

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103423

Headteacher: Mrs M McLaughlin

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Brackstone
21872

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 246295

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Warren Farm Road Kingstanding Birmingham
Postcode:	B44 0QN
Telephone number:	0121 3731741
Fax number:	0121 3820986
E mail address:	enquiry@christking.bham.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Foxall
Date of previous inspection:	19 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Brackstone 21872	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards? a) the school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed?
Mr P Dannheisser 1165	Lay inspector	Education inclusion	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
Mr M Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Geography	
Mr J Griffiths 20097	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Design and technology History Art and design	
Mr J Palethorpe 20671	Team inspector	Education inclusion Mathematics Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs S Leyden 2423	Team inspector	Special educational needs Visually Impaired Unit	
Mrs S O'Sullivan 31525	Team inspector		
Mr G Storer 19830	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ the King is a large Roman Catholic Primary School and includes a resource base with 19 children who are visually impaired. There are 385 pupils on roll, aged from 3 – 11. There are slightly more boys than girls. The school is situated in a large council estate built in the 1930s in Kingstanding, a suburb of Birmingham. Most of the houses are small semi-detached or terraced properties. A small number of pupils travel from owner-occupied housing on the periphery of the parish boundary. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 35 per cent and this is above the national average. The great majority of pupils are of white UK or Irish heritage. A small number of pupils are from Caribbean and Asian backgrounds. Three percent of pupils use English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs is well above the national average, at 40 per cent. Nearly five per cent of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need and this is also well above the national average. No pupils have been identified as gifted or talented. Children start Nursery in the school year in which their fourth birthday falls. They spend up to three terms there before transferring to the reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five. Currently, there are 43 children who attend Nursery on a part-time basis, and 45 children in Reception, all attending full time. There are two parallel classes per year group from Year 1 to Year 6. Children start school with very poor levels of attainment in speaking, listening and social skills. There is very little movement of pupils in and out of school because the local estate has an established community. However, over the past few years there has been a substantial turnover of staff. Christ the King is part of a local education action zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, the school adds good value to its pupils' education. It is an effective school where pupils are fully included in all activities and achieve well. This is a result of good teaching throughout the school and very high quality leadership and management. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are very good.
- Teaching throughout the school is good and, consequently, progress is good.
- Pupils enjoy school life and they behave well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils are fully involved in all activities. They benefit very well from community links and a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for personal development is very good.
- The school cares very well for its pupils, and their personal and academic progress is carefully checked.

What could be improved

- By the end of Year 6, standards in English are below average. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music are below those usually found among pupils of this age.
- The amount of time spent on all subjects except English and mathematics and 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 was last inspected in January 1998 and has made good progress since then. Inspectors at that time judged provision for the more able pupils to be weak, but this has been rectified through the use of rigorous assessment procedures. Increased opportunities have been provided to encourage pupils' initiative and responsibility. Those pupils who are not involved in physical education lessons are also given appropriate work to do. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching and in the leadership and management of the school. Provision for personal development is now very good, with particular strengths identified in moral and social development. Improvements have been noted in the care of the pupils and in the quality of the refurbished accommodation. The shared commitment to improvement is very good, as is the capacity to succeed.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	E	B
Mathematics	D	E	C	A
Science	D	E	C	A

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

Children start school at the age of three with very poor standards in all areas of learning. They make good progress the nursery and reception classes, but by the time that children are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, standards are still well below those expected for their age. Good progress is made in Years 1 and 2, but attainment is still well below average in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and science. This is because of the pupils continuing poor levels of speaking and weak use of vocabulary. Standards in Year 2 in mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music are below national expectations, but in relation to pupils' initial skills on entry to school, they make good progress in these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology and physical education are in line with national expectations in Year 2. Good progress is also made in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national averages in mathematics and science. Standards are also in line with national expectations in information and communication technology and physical education. However, standards are below average in English and below nationally expected levels in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the good quality of teaching and the very strong leadership of the headteacher. The school sets realistic targets that fully include and challenge all pupils, including those with specific learning needs, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They are keen and enthusiastic about their schoolwork.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. However, there are small but contained pockets of unhelpful behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils play and work well together. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance levels are below average because a significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term time.

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.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge; the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught consistently well. This ensures that pupils acquire knowledge and skills progressively throughout the school. Teachers' planning is of very good quality. Learning intentions are clearly identified and shared with pupils and this means that they understand what they are learning. A wide range of teaching methods is deployed which maintains the pace of learning, interest and concentration. Overall, pupil management is very good and this enables the pupils to concentrate on their learning. Support assistants are used very well to help all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, including the visually impaired, and those for whom English is an additional language. Learning support assistants and teachers praise the pupils very effectively and the marking of work is of good quality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All pupils are fully included in all activities. Extra-curricular provision is very good and very strong links have been established with local community groups. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but the time allocated to subjects other than English and mathematics is unbalanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides very well for these pupils. Individual education plans are detailed and specific to their varying needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good overall. Moral and social development is very good; pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong and the school fosters a strong community sense. Spiritual and cultural development is good; a climate has been developed that encourages the pupils to flourish, and opportunities are provided for them to explore their own cultural values and those of other peoples.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school where the personal and academic progress of all pupils is carefully monitored.

Parents are encouraged to take a full part in their children's education. However, many parents do not take up the opportunities offered by the school to work in partnership with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and leads by example. She is very ably supported in managing the school by very high quality input from senior staff and the specialist expertise of the bursar.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory requirements. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and participate in shaping the direction of the school through their effective committee system.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carefully checks the quality of teaching and monitors pupils' progress over time. Good use is made of test results to see where improvements can be made.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very efficiently to support all the pupils' learning. Specific grants are used well. The principles of best value are well understood.

There is a good match of staff to meet the needs of the pupils. The accommodation of the school is good. Learning resources are plentiful and of good quality.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school sent out 361 parent questionnaires and just under half of these were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. • Their children like going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • More information about their children's progress. • Parents would like to see the right amount of homework given. • Closer links with school.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments of the parents and agree that more could be done to indicate how well their children are achieving in comparison with national expectations. However, the team cannot justify any of the negative views. Inspectors feel that the range of extra-curricular activities is very good and the amount of homework given is appropriate for this stage of education. Inspectors feel that the school makes every effort to work with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery at the age of three with very poor levels of attainment in all areas of learning. Their speaking and listening skills are particularly weak and very few have had any social experiences before starting school. The children benefit from two years in the Foundation Stage environment, where they make good progress in all areas of learning. However, by the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum they are still below nationally agreed levels for this age group in all areas of learning. This is because their attainment is so low on entry into school and many receive little stimulus at home to enrich their learning.
2. The pupils' performance in national tests in Year 2 has shown some fluctuation from year to year, but has been consistently below the national average for the last four years. In the 2002 national tests for seven year olds, the pupils' performance in reading was lower than in most schools. The performance in writing and mathematics was especially so. When Christ the King's results are compared with those of schools whose pupils come from similar backgrounds, they are well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Inspection findings reflect the most recent national tests in reading and writing. However, although standards in mathematics are still below average, it is an improving positive picture.
3. There are no national tests in science for Year 2 pupils; standards at this age are based on teacher assessments. In 2002, the teachers' assessments indicated that the pupils achieved standards well below those found in most schools. These results were much lower than those of similar schools. The inspection findings confirm that standards in Year 2 are very low.
4. Standards in Year 2 are typical of those expected for their age in information and communication technology and physical education. However, standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, and music are below those normally found for this age group. This is because insufficient time is allocated to these subjects and, although National Curriculum requirements are met in each subject, there is a lack of depth in planning. This has occurred because there has been a sharp focus on raising literacy and numeracy standards.
5. In the national tests in Year 6, although the pupils' overall performance has fallen below the national average, results have steadily improved over recent years. In the 2002 tests, their performance in mathematics and science was average. However, results in English were well below average. In comparison with those in similar schools, results in the 2002 tests in mathematics and science were well above average. Results in English were above average. Inspection findings confirm that average standards have been maintained in mathematics and science. Standards are improving in English but are still below average.
6. No judgement could be made on standards in music in Year 6 because of insufficient evidence available during the inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards in information and communication technology are as expected for pupils aged 11 years. This is because of very good expertise in subject management and a good quantity of high quality resources. No judgement could be made on physical education at the end of Year 6. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history, and geography are below nationally agreed expectations.

7. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well across the curriculum in science, information and communication technology, design and technology, and geography. However, literacy skills are insufficiently developed across the curriculum and are not used to develop knowledge and skills in other subjects.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress towards targets set in their individual learning plans because they receive very good support in lessons, and work is carefully adapted to meet their individual learning needs. Pupils with visual impairment make good progress in all aspects of their learning because of the high level of skilled support and teaching they receive from specialist support staff. This ensures that they have full access to the curriculum and are helped to overcome any barriers to learning. The provision of additional opportunities to meet these pupils' special educational needs and the school's commitment to inclusion, result in pupils making very good progress in the development of their personal and social skills.
9. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, except in some of the foundation subjects, because of the good quality of teaching and the very strong leadership of the headteacher. The school sets realistic targets that fully include and challenge all pupils. All pupils achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the visually impaired make good progress in relation to their prior attainment because they are provided with very good levels of support from their teachers and the learning support assistants. Overall, the school adds good value to its pupils' education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. In the previous inspection attitudes were judged to be positive and behaviour was generally good. However, the inspection reported that there were too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their work. Pupils' attitudes to school are now very good. Enthusiasm for school is apparent in the interest they show in lessons and activities at lunchtime and after school. They are always enthusiastic in what they say about their school and its staff. The majority of pupils try hard and participate fully in the life of the school.
11. Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy coming to school. They have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults. As a result, they are happy, gaining in confidence and prepared for work. They try hard to behave well and sit and listen when asked to. Even the youngest have quickly learnt to work at tables with others. The majority of older pupils are willing to take part and work hard. Teachers always explain at the start of each lesson what they will be learning, and expectations are high. Generally, behaviour in class and around the school is very good and sometimes it is exceptionally good. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the pupils were unfailingly focused, collaborative and interested. This helped them to concentrate on the task in hand and encouraged listening and learning. Behaviour is never less than satisfactory.
12. The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal development is well established. Older pupils in the school are given a wide range of responsibilities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Pupils take registers to the office and there are further tasks such as playtime, library and classroom monitors. Some pupils take part in the school council to which older pupils are elected. They chair and minute their own meetings and have a real sense of contributing to their school. They are informed by views taken from class council meetings, and all pupils feel they may contribute if they wish. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 help younger children and play well together at lunchtime, both in the playground and in the games room. They look after the young pupils with care and affection. This has a strong impact on their own development

and the spirit of the school. There are a number of pupils who are registered as blind. They play a full part in the life of the school and have access to the full range of provision. All other pupils enjoy their company in class and in the playground. This helps everyone prepare for a world with people of differing talents. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that the initiative and personal responsibility given to pupils in their lessons were limited, and learning tended to be teacher-directed. Although this does still happen at times, it is less often so.

13. All classes have a time to share and discuss feelings and concerns within an informal circle situation. This encourages pupils to speak about their feelings and discuss a range of issues as well as dealing with everyday problems as they come up. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. For example, a tragic local situation that had affected some pupils was sensitively and compassionately referred to in assembly by the headteacher during the inspection. Pupils are aware of the results of their actions upon others and are confident to discuss their feelings about a variety of issues. Pupils confidently speak about their feelings and discuss a range of issues as well as dealing with everyday problems as they come up. Relationships between pupils are very good in lessons, and they work together amicably and share material sensibly. The pupils care about each other, and their actions display good moral and spiritual dimensions. They understand the school's expectations and what the result of doing well or needing support might be.
14. Pupils with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language concentrate well in all their lessons and work hard. They enjoy participating in all the lessons and activities in school, and are eager to take part in class discussions. As a result of the school's commitment to inclusion and the positive relationships throughout the school community, the pupils become increasingly confident in their social relationships and in their ability to succeed. Classroom assistants are aware of the need for pupils with visual impairment to become as independent as possible and build this into their curriculum plans and their teaching. Pupils with visual impairment move confidently around the classrooms and the school site. They manage their specialist resources well, such as low-vision aids and closed-circuit television.
15. The levels of attendance are below national averages and have not improved since the previous inspection. The lower than average figures are mainly attributable to family holidays taken in term time, without which the amount of absence would be about average. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. There have been two temporary exclusions during the past academic year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when, although teaching and learning were judged satisfactory overall, there was a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons observed. It is clear that the good teaching overall is having a positive impact on achievement, except in some of the foundation subjects where progress is unsatisfactory.
17. All teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the age groups and subjects they teach. For example, the teaching observed in the nursery and reception classes indicates a good understanding of the needs of these young children. This is exemplified by the interactive manner in which they are taught, where all children are fully included in the stimulating activities. In Years 1 to 6, teachers' good subject knowledge is evident through a confident approach, the interesting choice and use of resources, and good quality questioning. This was evident in a very good science lesson in Year 3, when the teacher continually challenged the pupils through discussion, questioning and reviewing. In an

excellent mathematics lesson in a Year 1 class the teacher successfully asked the pupils to recap on the previous lesson to remind them of how to 'take-away', using either their fingers or mental strategies. It was handled very well with a series of questions, discussion and calculations.

18. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in all classes. This enables the pupils to acquire an appropriate knowledge of skills. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson in a Year 3 class the teacher stimulated the pupils with a skilful warm-up session that involved the use of 'doubles' and 'halves'. This ensured that all pupils were thoroughly focused on the lesson. The teacher successfully maintained their interest through high levels of intervention, a brisk pace and the effective use of mathematical language such as 'symmetry'. Literacy lessons are characterised by clear explanations, good classroom organisation and effective use of time at the end of the sessions to evaluate what the pupils have learnt.
19. Teacher confidence in information and communication technology is developing well and this ensures that skills are taught appropriately. This was illustrated in a Year 5 session, which was led by a knowledgeable teacher who ensured that the pupils acquired the skills to use a graphics program to create a room plan.
20. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations and all staff are committed to raising standards of attainment. This is evident through the good progress that is made by all groups of pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language. The quality of marking is consistently good and verbal feedback is very effectively used to promote learning. Individual, group, class and school targets are set and this encourages pupils to have some understanding of their own learning. Homework is used well throughout the school and is particularly effective in promoting learning. As a result, the inspection team feels that the parents' negative views on homework received before the inspection are not justified.
21. Very good use is made of teaching assistants, who support the pupils' learning very well. In all classes, groups of pupils work with these assistants to ensure that the pace of learning is maintained and work is completed. For example, a teaching assistant in a Year 5 science lesson helped pupils in their experiments that involved mixing water with a range of different liquids. Not only were the pupils able to examine the effect of the water on these liquids, but their scientific vocabulary was also developed. Resources are used well to support learning and good use is made of time to maintain the pupils' interest and concentration.
22. Pupils are managed very well and appropriate methods are used to promote good procedures for discipline. The pupils are provided with clear guidance to ensure that they learn how to behave in class. All pupils are encouraged to participate in their own learning through discussions in pairs and groups, thus promoting independent learning.
23. The quality of planning is of a particularly high standard throughout the school. Learning intentions are very clearly defined, the differing group work is outlined and planned opportunities for assessment are clearly identified. This ensures that both the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum are carefully focused to enable the relevant teaching to take place, which fully includes all pupils.
24. Teachers and specialist staff work closely to plan the work for pupils with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language. They take account of their special educational needs and the targets in their individual learning plans. Work is continuously adapted to meet their individual needs, for instance by enlarging text and preparing materials with surfaces that feel different. Teachers

ensure that pupils are fully included and are able to follow the language and the content of lessons. Specialist staff provide skilled and sensitive support by recording key vocabulary and information, reinforcing new ideas and checking for understanding. Additional specialist teaching, such as the teaching of Braille and touch-typing, help pupils to develop the necessary skills to access the curriculum and become independent learners.

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

25. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and links well with the Foundation Stage curriculum¹, which is a nationally recommended scheme of work for this age group. For the rest of the school, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, and takes account of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. From these, teachers have developed termly, half termly and detailed lesson plans, which clearly indicate the lesson intentions.
26. A high percentage of time is allocated to literacy and numeracy, but this is quite appropriate bearing in mind the pupils' needs. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is proving effective since pupils make good progress. However, the varying amounts of time given to teaching different subjects means that, although National Curriculum requirements are met, insufficient time is allocated to some subjects to enable them to be covered in enough depth. The curriculum is planned using guidance from nationally recommended schemes of work, which suggests an appropriate allocation of time to each unit of work. However, the school does not use these suggested times for its teaching. This inevitably has an impact on standards, which are below expectations in science, art and design, design and technology, history, and geography. In physical education, the balance is too heavily weighted in favour of swimming, to the detriment of other aspects. The timetable is not sufficiently balanced and does not ensure a broad enough coverage.
27. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language take a full part in all the activities in the school. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs is provided through a specialist reading programme and through a recently established language group. The curriculum for pupils with visual impairment is very good because a wide range of additional opportunities is provided to develop their skills and independence. Good use is made of local facilities for mobility training. For example, there are weekly visits by younger children to a soft play facility at the local special school, donkey riding is available at a local centre and there is annual residential experience for older pupils. Other special activities in the Birmingham area provide visually impaired pupils with important opportunities to extend and enrich their learning.
28. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good in many respects, but has a particular flaw in the provision for sex education. Last year the school was awaiting a new policy from the local Diocesan Authority, which did not materialise. Instead of reverting to the old policy, pupils did not receive the sex education aspects of the curriculum. Other areas are covered well. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education has mapped where all aspects are covered in various parts of the curriculum from Reception to Year 6. Where there were gaps in provision they have been filled by using a nationally recommended programme. There is provision for drugs and health education and this includes citizenship. Of particular value was the visit by Year 6 pupils

¹ This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or 'stepping stones', from which both progress and standards can be measured.

to a young people's parliament. This is now mirrored in school with class and school councils, where pupils are learning how to make democratic decisions.

29. The breadth of the curriculum is good. It is enhanced with visits out of school and visitors to the school. Visits are linked to the curriculum; these include historical, artistic, dramatic and religious aspects. Visitors have included students for a drama performance, a mobile health education centre, representatives from national charities, music workshops, and visits made by guide dogs.
30. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Teachers take a number of activities, including football, netball, athletics, computers and choir. In addition, a good number of visiting adults take a variety of clubs such as art workshops, football coaching, drama and gymnastics, which are provided by the local education action zone and other organisations that arrange learning opportunities. Pupils support these clubs and activities very well. Year 6 pupils also enjoy a week at an activity centre. All of these not only provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a particular activity but also provide valuable experiences that assist pupils' social and moral development. The community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly through visits and visitors and the number of sports clubs that provide coaches. For example, the school has had links with a local basketball, football and athletics club. There are good relations with the Catholic secondary school, with ease of transfer ensured by many meetings for parents, staff and pupils.
31. In the previous inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was judged to be good. It is now very good. This improvement has partly been achieved through better behaviour management that gives pupils a very good understanding of moral principles.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and teachers demonstrate a commitment to establishing and maintaining a spiritual ethos in the school. The care and pleasure that older pupils take in looking after younger ones are testament to pupils' feelings for the school and each other. Planned opportunities in lessons are limited to personal and social education, and religious education, which was not a focus of this inspection. They are also seen in assemblies that reinforce a spiritual message through drama and interaction. Pupils learn to respect and help each other. In particular, this was seen in the way pupils related to those with special educational needs, including the several registered blind pupils. These pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and give much to their friends in return. Pupils have a sense of their own worth in this school. They are encouraged to express their own feelings and to reflect on their actions when they have gone 'over the mark'. Personal and social education lessons often take the form of discussion time, when pupils are encouraged to value each other and themselves.
33. Moral education is very good. The school has worked hard to develop a whole-school policy to support behaviour. This ensures that codes, rewards and sanctions are applied in a consistent way throughout the school. Pupils are helped to have an unambiguous concept of what is right and wrong. Pupils are taught how to respect each other, themselves and property. Very good care is taken to encourage the pupils to understand that they have a right to expect to be treated well and must treat others in the same way. They are learning to know that the basis of good behaviour is care and sensitivity to others.
34. The procedures for promoting pupils' social development are very good. The school's personal, social and health education scheme underpins their successful social development. Pupils are happy to do various jobs around the classroom and to take the registers to the office. Small tasks are enjoyed and taken seriously - even sharpening pencils before a session starts. There are opportunities for pupils to support each other

and to collaborate. Friends help pupils whose visual ability is limited. Pupils in Year 4 have been working as *'buddies'* with children in Reception, under their teachers' guidance and advice. The mutual pleasure and personal growth that came out of this exercise were impressive, as the older pupils helped the children make and decorate little paper hats and write their names on them. Planned activities at lunchtime give pupils opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility and an ability to mix with each other. Provision includes a games room and a regular disco that gives pupils fun, exercise and time to develop their social skills. Pupils work hard to gain team points and these are totalled every week. This gives them a good sense of working for the common good, as well as for themselves.

35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. An art and design lesson for Year 6 pupils linked art and history, taking the work of Hans Holbein as a starting point. Reception children enjoyed singing and performing actions in an assembly. In Year 4, pupils experienced good learning opportunities during a drama lesson taught by a visiting specialist. They were encouraged to think about the characters they were playing and this led them to think about others by imagining themselves in other people's shoes. The school takes advantage of opportunities available and various cultures to extend the pupils' experiences whilst validating and sharing in their own cultural heritage. They learn about their own and other cultures through visits to cultural events, or from visitors. Pupils' involvement in charities helps them to be aware of the wider world. Graphic artists, musicians and theatre groups have visited, and pupils from this school had their poetry selected for performance for the Queen at the centenary celebrations. Visits are frequent and include those to places of worship of a number of world religions. There are residential visits and trips that widen the pupils' horizons and through which they learn about the rich experiences that are available within and beyond the walls of the school.
36. The inclusion of pupils with visual impairment makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of all the pupils in the school. Pupils show care and consideration for one another and take account of any difficulties that may arise from limited vision. They respect each other's diverse needs and help one another when necessary, without the need for prompting by adults.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. In the previous inspection, the provision was judged to be good. There were questions raised about staff training for child protection; this is no longer an issue, though due to changes of staff more training is planned. However, midday supervising staff are not yet part of this process.
38. The first aim of the school is to provide a happy environment, which it does. Staff make sure that any problems are rapidly and sensitively dealt with. Systems of care and welfare in the school are rigorous and this ensures that pupils' health and safety are priorities for governors and staff.
39. Arrangements for first aid and dealing with sick children are very good, and some staff are trained to give first aid. There is now regular training and briefing for all staff to ensure that everyone is fully aware of child protection issues and up-to-date procedures. Good records are kept of accidents, but the minor treatments given are not noted. There are procedures in place for ensuring the monitoring and progress of pupils who do not live with their families.
40. Health and safety procedures are very good. A member of the governing body experienced in health and safety matters has taken on responsibilities for this area. Staff and governors undertake regular and very detailed health and safety audits. Professional safety checks are undertaken on electrical, fire prevention and physical education equipment. A few minor outstanding matters were discussed during the inspection.

41. Pupils' own awareness of health and safety issues and their attitudes and relationships to others are successfully fostered through personal and social education lessons, and in other lessons, for example when they learn about people who help them. The school is developing a healthy eating strategy and it is planned to extend this work to the popular tuck shop. Pupils are able to access water to drink at anytime, and to stretch and run about between lessons, and younger pupils have breaks for fruit and water.
42. The school methodically collects attendance information electronically and thoroughly analyses the statistics in order to identify any issues, such as holidays taken in term time. Unexplained absences are followed up with families on the same morning. The school receives support from the educational welfare officer, who visits regularly and follows up individual families when necessary. Very good efforts are made to improve attendance, including rewards for individuals and classes with good records. Punctuality is good and registers are completed very soon after school sessions start, while pupils get on with some set activities. In one case, pupils responded in French. Registers conform to requirements.
43. The school's ethos successfully promotes pupils' very good behaviour through a policy that they know and respect. This school has recently adopted a local education authority framework for analysing ways in which behaviour can be analysed and improved. This new approach is backed up by staff who have had relevant training and has resulted in systems of rewards and activities at lunchtime. Smiley faces, stars and team points record success immediately. These are publicly acknowledged in weekly assemblies and winners of the golden book award are featured in a display for all to see in the main hall. This has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Teachers throughout the school manage pupils' behaviour very well. They have a direct approach and set good examples for pupils through their own behaviour and warm relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect.
44. Teachers monitor and assess pupils' personal development, and those pupils with difficulties are supported and tracked. This ensures that very good care is taken of these pupils. Pupils having difficulties are monitored and their progress is shared with their families. Incidents are treated seriously and records are kept so that pupils' progress can be tracked and monitored.
45. Pupils are looked after well at lunch times and the midday supervisors have had training and take an active and positive view of their role. The midday staff play a part in making playtime enjoyable and productive for the pupils. *'I think we are lucky to be here,'* said one pupil from Year 6. *'I feel comfortable. You are treated well. New people are welcomed and others appointed to show them around'.* *'Yesterday someone was cheeky and the class teacher handled it so well'.* These pupils feel trusted and valued. In Year 6, pupils feel that they are treated appropriately for their age and are ready to move on to secondary education when the time comes.
46. Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are very good. For pupils with visual impairment, they are excellent. All the pupils' needs are carefully assessed and recorded. Appropriate targets are identified on their individual learning plans, and these are regularly reviewed and updated. Pupils are encouraged to identify targets for themselves, which are also recorded in their individual learning plan. Support staff monitor progress on a daily basis, recording pupils' response to lessons. As a result, all pupils with learning difficulties make good and often very good progress, and their welfare is carefully monitored. Very good care is taken of the pupils with visual impairment because their welfare is closely monitored throughout the day. Good use is made of the contribution from specialist support agencies in planning for pupils and reviewing their needs and their progress. This includes the mobility officer, visiting teachers, such as the typing tutor and

the learning support teacher, the behaviour support team, the educational psychologist and the speech therapy service. The school establishes close links with parents and is able to take account of any concerns or changes in the pupils' circumstances.

47. The school has developed good procedures and provides comprehensive systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. For the core subjects of English, mathematics and science recognised tests provided by a nationally recommended system are given to the pupils. They undertake these tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 and then the standard assessment tests in Year 6. The results of these tests are carefully analysed by the assessment co-ordinator to provide the school with indicators of how pupils progress. This data is also used to highlight any weaknesses in the curriculum that require more attention. In addition, teachers make satisfactory assessments every half term to provide additional data that is also analysed. Currently these half-termly assessments in the core subjects are not compared to the national guidelines for attainment, but plans are in place to do so.
48. Assessments are carried out when the children enter the nursery and reception, and the data from these assessments are used to track an individual's progress through the school. This tracking helps teachers to set targets for pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and science. At present, coherent systems for assessments in the other subjects of the curriculum are not yet in place and this has a negative impact on pupil progress.
49. The assessment co-ordinator makes good use of the support from the local education action zone for developing computer programs that analyse data and forecast future achievements by individual pupils. However, these programs are not fully developed and are yet to have a positive impact on achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The previous inspection report included a key issue that the school should provide further opportunities for parents to learn about and participate in the work of the school. There are now many opportunities for them to be involved, such as weekly newsletters and regular information about what children will be learning. An area requiring further development is the content of the annual reports on pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6.
51. Parents have positive views of the school and feel that it does well for their children. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and others spoken to during the inspection, say that their children are happy in school. Parents think the school is helping their children become mature and responsible, and are positive about the school and the staff. They feel that the school is open and that they are always welcome to speak to staff at any time.
52. A small minority of parents think the information about how well their children are progressing is not good enough. However, inspection findings indicate that the quality and quantity of information on children's progress provided by the school are very good. However, although the annual reports provide satisfactory information about the work undertaken, there is not sufficient indication of the levels attained in each subject compared with what might be expected of pupils at different ages. Meetings on the curriculum have attracted good response from parents, but annual meetings with the governors are not well attended.
53. Pupils' reading diaries provide a good means of communication between parents and teachers. The prospectus is good and provides a wealth of useful information for parents. Parents are fully involved in reviews of the educational plans for pupils with special educational needs and this has a positive impact on the progress made by their children.

54. There is no parents' or friends' association, but several parents are available to help in school, and on visits to the swimming baths. Despite the school's efforts to welcome parents and to encourage their participation, these have not always met with success. The school fully cooperated with the activities of the educational action zone and this has borne some fruit. Parental involvement is increasing and, where it is successful, it has a good impact on the pupils' attainment. For example, those pupils who regularly spend time reading with their parents make better progress in their literacy skills. There is a very good induction programme, which enables children to settle into class routines. All parents are invited to attend an introductory meeting in June. Parents can choose when they come into the classroom and are welcomed informally. This establishes good relations from the outset, which are then maintained on a daily basis.
55. The school makes every effort to encourage parents of children with specific learning difficulties and the visually impaired to be involved in planning and reviewing their children's progress. The great majority of parents of pupils with specific learning difficulties and those who are visually impaired attend their children's annual review, and contribute to setting and reviewing their children's targets. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement because both home and school are working towards a common set of goals. Very good use is made of community facilities and local special schools to extend and enhance the learning opportunities for pupils with visual impairment. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator and specialist teachers for the visually impaired unit benefit from their links with the local education authority and the support they receive from other specialist agencies. Parents for whom English is an additional language also receive support from a bilingual assistant who ensures that they understand all aspects of their pupils' education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher has created a very secure educational environment where her high quality staff are valued and keen to inspire pupils in their learning. The school aims to provide a secure and stimulating environment, which provides continuing challenges and prepares the pupils for diversity. This is successfully achieved through very high quality strategic planning. The headteacher has carefully ensured that all staff work together as a cohesive team and those with responsibilities have been empowered to develop their identified areas of management. For example, the highly effective co-ordinators of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology work closely with the headteacher to ensure that improvements are achieved. There is a high commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed. This has a very positive impact on standards.
57. The management of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is building on existing good practice in the school and planning for developments to meet the increasingly complex needs of pupils. The management of the visual resource base is also very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and commitment from governors, headteacher and all staff to the principle of equal opportunities and inclusion, and this is reflected in every aspect of school life. Documentation and record keeping are excellent for pupils with specific learning difficulties and those who are visually impaired. These records provide a very good foundation for all the school's work with the pupils. Pupils are very well supported by committed and well trained teachers and support staff, who work well as a team and in partnership with class teachers.
58. The governing body has a clear committee structure and successfully fulfils its statutory duties. Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of school life and have a good

understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They work closely with the staff, provide good support and make critical evaluations of all major decisions.

59. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are good. There is a systematic programme for monitoring lessons, plans and books, which is very effectively carried out by the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators on a regular basis. Pupils' performance is analysed very thoroughly and staff work closely together to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Senior management have developed successful monitoring procedures for evaluating the school's performance, and very good use is gained from analysing test results. For example, the identification of differences in attainment between boys and girls has led to specific focus groups to meet their differing needs. However, insufficient attention has been given to ensuring that all foundation subjects are given an appropriate time allowance.
60. Financial planning is agreed by staff and governors and is very closely linked to the educational priorities that are identified on the detailed school development plan. Very good use is made of all available resources, and funds are carefully matched to the priorities that have been identified in the plan. Very good use is made of specific grants. For example, the headteacher is highly skilled at gaining extra funds from building societies and local industries. The school is using a healthy carry-over in its budget to fund a new suite for information and communication technology, a covered area for parents and the maintaining of staff levels to ensure that class sizes are kept small. Very clearly identified routines have been established to enable the headteacher and governors to monitor the deployment of resources. Best value principles are clearly understood. For instance, standards are compared with those in local and national schools, prices are carefully compared when purchasing resources, and challenging targets for improvement in standards are set. Day-to-day financial management and administration of the school are excellent. A highly skilled bursar makes effective use of new technology to efficiently carry out administration procedures. An approachable secretary supports all staff and pupils very well and welcomes all visitors to the school.
61. There is a good match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and education support staff and the needs of the planned curriculum. The numbers allow the school to maintain relatively small classes. Good procedures are in place to introduce new teachers to the school and to support newly qualified teachers so that pupils' learning is not disturbed. Many teaching assistants have had specialist training and two are continuing their studies towards full teaching qualifications. Despite the fact that there is no music specialist, the curriculum is successfully taught and led. A full staff handbook provides new teachers with valuable information about the school's routines, procedures and policies.
62. The level of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Experienced and qualified teachers and support staff provide effective support, which ensures that pupils make progress in their lessons. Specialist staff who teach and support pupils with visual impairment are well qualified and highly skilled. The quality of their work with pupils is a strength of the school.
63. The resources in the school are satisfactory and, for certain elements of the curriculum, they are good, in particular information and communication technology. The two library areas are well organised and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are plenty of musical instruments, but their storage is inadequate. The resources available for the visually impaired unit are excellent and well managed. This includes technical equipment and enlarged texts. The school ensures that pupils have access to all the equipment and low-vision aids they require, including closed-circuit television. As a result, pupils are fully included in lessons and their understanding and learning can be reinforced through the use of specialist equipment and materials.

64. The school's accommodation is suitable for the effective teaching of the curriculum and, with the creation of the second hall, there has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. Classrooms vary in size but are large enough for present numbers of pupils. However, there is a splendid, fully equipped suite for computers, which are proving of value before, during and after the school day. Although children in the reception and nursery classes are in buildings separate from the main school, they are well sited next to each other and there is a secure play area. The playgrounds surrounding the school are in need of redesigning and resurfacing, and plans exist for this work to be done. The lack of a field limits the opportunities for a wide range of games. The specialist learning rooms for the registered blind pupils are attractive and well maintained, and serve their purpose well. However, the school is not suitable for wheelchair users because part of it is on an upper floor, without a passenger lift.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To improve the quality of education, the governing body and staff should:
- a) raise standards in English throughout the school by:
 - extending the use of drama through the school to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills²; (paragraphs 78, 80, 85)
 - b) raise standards in mathematics in Year 2 by:
 - developing specific mathematical language; (paragraphs 86, 87,88)
 - c) raise standards in science by the end of Year 2 by:
 - improving the quality and consistency of teaching in Year 2; (paragraph 99)
 - ensuring that there is adequate curriculum coverage; (paragraph 98)
 - developing independent enquiry and investigative skills; (paragraph 99)
 - d) improve standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music by:
 - improving the range and breadth of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 and ensure that appropriate time is allocated to each subject; (paragraphs 102, 106, 110, 122)
 - developing subject-specific vocabulary; (paragraphs 113, 123)
 - providing links and improving teacher confidence in using information and communication technology across the curriculum. (paragraphs 120, 122)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be included in the school's action plan:

- improving the content of the annual reports to ensure that comments on the pupils' progress clearly indicate what they have achieved in each subject, particularly in comparison with national expectations; (paragraphs 50, 52)
- encouraging more parents to take up the opportunities offered by the school to work in partnership with them. (paragraphs 15, 54)

² This has already been identified by the school in the development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	14	39	18	0	0	0
Percentage	4	19	53	24	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	361
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		137

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	31	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	21
	Girls	26	26	25
	Total	47	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (82)	82 (73)	82 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	21
	Girls	27	25	23
	Total	49	46	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (75)	82 (82)	79 (76)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	28	19	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	27
	Girls	13	16	14
	Total	31	36	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (54)	77 (53)	87 (72)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	12	13	11
	Total	28	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (46)	68 (63)	64 (51)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
278	1	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
15	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
9	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3:1
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	351

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5:1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.9:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1,139,511
Total expenditure	1,070,917
Expenditure per pupil	2,618
Balance brought forward from previous year	110,386
Balance carried forward to next year	178,980

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 24%

Number of questionnaires sent out	361
Number of questionnaires returned	86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	33	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	33	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	50	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	35	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	56	41	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	42	14	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	14	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	60	34	5	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	44	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	30	17	5	8

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

66. At the time of the previous inspection, provision in the nursery and reception were considered good, and this has been well maintained since then. Generally, children enter the nursery with very poor skills in all areas of learning. They are very poor in their social skills as well as in speaking and listening. All children, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in all areas of learning. This is because of the rich curriculum provided, the overall good quality of teaching and learning and the high levels of support they receive.
67. The overall quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in both nursery and reception. All the children benefit from coming into skilfully prepared and stimulating classrooms that encourage good learning opportunities. There are limited outside play areas but they are used well. Both nursery and reception classes have a secure attractive play area with adequate resources. All children's work is respected and displayed attractively to develop their self-esteem. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers and support staff work as a very effective team to plan work and monitor children's progress. They have a good knowledge and understanding of this age group. They are particularly good at knowing when to stand back and when to intervene, so that the children gain confidence and understand what they are learning. The enthusiasm of the teachers infects the children, who respond accordingly. High quality reports are prepared for parents at the end of the school year, and these very successfully reflect the children's individual achievements. Teaching is very well focussed and lesson planning clearly identifies what children are to learn in lessons. However, despite the good teaching and learning, and the good progress that children make, standards are still well below what is expected of them at the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Nearly all the children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. Despite skilful teaching in the nursery and reception classes the vast majority of children will not achieve the final stage or stepping stone of this area of learning by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This is because their personal and social skills are so poor on entry into school. The children learn to leave their carers willingly and, once they know the routine, quickly settle into the nursery class. However, very few are able to choose an activity independently and they tend to rely on adults to help them select equipment. Reception children enjoy working in the *'health centre'* but play tends to be in isolation at this stage. The adults provide good role models for the children and create excellent relationships with them. They always treat the youngsters with respect and courtesy. For example, when children have a drink and a piece of fruit, the adults show them how to peel a tangerine. The children are also encouraged by the teacher to sit properly and listen carefully. The teachers and other adults continuously reinforce the routines of the classroom. These include clearing up, washing hands before eating or drinking, lining up quietly, and moving around the classroom carefully. In Reception, teachers further develop these routines and children are given opportunities to develop initiative and responsibility. For example, they are expected to give out white boards and pens when required. They are beginning to approach adults in a more mature fashion; *'Can you open this please?'* and, once opened, the child says, *'Thank you,'* indicating that some children are progressing to the second *'stepping stone'*. During the inspection, one reception class lead an infant assembly for the first time and the children showed enough confidence to stand up and speak. Photographic evidence shows children on a farm visit with most of them willing to touch animals or ride on ponies.

Communication, language and literacy

69. When the children start in the nursery, most children speak indistinctly in short phrases or single words. They do not listen to each other and their knowledge of rhymes is very poor. However, all adults encourage the use of talk and show children that their efforts at communicating are valued. These children are only just on the threshold of the first stage or '*stepping stones*' of the Foundation Stage. Speaking skills are very poorly developed, but the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and this has a positive impact on the children's learning. For example, the teacher clearly identifies the key vocabulary to be learned. Teachers have a good technical ability to teach these basic skills with a positive, kind and calm approach. Often working with a group of three, the teacher encourages children to talk in sentences and sometimes the children manage a three-word sentence. This takes considerable effort and illustrates the children's very poor speaking skills.
70. The children are beginning to enjoy stories but they have very limited concentration. Although they are interested when the adults share picture books with them, they are restless and unable to keep on task. They do not know the difference between a picture and a book. Children show great interest when listening to stories. For instance, when one teacher read the story about '*Two Babies*' she had the children enthralled because their excitement and anticipation was enhanced with excellent facial expression and good use of her voice. Whilst teachers are good at telling children whom the author and illustrator are when reading stories, children do not know what an author or illustrator is when questioned. Children willingly share books with adults and can tell them about the pictures.
71. Children are beginning to make uncontrolled marks on paper when painting or drawing. Overall, standards are well below the first '*stepping-stone*'. In the reception class, children are learning an increasing number of nursery rhymes, although not all children join in, and their recall from day to day is poor. Few children initiate conversations and, if they respond to adults' questions, they do not speak in sentences. Their vocabulary is limited. The children's listening skills and understanding of spoken language are poor. More capable children are beginning to realise that print carries meaning and are just starting to recognise one or two words. A small number of children are developing an understanding of sounds. For example, children were observed sounding out the letter '*h*'. This was carried out repeatedly and then the teacher asked the children for words that began with the letter '*h*'. The children suggested '*hop*' and '*house*'. The class satisfactorily made a letter '*h*' with their hands and arms in the air. Later another group of children was able to write the letter '*h*' on a white board successfully. This indicated that the more capable children were progressing to the second stage in their development. However, the vast majority of the children had difficulty with this activity.
72. More capable children in reception '*write*' messages informally using unrecognisable marks on paper. For example, a few are able to write '*mum*' and make marks on paper that have meaning even if the letters are not formed properly. They share their efforts with the class, remembering what they had '*written*' earlier. Rewards during the day give children the chance to write their name on the '*smiley face*' board and most children can do this. However, at present they are not able to transfer the ability to write letters in their name to other words. All lessons have key words identified in the lesson planning and teachers, assisted by the other adults in the classroom, are good at emphasising them. For example, when the children were observed making a collage of the moon and a rocket, the vocabulary of mathematical shapes such as '*rectangle*', '*triangle*' and '*circle*' was emphasised.

73. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. All adults involved with these young children foster positive attitudes to books and reading through lively storytelling, which seizes the children's interest. Resources are very well prepared to engage children fully in learning. In both the Nursery and Reception, incidental opportunities are taken consistently throughout the day to improve speaking and listening skills. Well planned informal activities reinforce and consolidate skills.

Mathematical development

74. Nursery children are encouraged to sort, match and count in many varied activities. Whilst more capable children are beginning to recite numbers, they are frequently inaccurate in sequence, and cannot match one-to-one. They know few number rhymes but enjoy working in pairs with a computer programme that matches numbers with animals on the farm. Their use of mathematical language, for instance, to compare *big* and *little* is limited. In the reception class, children with adult support are able to thread wool through holes, in a number sequence. They count straws into cups and then place the cups in order. The more capable children count to 20 and 30 with adult help. A small number of children are beginning to recognise some numbers. However, most children are not able to count backwards. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan an interesting range of practical activities, which involve children purposefully, directly in their learning. For instance, computer games interest the children and motivate them to learn. Resources are of good quality and are well prepared and accessible to the children. As a result of this good teaching and support more able children are on stage two of the '*stepping stones*' for mathematical development with the remainder working towards this goal.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Teaching is good in this area of learning and this has a positive impact on the children's attainment. Many children start Nursery with very little experience of the world beyond their own home. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to provide a wealth of first hand experiences from which children learn about the world around them. They enjoy experimenting with materials, like sand and water. They are encouraged to use their senses but have limited vocabulary to describe what they see or touch. They are beginning to investigate construction materials but have little idea of the use of tools. Through stories and celebrations, they are taught about other cultures and beliefs and are approaching the first '*stepping-stone*'. In the reception class, pupils continue to enjoy the wide range of practical activities on offer, and standards overall are close to the second '*stepping-stone*'. They are also extending their knowledge and understanding through structured topic work. For example, the children enjoy touching and experiencing different types of materials and learn to identify objects such as feathers, a prickly ball, a rubber and a pen. They predict what material makes a soft landing for 'Humpty Dumpty' when he falls off the wall, and then test their hypothesis. A sense of excitement is generated when children look through some binoculars, particularly when they look through them the wrong way. Visually impaired children are able to recognise street sounds on a tape and readily say what they are. The children in both the nursery and reception classes enjoy using computers. With help, they use the arrow keys or the mouse to move objects on the screen. Teachers use questions skilfully to assess what children know and to extend their ideas. Short sessions at the end of lessons are used effectively to consolidate the active learning that has taken place. Visually impaired children are able to take a full part in sessions. They progress as well as the others due to the specially prepared materials and the good support they receive.

Physical development

76. All children in the Foundation Stage use the outdoor area with increasing awareness of space and of each other. They control the large wheeled toys with growing skill. Whilst

the nursery children climb and slide confidently, they are largely unaware of others. Few of them can put on their coats. Their fine motor control in handling paintbrushes and pencils, and tools such as scissors, is weak. They are working towards the first 'stepping-stone'. The children move to nursery rhymes such as 'ring-a-ring o' roses' and many are able to sing the words. Reception children move well in a co-ordinated way when in the hall. For example, they were observed pretending to be like a 'jack in the box' and made good use of their knees to bend and then spring upwards. These children are at the second stage or 'stepping-stone' of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teaching is good and this results in all children making good progress. This is because the lessons are well planned and teachers give both instructions and demonstrations so that children know what is expected. A good range of activities is well organised for outdoor play, and skills are gradually developed over time. Children are managed effectively, with appropriate encouragement and with awareness of safety aspects.

Creative development

77. Children throughout the Foundation Stage enjoy exploring a wide range of media. In the Nursery they are taught to blow on paper paint that has washing-up liquid in it. They squeeze, roll and make patterns out of play dough. They explore colour and pattern with paint and crayons. Children in Reception use glue sticks satisfactorily to create a collage, and draw pictures of their family. However, these are very immature and tend to consist of a body that lacks any recognisable features. Nursery and reception children tend to wait for instructions rather than responding with imagination in the role-play areas. Most children are keen to dress up but are unable to develop their own ideas imaginatively in play without considerable help from adults. They become gradually more confident in taking part in singing sessions, and extend their repertoire over time. Nursery children show some recognition of nursery rhymes such as 'Humpty Dumpty'. Reception children respond to quick and slow rhythms. The children make good progress in this area of learning and move from below the first 'stepping-stone' in nursery to reach the second 'stepping-stone' in the reception class. This is because the quality of teaching is good. The lively, enthusiastic approach of the teaching teams promotes the children's interest and effort. Resources are varied, attractive and well prepared. Teaching assistants make a particularly good contribution to learning in this area by the sensitive intervention and careful support they give to children in group work. All staff respect the children's efforts and give positive feedback so that children become increasingly confident. Involvement in the education action zone enhances provision for creative development, particularly in art, when outside staff work regularly with reception children. For example, a visiting artist was observed encouraging the children to create a picture of the moon and stars.

ENGLISH

78. Inspection findings indicate that standards in Year 6 are below average. This is an improvement since the 2002 tests. Standards in Year 2 in reading and writing are well below the national average and this is similar to the test results in 2002. When compared to the last inspection, there appears to have been a decline in standards. However, it is clearly evident from assessments on entry into school that the children start with very poor levels of skills, particularly in speaking. As a result, gains in their knowledge take much longer to develop and overall achievement is slower. There are also significant numbers of pupils with specific learning difficulties in each age group.
79. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low and the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above the national average. This means that to reach their current standards the great majority of pupils are making good progress, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those with English as an additional language. There are no significant differences in standards between boys and girls.

80. In the current Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are well below national averages. Although the more capable pupils are able to speak very simple sentences, most other pupils are unable to express themselves coherently. More capable pupils listen carefully for short periods. However, most pupils experience great difficulty listening for any length of time and need much more support from adults to help them. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening have improved. Listening skills are as expected for this age group but speaking skills are still below average. Above average pupils speak with confidence to both their classmates and adults. They listen carefully to different views and opinions and then successfully express their own conclusions. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6 the above average pupils were able to explain to each other that their pulse rate increased after exercise. However, average and below average pupils lack the appropriate vocabulary to express views and opinions. Their sentences are short and the vocabulary used is simple. They have difficulty listening to each other and tend to become argumentative. This was evident in a Year 5 science lesson, when the pupils had great difficulty discussing their scientific findings and taking turns to talk.
81. In Year 2, standards in reading are currently well below the national average. The more capable pupils talk confidently about fact and storybooks. They know what an author and illustrator are but are unable to discuss books that they have enjoyed reading. They sound out unfamiliar words and 'read on' to gain some meaning. Most pupils use the initial letter sound to help them work out words and also look at picture clues. By Year 3, most pupils understand the terms 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' but still rely heavily on picture clues to help them work out unknown words. By Year 4, they are able to discuss favourite books but are unable to say who wrote them. Pupils do not readily visit the local library to borrow books to read for pleasure or for information seeking. Pupils in Year 5 understand how to use indexes and glossaries and can explain their preferences between fairy tales and adventure books. Good progress is made and, by Year 6, standards in reading are just below national averages. More capable pupils discuss a limited range of authors such as Roal Dahl and identify favourite characters in the books that they have read, such as 'Matilda' in 'The Twits'. Some pupils read with an appropriate degree of fluency but lack expression and have minimal views on characters and plots. However, a significant number of pupils still require the use of a variety of techniques to aid word recognition and have a very limited knowledge of contemporary authors.
82. Current writing standards in Year 2 are well below the national average. Although the pupils have made good progress in Year 1 of the National Curriculum and above average pupils are starting to use capital letters to start sentences, the content of their writing is very limited. However, they understand that stories need to have a beginning, middle and end. They are also able to identify spelling patterns such as 'o'. Average pupils are starting to use full stops and capitals and are able to sequence a picture story. Below average pupils recognise the first letter of commonly occurring words but have not yet grasped the concept of full stops and capital letters. Pupils in Year 3 continue to make good progress in their writing and start to gain confidence in their use of verbs. For example, they use describing words such as 'searched', 'smiled' and 'sniggered' in their writing about Cinderella. They have an appropriate understanding of alphabetical order and understand the importance of a story plan. The pupils enthusiastically attempt to spell words and this helps them to write short sentences confidently. By Year 4, they use speech to create interesting stories and make good use of adjectives to enliven their writing. Year 5 pupils distinguish between spellings such as 'flour' and 'flower' and recognise the features of a play script, understanding that production notes help to enhance storylines. Above average pupils write poems. For example, one pupil wrote a poem about Halloween explaining that he was a 'big orange pumpkin, made for Halloween, with a bit on my head that's green'. However, although good progress is made, current writing standards in Year 6 are below those expected nationally because there is a high number of pupils with special educational needs and there are not enough

pupils attaining levels beyond those expected for this age group. The more capable pupils in Year 6 use a wide vocabulary to create chronological and descriptive reports. They write biographies of famous people from the past and write in the style of Shakespeare. They understand the importance of using verbs such as '*scampered, grabbed and scrunched*'. Average and below average pupils use their word-processing skills to create different styles of letters. They are developing their use of words such as '*before*' and '*however*', which join sentences together. Most pupils use capital letters, full stops and paragraphs and are not afraid to try to spell words. However, below average pupils do not always remember how to space out words within sentences.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There are a number of strengths in teaching. In particular:
- all teachers have good understanding of the requirements of the literacy hour and plan sessions well;
 - learning objectives are clearly shared with the pupils and used to evaluate learning at the end of sessions;
 - there are good procedures in place to check the pupils' progress;
 - there is generally a good pace set and teachers have high expectations of behaviour and outcomes of work;
 - homework is used well to recap on previous learning and promotes good working habits.
84. In high quality lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject influences pupils' attitudes. They react positively to stimulating activities and show good levels of concentration. For example, in a very good Year 1 lesson the teacher stimulated the pupils' interest through very good use of resources and high quality expression and fluency. She carefully maintained their concentration by introducing a varied number of activities, which included very good individual questioning and answering skills. The teacher also systematically ensured that all pupils were fully involved in the session and had appropriate access to the learning situation. Very good use is also made of classroom assistants, who conscientiously work with pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs. These assistants work very closely with teachers to ensure that their support is suitably targeted. Very good use is made of high quality resources, which include big picture books, whiteboards and individual learning aids. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class used individual '*whiteboards*' to display their answers to their teacher's questions. This not only ensured that all were involved in this session, it also enabled the teacher to keep a firm check on who actually understood the letters in focus.
85. The subject co-ordinator is passionate about the subject, and this results in very good management. She is clearly committed to improving the performance of the pupils in English. She has been actively involved in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and has a clear focus for improving the quality of writing throughout the school. The co-ordinator has been aware that, in the past, there have been weaknesses in boys interest in reading. She has introduced various strategies to improve this. She has organised special events such as book weeks, poetry and handwriting competitions, and visiting authors. There is a detailed programme for checking the quality of teaching and learning through the school, which ensures that skills are taught consistently and progressively. The well stocked library promotes the subject well and encourages pupils to use their research skills to help with their learning in other subject areas. Resources have improved since the last inspection and the co-ordinator ensures that good use is made of them, which enriches pupils' experiences. For example, a good selection of theatre visits is organised to watch both modern day and traditional plays. Very recently the school and the local education action zone have both devised and funded units of work that are designed to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. This is a very new initiative and is yet to have an impact on standards. However, it is already having a

positive impact on the pupils' social and cultural development. Literacy skills are insufficiently developed across the curriculum and are not used to develop knowledge and skills in subjects such as history.

MATHEMATICS

86. Inspection findings indicate that standards are below average at the end of Year 2. This means that there has been some improvement since the national tests of 2002, when standards were judged to be well below average at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, standards are close to the national average, a similar picture to that of the 2002 national curriculum tests. Standards in Year 6 have been maintained since the last inspection but have dropped in Year 2. When compared to the last inspection, there appears to have been a decline in standards. However, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above the national average. This means that to reach the current position, the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and visual impairment are making good progress and are achieving well.
87. By the end of Year 2, most pupils count accurately, with some reaching 100. They solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction and these often include the use of two-digit numbers. However, many have difficulty in remembering number facts and struggle with mathematical language. Some count in twos to 20 and recognise sequences, such as odd and even numbers. Although most pupils count in tens to 100, many have problems with simple multiplication by two. They are developing a basic understanding of money and many select the correct coins to make a purchase and give change from 50 pence. Most pupils use the correct mathematical names for a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and confidently describe their properties. For example, some could list the properties of a triangle, square and rectangle, whilst some could count the number of faces and edges on cuboids and cylinders.
88. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read, write and order five-digit numbers. For example, they order the distances from London to the cities of Singapore, Santiago, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. Pupils solve a variety of problems using all four operations employing recall of number facts of all multiplication tables up to ten. However, a significant minority struggle with simple mental and written calculations, for example, when solving money problems that require the use of decimals to two decimal places. At times pupils' reading difficulties affect their mathematics when they are required to solve real-life word problems. Most have a sound understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. For example, they differentiate between various quadrilaterals, such as square, rectangle, rhombus, parallelogram and trapezium. Pupils find the area and perimeter of shapes. They measure with the appropriate standard units of measurement and create conversion graphs to change kilograms to pounds. Pupils collect data and represent this in a variety of ways. For example, they construct bar charts from a tally chart to show the heights of pupils in the class. They have an understanding of probability, although one boy thought that there was only an even chance he would watch television that week!
89. Teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and one was excellent, in Year 1. There are a number of strengths in teaching. In particular:
- planning is thorough, clearly stating lesson objectives;
 - prior assessment is used to determine the work to be undertaken, even changing lesson plans from day to day if necessary;
 - a variety of tasks is set to cater for the different needs of the pupils in the class or set, ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged;

- all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or visual impairment, are fully included in all activities;
 - teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, enabling them to interest and motivate the pupils;
 - there are high expectations of behaviour and effort.;
 - good emphasis is placed on pupils developing their own strategies for problem solving;
 - there are very good relationships between all adults and pupils in each class, producing a very good working atmosphere;
 - marking is done very conscientiously, often with helpful comments to enable pupils to improve.
90. Where some or all of these are present, pupils are keen and enthusiastic about their work and are working hard. They remain thoroughly engaged in the work the teacher has set and get on with minimal teacher intervention. All this enables them to make good progress.
91. On occasions, even within satisfactory lessons, there are aspects that need improvement. These are mainly concerned with:
- the pace of the lesson being too slow;
 - the balance of the lesson being wrong, with too much time spent on the introduction, and too little time for pupils to practise what they have learnt;
 - inadequate organisation of the class, such as having insufficient room if pupils are required to sit on the carpet.
92. These aspects have a detrimental effect on the rate of pupils' progress, although nothing was serious enough to deem a lesson unsatisfactory.
93. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well across the curriculum. For example, in science, they measure and record results and, in information and communication technology, pupils collect data and display the results in a variety of formats. In design and technology, pupils use their measuring skills when making models. In geography, they interpret graphs such as population charts.
94. The co-ordinator for mathematics is effectively managing the subject and is leading a conscientious team of teachers in a concerted effort to raise standards. There are several strands to this, including:
- the use of data from the rigorous analysis of test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding;
 - ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and visual impairment are given appropriate work, partly through a system of setting, and partly through setting different tasks for different groups of pupils;
 - good use of information and communication technology through specific programs designed to support learning in mathematics;
 - specific emphasis on higher ability pupils, through extra homework and computer programs, to enable them to reach their potential;
 - the use of 'Booster' classes after school to help pupils reach the required level;
 - the use of targets for each pupil, known by them and their parents, to be achieved each term.
95. The co-ordinator has introduced a system of regular assessments to ensure that teachers know what pupils can and cannot do. This enables teachers to provide work that builds on previous learning and becomes more demanding. However, not enough is done to check the abilities of the more capable pupils. This is because teacher assessments for these pupils have not always been accurate, which results in inappropriate work being set. The

co-ordinator monitors plans and observes lessons to ensure that teaching is up to the required standard. He has provided sufficient resources for teachers to be able to teach effectively, including a range of computer programs. However, shortage of space has caused limitations with storage. Learning support assistants are used very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning through their support.

SCIENCE

96. Current standards in Year 2 are well below average and all pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language, do not make satisfactory progress. This is a decline since the last inspection, when standards were considered average. However, it is a similar picture to the most recent teacher assessment results in 2002, when standards were well below the national average. Standards seen during the inspection at the end of Year 6 are average. This reflects the most recent national test results of 2002 and the previous inspection findings. In Years 3 to 6, all pupils make good progress. This is because the teaching is good, and there are focussed revision tasks. Pupils' learning is regularly checked and activities set match pupils' prior attainment levels. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
97. Achievement in Year 1 is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching. For example, the pupils predict materials that are electrical insulator or conductor. Achievement in Year 2 is unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching. This is partly because, prior to the inspection, there had been a number of changes of staff in one of the Year 2 classes. However, the most important reason is that not enough time is spent on teaching the subject. An analysis of work in pupils' books shows that learning in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 3 know that there are many bones in the body. They can name some of these, for example the pelvis. Year 4 pupils know that the three forms of matter include solid, liquid and gas. They understand that gases form when liquids evaporate. However, progress could be better if more time was spent on teaching science and coverage was better. Achievement in Years 5 and 6 is good because of good teaching. Year 5 pupils understand the idea of dissolving and how to separate undissolved and dissolved solids. Year 6 pupils know parts of a plant and describe the function of each of these. They make observations and describe differences in leaves from top, middle and lower parts of a plant. However, they do need to repeat observations to improve accuracy. Pupils' independent skills of investigation are weaker than their other scientific skills because they do not have enough opportunities to develop these. This is partly due to the shortage of time allowed for the teaching of science. On the other hand, pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and cooperation make them good learners.
98. Although the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, it is unsatisfactory over time. This was evident from the weaknesses shown from analysis of pupils' work. This was especially so in one of the Year 2 classes, where it was clear that the teachers did not spend enough time teaching science. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. Common strengths in teaching are:
- management of pupils;
 - maintenance of good relationships;
 - the use of questioning to assess pupils' developing knowledge;
 - the involvement of all pupils in learning is strong.
99. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher combined several strategies that led to very good learning. Effective questioning provided good mental warm up. The teacher reviewed and assessed pupils' knowledge of the function of the skeleton. Then she carried on questioning to help pupils make a link between the heart and pulse rate. They were also encouraged to think

about the importance of muscles and the need for energy during exercise. This was followed by group work in which pupils, in groups of four, including the visually impaired pupils, investigated the effect of different exercises on pulse rate. Pupils were then taken to the information and communication technology suite, where they entered the data in a spreadsheet and produced a line graph to discuss in a subsequent lesson. The lesson had very good pace and the teacher set high expectations of all pupils to co-operate and learn. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the exciting learning. However, there is still not enough focus on developing independent inquiry and investigative skills.

100. The current subject co-ordinator is looking after the role in the absence of a permanent co-ordinator. The results of standardised test results have started to be analysed and are being used to determine the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. The checking of pupils' progress is effective in Years 3 to 6 and is used well to help teachers plan their work. The use of information and communication technology has started to improve since the new suite was installed, which is already having a positive impact on standards. The development of literacy skills in science is satisfactory, with pupils making appropriate use of different styles to present their findings. Pupils use tables and graphs to present information and this has a positive impact on the development of their numeracy skills.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Standards in art and design at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected nationally, and this is a decline since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those who speak English as an additional language, do not make sufficient progress in their learning, and achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Subject coverage meets statutory requirements, but insufficient attention is given to the teaching of basic skills in the subject. Whilst the pupils receive their full entitlement as far as the curriculum is concerned there is insufficient time to deal with the topics in any depth.
102. Because of timetabling it was possible to observe only one lesson of art and design but judgements have been made to include the work displayed in classrooms and around the school. Throughout the school, pupils' ability in drawing is underdeveloped and shows a lack of maturity. In Year 6, cartoons to illustrate the story of Macbeth show accuracy in relation to the story but illustrations indicate weak drawing and colouring skills. There are some good examples of pupils' work displayed in the '*Art Gallery*' on the staircase, showing work in the styles of Lowry and Monet, but there is a lack of consistently good work on display in classrooms of all year groups. This has a negative impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
103. Whilst studying life in Ancient Egypt in Year 3, the pupils satisfactorily draw figures as seen on Egyptian tombs and monuments. Through good teaching, they manage to successfully draw the figures in the correct pose. In the one lesson observed, the pupils made good links with history when attempting to make masks. The teaching was good in this lesson, which was well prepared and introduced. Pupils experiment with different media. They are enthusiastic and behave very well. At the point when pupils come to choose the media in which they will work, their skills and experience are limited. As a result, they need a lot of support to help them choose the appropriate materials. The support given for the visually impaired pupils is very good. This enables them to be fully included in and get full benefit from the lesson. In addition, these pupils have a specially adapted keyboard in order to use a computer program for creating a picture and this adds to the quality of their experience. However, limited use is made of information and communication technology skills to develop art through the school. Although all pupils are responsive and enthusiastic but their experience and skills are below expectations.

104. There is a well attended art club that operates after school, but it can only cater for a small number of pupils. The co-ordinator has been seconded to a nearby school for a year and, as a result, the subject has no current leadership.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards in design and technology at the end of Year 2 and 6 are below those that are expected nationally, and this shows a decline since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, those with visual impairments and those for whom English is an additional language, do not make sufficient progress. This is because whilst the programme for design and technology ensures that there is adequate National Curriculum coverage, there is insufficient time given to the depth of each unit of work. This means that the pupils do not adequately develop the appropriate skills for them to make progress, which has a negative impact on their attainment.
106. No teaching of the subject was seen during the inspection. Evidence from a small number of models and books confirms that standards are unsatisfactory. Small samples of books available for scrutiny show immature drawing and design, even for Years 1 and 2. On investigation, it was apparent that these books were from Years 3 and 5 and illustrated the lack of development in the subject. Work in other subjects shows that most pupils are taught how to use scissors and glue but, from the small number of models on display, care in joining materials and colouring is insufficiently developed. Art and design is coupled with design and technology for timetabling purposes. However, it is not clear from the lesson planning that the appropriate skills in each subject are properly identified.
107. At present there are no procedures for assessing design and technology. The marking in the small sample of books seen was just a series of ticks. No helpful comments are made to help the pupils improve. When talking to Year 2, pupils they can recall making sandwiches but are unable to remember writing anything in a book such as a list of ingredients. Part of the problem of retelling their experiences is due to their unsatisfactory speaking skills. Although they designed and evaluated, a group of Year 6 pupils had problems remembering what they had done. Currently, they do not have lessons in design and technology and this means that there is no progression of skills.
108. The design and technology scheme of work is based on that recommended nationally. The co-ordinator has visited a nearby beacon school for guidance on this scheme of work. Planning is collected from teachers to monitor what is going to be taught but checks on pupils' progress are underdeveloped. Resources are adequate for the teaching of the design and technology curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below national expectations. All pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, visual impairment and English as an additional language, do not make satisfactory progress. This is because coverage of the subject is inconsistent across year groups and the time allocated to the teaching of this subject is too short. For example, geography is not taught in Years 4, 5 and 6 in the autumn term. The current below-expected standards show a decline in those of the previous inspection, when standards were average.
110. No Year 4, 5 and 6 work was available for analysis. Learning in Year 1 is satisfactory. Pupils go on walks to learn about the geography of the area, and recognise the features of their local environment. Year 2 pupils' knowledge is limited to describing how local shops have changed and descriptions of their routes from home to school. However, one of the Year 2 classes had not done any work in geography because of a staffing problem. Pupils in Year 3 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject. They complete

simple geographical tasks and select the information they require from a range of sources. They know how change in land use has affected their local area but have minimal awareness of localities beyond their own. Older pupils in Years 4 and 5 can recall the main areas of the United Kingdom and understand that other countries are close by, for example Belgium and France. Discussion with Year 6 pupils indicated limited knowledge and understanding of the subject. They know that a map is useful for a journey to Wales and use the Internet for research. However, they are not able to compare and contrast physical and human features to do with the land and its uses, nor are they able to discuss how improvements can be made to the environment. Their knowledge of various parts of the world is also weak.

111. A newly appointed leader is competent in the subject and is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. An audit of resources has been made and new equipment has been ordered to meet the needs of the nationally recommended programme of work that the school has adopted. Pupils' progress is checked at the end of each unit of work and a '*geography genius*' award has been introduced to raise pupils' interest in the subject. However, it is too soon to evaluate its success. As yet, there has been no monitoring of teachers' work throughout the school. This means that there is no overview of the quality of teaching in the subject and this has a negative impact on standards.

HISTORY

112. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected nationally and this represents a decline since the last inspection. Despite some elements of good teaching, the pupils' poor vocabulary, and inability to express themselves, impedes their attainment in history. Teachers make the subject interesting through the use of a wide variety of approaches. As a result, all pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with specific learning difficulties, those who are visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language.
113. Pupils in Year 1 know that life in Victorian times was very different from that of today. For example, they have compared Victorian kitchens with the type of kitchen they have at home. Good quality teaching helps pupils develop their historical skills. For example, in one Year 1 class, the teacher encouraged the pupils to try and understand what it was like in a Victorian kitchen. By providing a simulated cooking range and a table full of modern and old kitchen artefacts, she skilfully captured their imagination. This approach helped the pupils to think of '*long ago*'. As a result, they began to gain an appreciation of the differences between a modern day kitchen and a Victorian one. However, during this lesson, pupils showed their lack of vocabulary because they did not know what a kettle was and could not identify one on the table.
114. In Year 3, pupils study Ancient Egypt and have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of the Nile. Teachers of this year group satisfactorily try to make history interesting and realistic by providing examples of artefacts from this period. Drama is also used well to promote learning. For instance, teachers encourage pupils to act out what happened when a pharaoh's body was prepared before burial for the after-life. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the acting and this helps to reinforce the facts. At the end of the lessons, satisfactory question and answer sessions indicate that pupils have remembered the main points of the lesson. In Year 4, pupils satisfactorily compare life as a Celt with that experienced by a Roman soldier. A timeline helps to develop the pupils' chronological skills but much of the work covered consists of pictures and drawings. This indicates that history is not being used to develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils in Year 5 make good use of the Internet to find out about the Tudors. With the help of skilful questioning, they identify what are the characteristics of a good monarch. They make good use of secondary sources, such as pictures from Tudor times, and this helps to stimulate their interest. In Year 6, pupils study life in Victorian Britain and can explain that

life as a poor child was very different from those in rich families. For example, they carefully look at documentary evidence to show the plight of children forced to work during Victorian times. In a good lesson, the pupils acted out interviews of Victorian children by members of parliament. This had a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, examination of their written work indicates that their ability to record historical evidence is weak. Many of the words are not spelt correctly and work is left unfinished. Fully sighted friends help pupils with visual impairment in activities and this enables them to be fully included in the lesson.

115. Teaching overall in history is satisfactory but there are a number of strengths. Teachers plan their work well and are quite clear about what pupils are to learn in lessons. Appropriate links are made to other subjects, such as art and design. For example, pupils draw and paint figures in a style similar to those found on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs. When studying ancient Egypt, links to geography are made when pupils locate and draw the River Nile. Teachers are also skilful at using the correct vocabulary and explain words that are new to pupils. This helps to extend their weak vocabulary. Teachers are good at reinforcing the skills learned in previous literacy lessons to extract the major points read in a document. However, problems of general knowledge and vocabulary occur. For example, one pupil wrote that a boy lived in a place called 'squalid cottage' (*he lived in a squalid cottage*) and when questioned he did not know what squalid meant. Work is set to suit the different abilities within each class and good support is given to pupils who have specific learning difficulties, those who are visually impaired and for those whom English is a second language. However, the marking of work is variable. Where it is good, comments are constructive and indicate what pupils should do next. This helps the pupils to understand what skills they need to develop. On the other hand, some teachers use decorative stamps, which indicate that they consider the work to be good or even excellent. Examination of work over time indicates that these stamps are overused and do not necessarily indicate that good progress has been made.
116. The co-ordinator is new to the role but has already started to provide a good lead to the subject. The school has adopted a nationally recommended programme of work. It has identified a need to introduce checking procedures to ensure that pupils make consistent progress. There is a clear awareness of the need for more artefacts. There is also an understanding that visits to historical places will help pupils appreciate events in the past and develop their vocabulary.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain the expected standards. All pupils make good progress, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired, and those for whom English is an additional language. This is because of good teaching and learning, where all pupils are effectively supported. The previous inspection judged standards to be above average but current findings do not necessarily represent a decline in standards. This is because national expectations have changed over the past few years and are now more rigorous in the subject.
118. By Year 2, most pupils have developed satisfactory keyboard skills. They review and modify their work as they write about events, such as Guy Fawkes Night. They make things happen. For example, the pupils give commands to make a programmable floor toy go forward, turn and then move forward again. They present information about favourite pets in bar charts and proudly print off their findings. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 compose poetry straight onto computers. They also make simple shapes and patterns with a screen robot, which responds to a range of instructions. Pupils use software effectively to compose pictures in the style of a chosen artist. Those in Years 5 and 6 use spreadsheets to investigate relationships between the side of a square, its perimeter and area. They are developing their confidence in entering and using formulae. Pupils access the Internet to

find out information about famous people, such as David Beckham. They know how to combine pictures and writing for effect. All pupils look forward to their information and communication technology lessons and work with a very high level of concentration.

119. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers combine good planning with high expectations and make use of equipment very effectively. The new technology suite is used very well to promote learning, and good use is made of an electronic board to help pupils understand new techniques. Teachers manage pupils very well and use classroom assistants effectively to support learning. Pupils' progress is continually checked and effective interventions are provided when necessary.
120. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The installation of the new information and communication technology suite and additional computers has made an excellent impact on provision. The design of the suite provides one computer per pupil in each class and the interactive board provides a very effective tool to develop pupils' skills. However, the use of information and communication technology to develop other subject skills is still underdeveloped. This is mainly because teachers are still not confident about its use throughout the curriculum, and this is a weakness.

MUSIC

121. It was only possible to observe, and listen to, a small amount of music-making during the inspection. However, from these observations and talking to pupils and teachers, it is judged that attainment is below expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a decline in standards since the last inspection and is due to the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, which have arisen from a limited curriculum.
122. There is an obvious strength in the quality of singing. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and even the youngest pupils are able to put actions to a number of well-known songs. Older pupils sing tunefully, with clear diction and a pleasant tone. They sing rounds, maintaining their own part, with an awareness of how the different parts fit together and the need to achieve an overall effect. It is obvious that pupils enjoy singing and all pupils take full part, including those with specific learning difficulties, visual impairment or English as an additional language. On the other hand, pupils are less competent when composing, such as when they try to create musical effects to accompany a story or poem. They lack the ability to notate their compositions through the use of graphic, pitch or simple rhythmic notation. However, tape recorders are used well for recording pupils' work. Pupils have had minimum experience of expressing opinions and ideas about their own music and that of other composers. Their musical skills are also poorly developed.
123. The deficiencies identified in pupils' attainment are largely because too much time in music has been given to singing. This has resulted in other aspects of music not receiving sufficient attention. The newly appointed co-ordinator has identified this weakness and is making good progress in the reorganisation of curriculum planning. This has involved the implementation of a new scheme of work to cover all the required areas of the National Curriculum. Standards have started to improve quickly because of the developments put in place over the last 18 months. A specialist teacher very effectively supports the teaching by accompanying the pupils on piano, but there is still a lack of confidence among some teachers. Checks on pupils' progress are made every half term and the co-ordinator monitors these to ensure that the teachers fully meet the needs of the pupils.
124. The profile of music in the school is being raised and this is having a positive impact on standards. For example, pupils who play brass or woodwind instruments have opportunities to play at assemblies. The choir meets regularly and is developing a wide repertoire. Pupils have sung to local senior citizens at Christmas time. Concerts, involving singing and instrumental work, take place each year. The education action zone arranges

for performers to come into the school to play live music, and this has a positive impact on the pupils' cultural development. There are sufficient instruments of good quality to enable all pupils to have opportunities to play in music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards in games in Year 2 are satisfactory, a similar picture to the judgements made at the previous inspection. Pupils send and receive a ball with appropriate control and co-ordination. By the end of Year 6, pupils' games skills have progressed well and are above expectations. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate that they can throw and catch in a variety of situations, showing speed, accuracy and control. No gymnastics were seen in Years 1 and 2 but, in Year 5, pupils' standards are barely satisfactory. Many of their movements are controlled but their ability to devise and perform fluent sequences on the floor is limited. No dance lessons were observed. In swimming, just under two-thirds of pupils swim 25 metres at the end of Year 6 which is below national expectations. This is because, although one third of their physical education time throughout the school is spent on swimming, few pupils have the opportunity to develop their swimming skills out of school.
126. The prime reason for pupils not reaching the required standards in games and gymnastics is because the time allocated to physical education is very limited. The school is following the curriculum provided by a nationally recommended scheme of work, in which each unit of work is designed to take 8-12 hours. However, the school spends only six hours on each topic, and this is not enough.
127. The teaching of games in Year 1 is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers give clear explanations and demonstrations of what is to be done. Pupils are well managed. They have plenty of time in lessons to practise their skills and this has a positive impact on their attainment. However, on occasions, organisation is weak and this results in too many pupils waiting for a turn. There are also times when the teachers' explanations go on for too long and this limits the time available for practice. The teaching of swimming is good. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to help them with confidence in the water and to help them with basic strokes. In Year 6, a professional coach takes the games lessons and the quality of teaching in these sessions is of a very good standard. For instance, in one games lesson observed in this year group, pupils were very well managed and motivated. This enabled them to practise accurate throwing and catching skills. The pace was brisk throughout and pupils worked hard. Very good progress was made and a good level of skills was achieved.
128. Gymnastics teaching in Years 4 and 5 is satisfactory overall but includes a number of strengths:
- pupils are well managed and organised;
 - there is a good emphasis on quality of movement;
 - lessons are brisk;
 - all pupils are totally included;
 - pupils are given time to evaluate performances.

These aspects enable pupils to work hard at appropriate tasks and to make satisfactory or good progress. However, some aspects limit pupils' progress and need improvement. These include:

- attention to health and safety issues itemised in the school's policy, such as the removal of jewellery and long hair being tied back;
- lesson objectives that are not sufficiently focused and are not reflected in the main teaching activities;

- too much teacher talking and demonstration, which limits the opportunities for pupils' own creativity and imagination;
 - insufficient use of pupils' independence in the movement of apparatus;
 - too much noise when the pupils are working.
129. A particular strength in all teaching is the inclusion of all pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, the visually impaired and those for whom English is an additional language. An excellent example of this was seen in a games lesson when a pupil who is registered as blind was throwing and catching a ball with a sighted partner. The partner was throwing the ball so gently that it was easy to catch. However, if her partner did not catch the ball, it would not hurt her. Pupils generally show a very high level of consideration for each other.
130. The two co-ordinators have been in post a short time but have made a satisfactory start and are keen to improve the subject. They feel that the scheme of work in place is appropriate but understand that there is not enough time allowed for each aspect of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth. The co-ordinators also appreciate that there are elements in teaching that need to be improved through in-service training. The checking of pupils' progress is identified in the planning but is still at an early stage of development. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, including football, netball, gymnastics, athletics and swimming. Pupils have opportunities to compete against other schools and this makes a valuable contribution to their moral and social development. There is sufficient apparatus and equipment to teach the curriculum.