

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LEAMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104157

Headteacher: Tim Franks

Reporting inspector: Godfrey Bancroft  
3687

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 246354

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bloxwich Road  
Leamore  
Walsall

Postcode: WS3 2BB

Telephone number: 01922 710514

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs I Malyon

Date of previous inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Godfrey Bancroft 3687	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Music Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Janet Butler 9428	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Philip Martin 23262	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Trudy Cotton 3751	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Science	
Mark Madeley 22657	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is an average sized primary school with a nursery for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. The nursery caters for the equivalent of 17 pupils who attend in either the morning or the afternoon. There are 221 pupils in Years R to 6. The school serves a community to the north west of Walsall which faces many significant social and economic challenges. The community is currently receiving support from the government's New Deal programme to provide regeneration for urban areas. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for children of that age. There are 32 pupils on the special educational needs register and three pupils with statements of special educational need. This is below the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and very few who speak English as an additional language. None of the pupils who speak English as an additional language and who are of statutory school age are at the early stages of speaking English. The school is emerging from the turmoil of a major building programme and severe fire which destroyed both accommodation and resources, causing significant disruption to pupils' education.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in many subjects. Standards are above average when compared with those found in similar schools. The quality of teaching is good. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governing body are also good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English, mathematics, science, history, music, physical education and religious education. They also make good progress in information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The quality of education provided for children in the nursery and reception class is very good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities is good, including the provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Arrangements to ensure the care and welfare of pupils are good.
- The management and leadership of the headteacher and governing body are good.

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

- Standards in English by the end of Year 2, information and communication technology by the end of Year 6 and in mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- Attendance.

*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. Improvement, since that time is good. It is all the more remarkable given the disruption caused by the building programme and the fire. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and leadership and management are now good. Pupils now achieve well in English, mathematics and science. However, the overall standards, although higher than at the last inspection, remain below the national average. Standards in music exceed those expected for pupils' ages and standards in design and technology are in line with expectations. By the end of Year 6 standards in information and communication technology remain below those expected. However, improvement is evident because better resources and accommodation are provided to support pupils' learning in the subject. The quality of resources overall has improved markedly. Significant improvements are evident in the planning and co-ordination of the curriculum and opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are well established. The school now meets the statutory requirements for teacher appraisal and to provide a daily act of collective worship.

## 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	C	D	A
Mathematics	E	D	E	C
Science	E	D	D	B

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

By the time children leave the reception class their attainment is close to that expected for their age. The end of Year 2 tests in 2002 showed that attainment in reading was above average and in writing and mathematics it was average. Teacher assessments judged attainment in science to be below average. When compared with the standards in similar schools attainment in reading is very high and that for writing and mathematics well above average. Attainment in science is average. Inspection findings show that attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is because the attainment of these pupils on entry to the school was well below that expected. By the end of Year 6 the tests for 2002 showed attainment in English and science to be below average, whilst that for mathematics was well below average. When compared with the standards found in similar schools attainment in English was well above average, attainment in mathematics average and attainment in science above average. Inspection findings judge attainment in English to be average, whilst attainment in mathematics and science is below average. This is because there are not enough opportunities in mathematics and science for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge during investigations. Attainment in most other subjects is close to that expected for pupils' ages. The exceptions are music and physical education in which attainment exceeds that expected and information and communication technology in which standards, by the end of Year 6, are below expectations. Over recent years standards, by the end of Year 2, in reading and writing have tended to remain close to and in some years above average. Standards in mathematics have been below average; however, steady improvement is evident. By the end of Year 6 standards in English have been close to or just below average. Standards in mathematics have been below average, whilst those in science from being well below average have risen steadily. The school sets realistic and suitably challenging targets for pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils clearly enjoy school. They are enthusiastic learners who listen well to their teachers and try hard to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite, helpful, considerate and self-controlled. Behaviour has improved since the time of the last inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils are supportive of each other and work well with partners and in small groups. Sometimes there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take personal responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is improving steadily, but is still below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 quality of teaching is high. In over four out of five lessons seen, it was at least good, with some very good and excellent teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers' specialist knowledge is used very well when they teach classes other than their own and enables pupils to learn well in subjects that are taught confidently. Excellent teaching is evident in music. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is very good in the nursery and reception classes and good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers' planning is good, but sometimes it does not provide sufficient detail about how the needs of pupils of differing ability and those with special educational needs will be met. Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will behave, learn and make progress. Teachers also manage their pupils well. Teachers make good use of time, support staff and the resources to support pupils' learning. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn well. A valuable contribution is made to the learning of all pupils by nursery nurses and classroom assistants. Teachers use opportunities to assess pupils' attainment and progress during lessons well. They also use the information they gain from these opportunities well to plan the next stages of their teaching. Sometimes the marking of work does not provide pupils with enough information about what they need to do to improve. Homework is used effectively to promote pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is planned effectively and meets the needs of all pupils well. Provision to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is good. All aspects of the curriculum required by law are in place. Opportunities for pupils to continue their learning outside normal school hours are good and members of the community make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is not structured sufficiently to ensure that all aspects are covered in enough depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. However, the documentation that provides the basis for this support is not always sufficiently detailed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has only a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Those in Years 1 to 6 learn very well and make very good progress. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English in Years 1 to 6.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Opportunities for pupils to enhance their spiritual and cultural development are also good. Assemblies, music lessons and religious education make a significant contribution to these areas of development. This good provision has a positive effect on the way pupils learn and work together.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Systems to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are given high priority and work well. Good behaviour is promoted effectively. Arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good in English and mathematics and science, but are not developed sufficiently in other subjects. The school's efforts to improve attendance are becoming increasingly successful.

The school's links with parents are good. Parents are very supportive of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Annual reports provide clear and helpful information for parents about how well their children are getting on.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong partnership that provides the school with a clear direction and sense of purpose. This has brought significant improvements since the time of the last inspection and guided through the school through difficult times following the fire. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their duties well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school. They fulfil their legally required duties. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play their part in shaping the direction of the school fully. Their shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The monitoring and evaluation of provision by governors, the headteacher and by subject co-ordinators is effective. Areas for development are identified clearly in the improvement plan and effective action taken to ensure these are addressed successfully.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The financial management of the school is good and resources are used well. Grants allocated for specific purposes are used well. The headteacher works very effectively to gain access to any additional resources available to support pupils' learning. Governors apply the principles of best value well when purchasing services and resources for the school.

The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the school is good. Accommodation is satisfactory, with some good features. Resources to support pupils' learning are good.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children make good progress at the school.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The degree to which they are kept well informed about the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• The degree to which the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with those features that parents like most about the school. Inspectors feel that the range of activities provided outside lesson is good. Inspectors also judge that parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and that the school works closely with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Until about two years ago children's attainment when they entered the nursery was below average. In the last two years it has been well below that expected in some areas of their learning. This remains the case when the school is compared with others in the area. Currently children's attainment when they enter the nursery is below that expected in their personal social and emotional development, and well below that expected in their communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. At this stage their physical development is in line with that expected for their age.
2. During their time in the nursery and the reception class children make very good progress in most areas of their learning. This is because they are taught very well. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class their attainment is in line with that expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It exceeds that expected in their personal, social and emotional development. It also exceeds that expected in their physical development. Children also make good progress in their physical development.
3. By the end of Year 2 the most recent national tests (2002) show that attainment in reading was above average and writing and mathematics average. Teacher assessments judged attainment in science to be below average. When compared with the standards in similar schools attainment in reading is very high and that for writing and mathematics well above average. Attainment in science is average. Inspection findings show that attainment for the pupils currently in Year 2 is below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Within English and in other subjects pupils listen well, but standards of speaking are not as good as expected. These standards are because this year group entered the school with attainment that was well below that expected in most areas of their learning and lower than that of pupils in previous year groups. These pupils have also experienced changes in teachers, a situation that the school has now resolved. They are currently achieving well and making good progress. Attainment in all other subjects by the end of Year 2 is in line with that expected, with the exceptions of music and physical education in which attainment is higher than expected for pupils' ages.
4. By the end of Year 6 the national tests for 2002 showed attainment in English and science to be below average, whilst that for mathematics was well below average. When compared with where these pupils started they had made good progress in English and science, although their progress in mathematics was unsatisfactory. When compared with the standards found in similar schools, attainment in English is well above average, attainment in mathematics average and attainment in science above average. Inspection findings judge attainment in English to be average, whilst attainment in mathematics and science is below average. In mathematics and science there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge during investigative work. Within English, standards in speaking remain below average. By the end of Year 6 attainment in music and physical education exceeds that expected for pupils' ages. Attainment in information and communication technology is below the expected level. This is mainly because pupils in the current Year 6 have not had long enough to benefit from the vastly improved teaching, accommodation and resources now in place for this subject. Standards in other subjects are in line with those expected for pupils' ages.
5. In all subjects by the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily and they are achieving well in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and

technology, history, music, physical education and religious education. They are also making good progress in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2.

6. When the test results of previous years are considered, standards by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing have tended to remain close to and in some years above average. Standards in mathematics were below average in 2000 and in 2001; however, steady improvement is evident. By the end of Year 6 standards in English have been close to or just below average. Standards in mathematics have been below average, whilst those in science, from being well below average, have risen steadily.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Some have made enough progress to move out of the special needs groups. They have considerable adult support in lessons and are occasionally withdrawn to receive additional help in smaller groups. A good example of this was the small group of Year 6 girls who made significant progress in their understanding of the story of the 'Prodigal Son'. The tempo of the whole class lesson was too quick for them to gain much from the story. There are very few pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language and there are no pupils of statutory school age who are at the early stages of speaking English. Those pupils who do speak English as an additional language are making very good progress and are rightly regarded as higher attaining pupils.
8. The school sets realistic and suitably challenging targets for pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6. Indications, based on teachers' assessments of pupils' current attainment and progress, suggest that these are likely to be met by the current Year 6 and in 2004 by the current Year 5 pupils.

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

9. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning. A Year 2 pupil said the best thing about school was that 'learning stuff makes you feel clever'. Parents agree that their children all enjoy going to school, and that they are keen to learn. Pupils' level of enthusiasm is good, and in lessons they listen well and try hard to succeed. They are often very interested and involved in their studies, showing curiosity at new discoveries and pride in their finished work. For example, pupils in the reception class examined a developing hen's egg with amazement and then produced good drawings of their detailed observations. In the older classes pupils' responses in lessons were always good or better, with excellent levels of involvement and concentration in some, particularly in music.
10. Throughout the school, in lessons and at play, behaviour is good. This reveals an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the renewed emphasis on behaviour management that has been a focus in recent years. Parents value the school's success in this area. Pupils are polite and helpful, considerate and self-controlled. This is particularly noticeable in the playground, where despite the crowded conditions in a relatively small yard, pupils are able to play a range of very active games without too much conflict or disturbance of others. In class pupils behave in a mature and orderly fashion, handling resources with care, and reminding one another of appropriate behaviour. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour are rare and at a low level. They are confident that issues are resolved satisfactorily when reported.
11. Pupils' relationships between themselves and with all adults in the school are very good. There is an air of friendly respect in classrooms, and at play the atmosphere is happy and relaxed. Pupils are supportive of one another and work well together in pairs and small groups. In a Year 4 science lesson groups of six pupils divided the tasks fairly amongst themselves and co-operated well in sharing the observations and results. The

relationships between Year 6 pupils and their reading partners in the reception class are particularly commendable. The older girls were extremely sensitive and encouraging in their conversations with the younger pupils about the books they were sharing. Pupils also show good understanding of the differences between peoples of other faiths and beliefs, and there is complete racial harmony in school.

12. Pupils' personal development is good and there have been some improvements since the last inspection. However, opportunities for them to show initiative and personal responsibility are still rather limited, particularly as the school council is not active. Pupils do demonstrate good levels of confidence and when given the chance they carry out duties responsibly. In the best lessons they are able to make choices, and can reflect on and discuss their own feelings. Pupils in Year 4 were able to empathise with a blind child and imagine how different colours might be associated with different emotions. As they grow older, pupils learn about their role in society and how to keep safe. The Kerbcraft course in Year 2 shows that they have a sensible awareness of the dangers around them, and junior pupils have learned about peer pressure and how to say no. They are well prepared for the transfer to secondary education.
13. Attendance is still unsatisfactory although this year's figures reveal a significant improvement which brings the level close to the national average for primary schools. The level of attendance in the past three years has been well below the national average, although there is not an issue with unauthorised absence. Absences appear to be due to ill health and occasionally to social problems. There was a serious decline in attendance figures in the early winter months when many pupils were ill. Overall this year, however, pupils' attendance is improving and shows that they are keen to attend school and value the school's incentives to attend well. Currently some classes have average attendance. Pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

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

14. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good. During the inspection teaching was very good or better in just over one third of lessons in Years 1 to 6. Excellent teaching was seen in Year 1 and Year 6. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. The school makes very effective use of these qualities. For example, teachers often exchange lessons, such as in science, music and physical education, so that pupils benefit from teachers' specialist knowledge. In these lessons, pupils make very good progress and standards improve significantly. Excellent teaching is evident in music.
15. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is very good in the nursery and reception classes, with children making very good progress. These basic skills are taught well in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make good progress. However, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge during investigations in mathematics and science. This is mainly why standards are below average. Teachers have worked very effectively to enhance their knowledge and their use of information and communication technology and pupils are achieving well in this area of their learning.
16. Teachers' planning is very good in the nursery and reception classes and meets very well the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers' planning in Years 1 to 6 is good, but sometimes it does not provide sufficient detail about how the needs of pupils of differing ability and those with special educational needs will be met.

17. Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will learn and make progress. They set targets for pupils' learning. The targets are shared with pupils who are well aware of what they need to do to achieve their target. This process works very effectively in English and mathematics where it provides pupils with good insights and understanding of their learning. Teachers also manage their pupils well. They have high expectations of how pupils will behave and how they will apply themselves to their learning. Pupils, for their part, respond well to these expectations which are based on good relationships between teachers and their pupils. These help to ensure that pupils try hard, sustain their concentration and are well motivated.
18. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Staff know the pupils and their needs well and plan, sometimes intuitively, for their needs. Insufficient detail is recorded on lesson planning and this can present problems for temporary staff. Lesson planning is often a joint venture between teachers and classroom assistants so that all adults know their role. This also enables work at the correct level to be planned. There is need to balance the desire to improve these pupils' language skills and the need for the pupils to use these skills to communicate. At the beginning of the lesson the best practice has classroom assistants sitting with special needs pupils. In Year 3 the classroom assistant helps them to engage in the lesson by explaining the questions or helps them to concentrate on the teacher. In some other lessons the classroom assistant is not so involved until the class splits up for group work.
19. Good use is made by teachers of time, support staff and the resources to support pupils' learning. The principle of using a three-part lesson when what pupils are expected to learn is shared by teachers is usually followed by a period in which the whole class learn together before splitting up to work in groups. Towards the end of lessons the whole class usually gathers together to review what has been learned and to go over points that need revision. This helps to ensure that time is used well and is deployed with particular success in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants. The qualified nursery nurses work very effectively to ensure the youngest children learn very well and make very good progress. Their very good work is extended in the reception class where the classroom assistant provides for good support for children's learning. Instances of classroom assistants working effectively are evident throughout the school. For example, a qualified nursery nurse provides very good support for pupils' learning in information and communication technology. Occasionally classroom assistants are not involved sufficiently when teachers are teaching the whole class. Resources in all subjects are well organised with teachers and classroom assistants ensuring they are readily accessible for pupils to use. This does much to ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils learn well.
20. Teachers make good use of opportunities to assess pupils' attainment and progress during lessons. They also use the information they gain from these opportunities well to plan the next stages of their teaching. Pupils, through discussions, are given a clear picture of what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve further. However, not enough use is made of opportunities for pupils to consider for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Sometimes the marking of pupils' work does not provide them with enough information about what they need to do to improve. However, there are instances, for example in Year 1, where teachers' marking is detailed and helpful to pupils.
21. Homework is used well to promote pupils' learning. Parents are happy with the amount and type of homework set for pupils and feel it prepares their children well for the next stages of their education. Younger pupils regularly take their books home for reading, whilst older pupils receive increasing amounts of homework. This mainly takes the form of English and mathematics and sometimes includes research to support learning in other subjects. Pupils, for their part, complete their homework and usually hand it in on time.

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

22. The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception class is very good. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Lessons cover the required curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There are good opportunities to learn outside normal school hours and the school works well with other institutions and partner schools to enrich pupils' learning. There has been a good deal of improvement since the previous inspection when a number of weaknesses were noted. The curriculum is now planned satisfactorily. Teachers' use of nationally recommended guidelines for teaching and planning is helping to ensure that all subjects are covered in enough depth and breadth. However, the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education, although sound overall, still lacks enough structure to ensure that all issues are dealt with in a planned way. The sex education policy and the raising of pupils' awareness of the dangers posed by some drugs is now soundly implemented.
23. The previous report identified some shortcomings in planning in English and mathematics. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result, the basic skills in English and numeracy are taught well. The teachers' effective use of these strategies and the development of literacy in other subjects are important factors in good achievement in English and mathematics, particularly numeracy. However, although teachers are increasingly confident in the use of information and communication technology, they do not use it consistently to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs in the nursery and reception class is very good. Their needs are met very effectively and they make very good progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Information is exchanged informally on a regular basis and the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support assistants all attend review meetings. They have a clear understanding of each pupil's targets and how they might be achieved. However, pupils' targets, identified on their review sheets, are not always incorporated into teachers' lesson plans and this limits pupils' progress. This means that work is not always aimed at the pupils' targets with sufficient precision. When temporary staff work in the school they do not have the thorough knowledge of the pupils that full-time staff have and have no written points of reference. The school has been trialling a new recording system and agrees with the inspection team that it does not contain sufficient fine detail to enable everyone concerned to accelerate pupils' progress. Adult and specialist help for pupils with learning difficulties significantly enhances the quality of learning for these pupils. In Year 5 the detailed planning of the teacher and classroom assistants significantly enhanced pupils' learning in a mathematics lesson. Pupils worked with adults in small groups at a level appropriate to their needs and mastered getting information from a graph.
25. The school provides a good range of activities outside normal school hours. There is a range of clubs in which pupils can take part in sporting, cultural and craft activities. Children from the nursery and reception classes and their parents, as well as pupils in Years 5 and 6, can attend a computer club before schools starts. This helps parents and pupils to develop information and communication technology skills and forges useful links between the parents and the school. There are firm plans for a breakfast club. The necessary equipment has been bought and should be installed shortly. There are other chances for parents to learn how to support their children, for example the 'Share' group for literacy. There is a thriving choir which has taken part in local events, and a football club. Most pupils in Year 6 attend 'booster' classes, aimed at improving their knowledge and understanding of mathematics after school one day a week. These activities help to enrich pupils' academic, personal and social development.

26. The school also works well with the local community for the benefit of pupils. The 'Golden Goals' group run by the local football club provides a range of good opportunities, for example 'Stadium Days' where pupils learn about safety issues. The same group also usefully supports families in developing literacy skills. Pupils' visits to places of worship of different religions, such as churches, mosques and gurdwaras make a positive contribution to their understanding in religious education and to their understanding of the society they are growing up in. The school has good links with a local supermarket that have a positive impact on pupils' learning in a range of subjects. These include design and technology when a baker from the supermarket worked with a class on a project about bread, and in speaking and listening when debating whether the establishment should provide a playground.
27. The school has satisfactory links with other educational institutions that benefit pupils' education. Older pupils visit secondary schools before transfer, and there are firm plans to use the outdoor and adventurous activity facilities at a partner high school. Each year, a number of students from higher and further education establishments work in school. These activities benefit pupils because the students not only work with the pupils but also offer extra support to teachers.
28. The provision for pupils' personal development, including provision for spiritual, moral social and cultural development, has improved since the last inspection and is now good in every aspect. The provision for spiritual awareness is good. In particular, both music and religious education lessons play a major part in raising pupils' awareness of the spiritual. The themes for discussion in circle time are satisfactorily planned and pupils are given time to reflect. Pupils think and talk about their experiences, and this thinking enhances their spiritual development. In Year 6 science pupils explored the growth of plants and how it works, and this led many to consider the existence of a higher being. Collective worship complies with statutory requirements and is well planned. The quality of the singing in assemblies greatly adds to the joy of worship. Usually acts of worship involve exploring meaning, purpose and values, such as a consideration of the Creation from a wide variety of cultural viewpoints, though they are broadly Christian in nature.
29. The school's overall provision for pupils' moral development is good. School rules are clear, understood by all and fairly administered. Pupils are treated equally, for instance pupils with special educational needs are very much part of the 'family'. Assembly monitors know that they have to watch pupils' behaviour. They understand the limits of their authority and other pupils respect this. Good behaviour is consistently rewarded by all adults. In class pupils' views are listened to and valued. Posters around the school consistently encourage pupils to do their best for instance one message is 'I can't is not allowed'.
30. Arrangements for developing pupils' social awareness are good. The key values of the school are displayed and shared with everyone. Staff and other adults at the school are positive role models. Pupils are provided with some good opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions, for instance in taking a lead in collecting for the local children's hospice and other charities. The good relationships within the school make a considerable contribution to the school's atmosphere. Classroom rules are developed by the pupils themselves. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to share resources and co-operate as a group. Older pupils are expected and encouraged successfully to care for the younger ones. A good example is the shared reading between pupils in Year 6 and reception aged children. When given the opportunity, many pupils show initiative by opening doors for others or picking up fallen coats.
31. The overall provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils understand the value of their cultural traditions, mainly through their study of British history. They have quite a clear picture of life in Victorian times, for instance. The majority of the pupils show an

understanding of the cultural diversity of British society, but more regular contact with other ethnic groups, perhaps through religious education, would enhance this further. The school's provision for cultural experiences for pupils is good. The recent visits of musicians and the visits to the local performing arts centre have been a highlight of many pupils' year. Their knowledge of Indonesian music is spectacular and they clearly recall the South American pipers and drummers and many knew the name 'Caliche'. Artists and theatre groups are very regular visitors and are used well by the school not only to add to the spiritual provision but also to train staff in new techniques which they can later use. A good example of this 'dual use' is the Year 4 pupils' work on Caribbean figures proudly displayed around the school.

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

32. The way in which the school cares for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good, and has improved since the last inspection. In a climate of considerable upheaval, with building work and fire damage to contend with, the school has consistently placed the well-being of its pupils as top priority. All pupils are well known to the staff, and their individual needs are attended to with care and understanding. Procedures for child protection are in line with the agreed local guidelines. The governors and staff are vigilant in ensuring that the health and safety policy is closely followed in practice.
33. All teaching and support staff are consistent in their interpretation of the school's procedures to support and guide its pupils in their personal development. Good behaviour is promoted well by discreet reminders, emphasis on positive role models, and rewards for personal achievements. Pupils value the use of certificates and stickers, and appreciate the kudos of featuring in the weekly 'good work' assemblies. They also understand and accept the use of sanctions, such as reduced playtimes.
34. Arrangements to assess children's attainment and progress in the nursery and reception class are very good. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress through Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. There is regular testing of letter sounds, more advanced reading skills and mathematics. More recently assessment in science has improved through the use of nationally recommended testing procedures. The statutory assessments in Years 2 and 6 are well established. The teachers diligently analyse every paper and every question in order to find out what pupils learned well and what could be improved. They use this information well to guide their lesson planning in science. Assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are much less well developed. The school recognises this and is introducing appropriate assessment and record keeping in the near future. Pupils' academic progress is monitored thoroughly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils and parents know their targets well, and work hard to achieve them. Assessment, recording and monitoring of attainment and progress are an integral part of teaching procedures. Portfolios of moderated work, at least for the main subjects, could enhance these further.
35. The school's procedures for identifying pupils who might have special needs, and then diagnosing those needs, are very thorough in English. They are still good, but less detailed in mathematics and for pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school's regular assessment procedures, plus additional work by classroom assistants and teachers, help track pupils' progress and inform review meetings. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported. Most have adult support for much of the day, the cost being supplemented from the school's own budget. Relationships are strong between adult helpers and the pupils. These pupils mix freely and well with the other pupils in the class and are given responsibility like anyone else; for instance, one girl is an assembly monitor.

36. The school has worked hard to improve its attendance figures and the good procedures have this year resulted in some success. The practice of phoning home on the first day of absence, associated with a home visit by the educational welfare officer where necessary, has brought about a significant improvement in the attendance of some children. Most pupils are interested in the termly attendance prizes and certificates, and the analysis of class figures shows that the oldest pupils are achieving good attendance now. The school does not yet make formal announcement of how the classes compare, which is a missed opportunity to promote attendance still further.

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

37. The school has maintained its good relationships with parents and its good reputation in the community. Parents have good opinions of the school, and think their children do well in its care. They particularly value the way their children like school and feel that teachers have high expectations and teach well. Most see the school staff as very approachable, and feel comfortable in bringing forward any concern. However, a small minority of parents have strongly held views that their concerns are not always fully understood, and the school is not yet totally successful in communicating to all parents the ways in which their concerns are dealt with and pupils' problems resolved.
38. The school works effectively to forge good links with parents which will underpin the shared role of educating their children. This process begins in the early years, when families are invited to a variety of meetings, family literacy sessions, and craft and parenting ideas groups shared with their children. The headteacher reports that parental attendance at these sessions is good and that support for the school is good. Throughout the school parents are invited to become involved in many ways, from volunteering to help, to daily support for homework.
39. Overall the information provided for parents about school life and their child's progress is good. The formal documents are very detailed. However, these documents are not attractively produced and do little to celebrate the pupils' contributions to school life. Frequent correspondence, the daily homework diaries and the accessible class teachers keep parents informed about day-to-day matters and weekly spelling test scores. However some parents do not feel they know enough about their child's progress. The two parents' information evenings are near the start and end of the school year and the lack of an interim comment might explain this concern. The pupils' annual progress reports are very helpful and well received by parents. They give good detail about achievements, make reference to age-related scores in English and mathematics, and give targets for improvement in these subjects and science. However, the targets do not consistently apply to specific skills in these subject areas and are often more general. The section on homework and reading at home is a valuable addition to the reports which are unusual and commendable for the way in which they give due credit to parental support, especially for hearing reading.
40. Parents' support for the school is good, and they make a good contribution to their children's learning. School life benefits from parental involvement in many areas, from the maintenance of the drinking water bottles, to the effective assistance provided in class. Trained parents help pupils to learn road safety awareness, parents assist in swimming lessons and others work with their children at a computer club. Support for reading at home is strong, and most parents are fully supportive of the school's attendance policy.
41. Parents of pupils with special educational needs feel that their children get a 'good deal' at the school and the inspection team endorses this view. They are kept well informed of their child's progress. They are invited to attend review meetings, receive copies of the class teacher's report before the meeting, contribute to the debate and offer written comments. Most attend regularly but if there are difficulties the special educational needs

co-ordinator goes out of her way to ensure that they have an input and receive a copy of the review. Class teachers and the co-ordinator make themselves available at any reasonable time for consultation and discussion.

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

42. The leadership and management of the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities are good and do much to ensure a clear educational direction for the school. They ensure effectively that the school's aims and values are reflected well in all aspects of its work. These include ensuring that pupils can learn successfully through applying their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, preparing pupils for a possible life beyond the community in which they live and equipping them with the skills of communication and co-operation for a successful life in the future.
43. The deputy headteacher provides good support for the headteacher and they work closely and successfully to ensure the smooth running of the school and the efficient use of the resources to support pupils' learning. This was clearly evident as the school emerged from the trauma and reorganisation brought about by a serious fire that inflicted substantial damage on the school's buildings and resources. Subject co-ordinators also work effectively to oversee and support developments in their subjects. The arrangements for co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects are good and part of a planned cycle.
44. The management of special needs is good. Information is shared regularly, including feeding back on recent developments to all staff. The contribution made by all staff, and particularly that by the classroom assistants, is valued. Outside agencies are used well and kept informed of pupils' progress and needs. Resources, at a satisfactory level have been purchased and are readily available for use. The budget is managed well with the bulk being spent on staffing costs to support pupils with statements of special educational need.
45. The governing body fulfils the duties required of it by law well. Governors are very supportive of the school and its work. This was particularly so during the significant disruption experienced in recent times. It is credit to all concerned that the school has emerged so successfully from this period. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is good. They are involved fully in a strong partnership with the headteacher in putting together the school improvement plan. This plan identifies clearly and well the priorities for development and how they will be achieved. However, these priorities are not linked closely enough to the possible outcomes in terms of the standards that pupils attain. Even so, the action taken to meet the school's targets has been successful in recent years and achieved through very difficult circumstances. This is also reflected in the good improvement evident since the school was last inspected. The plan is very lengthy and detailed. This is mainly because of the additional work generated by the damage caused by the fire and none of the previously identified priorities have gone away. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and of the areas needing development. All governors have oversight of at least one subject and liaise closely with the headteacher and with subject co-ordinators. There is an effective committee structure of the governing body that ensures their work is carried out efficiently and helps to ensure that governors are kept well informed about developments. Several governors work in the school in a variety of capacities. This helps to ensure they remain well informed and contributes well to their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. The shared commitment to improvement by the governing body, headteacher and staff is good.
46. The day to day financial management of the school is good with office staff monitoring the spending on each item of the budget closely and keeping the headteacher well informed

about patterns of spending and the development of the budget. The governing body is involved well in decisions about how resources should be spent. The headteacher, in his reports, ensures they are up to date with all spending developments. Governors ensure effectively that priorities for development, identified in the school improvement plan, have sufficient resources allocated to ensure that they can be achieved.

47. At the end of the last financial year the school's budget showed a significant underspend, more than the recommended amount. This is likely to be repeated this year. This is because governors are planning to appoint an additional teacher and wish to be in a position to sustain the appointment over several years. There is also a significant amount within the budget accruing from insurance payments following the fire suffered by the school. Governors apply the principles of best value well when purchasing services and resources for the school.
48. Grants allocated for specific purposes are used well. For example, the school makes good use of those grants provided for the support of pupils with special educational needs and for the development of information and communication technology. The work of the headteacher in accessing other sources of funding to enhance the school budget is outstanding and does much to enhance the quality of provision. Examples of this include the extent to which the school has benefited from the government's 'New Deal' for communities funding and the recently accessed grant to sustain specialist tuition for singing.
49. A real strength of the school is the quality of its staff and the relative stability which the staff have provided through the months of uncertainty and upheaval in the accommodation. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum, and the decision to share their expertise by teaching the same subject to different year groups enriches the pupils' learning. In the same way, the contribution made by an external music specialist is a real bonus. The support staff are well trained and provide good quality assistance in lessons, and when working with smaller groups of pupils. Administrative staff have managed the increased workload caused by the building works and introduction of new technology most efficiently. Arrangements to induct new staff are good and the school is already working successfully as a venue for the training of new teachers. The school's arrangements for performance management are good. These meet the needs of the school and the individual teachers and other staff well, ensuring that their training needs are met.
50. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of the accommodation since the last inspection. It is now satisfactory with some strengths. The remodelling of the building has provided extra teaching space and a large library, while the retained mobile affords specialist accommodation for art and design, and for music. The computer suite is another welcome addition, but it is not furnished to a satisfactory standard as the seats are not adjustable and are the wrong height for small children to work comfortably at the computers. Overall the accommodation is well maintained, clean and bright, with good use made of displays to stimulate ideas and celebrate pupils' work. The plans to renovate the toilets in the old building require urgent action. Parents feel that the playground space is very limited, and observations during the inspection confirm that the school needs to seek more ways of avoiding congestion at playtime.
51. The school has spent a considerable amount on learning resources since the last inspection, and the overall stock is of good quality and sufficient quantity. The resources are well organised and are well matched to the demands of the curriculum and to the needs of pupils. This is a particular feature of the new stock of library books. Resources for the children in the nursery and reception classes are good, and the hardware for information and control technology has been increased significantly.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve provision the governors, headteacher and staff should:-

- (1) raise standards at the end of Year 2 in English by:-
  - planning for a wider range of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects;
  - providing a wider range of books to challenge higher attaining readers.
  - making sure that progress in reading is not held back by pupils reading too many books from the same level of the reading scheme;
  - having the same clarity, expectation and challenge for writing in guided group time as in other writing experiences;(paragraphs: 3-4 and 72-84)
- (2) raise standards in mathematics by:-
  - providing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to investigate mathematical ideas;
  - ensuring that what is taught is relevant to pupils' own experiences;(paragraphs: 3-4 and 85-89)
- (3) raise standards in science by:-
  - modifying what is taught so that pupils experience more work at a higher level and have more opportunities to plan and record their investigations;(paragraphs: 3-4 and 90-96)
- (4) raise standards in information and communication technology by the end of Year 6 by:-
  - maintaining the provision that is already improving standards in Years 1 and 2 and in the early part of the junior years;(paragraphs: 4 and 155-122)
- (5) introduce arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects to supplement those already in place for English, mathematics and science;  
(paragraphs: 34, 105, 107, 110, 114, 122, 133 and 140)
- (6) improve attendance by continuing to implement the measures that have brought about the recent improvements.  
(paragraphs: 13 and 36)

In addition the school should consider including the following less significant areas for improvement in its action plan:-

- introduce arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education within a structured programme (paragraph: 22);
- ensure that the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are documented fully in teachers' planning (paragraphs: 18 and 24).

The school is aware of these issues. It is well placed to address them and has already begun to work on them.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	21	30	9	0	0	0
Percentage	3	34	48	15	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 close to two percentage points.

### 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)	17	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (79)	93 (94)	93 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	25	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (97)	93 (94)	90 (100)
	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	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	12
	Girls	13	8	13
	Total	21	16	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (83)	53 (69)	83 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	9	8	10
	Total	17	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (74)	53 (63)	60 (74)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	188	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	20	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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	31.6

### Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131.5

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 02
	£
Total income	539,126
Total expenditure	514,713
Expenditure per pupil	2,630
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,294
Balance carried forward to next year	84,747

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 49%

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	116

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	2	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	49	4	0	3
The teaching is good.	68	28	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	42	11	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	3	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	47	7	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	42	47	3	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	3	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	35	13	3	12

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

53. Until about two years ago children's attainment when they entered the nursery was below average. In the last two years it has been well below that expected in some areas of their learning. Currently children's attainment when they enter the nursery is below that expected in their personal social and emotional development, and well below that expected in their communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. At this stage their physical development is in line with that expected for their age.
54. During their time in the nursery and the reception class children make very good progress in most areas of their learning. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class their attainment is in line with that expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It exceeds that expected in their personal, social and emotional development. It also exceeds that expected in their physical development. In their physical development children make good progress. At the time of the last inspection provision for children in the nursery and reception class was satisfactory. Improvement since that time is very good and provision is very good. This is reflected in the link status ascribed to the nursery as part of the Beacon provision in the area.
55. The quality of teaching and the provision made for children's learning in the nursery and in the reception class is very good for all areas of their learning. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants plan very effectively to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language. The planning and the methods used by staff in the nursery and in the reception class shows very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, of the six identified areas for children's learning and of the early learning goals within each area of learning. They have high expectations of how children will respond and how well they will learn. This, coupled with the effective methods and very good use of resources to support children's learning, ensures that they learn very well. The nursery and reception classrooms are bright and stimulating with good displays that support children's learning in each area of their development very well.
56. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The two nursery nurses form a very effective partnership in the leadership of the nursery. A similarly effective partnership is evident between the teacher in charge and the nursery nurse in the reception class. Typical of this are the very good arrangements for assessing the attainment and progress that children make. The outcomes of these assessments are recorded with care and in great detail to provide parents with very thorough reports about how their children are getting on and to help with planning the next stages of children's learning. The detailed records of the progress made by each child are often supported by photographic evidence.
57. The partnership formed between staff and parents to support children's learning is strong. Parents are made very welcome in the nursery and in the reception class, consequently they are confident when discussing problems or talking with staff about how their children are getting on. Parents also provide good support for their children's learning. They help their children at home to improve their reading and to develop other basic skills well. They provide resources to support the various topics that are covered each term. There is currently a very effective 'Share' programme in operation. This enables parents to visit school each week and to work together with staff and with their children to support the children's learning. This is helping parents to become increasingly confident in helping their children to learn.

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

58. Children make very good progress in this area of their learning and benefit from very good teaching. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment exceeds that expected for their age. Children quickly settle into the nursery and rapidly become familiar with what is expected of them and with the daily routines. Children are prepared well to begin in the nursery as many pre-nursery children visit frequently to benefit from the toy library housed at the school. In both the nursery and the reception class children are polite and helpful towards each other and towards the adults who help them to learn. Children in the nursery play well together. They also sustain their interest in activities and listen to the staff well. In the reception class they show increasing care for each other's welfare, showing great sensitivity if they perceive that one of the class is ill or upset. Behaviour is very good. This is because the staff manage children well, expect high standards of behaviour, and reinforce children's good responses consistently. Children also make very good progress because they feel valued and well cared for.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

59. The quality of teaching for this aspect of children's learning is very good. Children make very good progress. By the time they begin in Year 1 their attainment is close to that expected for their age. When they enter the nursery many children do not speak clearly and some have difficulty making themselves understood. Rapid progress is made because of the good opportunities for children to practise their speaking each day, individually and in small groups. In the nursery and in the reception class children are taught the sounds made by each letter and by the combination of letters very well. This helps children to make very good progress in their speaking and listening and in the acquisition of early reading and writing skills. In the reception class children listen intently as Charlie the puppet tries hard to pronounce words correctly and they take great pride in their ability to help him when he says words wrongly (which he often does).
60. Children's ability to read develops well in the nursery. Children select books and benefit greatly from frequent opportunities to discuss these with the nursery nurses and with their parents. Children's reading continues to develop well in the reception class. Of note is the very good help children receive from pupils in Year 6 who act as reading partners. Great pleasure in reading is evident on both sides of these partnerships.
61. In reception children's handwriting is developing satisfactorily with higher attaining children forming many letters legibly and benefiting from the frequent good opportunities to practise writing. Lower attaining children are less successful, but recognise that the marks they make on the page are intended to convey meaning. The higher attaining children are able to place words in the correct order to make simple sentences and know that sentences need to start with a capital letter and finish with a full stop.

## **Mathematical development**

62. The quality of teaching for this area of children's learning is very good. Consequently children make very good progress and by the time they are ready to start in Year 1 their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. The children in the nursery class receive frequent good opportunities to develop their understanding of number. No opportunity is missed to encourage them to count, such as when they check how many children are there at the start of a session. They make very good progress.
63. In reception children's knowledge of number is developing very well. Many children can count well beyond 20 and recognise numbers up to 50 in their written form. When making a number line one child immediately recognises that the number eight is missing. The children's counting skills are applied well when they measure objects in the room correctly

using non-standard units, such as hand spans, correctly. One higher attaining child says the distance across the teacher's display board is 'six and a half hand spans'. They also know the importance of not leaving gaps when they measure if the result is going to be accurate. Children are similarly competent in their understanding of capacity, using terms correctly, when they describe containers as 'nearly full' and 'about half full'.

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

64. At the end of their reception class children attain standards close to those expected for their age. They make very good progress in this area of their learning because the quality of teaching is very good. Children in the nursery are beginning to take an interest in what is going on around them. When they arrive at the start of their session they discuss the weather. This is all part of the good opportunities provided by the nursery nurses for children to develop their speaking and listening abilities.
65. Children in the nursery and in reception are making very good progress in using computers. There are daily opportunities for them to do so in both the nursery and the reception class. Children in reception are able to explain exactly what they are doing when they send an email to 'Mr Elephant'. There are also excellent opportunities for them to use computers alongside their parents each day before the start of school. These sessions are led very effectively by one of the nursery nurses.
66. When children in the nursery talk about the weather they sing 'On rainy days we splash and play'. Some lower attaining children are reluctant to join in, but higher attaining children know the song well. However, good progress is made and many children, without being asked, sound out the initial letter of each word correctly. In reception children's knowledge of how materials can be changed by heating and cooling is developing well. The staff boiled eggs for children to paint the shells and made good use of the opportunity to break open the shells and look at how the eggs changed when they were boiled. Afterwards, higher attaining children explained precisely what had happened to the egg. Children also hoped that some of the eggs, kept in an incubator, would hatch and were able to explain correctly what the eggs need for this to happen. Children's learning is often enhanced by the very good first hand experiences, like this one, provided by the staff.

### **Physical development**

67. When children begin in the nursery their attainment in this area of their learning is close to that expected. The quality of teaching they receive is very good. They make very good progress and by the time they leave the reception class their attainment exceeds that expected. Children move well when they play, showing good co-ordination and awareness of what is happening around them. In the nursery they learn to handle implements, such as pens, paint brushes, scissors and modelling tools, correctly. By the time they leave the reception class most know how to hold a pen or pencil correctly.
68. When they work in the hall the nursery children join in with great enthusiasm, replicating the movements and noises made by the animals they have learned about in their animal topic. Higher attaining children use adjectives correctly to describe the movements and noises. This very good learning is continued by children as they work and play in the reception class. In the hall they hop and skip well when Morris dancing in groups as part of their learning about Easter and Spring festivals. Their learning is helped considerably by the excellent demonstration provided by their teacher and the teaching assistant.
69. The provision for children to play out of doors is satisfactory. There is a safe and secure outdoor area which children in the nursery and reception use each day. The area is equipped with a good range of large wheeled and other toys. In both the nursery and the reception class children show remarkable skill and awareness when they ride tricycles and pedal cars, often at great speed, but with full awareness of what is happening around

them. Many ride two wheeled bikes with great confidence. The school lacks appropriate outdoor climbing apparatus, but this situation is about to be rectified by the provision of new equipment.

### **Creative development**

70. The quality of teaching for this area of children's learning is very good. Children make very good progress and by the time they start in Year 1 their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. In the nursery children make rapid progress in art and in design and technology activities. For example, they design and make patterned plates to replace the one broken by 'Baby Bear'. They also benefit greatly from the frequent opportunities provided to draw and paint. Much of their work is close to the standard expected for their age, such as the animals they paint using colours that replicate closely those of the animals' coats in real life. There are good opportunities for children to learn socially and creatively though role play. Currently children have access to the reptile house of the zoo as part of their animal topic and clearly enjoy playing the role of either the animals or their keepers. Children in the nursery and in the reception class enjoy singing. They know many songs and nursery rhymes by heart and need little persuading to sing or say these on their own. The staff use these opportunities very well to improve the clarity of children's speaking.

### **ENGLISH**

71. Over time, attainment in reading has been above average in the national tests for the end of Year 2, whilst standards in writing have been average or just above. By the end of Year 6 attainment in English has been more uneven, alternating between above and below the national average. In 2002, pupils achieved better results than others in schools with a similar background.
72. Inspection findings indicate that standards in reading and writing are below average by Year 2, with more pupils attaining the lower levels and fewer reaching the higher levels. These standards are not typical of the above average attainment over time. The present dip in attainment is linked to staff mobility in the infant classes and to the lower attainment on entry to the nursery of these pupils. Presently pupils follow structured reading scheme(s) and may read too many books at each reading level. This sets a ceiling to the progress they make. For everyday reading, there is not a wide enough range of books to challenge more capable readers and enable them to reach the higher levels with their reading.
73. Standards in English are average by Year 6, and reflect the national picture. Throughout the school, listening skills are average, but speaking skills are below average. The development of writing across the curriculum, a key issue in the previous report, has improved. Examples of writing in science about famous scientific discoveries, and stories from the Bible, recreated as newspaper reports, indicate the wide range of purposeful writing undertaken in school. Handwriting is taught consistently and expectations and standards of presentation are higher. However, more capable readers and writers still could be challenged more. This is reflected in the 2002 national tests for the end of Year 2, when no pupils attained the higher levels in writing.
74. Speaking and listening skills are below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn, but lack confidence and competence as speakers. Most pupils start school with undeveloped skills in speaking and listening, and make good progress with their listening skills in particular. This is because they are encouraged to take turns when answering questions and to listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. In Year 1, for instance, younger pupils listen attentively as they

sequence events in their class story of Cinderboy and with guidance from the teacher suggest what might happen next.

75. Teachers' good questioning skills encourage pupils to contribute in lessons, but it is often the more confident speakers who take the lead, despite inclusion of all class groups. In Years 4, 5 and 6 in particular, pupils make good progress with their speaking skills as they begin to use a wider range of vocabulary to describe and explain more clearly. This is evident in Year 6, when a pupil with special educational needs suggests 'amazement' and 'excitement' to describe a visit to Buckingham Palace, or when a more confident speaker explains 'The fans are all devoted to their team and there is the smell of anticipation in the air'. A significant number of pupils are unable to make an appropriate choice between the use of standard English, colloquialism and dialect in their talk. Whereas pupils share models of good English by exploring a wide range of books together, there are fewer planned strategies to develop speaking skills in literacy lessons and in other subjects including drama.
76. Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by Year 6. Discussions with pupils show they enjoy reading and that a growing number choose to read for pleasure. Parents are very supportive of reading shared at home and this is helping pupils to improve their reading skills. Teachers plan a range of experiences to meet the diverse needs within their classes. For instance, pupils reading to 'reading buddies', or in guided groups. Less capable readers have regular, targeted help from supportive adults and so achieve well. Presently, there is no specific additional literacy support for the significant number of pupils who are achieving 'nearly 'average levels with their reading and who would benefit from extra help.
77. By Year 2, average and more capable readers read with understanding. They recall words by sight and link letters with their sounds (phonics) and so read with greater fluency and confidence. However, despite their good basic skills, fewer pupils are achieving the highest levels in reading. The structured content of some books does not provide a rich enough text for pupils to explore at greater depth. As one pupil explains, 'you can get excited with these books, they're better stories than the others'.
78. By Year 6, pupils read accurately and with growing expression. More capable readers read in a mature way as they read between the lines and explain hidden meaning. For instance, pupils exploring the poem 'The Watchers', identify its changing mood and suggest that the watchers have become the watched. Average attaining readers make good progress as they begin to empathise with different characters and refer to the text to justify their opinion. Often pupils in Years 5 and 6 are stimulated to read books after watching a dramatised version on television, or reading an extract in class. However, without the teacher's guidance, a good proportion of the class still find it difficult to infer and deduce and to read beyond the literal level of meaning. In Year 6, 'Booster time' provides a clear focus for learning and is used well to develop pupils' comprehension skills.
79. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Teachers plan for a range of purposeful writing in English and in other subjects. The structure of fictional and non-fictional writing is taught well in most classes and this enables pupils to shape their ideas and thoughts successfully and to hold the interest of the reader. Teachers' effective modelling of writing is helping to raise standards and move learning on. Progress in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 is good. This is because teachers have gained in expertise and confidence and use assessment of pupils' work and high quality marking to help them improve. Presently, the same clarity, and challenge identified in extended writing is not planned for in writing in group work in the literacy hour. Often there is little difference between the work set for average attaining pupils and pupils capable of reaching higher levels.

80. Pupils start school with well below average skills in writing, but make good or better progress in Year 1, because of high quality teaching and high expectations. They begin to link the spoken and written word and experiment with writing stories based on famous traditional stories. Pupils gain control over the size and shape of letters and identify everyday words and letters in their spelling. By Year 2, pupils write sentences that make sense and begin to join their ideas together in a more coherent way. The basic skills are taught well and progress with spelling and handwriting is steady. Last year, in the 2002 national tests in writing, most pupils gained average levels. Higher expectations and more challenge in the work set for more competent writers will help to raise standards.
81. In the junior classes there is an appropriate balance between developing the basic skills with grammar, spelling and punctuation, and writing for a range of different purposes. Lessons in Years 3 and 4 put an emphasis on enriching writing with the use of adjectives and similes, such as 'The dragon glided over the roof, his eyes were like jewels and his skin as red as fire'. Links with the local supermarket add purpose to the study of persuasive language, when pupils produce and edit their own leaflets, creating slogans such as, 'blast off to a new shopping dimension'. The good work with drafting and editing ideas developed over time in the junior classes is built upon effectively in Year 6. Progress with structuring fictional writing is very good. This is evident in the following piece of writing. 'Instinctively I opened the door and there stood the desert. I walked in and was separated from my mind. Helicopters scrambled past and tanks retorted like ants'.
82. The school works hard to be inclusive and provides extra targeted support for pupils with statements for their need and those identified at school action plus. The very few pupils learning English as an additional language all speak and write English fluently and make very good progress with their learning. During the inspection there was no marked difference between the learning of boys and girls and both groups contributed equally in literacy lessons. As yet pupils capable of working at higher levels would benefit from more demanding work.
83. Teaching is good in English overall. Often it is very good. In effective lessons teachers build on pupils' ideas and initiative, have very good subject knowledge, and clear expectations of what is to be taught and learned. Good modelling by teachers is helping to raise standards in writing, particularly in extended writing lessons in junior classes. Teachers have good questioning skills and encourage pupils to join in with class discussions. However, there is a need to plan for a wider range of strategies to develop pupils' speaking skills. Targets are used well to improve pupils' learning and understood by pupils. Teachers plan for pupils to use their Information and communication technology skills to develop skills with reading and writing.
84. The management of the subject is very good because of the drive and expertise of the co-ordinator. The school has looked closely at the literacy strategy and modified certain aspects in order to put a clearer focus on developing writing. Good use is made of the guidance from specialists from inside and outside school to improve the quality and range of writing. Analysis of assessment information related to writing is put to good use to identify the next step in learning. Provision in reading would benefit from a similar clear analysis. The school has a new library and as a resource it has improved since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils appreciate the range of interesting books in guided group reading, but find some other 'free choice' books a bit dull.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is below average. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress because of good teaching. By the time they are

seven, standards have improved, especially in numeracy, but are still below national averages. In last year's National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results showed that attainment was similar to the national average, but well above that for similar schools. The group of Year 2 pupils that took the tests last year had a greater proportion of higher attaining pupils than this year so fewer pupils are currently likely to reach higher levels. There has been a steady improvement in pupils' results over the last three years and boys and girls did equally well. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 last year, standards reached were well below the national average. However, the school's performance was about the same as other schools in similar areas. The good quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Because of this, there are a greater number of higher attaining pupils. There is a strong concentration on numeracy and attainment in this aspect of mathematics is close to what is expected nationally by the time pupils leave school. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge to problems taken from real situations relevant to their own experience, or to use their knowledge and understanding to investigate a wide enough range of mathematical ideas.

86. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory degree of improvement. Teaching and learning are now good across the school. At the time of the previous inspection, standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 were judged to be close to those expected for pupils of that age. However, there are fewer higher attaining pupils in Year 2 this year. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 were below the national average at the time of the last inspection. Now, standards in numeracy are better, but a few of the shortcomings noted in that inspection, that pupils do not do enough work in using and applying mathematics in investigations and practical problem solving, still apply. There has been a good deal of improvement in assessing pupils' work and in using the information to prepare lessons and to set targets for individuals' and groups' improvement.
87. The good quality of learning for all pupils reflects the good teaching. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in numeracy. In Years 3 to 6, all pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. Teachers put the pupils in Years 3 and 4 and in Years 5 and 6 into sets of pupils of broadly similar ability. This helps to ensure that the work that the classes do together matches the pupils' ability. Teachers also plan work that matches the needs of pupils of differing abilities well. Teachers plan well-organised lessons that reflect the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily. They use the start of the lessons well to reinforce pupils' mental arithmetic skills. In a good lesson for Year 1 pupils, they add and subtract single digit numbers mentally. The teacher of a Year 2 class uses the start of the lesson well to remind pupils how to recognise odd and even numbers and the lesson develops well into ordering numbers using pupils' understanding of place value up to 100. In a class of younger juniors, the teacher involves the pupils well, asking them to halve numbers and discussing the way they do so. This helps pupils to understand that there are a number of different mental strategies that they can use to solve problems quickly. In Year 1, the teacher uses information and communication technology effectively during the discussion and has prepared a program so that pupils can record their ways of making certain numbers. The teacher matches work to the pupils' abilities and as a result, they make good progress. She and the classroom assistant provide good support during the lesson so that pupils use the relevant vocabulary and conventional notation correctly. They click and drag the numbers and symbols into place to write number sentences such as  $5+4=9$ . Teachers' explanations are clear so pupils start their group and individual work promptly and work hard during these sessions. This means that they learn well throughout the lesson. In a set of more able Years 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher involves pupils in a brisk question and answer session in which they learn to calculate the area of shapes made up of rectangles. Teachers move the introductions smoothly into group and individual work. They provide clear instructions so that pupils can start quickly and

make good use of their time. Years 5 and 6 pupils were well supported as they constructed line graphs. The lower attaining pupils in this set also made good progress as they used information and communication technology, with the help of the classroom assistant, to draw their graphs. Teachers round off lessons well, revisiting what pupils have learned and giving them opportunities to apply their knowledge in a slightly different way. Year 1 pupils used a computer program well to identify numbers on a grid of numbers from 1 to 100. This encouraged them to think about number patterns. The teacher of a set of Years 3 and 4 pupils used an overhead projector and transparent counters effectively to emphasize the theme of the lesson, identifying fractions. This helped to reinforce pupils' learning. An examination of pupils' previous work confirms that they are making good progress in their understanding of number, but not to the same extent in other areas of mathematics. Standards of attainment in these other areas do not reach the same level. Much of the mathematics that pupils do does not relate sufficiently to their own experiences or encourage them to apply their knowledge to problems from outside the classroom. Teachers keep marking up-to-date. They write comments that provide useful information, for example, how well the pupil has done the work and what might improve it.

88. Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics and this is another factor in their good progress. They behave well in lessons and work hard to complete their work. However, some Year 2 pupils are over-enthusiastic in their wish to join in whole class discussions. They call out answers, reducing other pupils' chances to participate. During group work however, they maintain their keenness and they work well together when generating two-digit numbers which they then proceeded to place in order of size. Older pupils were excited when they were told that the next part of their lesson involved fractions. These positive attitudes are a real asset and have a good impact on pupils' learning.
89. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards. These findings have been incorporated into a useful action plan and realistic targets have been set for attainment in 2003. These targets are based on good procedures for finding out how well pupils are achieving. The school uses a range of methods for measuring attainment and progress. The results of these are soundly used to plan work and set targets for individual pupils' learning. Pupils know what their targets are and that if they meet them their work will improve. In Year 6, pupils have the opportunity to attend classes outside normal school hours. This has a positive impact on the learning and standards of attainment. The school successfully implements the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have a good understanding of the strategy and use the lesson structure to good advantage to keep pupils interested and involved. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In a few lessons, teachers use information and communication technology effectively to support teaching and learning, but its use in this way is inconsistent

## SCIENCE

90. Standards are below average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils make good progress, although there are too few pupils who are likely to reach the higher grades (Level 3 at Year 2 and Level 5 at Year 6) this year. There is very little difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Overall, this is a very similar situation to the 2002 teacher assessments for Year 2 when the majority of pupils achieved the average grade but very few reached the higher grade. It differs from the Year 6 results for 2002 when pupils scored highly and nearly one in three pupils achieved the higher grade. The difference is because the current group of pupils does not have the potential to match these results. These judgements are an improvement on the findings of the last inspection and are attributable to the co-ordinator, as a specialist, teaching three classes, the increased emphasis on aspects of scientific enquiry, the high quality of resources and the better teaching across the school.
91. In Year 2 standards are below the national average. Pupils have used books to find out simple scientific facts and enjoy using equipment to do experiments. They have a basic understanding of what plants and humans need to grow and use scientific vocabulary satisfactorily to describe these needs. They find it difficult to use this knowledge to describe the differences between living and non-living things. Their understanding of change of state is good. They describe what happens when ice changes to water and then to water vapour and they know that it could go back to ice again. Their understanding of sound and light is basic and their knowledge of electrical circuits is weak. Whilst most pupils achieve well, higher attaining pupils could achieve more if the tasks within the lessons were more closely geared to their needs.
92. In Year 6 standards are below the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of a 'fair test' and choose appropriate variables to change and measure when devising an investigation, though teachers sometimes over direct pupils during investigations. Pupils have closely studied micro-organisms and the parts of a plant and recall well key names and their functions. Changes in state, using the vocabulary solid, liquid and gases, has been learned and pupils are well aware of which can be reversed and which cannot. Knowledge of circuits and circuit diagrams is sound. Pupils achieve well.
93. Pupils' progress is good through the school. They learn progressively about scientific knowledge and develop scientific skills. There is a helpful consistency to the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator, working with other classes as well as her own, provides effective help for her colleagues. The programme is thorough and without any repetition. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs do not have any specific science targets. Science lessons are an opportunity for these pupils to succeed in a practical situation, which most of them do. Their tasks are carefully prepared so that they can succeed and so that there is support available when they have to record their results.
94. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are well organised and manage pupils well. This helps create an atmosphere in all classes in which pupils learn well. Resources are used well to enable pupils to experience science 'first hand'. Flowers in Year 6 helped pupils understand the reproductive organs of a plant. Mostly the practical work comes out 'correctly'. There are occasions when getting it 'wrong' actually aids learning but teachers are too attentive to let this happen often. In Year 3 pupils did not pour all their soil into the filter and this gave rise to some important discussion about 'fair test'. Pupils really enjoy the practical work and try hard to follow instructions working constructively in their groups. The pace of lessons wavers at times because teachers do not review the work that has been done so far by the pupils.

95. Strong links with English and mathematics have been developed. Report writing on Dr Jenner and micro-organisms was good and the piece on water mixing with plaster of Paris was both amusing and informative. Numeracy skills are used well in the presentation of information, usually in the form of graphs or tables. Little use of information and communication technology was seen, other than the overhead projector, thus this is an area for development.
96. The management of the subject is good and has helped standards improve since the last inspection. Expertise has been shared to the benefit of all. Pupils' work and teachers' lesson planning have been monitored and teachers have reacted positively to guidance provided by the co-ordinator. However, too few lessons have been observed in Years 1 and 2 for the co-ordinator to have a clear idea of standards. Resources are now well organised and are used well by teachers to enhance learning. The policy for the subject contains good statements on racial equality and promotes strong links with English, mathematics and computer work, as well as guidance to build on what children have learned in the nursery and reception class.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. Standards in art and design meet national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. New guidelines in the subject are ensuring that skills are built upon in a progressive way year on year and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
98. Pupils explore and create imaginatively in a wide variety of materials, but especially in paint, collage and pastel. They are encouraged to try out new techniques and skills and to use them to the best effect in their own original work. Work in Year 3, for instance, with layering and printing with a rich mixture of paint enables pupils to reflect the swirling, fluid lines of Van Gogh's images in their own work. Younger pupils in Year 1, look at textiles and weaving from different cultures and try out a range of weaving skills on simple looms and fabrics. Right from the start, pupils stand back and reflect on their work and suggest how they can improve. On occasions tentative ideas are drafted out in sketch-books, but as yet, these are not used consistently throughout the school.
99. There are good links between work in art and in other subjects. In Year 5, pupils study the Ancient Greeks and use the colours, images and patterns from artefacts from that period of time in work in pastel and with sgraffito (scraping away). Pupils develop their fine skills and work with greater accuracy and precision. In science lessons, observational drawings of rocks and soil reflect the likeness of the images and show pupils good progress with finer drawing skills and use of line and tone. There also are effective links with information and communication technology as pupils create pictures and diagrams using the computer.
100. Teaching is good. Teachers have enthusiasm and the confidence to model new techniques and skills and this is enabling pupils to make steady and at times good progress with their learning. Lessons are managed well and resources accessible, but pupils could still have more choice over what materials to use. Pupils are keen to learn and well behaved. They share their ideas and resources amicably and so lessons move at a good pace. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to lessons and are as keen as others to share their achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language are fluent speakers and readers and have no difficulty with understanding more technical language. Art adds to the pupils' cultural development through the study of famous artists from around the world.
101. The subject is well managed. Gaps in coverage and learning, identified through an audit of planning and coverage, are highlighted and there is a clear plan for the way forward for the subject. Teachers find the new guidelines useful and in-service training has helped

raise confidence and expertise. Assessment procedures have been put into place and follow national recommended guidelines. Monitoring and assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection. Resources are appropriate to support the curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in design and technology meet national expectations. This is an improvement from the unsatisfactory levels at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are higher because of clearer subject guidelines for teachers to follow and planned, focused time for design and technology during the school year. This enables pupils to make better progress as they carry through their ideas and plan, make and evaluate their work.
103. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to plan their work and carry through their designs. Younger pupils explore different ways of joining materials together as they make models of their ideal playground. They make good progress as they test out the strongest structure for constructing swings and slides using modelling straws. Experiments with sewing and decorating fabric enable pupils to plan and make puppets and to create their own versions of Joseph's multicoloured coat.
104. By the end of Year 6, pupils draw from their previous experiences with making and evaluating a range of products to enhance their ongoing work. In Year 5, for instance, pupils not only consider the quality of the sound their musical instruments make, but also their finished appearance. They evaluate and improve their work, and persevere with specific details, such as the length of guitar strings. However, the quality of planning varies in lessons and could be of a higher standard with regard to step-by-step detail and precision in measurement.
105. Teaching is good. Teachers guide learning rather than imposing their own ideas and this in turn encourages pupils to experiment and work more independently. For instance, pupils in Year 1 decided to add a swimming pool and swimmers to their playground plans. Lessons move at a pace and resources are accessible. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate and improve their work, but explanations of 'why' and 'how' could be recorded in greater detail, especially by older pupils. Although assessment procedures are in place, they are at an informal level and assessment is yet to be used to inform teachers' planning. Pupils have positive attitudes to design and technology. They listen to instructions and show an appropriate level of independence with their work. They are willing to try out different materials and make choices of those they think most appropriate.
106. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator has enthusiasm and expertise. An audit of coverage and teaching in the subject has identified gaps in coverage of food technology across the school. Links with control technology also need firming. Everyday resources are appropriate to meet the pupils' needs.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. Standards match those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Similarly, there are still no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress because of sound teaching. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the immediate locality and compare this to other localities. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
108. Teachers draw well on pupils' experiences of their own area and help pupils to understand about the similarities and differences between places. They plan lessons that help pupils

learn about places whilst also developing geographical skills such as reading and making maps. Lessons in which pupils draw and read simple maps help them to understand their uses. Year 1 pupils draw simple maps of their locality, including known features. This helps them to understand the uses of maps. They conduct a traffic survey, counting the different types of vehicles that go past the school and record the results on charts and tables. The same pupils draw simple maps and include known features. Older pupils extend their skills and draw maps of an imaginary island, including a range of features. They usefully compare the similarities and differences between their own area and the island, considering, for example, ways of getting around in both places. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher led a thoughtful discussion during which pupils were encouraged to think about what jobs people did in either place. The teacher built well on pupils' own knowledge, so they realised that although there may be no need for a tyre-fitter on the island, a hairdresser would be useful. Pupils have good attitudes in geography lessons. However, Year 2 pupils sometimes become over enthusiastic and call out their ideas, interrupting the teacher and other pupils. This holds up progress at these times. However, their interest and enthusiasm mean that they want to be involved and try hard when completing their work. The teacher helps these pupils to develop their mapping skills soundly. They have drawn imaginary maps of their island and looked at real maps of their own locality.

109. Progress continues to be satisfactory in the junior classes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, soundly develop their skills and understanding of the wider world through a well-planned series of lessons. The very few pupils for whom English is not the first language make similar progress to the rest of the class. This is the result of satisfactory teaching, in which there are some good elements. In Year 3, the teacher planned and taught a good lesson that stressed the importance of clean water. This lesson had good links with science. Pupils 'cleaned' muddy water using a series of filters. This helped them to understand the processes that people need to use to maintain a healthy environment. Older pupils look at the natural features of river systems and consider the impact that our activities have on them. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils visited the local leisure centre and extended their understanding of people's impact on their surroundings. This lesson contributed well to pupils' social development and understanding of citizenship. The teacher had effectively helped pupils to prepare for the visit by encouraging them to ask the centre's manager relevant questions. They learn about the features of a contrasting locality in the United Kingdom and compare the similarities and differences of how people live.
110. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The resources for teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. The good range of books and recorded video programmes to support lessons is well organised. Teachers use nationally recommended guidelines for teaching, but there are no formal procedures for assessing and recording how well pupils are learning. This means that there is not enough information to help teachers when they are planning lessons. Teachers soundly encourage the use of literacy skills in geography. Pupils write in a range of styles, offering descriptions and reports. Year 3 pupils' visit to the Leisure Centre gave them good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils also use some information and communication technology, for example, when finding features of Llangollen, the contrasting locality. However, the use of this technology is inconsistent and its use is not firmly embedded in lesson planning. Pupils have sound opportunities to use numeracy skills, for example when conducting a traffic survey, or constructing graphs and charts to compare rainfall and temperature in North Wales with that in Walsall.

## HISTORY

111. Standards of in history are at the expected levels for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. No teaching was observed in the infants, but work samples and planning show that pupils are learning about history in a way that emphasises that there are differences between what has happened in the past and what happens now, and the way that things have changed. There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are still at the level expected for pupils at the ends of Years 2 and 6. The school has improved its resources. There is a now good range of books and recorded programmes on historical themes and the school makes sound use of the local authority's loan service.
112. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 because of satisfactory teaching. Pupils find out about different events from the past and compare how things now are different from, or similar to, the way they were. Younger pupils are beginning to understand about the effects of the passing of time as they match which teddy bear might belong to different people. Pupils are beginning to understand that we can find out about the past from what people recorded then when they read what Samuel Pepys wrote about the Great Fire of London. They find out about famous people such as Florence Nightingale, why we remember them and the contributions they have made. They use first-hand research to find out similarities and differences between buildings now and then when looking at the different styles of windows in the school.
113. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also make sound progress because of satisfactory teaching with a significant number of good elements. The lessons seen during the inspection were well taught, but an examination of pupils' work from Years 3 to 6 shows that this level of teaching is inconsistent. Although pupils make good progress in lessons, many pupils do not remember what they have learned. For example, Year 6 pupils were knowledgeable about the aspects of history they have covered this year, including the impact of World War II in this country. However, many have only a hazy understanding of previous topics. For example, they are not sure whether the Vikings or the Romans invaded Britain first. One of the reasons for this is that history is taught every other half term. This prevents standards of attainment from being above expectations. The teacher in a Year 5 history lesson used information and communication technology well to display images of Ancient Greek pottery. Coupled with the teacher's own very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm this captured pupils' interest, greatly enhancing their quality of learning. In a Year 6 lesson about how evacuees during World War II might have felt, the teacher led a brisk discussion, ranging widely across what pupils had previously learned, but always bringing the focus back to the lesson theme. The teacher used her own local knowledge well to conjure up a vivid picture of the journey that evacuees from Leamore might have taken. This led to good progress in the lesson.
114. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. However, there are no formal procedures for assessing and recording how well pupils are learning. This means that there is not enough information to help teachers when they are planning lessons. Lessons and learning are enhanced and supplemented by visits to places of historical interest such as museums, local Tudor buildings and a Victorian schoolroom. Pupils know about local figures of historical interest such as Sister Dora. A visit from a Viking re-enactment group enlivened study of that period for pupils in Year 4. Teachers use literacy skills well in history, for example, when asking pupils to write letters from the point of view of an evacuee. Pupils also write reports, descriptions and answer questions based on information they have read. There is some good use of information and communication technology, for example, when the teacher uses pictures of Greek pottery to help pupils to learn about the use of artefacts to investigate history. However, the technology is not yet

consistently used in teaching and learning. There is little evidence that numeracy skills are used in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 but below expectations by the end of Year 6. All pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but only satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. This is because pupils in Years 3 to 6 are catching up with aspects they were not able to cover fully in earlier years. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection and is the result of increased confidence and competence amongst teachers and considerably better equipment for them to teach with.
116. In Year 2 pupils access basic programs and use the mouse and keyboard with growing confidence to input information. They select suitable tools, for instance a fine brush to draw with or a colour-fill option to complete a background. Input of text is limited by their ability to type, but they manage names and other simple data well and they enjoy changing their name so that it is surrounded by 'glitter'. Simple spelling and number games are accessed in class and used to reinforce learning.
117. All pupils make good progress because teachers are confident in using the software and knowledgeable about the subject. Pupils are gradually taught the skills, for instance inputting of text in Year 1, and the next teacher builds on them so that simple changes and the 'WordArt' program are used confidently in Year 2.
118. In Year 6 pupils do not yet fully meet the national standards because they have not had access to appropriate equipment and informed teaching through the junior years. They work with a graphical package well to display information in varied ways on the heights of mountains. More recent work shows a growing understanding of the use of spreadsheets to convert euros to pounds and kilometres to miles. They confidently place formulae in the cells and make informed approximations of answers to check if they are broadly correct. They have explored 'PowerPoint' but not in sufficient depth yet. The Internet has been used to download successfully information and pictures of the Victorians. More work needs to be done before pupils are confident and safe with this aspect of the subject. No work on control technology was seen because it will be taught in the summer term.
119. Pupils in the junior years now make satisfactory progress. As the full curriculum and more confident teaching become the norm this is likely to improve and standards should continue to rise. Higher attaining pupils could be challenged more, for instance in the Year 6 lesson on spreadsheets many could already work out the formula needed from the information given and did not need to be taken slowly through the whole process. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. They receive good, patient, support from both class teachers and classroom assistants and are included fully in every lesson.
120. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are managed well and lessons are well organised, with what is to be learned shared with pupils from the outset. These factors help promote an atmosphere in which learning takes place well and gives clear indications to pupils of what is expected of them. When whole classes are taught in the computer suite work at different levels is set for the pupils so all can succeed. Teachers and the classroom assistant assess pupils' work accurately. In Year 1 for instance, the assistant provided an additional, patient explanation of how to record data on a simple bar chart. A Year 4 lesson on moving a 'robot' around a screen successfully challenged higher attaining pupils to write a series of three instructions for their 'robot'. However, this level of challenge was not found in all lessons.

121. There are good examples of growing cross-curricular links and the use of the Internet and computers as a tool for learning in other subjects. A Year 1 mathematics lesson was carefully structured around the use of a mathematics program. This enabled pupils to work at their own level when finding addition pairs. A graph package was used well to enable weaker pupils to produce quality graphs in Year 6 and during a history lesson pupils were given a better idea of the illustrations on a Greek pot by the teacher using the projector and screen. Teachers have yet to explore fully the potential of computers in their class lessons beyond games that reinforce previous learning.
122. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers and the well-qualified nursery nurse have benefited from good training opportunities. Equipment has been upgraded and the computer suite and class machines are now of a suitable specification. The seating in the computer suite makes it difficult for younger pupils to use the computers comfortably. The school's policy for the subject promotes effectively the use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning as well as skills to be learned in their own right. Assessment and record keeping are not yet formalised. This inhibits the learning of individual pupils because records currently refer to what whole classes have learned and do not provide enough information about individuals. Pupils and parents also benefit from the early morning and lunchtime 'drop in' sessions for reception children and pupils in Years 5 and 6. These sessions are well organised and allow parents to share learning with the children as well as enabling older pupils to practise their skills. The school has an interactive white board and projector but this was not used during the inspection. It is very useful to the teachers and saves considerable time when the nursery nurse sets up, when appropriate, the programs for the class before they arrive. She also contributes very positively to teaching and learning in lessons.

## MUSIC

123. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards exceed those expected and pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Improvement, since the time of the last inspection when standards were below those expected, is very good. This is particularly true of standards in singing, which are very high.
124. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils show very good attitudes to their learning in the subject and this, combined with the good teaching, contributes significantly to the good progress they make. Throughout the school pupils know the importance of preparing their voices for singing and teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to do this. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing very well. They also know the actions to many songs and accompany their singing well with percussion instruments. When they do this they put their heart and soul into their work.
125. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work and the good teaching they receive are sustained in Years 3 to 6. Pupils sing well because they are taught to breathe correctly. They sing difficult and challenging songs, which demand changes in pitch and singing in parts, very well. Pupils in Year 5 illustrate these qualities well when they sing the Greek folk song 'Gone Fishing' and the traditional Congolese song 'Si Si Si'. The oldest pupils sing songs such as 'Bird of Heaven' with excellent pitch, range and timing. They also sing traditional African songs, such as 'Amarni', superbly and with great enthusiasm. Pupils also comment thoughtfully, in response to their teachers' questions, about how well they feel they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils are also provided with good opportunities to compose their own music. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. For example, the music they make is recorded for evaluative purposes and good use is made of electronic keyboards and of a computer program that enables pupils to write music.

126. When pupils are taught singing by a visiting teacher the quality of their work is very good and the teaching is excellent. Extra-curricular provision is good. The school has a choir that sings very well and several pupils are enthused sufficiently to attend choirs in the community. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have performed at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. Part of this performance was shown on television and was acclaimed in the local press. The singing of younger pupils, working with pupils from other local schools, is available on the 'Bard of Blakenall' CD. This was produced following children's work with the musician and composer Peter Churchill. He successfully encouraged pupils to write their own songs, with excellent results. Music and singing in particular makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Typical of this is the songs learned by pupils following their world music day, led by Ian Blick and featuring the use of a gamelan. Many of the songs that pupils sing are taken from other cultures and give pupils good insights to the traditions and beliefs of other groups and peoples. The school has received a grant from the Voices Foundation to help sustain its work to develop pupils' singing. The recent visits of musicians are a highlight of many pupils' year. Their knowledge of Indonesian music is spectacular and they clearly recall the South American pipers and drummers and many knew the name 'Caliche'.
127. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is improved by the good support and guidance she provides for her colleagues and from the good opportunities for training that teachers have. The excellent teaching of the visiting teacher has inspired her colleagues in the way they teach singing and makes a significant contribution to the high standards in this aspect of the subject. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a dedicated music room and the quality of accommodation is good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards exceed those expected with pupils achieving well and making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Improvement since the time of the last inspection, when standards were in line with expectations, is good.
129. The quality of teaching is good and because of this pupils learn well. In Year 2 pupils acquire gymnastic skills well. They perform movements smoothly, showing good control. They also combine these movements very effectively into sequences which they extend well when given opportunities to work with a partner. Year 4 pupils show similar qualities in dance where they respond well to the high expectations of their teacher and to the challenges set for them. These pupils successfully introduced comedy into their group dance sequences, exceeding the work expected for their age.
130. In games pupils in Year 3 work hard to acquire the challenging skills taught by their teacher. They sustain their effort well to develop the 'flick' pass technique in hockey. Whilst some pupils find this hard they benefit greatly from the good subject knowledge of their teacher. They also apply their skills well when they play small sided games of hockey, showing good control when they dribble and accuracy when they pass the ball to each other. Older pupils show similar good skills in netball and football. Again, pupils benefit from the good subject knowledge of their teacher in netball and that of visiting coaches in football.
131. Pupils make very good progress in swimming. Few can swim when they start school. By the time they finish almost all can swim over 25 metres, often with stroke techniques that are performed in good style. Even lower attaining pupils become confident and happy in the water. Higher attaining pupils apply the skills they acquire very well. This is evident when pupils in Year 5 invent team games and challenging activities to do in the water.

When they do this many swim underwater without problem and demonstrate their ideas confidently.

132. Throughout the school pupils show good attitudes to their learning. They show interest in their work, sustain their effort, co-operate well with each other and answer questions thoughtfully.
133. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress during lessons and use this information satisfactorily to plan the next stages of their teaching. However, this information is not recorded in a way that allows teachers to assess pupils' progress in relation to the national expectations. Teachers are good at explaining to pupils how they think they are progressing but do not give pupils enough opportunities to evaluate and to explain this for themselves.
134. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator makes good use of opportunities to watch her colleagues teaching and gives them good support and guidance. This helps to make the quality of teaching good. Good opportunities from training, provided by the local authority and by partner schools, also enhance the quality of teaching. Resources to support teaching and learning are good and the quality of accommodation is satisfactory. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good with a dance club and a lunchtime football club.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135. Standards are in line with those identified in the locally agreed syllabus. In this respect judgements are the same as the last inspection. However, the quality of teaching has improved markedly. This leads to the pupils making good progress and, in Years 3 to 6, to some very high quality writing from higher attaining pupils. Resources have also improved significantly which helps teachers adopt a more 'hands on' style of learning with their pupils.
136. In Year 2 pupils meet the standards set by the locally agreed syllabus, though much work is based on discussion rather than written or drawn records. They have looked at the symbols of Christianity and are starting to understand the importance of the cross. A church visit gave meaning to the vocabulary of 'font', 'aisle' and 'pew', which they use comfortably. In Year 1 study of Judaism they use the complex vocabulary of the 'mezuzah', 'Shabbat' and 'menorah' accurately when describing some of the things that are important to Jews. They write about what is special to them and why.
137. In Year 6 pupils comfortably meet the standards required of the locally agreed syllabus with higher attaining pupils exceeding them. All pupils know about the symbols of the major world faiths and their particular ceremonies. They have explored, in depth, the meaning behind Remembrance Day and have written good quality pieces in an autobiographical style of a young soldier at the Front. The themes of 'forgiveness' and 'neighbourliness' have also been explored with careful consideration was given to the feelings and of all participants. Higher attaining pupils delve deeply into these themes and write expressively and movingly. Other pupils write in a more simple form using less high quality vocabulary.
138. Pupils' progress through the school is good. From a low starting point they build on their knowledge of bible stories from reception class to explore the major non-Christian faiths as well as Christianity in significant depth. Meanings and different viewpoints are explored quite well. Over the years pupils build up a good framework with which to consider the world they live in and the ability to reflect on whether or not there is a 'higher being'. All pupils benefit from the cross-curricular links with English and produce good quality writing

but higher attaining pupils make outstanding progress in this respect. Special educational needs pupils benefit from one-to-one teaching and from working in small groups. Three Year 6 girls were better able to understand the story of the 'Prodigal Son' because they were taught separately and had more time to respond to questioning.

139. Teaching and learning are good across the classes. Lessons are stimulating because teachers use the available resources well. In Year 1 pupils will remember their lesson on Judaism because they sampled potato latkes and handled a menorah. They were keen to complete their written work and delighted to colour the menorah. Meanings are explored well, as when Year 2 pupils discussed the cross on 'hot cross buns' and then to their great delight ate them! With older pupils teachers challenge them both in understanding and in the quality of their written work. A Year 6 class thoughtfully considered the story of the 'Prodigal Son' and after some lightening and insightful questioning from the teacher proceeded to write really interesting stories from the viewpoint of the father or the eldest son. Higher attaining pupils wrote a lively introduction and up to two pages in a very short time. Pupils also benefit from visits to the local mosque and Methodist and Catholic churches and they would benefit from contact with visitors from non-Christian faiths.
140. The management of the subject is satisfactory. It is not a current school priority except for the purchase of sufficient resources to teach the units required in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' work is monitored termly but little observation and evaluation of teaching takes place. The policy shows considered cross-curricular links with English, computer work and personal and social development and pupils' spiritual development. Assessment and record keeping need further development if standards are to rise further.