly or needy in the locality. The school has good relationships with other schools and to mark the Millennium pupils participated in the JC 2000 project. Satisfactory use is made of the Internet to support learning and pupils in some classes use e-mail to communicate with other classes; there are plans to extend these opportunities to include other schools. Good links have been developed with the secondary schools to which most pupils transfer and this helps to ensure a smooth and secure transition into the next stage of education. Pupils in Year 6 say they are prepared well for the transition to secondary education.
- 25 Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall. Spiritual and moral development is promoted very well. Teachers successfully combine the teaching of religious education with spiritual and moral values and enable pupils to develop an awareness of personal responsibility and thoughtfulness towards others. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and think about their lives and those of others. Year 6 pupils, writing about Remembrance Day, vividly captured the horrors of war and expressed very clearly their thoughts about world peace. In Year 4 the pupils described the red ribbon around the Christingle as "the caring arms of God around the world". Religious education is used well to teach tolerance and to appreciate the varied religious traditions in Britain today. The celebration of religious festivals and their similarities and differences with the Christian faith are explained clearly and contribute to pupils' understanding of personal belief. Opportunities to take part in choral festivals in Lichfield Cathedral and in fundraising for charity help pupils to forge the link between spiritual and moral values. Moral values are

promoted very well. There is a strong sense of promoting the individual's contribution to school life and the staff generally reward good behaviour through effective praise and encouragement. Pupils are given clear guidelines for good behaviour and taught well to understand the impact of their actions on others. Staff make their expectations of behaviour very clear and are consistent and fair in their dealings with pupils. Time is spent helping the pupils to reflect on the consequences of their own and others' actions and this contributes to making the school a well-ordered community.

- 26 Pupils' social development is fostered well. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to work in different sizes of groups, and boys and girls get on well together. The staff encourage them to be sociable and emphasise good manners and politeness. As a result, pupils feel confident in social situations such as sharing a meal with visitors or discussing their work. Discussions in lessons, such as circle time, encourage pupils to reflect upon how their own activities may affect others. The staff provide suitable opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility for helping around the school by taking registers and messages to the office. The choir has been successful in developing pupils' confidence and expertise in working together. The school promotes the idea of citizenship well. In a display of their work pupils showed a good understanding of responsibility for the world and care and concern for the environment.
- 27 Good improvement has been made in pupils' cultural experiences since the previous inspection. A good variety of school visits promote their understanding of humankind's achievement. At Techniquest, pupils gain an appreciation of scientific and technological achievement and this is further enhanced by visitors to the school during the science week who share their expertise in laser technology and engineering. "Pete the Poet" worked with each class on poetry writing and the event also involved parents in a recital. Year 5 pupils were involved in a community project about African art and two artists visited the school to inspire pupils to produce good pictures using a variety of natural fabrics and materials. In religious education pupils are taught effectively about different faiths and traditions and this work helps to prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society. Music contributes strongly to pupils' cultural development. More could be done to reflect the cultural traditions of pupils of minority ethnic heritage who attend the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 28 At the time of the last inspection there was no governor responsible for health and safety and lunchtime supervision in the annexe was inadequate. These deficiencies have been addressed during the past year and standards of care are satisfactory. Considerable progress has been made in this period, because of the considerable expertise of a governor, in developing and producing a new health and safety policy. Governors approved the policy very recently and procedures now need to be embedded in school routines. Adequate measures have been taken to improve supervision at lunchtimes for pupils in the annexe but given the location and nature of the building and play areas staff have to be constantly vigilant and pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour. This trust is not misplaced. Pupils usually behave well. For example, they take care when setting out resources for afternoon lessons.
- 29 Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has plans to ensure all staff receive regular reminders in relation to awareness of potential issues. Pupils' personal development is monitored well. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well and this helps them to give good individual support. Personal needs are dealt with effectively. Good procedures help pupils to settle well in the reception

classes. An adequate number of staff are trained in first aid and sick or injured children are cared for well. Good behaviour is promoted successfully. Praise and rewards are given consistently for good behaviour and attitudes as well as for good work or effort. Potential issues are dealt with well and most parents and pupils feel confident that the school handles issues such as potential bullying effectively. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very effective and contribute well to the very good overall levels of attendance.

- 30 Assessment procedures in the foundation stage are developing but do not always accurately pinpoint what children know, understand and can do. These procedures have not developed sufficiently since the last inspection when it was a key issue. Information from statutory and non-statutory tests is not used thoroughly enough to provide information about pupils' rates of progress. Although data is beginning to be analysed, there is no specific identification of individual pupils' strengths and no precise setting of targets, for example, in literacy and numeracy, to help track rates of progress. Consequently pupils and parents are not as well informed as they could be about pupils' progress and what they need to do to improve their performance. Despite some good examples of assessment, insufficient use is made of the findings to plan pupils' work. There are shortcomings in the school's procedures for identifying pupils with SEN. Current criteria are not detailed enough to help teachers recognise the point at which concerns need to be raised. The school has a large proportion of children with above average or better attainment. This has an understandable impact on the school's perception of the performance of average and lower attaining pupils and its ability to differentiate between pupils in these bands and those with SEN. Consequently, too many pupils are put forward as having SEN. An additional concern is that some pupils who have EAL are identified as having SEN for no other reason than that their understanding and use of the English language is at an early stage of development. IEPs have not always been reviewed regularly enough to ensure that progress is maintained. The annual reviews for pupils who have statements of SEN are appropriately planned and regularly carried out. Pupils with SEN do not have sufficient awareness of their learning targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 31 At the time of the previous inspection the school was "extending" its links with parents. However, in recent years, uncertainties over staffing and the headship of the school have seriously impaired relations with parents. The acting headteacher and governors have acknowledged the situation and are taking good steps to successfully rebuild the partnership, which is now satisfactory.
- 32 Parents have mixed views of the school. In the pre-inspection meeting, the parental questionnaires and in letters to the registered inspector they praised aspects of the school's work but also expressed significant concerns. In particular, most feel their children like school, are making good progress and behave well. They think teaching is good and their children are encouraged to work hard. However, many have concerns about approaching the school with questions or a problem. They also comment that they do not receive enough clear information about how their children are getting on. They do not feel the school has worked closely with parents or that it is has been well led and managed. However, they are generally supportive of the acting headteacher. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The school has made good steps recently to involve parents and to provide them with better information. Newsletters have been improved this term and give information on staffing, the curriculum and school events. Parents took part in the school's "visioning day" and very recently have attended coffee afternoons to share their views with the acting headteacher and acting

deputy headteacher. Pupils' homework diaries have been revised. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory; they meet requirements but do not include precise enough targets for pupils' improvement. Reports for the pre-reception children are good and give parents a good flavour of their children's progress. There is little contact between parents and staff at the start and end of the school day. Relationships with parents and the pre-reception class are good and the reports to parents are much appreciated. However, because parents do not deliver or collect their children from the classrooms the rich opportunities for bridging children's home and school lives are missed.

- 33 Systems to involve parents if the school feels a pupil has SEN are appropriate. Parents are well consulted. They attend and contribute to review meetings and some of pupils' targets require input from parents. Parents of statemented pupils usually contribute to annual review meetings.
- 34 Parents are involved well in their children's education by supporting homework, ensuring their regular and prompt attendance, helping with school activities and attending consultation sessions. The Parent Teacher Association regularly raises funds for the school. Good support is given to parents of new pupils and a good induction process helps the youngest pupils settle quickly into the reception classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 35 The deputy headteacher has been at the school for less than three years. During this time she has often acted as the headteacher when the former headteacher has been absent because of illness. She is now acting headteacher until a permanent headteacher is appointed for April 2002. She has led the school well during a potential time of instability for the school. Despite the high turnover of teachers in the last two years, there is every sign that the staff are working well as a team and that their morale has improved. The acting headteacher is supported well by the governors and has set in train important and necessary improvements. She and the governors are well aware of what still needs to be done. Good use has been made of advice from the Local Education Authority. The school's capacity to continue to improve is good.
- 36 The school improvement plan is a useful tool to guide the school's future. Priorities are appropriate, targets are sufficiently precise and costs are clearly identified. The governors discuss the plan regularly and they now also receive clear reports from the acting headteacher. The governors monitor the school's budget closely and the most recent audit praised the efficiency of control and raised no issues. Specific grant funding has been used appropriately to help the school improve its curriculum and teaching. Governors apply the principles of best value generally well, for example they compare the school's performance with similar schools and obtain comparative quotes for work to be done on the accommodation. The governors commented, in discussion with inspectors, that they are much more involved in the life of the school than they were over two years ago. In most respects they fulfil their responsibilities well. Their liaison with subject co-ordinators has been very helpful in revising and updating subject policies. Performance management is up and running and all teachers have targets. The acting headteacher's targets are appropriate and include improving the monitoring of teaching and learning. An important target for the acting deputy headteacher is to improve further the partnership with parents. A useful start has been made in lesson observations, including paired visits by the acting headteacher and LEA advisor, and observations by some subject co-ordinators. The improvement plan importantly recognises the need to improve assessment procedures and the use of assessment results.

- 37 The newly appointed SENCO is aware of weaknesses in the management of SEN but has not had sufficient time to bring about the necessary changes to the unsatisfactory provision, which is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. The SENCO has accurately identified where improvements need to be made. A register of SEN is kept but does not contain enough detail of dates and levels of need. It is therefore not a useful document for tracking the progress of statemented and non-statemented pupils. Liaison with external agencies is satisfactory and developing.
- 38 The school is adequately staffed with experienced and suitably qualified teachers and a satisfactory level of support staff. The turbulence caused by the high level of turnover of teachers, the uncertainty over the headteacher post, and the high level of long term sickness of teachers have had a negative impact on consistency in pupils' progress and partnership with parents. Good recruitment procedures have helped to alleviate this position. Good procedures for the induction of new teachers are contributing well to establishing teamwork. Administrative support is excellent, ensuring the acting headteacher and teachers spend the minimum of time on administrative issues.
- 39 Accommodation is satisfactory. Recent improvements have dealt well with issues raised in the previous report. Security, reception and administration areas and the staff room are very good. Pupils' toilets have been improved but there are none in the mobile classrooms. The governors have established a good programme of improvements, which they are beginning to relate to curriculum needs. The split site presents difficulties, for example, in relation to management, whole school occasions such as worship and sharing of resources. No water is available in classrooms in the annexe and in the mobiles. Inevitably this has a negative impact in subjects such as science and art. Several classrooms are cramped for the number of pupils. The libraries are inadequate both in size and location, limiting scope for pupils' independent learning. Resources are satisfactory overall but more challenging reading matter is needed in the infant classes. Resources for ICT are too limited.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40 The governors and acting headteacher should:

- (1) Improve the progress of the most able pupils by:
- identifying them, including the potentially gifted and talented;
 - setting them challenging tasks and targets for their learning and monitoring their progress more thoroughly.¹
 - giving them more challenge in their reading in the reception and infant classes.

(Paragraphs: 1, 2, 4, 6, 14-16, 19-20, 46, 48, 63, 66, 70, 72, 74-76, 95, 101)

- (2) Improve assessment procedures throughout the school and make sure the results of assessment are used to help plan pupils' work.¹

(Paragraphs: 5-6, 16, 19, 30, 64, 70, 77, 100-01, 103, 105, 115)

- (3) Improve provision for SEN¹ by:

- identifying SEN more thoroughly and make sure IEP targets are precise and measurable;
- making sure teachers' plans include attention to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN;
- improving teachers' and learning support assistants' skills in meeting SEN;

(Paragraphs: 7, 17, 21, 30, 37, 63, 70, 76, 91)

- (4) Improve provision for the few pupils with EAL by:

- identifying their needs more closely and set targets for their learning;
- monitoring their progress.

(Paragraphs: 8, 18, 22, 30, 43, 63, 76)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL FOR INCLUSION IN THE ACTION PLAN

- Ensure pupils have opportunities to develop their ICT skills within the whole curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 3-4, 15, 17, 19-20, 39, 62, 67, 95, 119)
- Make sure teachers' marking helps pupils to improve their progress.¹
(Paragraphs: 16, 64, 76)
- Make sure pupils' annual reports give clear targets for their improvement.
(Paragraphs: 30, 32)

¹ indicates that the school is aware of the issue and has made reference to it in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	12	34	29	0	0	0
Percentage	5	15	43	37	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. 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	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	439
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

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	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	31	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	27
	Girls	31	31	31
	Total	59	59	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (90)	95 (100)	94 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	25	27
	Girls	31	31	31
	Total	57	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (92)	90 (92)	94 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	33	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	29	32
	Girls	35	32	35
	Total	65	61	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (89)	88 (86)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	32
	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	62	63	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (82)	91 (88)	96 (91)
	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	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	2
White	373
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	1	-
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	806,942
Total expenditure	826,353
Expenditure per pupil	1,762
Balance brought forward from previous year	67,450
Balance carried forward to next year	48,039

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	439
Number of questionnaires returned	179

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	47	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	33	53	8	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	59	8	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	57	14	6	3
The teaching is good.	30	54	8	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	47	26	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	37	16	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	32	55	5	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	17	47	25	11	0
The school is well led and managed.	12	42	21	13	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	55	13	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	42	22	9	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

- 41 Provision in the reception classes has improved since the last inspection. The new foundation stage co-ordinator has introduced changes that have had a beneficial impact on the quality of education provided. She has a clear understanding of how provision can be further improved. The co-ordinator has responsibility for the two reception classes and for the pre-reception class that provides part time education for autumn and spring born children in the terms after their fourth birthdays.
- 42 Assessments of children in their first term in the reception classes indicate that the English skills of most are well in advance of those usually found for children of this age. Their other skills are broadly above average. By the time they enter Year 1 the vast majority easily exceed the expected learning goals in mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. Their achievement is good in these areas. In all other learning areas most children achieve satisfactorily overall and exceed the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. The most able children could be making better progress in reading.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 43 Because of good teaching children make good progress in this area and the early learning goals are likely to be well exceeded by the time children leave the reception classes. Teachers establish very good relationships with children and this underpins the good progress they make in this important area of learning. Children are respected and they learn to respect one another. They are well motivated and very eager to learn and concentrate very well. When asked to do so, they move enthusiastically from one activity to the next, settle down quickly and the vast majority work purposefully until asked to move. The few who lose interest are, generally, amiably re-directed to an alternative activity. Teachers have high expectation of good behaviour, and children respond well. They are very well behaved, attentive and listen very well. Almost all have settled down very well to the routines of the reception classes. They understand what is expected of them. However, a very small minority miss out and do not fully benefit from all the reception class has to offer because strategies have not been developed to ensure the inclusion of all children, including those with an insecure understanding of the English language.
- 44 A strength of the reception classes is that children collaborate very well. Teachers encourage children to work in friendship groups when appropriate and this has a very positive impact on co-operation and interaction. Examples of this during the inspection included a group of boys working in the sand tray, three children playing with puppets and four playing with a doll's house. These and other instances were characterised by an absence of discord and by a sustained period of concentration. Children approach tasks confidently and are persistent. They have very good self help skills, work independently and help one another well. They have a tolerance of one another and appreciate that other children may have different interests and strengths. Their very positive attitudes to work and constructive relationships have a strong impact on their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Communication, language and literacy

- 45 By the time children leave the reception class they are likely to exceed the national goals for this age group. They make good progress in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in writing. Given their good skills on entering the school, the most able children do not achieve as well as they should in reading. Teaching in this learning area is satisfactory overall.
- 46 Speaking and listening skills are much better than those usually found in this age group. In both classes, children listen attentively, respond well to questions and express their views confidently. Because of their mature language skills, they explain their ideas, negotiate, initiate activities and collaborate to a much greater extent than is usual for this age. Their very well developed speaking and listening skills enhance relationships with other children. The teachers have very good story telling skills which are effectively used to foster children's enjoyment of stories. Their telling of the familiar story, *The Three Little Pigs*, captivated children in both classes. They responded enthusiastically, huffing and puffing and joining in the repetitive lines. In one class they recalled hearing several versions of the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and showed that they understand that different versions of a story remain consistent in the essentials yet differ in detail. Children understand that text carries meaning and handle books well. The majority recognise letter names and sounds and many combine them to form simple words, such as "pig". Several recognise simple words and know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Already many are achieving the goals set for the end of the reception year. However, not enough is expected of children in reading. In particular, high attaining children are marking time because the books they are given to read are too simple and do not build on their very good language skills.
- 47 Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in writing. Their knowledge of letter sounds is developing well and most write their own names very competently. During the week of the inspection, children independently wrote their names on their paintings and other work. Some are beginning to write simple sentences guided by their teachers. However, there are missed opportunities to promote writing. For example, one group activity supported by a teacher entailed sequencing pictures to retell the story, *The Three Little Pigs*. Given children's good language skills this did not provide sufficient challenge for the most able. Unsupported writing activities vary in quality. Those that are well planned and imaginatively resourced, attract children and provide a good focus for extending their writing skills. For example, children were drawn to a small writing area that provided postcards, envelopes and models of key words to help them write their own letters. But in the role play area there is no opportunity for children to practise their writing.

Mathematical development

- 48 Mathematics teaching is good and the good range of activities helps to consolidate and extend children's well developed mathematical skills and knowledge. Many have already attained some, if not all, of the goals set for the end of the reception year. The vast majority are likely to considerably exceed these goals by the end of reception. Most already count accurately. When checking how many little bears she had for making patterns, one girl counted accurately to twenty-nine. The majority confidently match numerals to numbers, at least up to 10. Many are able to add and calculate the difference between numbers. Dice games give good opportunities for developing number skills. For example, one child said; " I need to throw six to catch up with Hannah". Another, having thrown a six and a two immediately said; "Mine is eight".

These activities are well organised and enjoyable but are not always challenging enough to extend the number skills of the most able children.

- 49 The use of positional language, a focus for learning during the week of the inspection, was well taught. In one good activity children directed others to stand in front of, behind or beside an object or person. They learned that “beside” and “next to” meant the same. In one follow-up activity, they painted pictures, placing trees, clouds, flowers and other features in the correct location, as directed by the well-briefed adult leading the activity. In another engaging activity, groups worked with the teacher to make booklets about a story of a lost dog and where it might be hiding. The full potential for employing positional language in this activity was well brought out. The lessons consolidated what most children already knew. However, in each class there were small groups of children whose uncertain understanding of positional language had been noted when the topic was introduced. Imaginative and well planned additional activities were introduced for these children. With the help of a toy parrot, which hid inside, behind or at the side of a box, their understanding was deepened and they made good progress in correctly using positional language
- 50 The children enjoy mathematical activities. They are very highly motivated. When activities change, they move eagerly from one to another. They work purposefully, even when not directly supervised by an adult, and often apply their previous knowledge well. For instance, two boys drew on their past work on two-dimensional shapes when creating collage pictures. One explained; “I used five rectangles, one square and one triangle to make my man”

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 51 By the time they leave the reception classes, most pupils exceed the expected learning goals. Achievement is satisfactory overall but making skills are very well developed. They use scissors and other tools confidently to cut and to join junk materials when making model houses. They select materials with imagination and care to enhance their models, for instance by using polystyrene granules to create smoke emerging from a chimney. Teaching and learning are good and children learn new skills quickly. For instance, having shaped clay to create diva pots, children learn to impress patterns in the clay using modelling tools and other objects.
- 52 Children’s curiosity and interest are well aroused by teachers’ use of interesting resources, including, during one lesson, a range of house building materials and tools. Many children know the names and purpose of these resources that included bricks, roof tiles and a saw. Later in this lesson, four boys played with doll’s house for a considerable time. They knew that the house walls were made of bricks and that the roof was tiled. They were planning building alterations, including the installation of a swimming pool. In this lesson there was a good range of well planned adult-led and child-directed activities which extended pupils’ understanding of materials and construction processes. Teachers often gave children encouragement to work in friendship groups, for instance by asking; “Charlotte, you’re going to make a house would you like to choose two friends to work with you.” This had a very positive impact on children’s ability to collaborate in practical tasks.
- 53 Children have good skills in using construction kits. A weakness is that there is little opportunity for work on a larger scale, for example with big wooden bricks, to build a structure that exceeds their own height or that extends their collaborative skills. Children use ICT confidently. The use of headsets and tape recorders to listen to favourite stories was a favourite activity during the inspection week. Children have

access to computers but their learning is restricted because by the few programs the school has available for the foundation stage. Children have appropriate opportunities to extend their knowledge of time and place. In their maps of routes from home to school, most show a good awareness of features in the locality. They use their senses to explore the sights and sounds in the environment. Their sense of history is appropriately fostered by their focus on families and special occasions. Through making diva pots and hearing the story of Diwali, children's awareness of a range of cultures and beliefs is well nurtured.

Physical development

- 54 Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in physical development. Although it was not possible to see a physical education lesson or to observe children in the outside play area, other observations indicate that children's movements are well controlled and their co-ordination is good. Their fine motor skills are very good and the control of tools is well above that expected of children in this age group. Most are very dextrous, particularly when using scissors. Their very good control of scissors and drawing and writing tools has a very positive impact on their independence and their learning in other curriculum areas. Teachers give children good opportunities to practise and refine their fine motor skills. They teach new manipulative skills, for instance, to enable children to successfully make finger pots. The provision for physical development is satisfactory and includes set times for physical education lessons in which children have opportunities to move on large apparatus. In addition, children have opportunities for riding and controlling wheeled toys in the designated outside area.

Creative development

- 55 Children are likely to exceed the goals for the end of the reception year. Achievement is satisfactory overall but there are some significant strengths. Teaching is good. Children have good opportunities to work with a range of two and three-dimensional materials and are well supported by adults. This quality of provision, coupled with the children's very good manipulative skills and well developed use of tools contributes to the very good use they make of colour and shape to express their ideas. They use a range of coloured papers very effectively to decorate train shapes and their pictures of lively jumping monkeys enhance the reception environment. They control paint well in their pictures of the three little pigs and the wolf. During the inspection, in their delightful felt pen pictures of their homes, children demonstrated their good drawing and observational skills and striking use of colour. Small groups worked unsupervised and were totally engrossed in their work as they produced imaginative collage pictures. They had very good cutting and joining skills and their use of colour and shape was very imaginative. Some had carefully cut around their work leaving a border of about half a centimetre. This showed a very high degree of sophistication in finishing their collage and also a very high degree of scissors control.
- 56 There are sound opportunities for children to develop their imagination through role-play. Boys and girls enjoy playing with a doll's house. They co-operate well, sharing the same imaginative world and remain involved in the play for a good length of time. Play in the home area varies in quality. In one class it lacks sufficient purpose and in another class it benefits from the teacher's intervention: "I'm coming to tea in ten minutes - you know I like hot chocolate don't you?" After a later intervention one child was heard to say; "Better hurry up, she said she'll be two minutes," and the group were rewarded with; "Oh, this looks lovely," from the teacher a few minutes later. Although, in general, children demonstrate a good level of responsibility when asked to tidy away,

this is not always the case in the home areas which sometimes appear uncared for and untidy. The school is aware that role-play is an area of provision which would benefit from thoughtful and imaginative development in order to enhance children's creative and language learning.

ENGLISH

- 57 Standards in the national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven, when compared with all schools nationally, have remained well above average over the last four years. When compared with similar schools, standards in 2001 were above average in reading and well above average in writing for seven-year-olds. The results for eleven-year olds, when compared with those in similar schools, were at least above the average overall. Inspection findings reflect these results. The current Year 2 pupils are attaining well above average in speaking, listening and writing and are above average in reading. In Year 6, standards continue to be well above average in speaking, listening, writing and reading. Targets set for English in Year 6 were exceeded and are being revised upwards for 2002. Standards show considerable improvement since the last inspection and by age eleven English is now a strength of the school. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 58 Most infant pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Usually they listen carefully and participate well in discussion. They contribute their ideas confidently and use a good range of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 use appropriate vocabulary not only in English but also in other subjects. In a good lesson, pupils expressed themselves clearly and used intonation well as they read out their written instructions on how to make a sandwich. High attaining pupils have the capacity to be challenged even further. For example, there is little use of role-play and drama to further develop their speaking skills. Junior pupils also make good progress. By the age of eleven, pupils listen very well and respect each other's views. They debate the merits of authors using mature language, presenting their views succinctly. In role-play in Year 6, pupils did well to answer questions about the historical character they were playing, but they showed a lack of confidence in being unable to give the character a commanding presence, thus indicating a lack of practice in drama. Year 6 pupils make good use of scientific terminology.
- 59 Progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 is not as good as that in other aspects of English. They are gaining a good understanding of letter sounds and their word building and word recognition are competent. However, the progress of the most able pupils in particular is being restricted because they are often not reading books that challenge them enough. Junior pupils make good progress and by Year 6 many have advanced reading skills. Year 6 pupils are given guided choice in their selection of reading matter and cope well with reading adult text, for example, extracts from Pepys Diary. They have a wide knowledge of authors and are equally capable of turning to reference books to retrieve information, but some are not yet as confident when reading text from the Internet. A characteristic of their reading aloud is that they are able to give meaning to text, to recall clearly elements of the story, to predict what might happen next and comment on an author's style. They enjoy reading and it is clear that many are well supported by their parents. The libraries, both in the main school and in the annex are inadequate in size and location. In order to compensate in part for this, older pupils are encouraged to bring books from home. Teachers ensure that the books pupils bring are at a suitable level of challenge.

- 60 Progress in writing is good in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. Just over half of pupils in Year 1 write in sentences but a considerable number have problems with letter formation. By Year 2 pupils' handwriting is clear and well formed and most write independently using correct punctuation. Many plan and write good quality stories. Pupils' experiences of reading poetry in class and the stimulus of a visiting poet have helped them to write about their thoughts and feelings. One group of Year 2 pupils showed their clear observation of events when they wrote the following:

'Chasing one another, shouting on and on
Watching the train go by,
Looking at the boys playing football,
Looking at the leaves falling down,
We like it here.'

- 61 Junior pupils are becoming knowledgeable about grammatical structures, punctuation, comprehension and writing fictional and non-fictional texts. By Year 4 they are writing interesting accounts and apply advanced word knowledge and very good sentence construction. For instance, one pupil described a fox advancing on a hedgehog as 'baring his teeth as the hedgehog sped over the bridge'. Pupils enjoy the challenge of writing in various forms and their work in story, poetry and in writing non-fictional accounts is often very good. Some excellent work was observed in Year 6 after the pupils had studied the work of war poets and this was matched by research work they had been engaged in when writing about 'Famous Victorians'. One boy, in connection with Armistice Day, had written with great sensitivity the following:

'Through the smoking mist of fired guns,
Lying wounded in the murky light'

and then went on to conclude in his last verse a repetition of the first two lines and the following:

'Peace is best, war is no fun,
For peace is the road to future hope'.

- 62 By Year 6 pupils write in a variety of styles, their handwriting and presentation are good and their spelling has shown real improvement over that of the earlier years. Year 6 pupils have regular spelling lists, which are designed to improve spelling and extend vocabulary. In much of the writing in the lower juniors pupils do not take enough care with their spelling, handwriting and presentation of work. There is no whole-school spelling scheme and strategies used are left to individual teachers. The use of ICT for word processing in infant and lower junior classes is too limited. Word processing is developing well in Years 5 and 6.
- 63 The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. It is never less than satisfactory. The literacy strategy has been implemented well and lessons are usually well structured as a result. A feature of the most effective teaching is that all pupils' abilities are catered for well. For example, high attainers are suitably challenged and pupils with SEN are well supported either by a learning assistant or teacher or a combination of both. In a very good lesson in Year 2 the teacher used a range of questions to ensure all pupils were suitably challenged as they developed their skills in writing instructions. In an equally effective lesson in Year 4, appropriate expectations ensured that all pupils participated well as they discussed their poetry preferences. However, catering well for the full range of abilities is not a consistent feature of all the teaching. The English targets for pupils with SEN are not precise enough and there is

scope to challenge the highest attainers even further. The English language needs of the few pupils with EAL are not identified clearly enough and tend to be confused with SEN.

- 64 Not enough structured time is given to reading, especially in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. Teachers' marking is too inconsistent. It varies from being very helpful to pupils on how to improve their learning to giving little or no advice. Reading records are unsatisfactory, the usual practice being to simply record books that have been read rather than standards of reading. Assessment is not consistently applied and therefore its results are of too limited value.
- 65 The subject is led and managed by the acting headteacher. She has produced a detailed plan for the development of writing, which is proving very effective as the quality of writing is now very good. She is very knowledgeable about the literacy strategy and gives good guidance on effective teaching methods. However, with her other management duties she does not have sufficient time to adequately monitor the teaching and learning of English.

MATHEMATICS

- 66 The school has done well to maintain its overall well above average standards in the national tests for pupils aged eleven. The results for seven-year olds have fluctuated more widely over time but in 2001 were above the average for all schools and in line with the average for similar schools. The current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving above average standards overall. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The fall in standards at age eleven is because of the high turnover of staff and the consequent discontinuity in the teaching and pupils' progress. Standards in the work seen have improved well since the last inspection but the school has recognised there is scope to challenge high attaining pupils even further. The curriculum is under review and how to provide more opportunities for complex problem solving is being considered.
- 67 By the age of seven pupils have a good knowledge of number. In Year 1 they confidently count to 20 and beyond and know that amounts of money can be made by using a range of different coins. Their skills improve rapidly as they move into Year 2 and most pupils count in multiples of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10. The high attaining pupils add and subtract numbers well beyond 100. They understand the importance of mental recall and teachers develop these skills very well through the good implementation of the numeracy strategy. A significant number of high attaining pupils develop very good number skills as they move through the juniors. Year 6 pupils recognise place value to a million, calculate fractional parts with confidence, know the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages and understand the role of ratios. A weakness in the provision is the lack of use of ICT to develop pupils' application of skills. Numeracy skills are supported reasonably well in other subjects, for example, in science and design and technology, but during the inspection there was insufficient evidence of opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their investigative skills. The high attaining pupils throughout the school are especially capable of higher levels of challenge in using their very good number skills.
- 68 Pupils throughout the school have opportunities to apply their knowledge of shape, space and measures in practical activities. In the infants, pupils investigate measures using standard and non-standard units. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise and name two-dimensional shapes including hexagons, pentagons and right-angled triangles. By the time they are eleven pupils calculate area and perimeter accurately and understand the

role of formulae to aid calculations. Year 6 pupils identify isosceles and equilateral triangles accurately and confidently measure angles to the nearest degree. In a good lesson they classified quadrilaterals according to the properties of their angles and sides. By the end of the lesson high attaining pupils sorted quadrilaterals according to their properties and placed them on Venn diagrams. Pupils enjoyed the challenge of logical thinking and developing reasons for placing each shape in a category. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of data handling by providing tasks that require pupils to use tallying and frequency charts and to draw a range of graphs. Pupils' ability to interpret information from a range of graphs increases as they proceed through the school. Year 6 pupils define accurately the differences between mode, mean and median

- 69 The quality of teaching was good or better in almost six in ten lessons. No lessons were unsatisfactory. In a very good lesson in Year 1 high quality relationships provided a very good platform for learning. Pupils were prepared to test their ideas about using money. When they made mistakes the teacher used the opportunity to reinforce learning. This helped pupils to grow in confidence and be more independent. The lesson was very well planned with appropriate activities at the right level to extend pupils' learning. At the end of the lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to use the language of money when explaining their answers, including those with SEN. All pupils made good progress. Teachers use appropriate mathematical language well and this helps to develop pupils' understanding. Where teaching is satisfactory, for example, in Years 3 and 4, good relationships are a strength but there are occasions when a small minority of pupils do not concentrate or behave as well as they can do and this reduces the effectiveness of their learning. In one lesson, although it was well planned, the teacher did not manage the behaviour of these pupils well enough to sustain a rigorous pace. Consequently, the pupils' high level of motivation evident at the start of the lesson was not sustained.
- 70 There is a high proportion of pupils with high prior attainment and assessment procedures are not developed sufficiently well to identify their needs, predict their rates of progress or ensure they are challenged sufficiently. Where assessment is effective, for example, in Year 5, teachers respond quickly to the learning needs of pupils and manage time and resources effectively. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher carefully monitored pupils' understanding and adjusted her teaching accordingly to ensure all members of the class were suitably challenged and achieved well. Notes of pupils' progress were used to plan the next day's work. When the most able pupils are taught effectively they achieve levels which are well above average. For example, half the pupils in Year 6 are already exceeding the expectations for eleven-year-olds, and in Year 5 four in ten pupils are already exceeding the standards expected of eleven-year-olds. Pupils with SEN often do not make the progress of which they are capable because targets for their learning are not identified clearly enough.
- 71 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and understands the action needed to improve standards further. There are appropriate plans to improve the use of ICT, following staff training, and to provide more opportunities for investigative work.

SCIENCE

- 72 Standards in the national tests for pupils aged eleven have remained high over time and the school has achieved well in relation to schools in similar contexts. The current pupils in Year 6 are attaining above average standards. At age seven pupils' performance in 2001, as assessed by the school, was average for the expected level but above average for the higher level. In the work seen in the current Year 2 pupils are

attaining above average standards overall. Throughout the school continuity in pupils' progress and attainment have been affected by the high teacher turnover but also, in the work seen, the able and most able pupils are often not challenged consistently. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Standards in the work seen are better than at the time of the last inspection.

- 73 There was only a very small amount of pupils' work in the sample from Year 1 and no lessons were observed in this year group. Pupils' work on senses was appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 2 have covered a good range of work especially on materials and their properties, and physical processes. The scientific content of the work is basically the same for all pupils but expectations on how they record their work are suitable to meet the range of abilities. Consequently they make generally good progress overall. Pupils have undertaken suitable scientific enquiry, for example, in testing whether different materials are magnetic or not. In a very good lesson pupils showed good understanding of electric circuits and used appropriate subject language well to talk about their work. A good feature of this lesson was that the work was progressively made more difficult. Many Year 2 pupils know what constitutes a fair test, make sensible predictions and record their work in writing, tables or pictures. Some of the written explanations of pupils' findings are good but not enough care is always taken with the presentation of work.
- 74 Progress falters in Year 3 and Year 4. Not enough account has been taken of what pupils' already know and can do and the challenge for able pupils is not consistently high enough. There is evidence in Year 3 of pupils making reasonable predictions in their enquires, for example, when testing paper for absorbency. On the other hand, some of the work, for instance, in describing the properties of materials, is very similar to what pupils would have done in Year 2. In a lesson in Year 3 pupils achieved well in the opening whole-class session and showed good knowledge of materials and their properties. However, when they undertook the subsequent investigation the most able pupils in particular did not achieve as well as they were capable because they did the same task as every one else. No lessons were observed in Year 4. In the sample of Year 4 pupils' work some pupils have given clear explanations of their investigative work but many have not taken enough care with how they record their findings. Most pupils in Year 5 are making good progress and attainment is above average in much of the work. Pupils show good understanding of solids, liquids and gases and have undertaken regular scientific enquiry. In a good lesson pupils showed good skills in testing how much air is in various types of soil and selected appropriate equipment well.
- 75 Pupils in Year 6 have undertaken good work on physical processes and have good understanding of forces. Their work shows good links with mathematics especially in their recording of measures. For example, a high attaining pupil carefully and accurately recorded his measure of force in newtons. Pupils' work includes clear written explanations of gravity. For instance, one pupil wrote; "Gravity causes objects to have weight." A good feature of pupils' science books is the glossary of scientific terms. In a lesson in Year 6 all pupils planned and carried out an investigation into air resistance. In the discussion prior to the enquiry they used scientific language very well. Most pupils made gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, although the most able pupils participated very well, they were not significantly challenged by the work.
- 76 Six lessons were observed. The teaching was good or better in four lessons and never unsatisfactory overall. A significant feature of the very good lesson was that all pupils were suitably challenged. Most lessons begin well with the teacher addressing the

whole class. Objectives for the lessons are shared appropriately with pupils. Discussion on previous work and work to be undertaken is generally productive but especially where careful questioning enables pupils to show their knowledge and understanding. In Year 6 the teacher's opening question; "What do you know about forces?" stimulated a lively discussion and pupils demonstrated their high attainment. In the good lessons resources are used well. The pace of the introductory sessions is invariably brisk but often in the middle part of lessons pace is slower especially for the most able pupils. In the effective teaching pupils with SEN or with EAL achieved as well as their peers but in the least effective teaching they were not given enough appropriate support. Pupils co-operate well and work safely with equipment. High attaining pupils often help other pupils. Whilst this is laudable it is another example of the most able pupils "treading water". Teachers' marking is very inconsistent. At best it is helpful and indicates how pupils can improve. At worst it is perfunctory and offers no help. The school needs to review the common practice of all pupils in mixed ability groups undertaking the same tasks at the same time

- 77 The co-ordinator has been at the school for less than a year. She is gathering together samples of assessed work and has begun to scrutinise samples of pupils' work in order to form a view of progress and attainment across the school. She did not inherit any evidence of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. She acknowledges that more work needs to be done on making better use of assessment results.

ART AND DESIGN

- 78 The attainment of eleven-year-olds meets expectations for their age and their drawing skills are good. These were particularly evident in drawings based on William Morris's wallpaper and textile designs. Good quality work was also seen in abstract compositions, drawn in charcoal, incorporating features of the industrial landscape. The attainment of seven-year-olds is above expectations for their age. Good observational skills are evident in portraits they create using a range of media including paint, pencil and ICT. Their paintings, inspired by the portraiture of Picasso, reveal good brush control and lively use of colour. Standards are much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Given pupils' good skills when they move from reception to Year 1, their achievements in Key Stage 1 are appropriate. In the juniors pupils do not achieve well enough and progress is patchy.
- 79 In Year 1 some pupils have produced very high quality scraperboard work. With very good control, pupils have cut back a layer of black paint to reveal exciting swirling shapes, brilliant bursts of colour and zig-zagging lines. Children have been taught a technique and they have used it with creativity and imagination to express the sights of bonfire night. During the inspection, the same pupils were asked to draw pictures in the style of various artists, reproductions of whose work were placed on each table. They worked with pastel crayons and chalks, controlling the materials well. However, the finished work lacked the vibrancy of their earlier fireworks pictures.
- 80 In Year 3, pupils have used materials well to produce their "Tattyboggle" pictures. During the week of the inspection, some good still life drawings were made. However, after Year 3, progress slows because teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough and the work pupils are given to do does not help them progress well enough and often leads to frustration. For example, in Year 4, pupils were given inappropriate large headed brushes to paint detailed and delicate items. In Year 5, pupils have been expected to work in response to the challenging work of three artists, Escher, Riley and Hundertwasser. However, they have not been given enough guidance on how to use materials and techniques. Their response, therefore, was not as good as could be

expected. Ideas and references in pupils' sketchbooks lack care and detail. Finished crayon pictures and black and white collage patterns were below the standard expected of this age group. Some pupils have spent considerable time researching the lives of these three artists. Pupils' learning improves in Year 6. Work they are given to do is challenging, yet clearly defined. Their good drawings of Victorian household equipment reveal well controlled use of line and good observational skills.

- 81 Pupils enjoy their art lessons. They are highly motivated and work with purpose and concentration. Behaviour is good and, even when frustrated by unsuitable equipment, pupils remain patient and well behaved. Infant pupils sharing pastel crayons were self controlled and good humoured when another pupil was using the colour they needed. They help one another, work amiably and in the infants often sing happily to themselves as they work.
- 82 Only one lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2. The teaching was satisfactory but the good standards in pupils' work indicate that the teaching in these year groups is usually better. Three lessons were observed in the juniors. The teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good or better in the other two. Class management was good in all lessons and as a result pupils responded well. In the best lessons there was good organisation and good use of resources. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils had access to a good range of reference material. In some lessons, practical activities were not well enough planned.
- 83 A key weakness is that there is not a satisfactory scheme of work. The school has decided to no longer use the QCA units of work but to develop its own scheme. The scheme for the autumn term has been written and is currently being used as a basis for lesson planning. In its present format, the scheme does not give teachers enough guidance on how to help pupils build up their skills and express their ideas and experiences using a range of media. There is a strong focus on the work of established artists but not enough guidance on how the work of other artists can realistically be used as a starting point for the pupils' development. Assessment, which until recently was entirely informal, now incorporates an annual observational drawing by each pupil to record progress from year to year. This is a welcome development introduced by the co-ordinator, which she hopes to build on. The co-ordinator has been responsible for the subject for only a short time and has not had time to fully develop her role. Nevertheless she has begun to monitor some of the work. ICT is under-used.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 84 Only two lessons were observed, one in the infants and one in the juniors. Evidence from pupils' completed work, discussions with staff and scrutiny of school documents together with the two lesson observations, indicates that eleven- year-olds reach the standards expected for their age. The standards achieved by seven- year-olds are above expectations. Standards are very similar to those reported following the last inspection.
- 85 Pupils enter Year 1 with good making skills. Good teaching helps pupils to further develop their skills. This was the case in a Year 2 lesson in which children, after having drawn plans, made models of houses. In a previous lesson they had been taught scoring and cutting techniques. They also knew how to use a fold of card as a hinge. The teacher reminded pupils of their previous learning and supported them well during their work. Her good subject knowledge enabled her to help pupils overcome difficulties and improve their work. Pupils applied their previous learning well. The materials they used were sometimes awkward to handle, but with their good manipulative skills and

persistence, the challenge was well judged. Good learning resulted and all made good progress.

- 86 In the lower juniors, learning proceeds steadily. In Year 4, pupils design and make a light shade, a purse and a pop-up book and have sound opportunities to work with a range of materials. In later years they evaluate manufactured products, including footwear and bread. Pupils' evaluations are often thoughtful and revealing. However, they lack sufficient opportunities to design, make, evaluate and modify their own products and this is a weakness. In Year 5, pupils follow an interesting topic on bread and, as a result, confidently explain bakery production processes. Nevertheless, their own practical experience associated with this topic is too limited. In Year 6, there are more opportunities for designing, making and evaluation as seen in pupils' work on slippers.
- 87 In the lessons seen, pupils had good attitudes to their learning. In Year 2, pupils handled tools very competently and applied their previous knowledge well. On encountering a difficulty, most persisted well until they had mastered the technique being employed. In Year 5, pupils tasted different types of bread. Nine or ten breads from different countries were placed on each table. Pupils' interactions were very positive. Most could explain why they liked or disliked a particular type of bread and were aware that others had differing preferences. They co-operated well and their maturity and good manners were evident in their response to this situation. In both classes, pupils behaved very well and enjoyed their lesson.
- 88 The teaching was good in the Year 1 lesson and satisfactory in the Year 5 lesson. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this underpins their good class management skills and promotes good behaviour. In both lessons the pace was brisk and this elicited a good response from pupils. Resources were well used and, when available, non-teaching staff were well deployed. In Year 1, the lesson effectively advanced pupils' making, designing and evaluation skills. In Year 5, pupils did not have enough opportunity to make improvement to the required range of design and technology skills.
- 89 Design and technology is taught in alternating terms with art and design. Currently there is no teacher assigned to take responsibility for the subject. The QCA curriculum is followed and assessment follows each unit. Teaching and learning are not being monitored effectively enough. ICT is under-used.

GEOGRAPHY

- 90 Standards are in line with nationally expected levels for pupils aged seven and eleven. Since the last inspection standards attained by pupils aged seven have declined due to high staff turnover and absence of staff. Standards attained by pupils aged eleven are at a similar level to those at the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed.
- 91 Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress, except for those with SEN whose progress is limited by their relatively low standards of reading and writing. Although they are sometimes given additional help by teaching assistants and by the class teacher when working in groups, they make slow progress in acquiring skills and understanding of places.
- 92 Geography is taught in conjunction with history as part of a humanities programme of alternating topics although some units of work usefully combine geography with other subjects. For example, the unit of work on the history of the Romans combines with

geographical work on settlements. Other cross-curricular themes are also being developed between science and geography in relation to work on weather, and between geography and fictional stories when developing knowledge of geographical features and life in contrasting island settlements. In these ways knowledge is being satisfactorily extended.

- 93 The requirements of the National Curriculum are being covered by the use of a national scheme. This has been adapted to take into account local studies of the area supplemented by field study work, especially during the residential visit to the local field study centre at Shugborough. By the age of seven pupils are able to correctly position Lichfield on a map of the British Isles and know the position of Britain on a world map, along with other locations they have studied through their work on the travels of Barnaby Bear. Mapping skills are being developed throughout Years 1 and 2 with pupils able to interpret maps and plans of places they have studied. They are beginning to use appropriate mapping symbols when drawing maps. In Year 2, pupils define what constitutes an island and describe the physical characteristics of the island of St Lucia. A good level of understanding of occupations has resulted from a comparison between those of St Lucia with those of Lichfield. In Year 1, pupils are gaining an understanding of different climates by selecting appropriate clothing to be taken by Barnaby Bear on the bear's travels to different lands.
- 94 By the age of eleven pupils' knowledge and geographical skills are satisfactory. They talk about current world issues and locate major countries of the world on a world map. They know about the importance of carefully choosing a housing location above a flood plain, using the Trent valley as an example. Pupils have also linked this to mapping a location for a 'Harry Potter' town. When studying climate, they show how animals adapt to varying climatic conditions. Pupils are interested in studying different areas of the world and are knowledgeable about key environmental concerns, but evidence from work examined suggests that insufficient time is being given to enable them to work in depth. Thus, although their knowledge is sound and they are able to discuss geographical issues, recording is weak and more able pupils are not being extended sufficiently.
- 95 In the lesson observed teaching was satisfactory and the teacher had adequate subject knowledge. The samples of pupils' work indicate that expectations of work rate and acquisition of knowledge and skills are not consistently high enough, particularly of the potentially above average attainers. In Years 5 and 6, ICT is being introduced to aid further geographical enquiry but this is at a very early stage of development. The potential of the use of the Internet and e-mail in enhancing geographical studies has not been realised.
- 96 The geography co-ordinator has been in post for two years and has developed the planning of units and their evaluation. She is aware of the need to further develop monitoring of pupils' work and to improve assessment and has plans in hand to accomplish this.

HISTORY

- 97 Standards have improved since the last inspection. At ages seven and eleven, standards are above those expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils are making good progress and are gaining a good standard of knowledge about life during different periods of history, with older pupils particularly knowledgeable about the lives of famous people. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress, being aided in their work by working in mixed ability groups and by the help and advice given by teaching assistants

and other adult helpers. All pupils are developing the use of research skills to access information. Older pupils know the difference between primary and secondary sources and make informed choices between fact and opinion.

- 98 History forms part of the humanities programme along with geography and care is taken to ensure that wherever possible links are made with other subjects. In a topic on Britain since 1948 in Year 3, a range of artefacts had been collected by pupils and teachers, photographs had been studied and maps had been used to compare and contrast now and then. When working on a topic on early Egypt, Year 2 pupils drew a map of Africa and correctly placed Egypt and the Nile Valley. They know that there are different types of pyramids and can correctly name them. A good lesson in Year 4 about the Viking invasion extended pupils' vocabulary well when they described their feelings on setting out to sea in a Viking long boat using descriptive words such as 'frustrated', 'quivering', and 'horrified'. They expressed the feelings of a Viking warrior well. In Year 5 a topic on the Tudors produced work which was more variable, especially in its presentation. Some very good work was observed in Year 6 when pupils studied a famous Victorian of their own choice. Different forms of recording were used including sketches, time lines, reported writing, diary extracts and word search techniques. Each topic was very well presented and included a contents page and bibliography. The pupils had clearly enjoyed the challenge, producing work of high quality. Pupils with SEN also rose well to the challenge and produced work of good quality. High attaining pupils' work was of outstanding quality. The work was very carefully appraised by the teacher who made helpful comments on how to extend the work further.
- 99 Four lessons were observed in which the overall quality of teaching was good. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the history curriculum and are aware of ways in which the subject can be presented to create high interest levels amongst pupils. Teaching techniques are being broadened to include drama and the use of the Internet, although at times the language used on the Internet is too difficult for pupils to readily gain understanding. The use of drama for role play, for example in Year 6, is helping pupils gain an understanding of past life and times but is insufficiently used throughout the school as a teaching technique. The scheme adopted is based on a nationally agreed scheme and this provides teachers with a useful framework. However, the arrangement of topics is unhelpful to understanding the chronology and only the oldest pupils have a firm grasp of sequence of key events and personalities.
- 100 Fieldwork visits are helping pupils gain understanding of the past. For example, Year 4 pupils spoke knowledgeably about their visit to the nearby Roman settlement of Wall, as part of their work on early settlers and invaders. Research techniques are being aided by the use of the local authority loan collections to supplement the school's very few artefacts. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role but she has begun an audit of resources and is involved in planning an updated policy document. She is gathering useful information on the evaluation of units of work covered and recognises that assessment is an area for development. Pupils' progress is not systematically recorded.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- 101 Since the previous inspection, the provision for ICT has improved and there is now adequate coverage of all aspects of the subject. Standards are at a similar level to those reported at the time of the previous inspection with some improvement in control technology. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected but not as high as they should be given the level of skills and understanding that almost all pupils bring

from their home experiences. Progress over time has broadly been satisfactory for most pupils, including those with SEN or EAL, but it has been patchy because of the lack of use of assessment. The highest attaining pupils have not been challenged enough. Progress in lessons is usually satisfactory but in Years 5 and 6 it is often better because of the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers.

- 102 Pupils in Year 2 have secure skills in using the computer mouse to “paint” pictures in the style of a variety of artists. They use a good range of the computers’ tools to spray, fill, block and amend their work. They also load programs and save and print their work. They confidently compare the techniques of using pencil crayons and the computer and most express preference for the former. In word processing, the pupils change fonts, size and colour and centre text accurately. Many have computers at home and they understand that ICT is an important part of life in society today. Pupils have had some limited experience of control technology and teachers’ planning shows that these skills will be taught later in the year. There are weaknesses in the planning of the ICT curriculum that affect pupils’ progress. Long gaps in time between the teaching of the subjects’ different elements results in insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their skills. For example, during this term the lack of opportunity to develop word processing and control technology contributed to uneven progress in these important skills. The absence of a detailed scheme outlining the key skills to be taught has led to what was taught in Year 1 sometimes being repeated in Year 2.
- 103 Pupils in Year 6 achieve the expected standards for their age but the changes in staff, and lack of assessment and guidance, have contributed to standards not being as high as they could be. Pupils are keen to use computers and recognise how they can be used to good effect to save time in writing, present work effectively and imaginatively, and aid spelling. Pupils are familiar with the main toolbars and menus of the computer and handle them confidently. Many have good skills in amending text and some type quickly and accurately. Pupils have appropriate skills in analysing data and in making spreadsheets and graphs. They understand key vocabulary and formulae to carry out data analysis. They competently load, save, retrieve and print their work. They make good use of some of the computers’ tools such as the spell checker and this helps them to improve their presentation of work in English. Control technology was not seen during the inspection but pupils have an appropriate understanding of how computers can be used to control a series of actions. There are good links with literacy in Years 5 and 6. The teachers encourage pupils to research information from the Internet, amend their own writing and present their work effectively. Pupils take much care in using borders and clipart to enhance their work and add emphasis to their writing by enlarging some words and altering the font. There are suitable opportunities for the pupils to send and receive e-mail and these are to be extended later in the year.
- 104 Pupils are avid learners of ICT and enjoy working alone or with partners. They behave very well throughout lessons and maintain good levels of concentration. They work hard and persevere with tasks, willingly experimenting with the different tools available on the computer. The most able often support the less confident. This increased confidence since the previous inspection has been brought about by more effective teaching. Pupils use computers to support their work in some other subjects, for example, in English and history. Pupils in Year 6 used search engines to research information about Samuel Pepys and extracted key information about his life and work. However, ICT is underused within the whole curriculum especially in mathematics and science.
- 105 Some teachers have begun to keep very basic records of the pupils’ coverage of the subject but these are insufficiently detailed to ensure that skills are built upon

consistently between year groups. The subject leader has been absent from school due to periods of illness and there is a lack of determined and well-focused leadership which has hampered progress. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there is no coherent approach to identifying pupils' progress and attainment. In addition, there is no sufficiently detailed scheme of work to help teachers build on what has already been taught. The school has suitable plans to tackle these issues.

- 106 Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' subject knowledge is patchy. Some staff have good skills and knowledge but others lack confidence. The lack of guidance and training means that the teaching of basic skills is adequate but ICT is not used sufficiently as a tool to enhance learning. The computer suites are rather cramped and this makes organising lessons difficult in some of the larger classes. Most staff provide a mixture of activities so that half of the class work on computers while the rest work with pencil and paper. However, in some lessons the pupils work in groups of three at a computer and this restricts their access and slows their learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and during lessons they intervene appropriately to make suggestions or to guide the less able. Where staff have good subject knowledge, as in Years 5 and 6, they provide sufficient challenge. In some infant classes the work is pedestrian and pupils are sometimes required to fill in basic worksheets that reinforce what they already know but do not extend their learning. Teachers maintain good discipline and reward hard work with praise. The school has plans to raise the level of teachers' competence by providing further training.
- 107 Resources for ICT are too limited and the absence of computers from most classes restricts opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in lessons in other subjects. The range of software for developing basic skills is suitable and the pupils have Internet facilities on most computers.

MUSIC

- 108 Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum at the age of seven. Standards are similar to those described in the last report. No teaching of music was observed at the end of the junior stage so overall standards for this age range could not be judged. However, the oldest pupils were heard singing and the standard was good. Curricular planning is of good quality and covers all the elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils of all ages have a good range of opportunities to compose and perform. A good feature of the planning is the link made with other subjects. For example, in geography, pupils explored sounds that reflected the environment. Pupils in Year 6 described how they created the sound of water using different instruments to give a range of effects. They used symbols to record their compositions and indicated when different instruments should be played.
- 109 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use taped materials from a published scheme to support the curriculum. This links well to the school's planning and provides non-specialist staff with the resources they need to support the development of singing and appreciation of music. Pupils enjoy listening carefully to the beat of songs and perform well in groups to maintain pace and rhythm. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed swaying to the rhythm of music when listening to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.
- 110 Two lessons were seen in the infants. In one lesson the teaching was good and it was satisfactory in the other. In the good teaching the taped materials were used discriminately to develop ideas that met the needs of pupils well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson that focused on music getting quieter, there was healthy competition as pupils aimed to be the last person to hear the sound of the cymbal as it faded. The

teacher used their enthusiasm to improve their listening skills. Joining in with singing from the tape recorder challenged pupils when they have chance to adapt their voices to different characters in the musical story. In the juniors, lessons are taught by specialist peripatetic teachers. In the two lessons observed in the lower juniors the teaching was at least very good and inspired pupils. In an excellent lesson in Year 4 pupils were asked to decide if the pitch of the music went up or down. As the pianist decreased the intervals between the notes pupils' aural discrimination was assessed. The teacher taught pupils to recognise when to sing quietly. She emphasised precise articulation so that words were always audible. Pupils' enthusiastic singing, accompanied by two recorder players, was a joy to hear. Teachers strive to make music an exciting part of the curriculum. Pupils expressed disappointment when there was no more time to continue work they found thoroughly enjoyable. Tasks for homework were received with enthusiasm.

- 111 The quality of singing throughout the school is very good. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically and the upper junior pupils are challenged to sing songs and hymns in different parts. There are good musical links with the community. Recorder groups take part in county music festivals. They are invited to play in the cathedral and nearly 150 pupils took part in a schools' musical evening at the Civic Hall. At Christmas the school band has played at the local shopping centre. The school offers a wide range of instrumental tuition that includes strings, guitar and woodwind. Lunchtime choir practices are well attended by upper junior boys and girls who enjoy music making and extending their musical repertoire. Music enjoys a high profile in the school and provides strong cultural opportunities for pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 112 Five lessons were observed but none in Year 3 and Year 4. In the work seen pupils generally attained standards expected for their ages including pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
- 113 Pupils in Year 1 showed reasonable control of their bodies and performed a satisfactory sequence of movements across apparatus. Year 1 is a lively year group and pupils take time to settle to work. Teachers appropriately emphasise safety and are trying hard to teach pupils how to carry equipment properly. However, more floor work and a more-phased introduction to the use of large apparatus would be more suitable. Pupils in Year 2 co-operated in small teams as they followed a simple plan to locate different places in the hall. They showed adequate control of their bodies. In a good lesson in Year 5 pupils showed good hockey skills and control including some very accurate passing and shooting. Year 6 pupils persevered well in very cold conditions as they satisfactorily practised ball control in small groups. Behaviour was generally good.
- 114 The teaching was very good in one lesson, good in another and satisfactory in the remaining three. In all lessons teachers made sure pupils' bodies were suitably warm before they undertook the main activities. A key feature of the good or better teaching was the emphasis on helping pupils' improve. For example, Year 5 pupils improved their hockey skills because of their opportunity to evaluate their own and each other's performance. Suitable attention was given to safety in all lessons.
- 115 A range of extra-curricular sporting activities supplements pupils' physical education including netball, football, cricket, rounders, athletics and cross-country. Parents help in several activities. All junior pupils at some stage attend swimming lessons. The school expects that the vast majority of pupils will attain the end of key stage target.

The subject co-ordinator has been at the school for less than a year and has good subject knowledge. She has good plans for the way ahead and acknowledges that a system for assessing and recording pupils' is needed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 116 The provision for religious education has improved since the previous inspection and all classes now have sufficient time to study the subject. In Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with those expected in the syllabus followed by most schools in Staffordshire. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress over time. Progress is especially good in lessons in Years 5 and 6 because of thought provoking and challenging teaching. These pupils are particularly adept in linking their studies in lessons with their own personal beliefs and experiences, and this contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the syllabus and follow the additional guidance, provided by the subject leader, effectively. The subject leader has been instrumental in raising the subject's profile through the school and has contributed much to guiding colleagues in planning suitably stimulating lessons and activities. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers keep suitable records of the pupils' understanding of topics and use the information to plan the next series of lessons. However, the subject leader has had no opportunity to monitor teaching or learning to keep a check on how skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently.
- 117 Pupils in Year 2 have a suitable understanding of several religious festivals. They understand that there are similarities and differences in the creation stories as understood by Jews, Muslims and Christians. They have an appropriate knowledge of Bible stories and apply their knowledge of celebrations such as harvest to their understanding of care. The teaching of religious education is often linked to promoting the pupils' awareness of how they can relate their own beliefs to caring for others. In lessons about giving, the pupils successfully explored the story of the Magi and then discussed presents that they would give to Jesus. The teachers enlivened the discussion and helped pupils to understand the difference between value and cost.
- 118 Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of how some people's faith influences their lives. In an excellent session, led by a missionary to Afghanistan, pupils discussed sensitive and complex issues such as war and peace, cultural variations and the role of women in society. They made particularly good gains in their learning as this lesson was the culmination of work on examining the lives and impact of significant religious and social leaders from the past and enabled the pupils to understand that faith is made more real through action. Year 6 pupils also have a secure knowledge of several world religions and clearly understand their similarities and differences. Pupils in Year 4 also showed good understanding of ideas such as the love of God as they discussed the Christingle. One pupil remarked that the red ribbon was like "God's arms around the world". The teacher handled this very well and encouraged others to express their feelings and opinions, thereby successfully enhancing their understanding.
- 119 Pupils work hard in lessons and pay good attention to using their literacy skills. However, ICT is not used sufficiently to support the teaching. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to discussions and offer thoughtful ideas and opinions. Year 6 pupils ask perceptive questions. Pupils' interest in religious education is genuine and learning is effective. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and value others' points of view.

120 The teaching is satisfactory overall with some good or better lessons in the juniors. A suitable range of religious objects supports the teaching but the range of books in the library is too limited and this inhibits progress in pupils' research skills. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a strength in lessons is their encouragement of discussion. They provide clear and factually correct explanations of the different ways in which people celebrate festivals and worship. They encourage the pupils to value others' beliefs and use religious education well to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society. Teachers use questioning sympathetically to draw out pupils' personal ideas and beliefs. The planning of pupils' work is satisfactory and follows the guidance in the agreed syllabus. Most lessons have appropriate pace and include time for the pupils to reflect upon what they have learned. However, in a few lessons the pace and challenge diminish because pupils complete simple worksheets and the momentum of learning slows. Marking of pupils' work is often superficial and usually includes only a brief comment with little additional guidance to help them improve. Strong links are made with the parish church and other places of worship. Through visits to the church and visits from the clergy the pupils grasp the need to respect places of worship. Other events such as involvement in JC 2000 and events at the cathedral also enhance pupils' religious understanding. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in a Lent course as part of an extra-curricular activity.