

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bloxwich, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104168

Headteacher: Mrs G. Morley

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 January 2003

Inspection number: 246357

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
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor K. Worley
Date of previous inspection:	12 – 15 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G. D. Timms	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Foundation Stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9446	Mrs H. Griffiths	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18645	Mr B. Loizou	Team inspector	Science Design and technology History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Efficiency Staffing, accommodation and resources.
21235	Mrs M. Graham	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Religious education Special educational needs	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbey Primary School is about the same size as most primary schools with 204 pupils on roll. There are 26 part time children in the nursery class. It serves part of the large Mossley estate on the outskirts of Bloxwich. The school takes pupils into the nursery class when they are three years old. They join the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. A very small proportion of the pupils are non-white and none are learning to speak English. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected, especially with regard to children's personal, social and emotional development, and their language and communication skills. When they enter the reception class their attainment has improved but is still below average. Twenty per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register and this is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion in some classes is much higher than this. Two pupils have statements of special educational need and this is below average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than is usual is broadly typical although this has had a negative impact on some year groups. Almost 30 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This effective school provides its pupils with a good standard of education in difficult circumstances. Standards are below average although the pupils make good progress from their very low attainment on entry to the school. The majority of the teaching is of good quality. The leadership and management are good and the school is well led with a very clear focus on the need to raise standards further. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards have improved since the last inspection, especially in mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education.
- The progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good and they achieve well given their attainment on entry to the school.
- The provision for nursery and reception children is good and they make good progress.
- The quality of the leadership and management is good.
- The quality of the teaching is good.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and the school has very good links with the community, including other local schools.

What could be improved

- Standards could be higher, particularly in English and science.
- Teachers' do not use plenary sessions productively and work does not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher attainers.
- The way in which the school communicates with its parents and the way in which the parents are involved in their children's learning.

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. Since then, there have been significant changes among the staff. The level of improvement has been good. The key issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. In addition, standards have risen in most subjects, especially in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, revised the curriculum to take account of recent changes and introduced the new curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E*	E	D
science	E	E*	E	E

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

Overall, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. When they begin Year 1, however, they are still below the level expected, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and their communication, language and literacy skills. The national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that in reading, writing and mathematics standards were below average. This still represents good progress measured against the pupils' prior attainment.

The national test results for the Year 6 pupils in 2002 remained at the well below average level found at the last inspection. This is due to the fact that few pupils reach the higher levels and does not reflect the hard work put into raising standards. This hard work is clearly having a positive impact on standards, especially in mathematics, where for the present Year 6, standards are now broadly in line with the national average. Standards have improved over time, and at a broadly similar rate to those found nationally. There are no significant differences in the levels of attainment achieved by boys or girls. The standards in literacy are below average, while in numeracy they are good.

The current standards, as judged from the inspection evidence, have improved in both key stages since last year, although they remain below average. Pupils achieve well given their very low attainment on entry to the school. Attainment is below average in Year 2 in English, mathematics and history. In science, ICT, religious education and the non-core subjects, standards are broadly in line with those expected. The low level of pupils' skills in problem solving and speaking skills has been recognised by the school as a priority if standards are to rise further. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress given their prior attainment. The school just failed to reach the targets set for English and mathematics in 2002, and the higher targets set for 2003 are equally challenging given the pupils' prior attainment, but they are making good progress towards achieving them, especially in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of the pupils are interested in the activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The school has a minority of challenging and difficult pupils who are usually well supported by teachers and other staff, but who occasionally make it difficult for others to learn.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The relationships between adults and pupils are good. The older pupils accept responsibility enthusiastically.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall and now closer to the national average.

The school works hard with a minority of challenging pupils to ensure that all pupils are offered good opportunities to succeed. Expert guidance is sought when required and individual help offered to the pupils; this is largely successful in improving attitudes and behaviour.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching in English and mathematics is good and teachers are using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Numeracy skills are taught effectively and are well used in other subjects. The teaching of literacy skills is good although there are too few opportunities provided for writing in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for, largely in small groups with good teaching assistants and they make good progress. However, the more able pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging activities.

The teaching throughout the school is good and has improved since the last inspection. Where the teaching is strongest, lessons are well planned, the work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils and the work is assessed and pupils' contributions to lessons and the progress made is noted and used in future planning. The teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage where very good use is made of the very good quality nursery nurse and support staff. The teaching is good in ICT, art and design, and physical education. Weaknesses remain in a few classes where teachers do not always leave sufficient time for appropriate plenary sessions to reinforce the learning objectives, or where the planning does not identify work sufficiently well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Marking is good in English but less good in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality curriculum with a broad and balanced range of activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The teachers and teaching assistants work hard to ensure these pupils are well provided for and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good; the provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress are effective.

The school works hard to involve parents but few take advantage of the support that is offered. The very good residential visit for Year 6 pupils provides excellent opportunities for their social development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school has a very clear focus on the need to raise standards and all staff are working hard to achieve this aim through training and improving the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school but also have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good, overall, but the school has been very good in monitoring and developing the teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funds are used appropriately and improvements to the school since the last inspection have had a positive impact on standards.

The school applies the principles of best value appropriately. The range of resources available to staff is broadly typical and the accommodation is good. The school's aims are very clearly reflected in its work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like going to school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems and that the school works closely with them. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority feel that the school does not provide a sufficient range of activities outside of lessons.

There was a very small return to the questionnaires and only a small number of parents attended the meeting with the inspectors. However, the views of those who did respond were largely very supportive of the school. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views. The provision for activities outside lessons is good. Parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning and the school should investigate more effective ways to engage parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start in the nursery, the early assessment of their attainment, together with the inspection evidence, indicates that the knowledge, skills and understanding of the majority of them are well below those expected for their ages. They make good progress in the small nursery class, and this progress continues through the reception class, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and the communication, language and literacy skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of the children, despite the good progress made, are still below the levels expected for their ages.
2. The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 remained at the low level of 2001 in English but improved slightly in mathematics and science. Overall, the results are well below the national average and have remained so since the last inspection. However, these results hide the good level of achievement which shows that the majority of the pupils do make good progress through the school, although more needs to be done, especially in English and science, to raise standards further, and the school is very aware of this.
3. When the results are compared with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in 2002 were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. The results in English and mathematics represent good progress over the very low attainment on entry. Progress in science is less good and the school has recognised this and has begun work to raise standards, as has already been successfully done in mathematics. A similar picture is apparent when the Year 6 results are compared to the results the same pupils attained when they were in Year 2. This does not reflect the more recent improvements in mathematics. The inspection evidence supports the view that standards are rising.
4. In Year 2, the test results in 2002 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics, as they have consistently been for some years. The school is aware of the year groups where progress has been less evident and the staff are monitoring progress closely. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the results in 2002 were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics.
5. The inspection evidence shows that standards are still below average in English and science by the end of Year 6, although in mathematics standards are now closer to the national average. This is the result of a focus on mathematics including more monitoring of teaching and learning, more input for staff support from the co-ordinator, more training for staff and opportunities to see leading mathematics teachers in action. A similar focus into science is in place although this has yet to have an impact on standards at the top end of the school. In Year 2, standards in mathematics are still below those expected, as they are in English, although good progress is being made. Science standards are broadly in line with the expected level, although the skills in investigative and experimental science are less secure.
6. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below those expected in history, but broadly in line with the expected level in art and design, design and technology, geography, ICT, music, physical education and religious education. By the end of Year 6 standards in history have improved to the expected level. Standards in literacy across the curriculum are below those expected and in some subjects, such as history, too many worksheets need to be completed and this limits the time available for extended writing. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects such as science and geography. The progress made in ICT has improved since the last inspection, due to the better resources now available and the development of teachers' skills through training.

7. The school has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, two year groups have a small number of pupils with negative attitudes towards school. This has an inevitable impact on the overall standards achieved in those classes. However, those with special needs who receive extra support through small group teaching and good individual education plans are making a good level of progress based on their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are good. Behaviour is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes, although there are pupils whose attitudes towards school are poor and this affects the rate of their progress. Attendance is satisfactory. These judgements are similar to the findings of the last inspection.
9. The school's mission statement says that it aims to develop a moral and social awareness and an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and to help foster a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect. In general, pupils' attitudes reflect the school's aims well. They know right from wrong and most are thoughtful of others. They show good interest in their learning and are keen to offer ideas in discussion. Sometimes there is unnecessary chatter, but teachers' careful management results in a good working atmosphere, as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where good progress resulted. Pupils show a good level of respect and can be sensitive to others' feelings. For example, in a Year 1 ICT lesson, pupils spontaneously applauded a pupil with special educational needs in his efforts to solve a spelling problem. Pupils are keen to join in clubs and activities. They are generally eager to come to school and punctuality is good for the majority of pupils, though a small number have problems getting to school on time.
10. Pupils know the school rules well and feel that they are treated fairly. When teachers' behaviour management is good, pupils respond well and listen attentively to teachers and to others. For example, in a reception lesson on counting in 2s and 10s, the children behaved very well throughout, took turns and were keen to be involved. In a Year 6 design and technology lesson, pupils worked hard and were keen to discuss their ideas. However, behaviour at play times is often over boisterous and the behaviour of some boys in Years 4 and 5 is unsatisfactory. Most pupils are, however, friendly and polite, and pleasant to visitors. Relationships are generally good between adults and children and among children. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils feel confident that if it occurs it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. The incidence of exclusions is high: there were fifteen fixed-period exclusions and one permanent exclusion last year. One pupil has been permanently excluded this year and two have been given fixed period exclusions. Procedures were correctly followed.
11. Pupils' personal and social development is good. There are good opportunities for them to take responsibility, in class and around the school such as, for example, through the house system, and they take these responsibilities seriously. Pupils understand the values of other cultures, through geography, music, religious education and art.
12. Despite the school's efforts, attendance last year was well below average and the rate of authorised absence well above average. Attendance figures so far this year show similar figures. This is due to a small number of families who are failing to support the school by ensuring their children's attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is good with a significant percentage that is very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 80 per cent was satisfactory or better and 40 per cent good or better. The present picture is that all of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, although there remain weaknesses in some lessons, largely relating to the control and management of the more challenging pupils, the use of plenary sessions, the

work provided for the more able pupils and the opportunities for problem solving and developing pupils' thinking skills. Sixty-three percent of the teaching is good or better.

14. The teaching is good in all key stages. In the Foundation Stage, which covers the nursery and reception classes, the teaching is good or better in 90 per cent of the lessons seen. The strengths are in the knowledge and understanding of the age range demonstrated not only by the teaching staff, but also by the very high quality nursery nurse and other support staff. Very good routines are quickly set up and the children respond to these well. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between the different adults working or helping in the classes, are very strong. Great effort is put into planning work appropriate for the pupils' levels of attainment on entry, especially with regard to their communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage is well resourced and the building and outdoor area improvements since the last inspection have addressed the issues raised at that time. A major strength of the present provision is the very careful recording of pupils' progress and learning and the way assessments are used in planning activities appropriate for the pupils' prior attainment. The rooms are filled with bright displays, many of the children's own work, and there is an effective learning environment.
15. In the infant classes, teaching is also good. Although one class has a temporary teacher due to absence, she has quickly developed a very good relationship with the pupils and this is leading them to work hard, to enjoy the tasks set for them and to show pride in their achievements. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 leads to good progress being made and building well on the work completed in the Foundation Stage classes. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of pupils of this age. The basic skills are taught well and appropriate teaching methods are used for specific purposes. For example, in one good mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher made good use of pupils supporting each other during a mental activity, and this helps prevent the less able from fearing failure and encouraged them to attempt an answer.
16. In the junior classes, teaching is good overall, although where the teaching remains satisfactory it is often due to the challenging behaviour of some pupils being less well controlled, and this has a negative impact on learning. This occurs largely in practical lessons such as science, physical education, art and design or design and technology lessons. The older pupils have had too little experience of work requiring problem solving and the development of thinking skills and, together with their low level reading and writing skills, this has a negative impact on their confidence and organisational abilities to attempt such activities successfully. However, in the majority of lessons the teachers' planning and the tight structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies support a good learning ethos. The relationships between pupils and adults are good. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching, especially in numeracy. Their expectations are sufficiently high, although in some lessons the planning does not sufficiently extend or enrich the provision for the more able pupils. Very good use is made of the good quality teaching assistants to observe and record pupil activity and progress during whole class sessions, and to work with small groups on well planned tasks. Time is used well in most lessons. In one very good lesson in Year 5, a brisk pace combined with very clear instructions about fractions resulted in very good learning taking place, as the pupils' attention was held effectively for a lengthy period. In some lessons, the plenary session is too short and does not provide a very effective opportunity for summing up the learning objectives or pointing the way towards the next objectives. In one very good example, in Year 6, the teacher gathered the pupils for a plenary session during the lesson rather than at the end, to address some common misconceptions about the work being undertaken. This helped move their learning on well.
17. The pupils with special educational needs are supported well by specific learning programmes and benefit from a balance of whole class teaching, small group work and individual attention to their areas of difficulty. The teaching assistants play a significant part in this support. This has a positive impact on their learning and enables them to make good progress. Overall,

progress is reviewed termly, involving teachers and the teaching assistants, and the school has been developing procedures so that the pupils are involved with the target setting process. The school has used effectively the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies intervention programmes, again, largely with the good support of the teaching assistants.

18. The marking of pupils' work has been a focus of staff training recently. All the work is marked regularly and with praise. The best marking, which is largely found in English, has comments about how the work might be improved. Most of the teachers give good oral feedback about the work in hand. In the best lessons, they encourage the pupils to identify their own mistakes and think about how to correct them. Where the marking is good, the teachers use their daily assessments of the pupils' progress to plan future work for all ability levels. However, the school's marking policy is not always fully implemented by teachers. Homework is provided throughout the school and this is of broadly satisfactory quality and quantity.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good in both the infant and junior classes and for children in the nursery and reception years. The curriculum in the reception year is consistently good and is particularly effective in developing the children's early language and numeracy skills. Statutory requirements, including the provision for religious education, are met. The time allocation for subjects other than English, mathematics and science is good. For example, art and design and design and technology as well as history and geography are planned in alternate half-term blocks so that they may be studied in reasonable depth. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being fully met. Science planning has improved recently after the school identified that standards in science were too low. This is beginning to have an impact on standards because science lessons in the junior classes now build on what the pupils have previously covered. However, the school must now ensure that, as the pupils move up the school, average attaining and more able pupils are provided with sufficiently challenging tasks in all subjects, to avoid them underachieving.
20. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its schemes of work and teaching plans and these are now good. Alongside its adoption of the frameworks for numeracy and literacy the school is also checking its medium term teaching plans to ensure that there is continuity and progression for all the pupils. This has improved the science planning which has been particularly weak in the junior classes in the past. Short-term teaching plans are derived from the medium-term plans. Improvements in the quality of teachers' assessments and their knowledge of the curriculum are starting to lead to some improvements. The ICT curriculum is much improved since the last inspection and all aspects of it are now taught. The installation of the computer suite has considerably improved the pupils' access to computers and increased opportunities for their learning in this subject.
21. The school is committed to ensuring that all the pupils have access to the full curriculum and makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The new Code of Practice has been implemented successfully. The pupils' needs are identified early and structured work programmes set up for them. Their individual education plans are written by the special educational needs co-ordinator in close collaboration with the class teachers. Pupils with statements of special educational need have programmes of work and their individual plans are used by the teachers to plan appropriate work.
22. The school has many pupils who need to extend their writing skills and limited opportunities are given for this to happen in subjects other than English. Many of the pupils' skills in listening and speaking need much improvement but there are good examples of teachers targeting pupils, for example in geography and history, asking them to explain their work and why they are doing it.

23. Planning for numeracy is good and, where the teaching is strongest and more consistent, results in much improved national test results by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers plan work for different abilities and, where there is appropriate additional support for lower attaining pupils, this is effective to meet the needs of all pupils. Many pupils lack the ability or confidence to speak clearly or explain ideas fully in class discussions. This is an area in which the school should now focus its resources to raise standards further.
24. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a good range of lunchtime and after school activities. These include a library club, craft club, football, cricket and netball coaching, a computer club and the school operates a parent and family scheme called 'Share' which has an increasing number of parents attending each week. However, more could be done to encourage more parents to help their children in school and at home to raise attainment and improve the way parents are involved in their children's learning. Too few support school curriculum meetings when the work their children are doing is explained and there is insufficient support for homework. Good use is made of a range of educational visits to places of interest as well as an annual residential visit to Wales for older pupils; this has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment as well as developing their personal and social skills. Some pupils also benefit from individual and group music tuition that includes string and brass instruments. This is provided by the local music service, which deploys peripatetic music tutors to schools in the area.
25. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school ensures that the pupils, through science topics and projects in design and technology, learn about healthy living and the dangers of drugs misuse. Through special projects and events, the school involves outside agencies, such as the nurse or health visitor, to discuss topics such as health and safety or healthy eating. The role-play and outside play area in the Nursery reinforce road safety and, in the rest of the school, there is an appropriate emphasis placed on personal hygiene and healthy living. Issues such as drug misuse and sex education are handled sensitively and thoroughly through curriculum topics.
26. The school's links with its local community are very good. The vicar from a nearby church comes regularly to take infant and junior assemblies as well as religious education lessons. The community police officer gives regular talks to pupils. Links with neighbouring schools are very good. There are particularly strong links with the local community secondary school, from where teachers come to meet the pupils who will be attending their schools as well teaching gymnastics and other subjects. Older pupils visit the secondary school and take part in lessons as well as use the school's facilities. The school receives students from local schools who are on work experience and there are very good business links. For example, a local company sponsors reading books to promote and develop home reading. The local water company helps the pupils to participate in local environmental projects as part of the school's geography and science curriculum. A nearby rugby club has provided coaching sessions. There is a good range of educational visits to enhance and support the pupils' learning across a range of subjects. The headteacher is keen to develop strong links with the community and is currently embarking on a community and youth project entitled 'Valued Youth', which helps young people to participate in schools as part of a process of lifelong learning. Community links are a strong feature of the school's curriculum and this is evident in the extensive range of opportunities the school provides for its pupils and for the broader community.
27. The provision for pupils' personal development includes good provision for moral, social and cultural awareness and satisfactory provision for spiritual development. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.
28. The teachers support the pupils in their understanding of the wonders of the natural world and human achievement. They help them to an acceptance that there are some aspects of life that cannot be explained and how love and truth can be demonstrated through the lives of great

figures in history such as Saint Columba and the prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry. In a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils demonstrated respect and empathy when a visiting clergyman talked to them about loss and in an assembly when the headteacher talked to them about the control of anger. In a good Year 5 lesson, the pupils were interested in the power of words written by their classmates as they built up the atmosphere in their re-telling of the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Music plays an important part in the pupils' spiritual development. They are given opportunities to express themselves through creating their own music with voices and instruments, and by listening to the work of famous composers and artists. There are also good opportunities for this to develop through the creation or appreciation of art, such as painting in the style of Georgia O'Keefe's 'Blue and Green Music.' In assemblies, some opportunities to broaden the pupils' understanding and appreciation of music are missed because little explanation is given about the music played or its significance to the occasion.

29. The pupils are developing an understanding of what is involved in belonging to a community in terms of beliefs, practices and values. They can identify the similarity and differences between religions with the recognition of features such as values, holy books and places of worship. They are developing an understanding that religious faith is important to many people and that these beliefs have an impact on their lives and their communities. They are supported in this by being taught about the significance of celebrations through particular forms of service, music, clothing and meals. The Year 6 teacher was sensitive in encouraging an open respect for the opinions and beliefs of others as she introduced the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path and involved the pupils in discussing the similarities with the Ten Commandments.
30. Opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities are a developing feature of the school's provision. They have opportunities to take on roles such as monitors. This supports the development of a sense of their own worth and usefulness as they undertake tasks but they also realise the implications of social duty as they raise money for charities and look after those younger than themselves. Pupils are encouraged to respect other people irrespective of talents, ability, race or gender so that they can challenge ideas about the parts people can play in a community. All pupils have opportunities to discuss personal issues in circle time. This makes them feel that their views matter and that they can make a difference. There is a clear code of conduct and pupils are aware of their responsibility for their own actions. Throughout the school, the teachers are good role models for the pupils to develop an understanding of the consequences of their own and others' actions.
31. The school works hard to promote a sense of unity and understanding to help to break down prejudices so that the pupils can realise the benefits of living in a multi-cultural society. Assemblies, visits and visitors are used to draw attention to similarities and differences between different faiths and cultures. The festivals of different religions and cultures are celebrated and this helps the pupils to respect and enjoy learning about lifestyles and traditions. The current pen-pal programme with a school in Italy is developing the pupils' understanding of school life in another country as well as leading to an appreciation of the power of ICT. The school is developing the pupils' understanding of the culture of the United Kingdom by a programme of visits to places of historical, geographical and cultural interest.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school is a caring community, which has effective procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection but there has been considerable improvement in some areas. Child protection procedures are good. The headteacher has been fully trained, and has trained all staff, in dealing with child protection issues. Local authority guidelines on child protection have been adopted and links with social services are improving.

33. There are good policies for ensuring health and safety, and practice is good. Three members of staff are fully trained in first aid. Pupils' medical conditions are listed in registers and arrangements for dealing with pupils who become ill during the school day are good. Accidents are carefully logged. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and the conscientious caretaker has a good input into these. Emergency evacuation procedures take place at least once a term and all fire equipment is checked regularly. There is good safety practice in science, design and technology and physical education. Supervision at play times is satisfactory. There is a good and effective policy for the pupils' safe use of the Internet.
34. Pupils understand that good behaviour is expected of them because school rules are clearly displayed and shared with parents in the prospectus. There is a clear behaviour policy and this is consistently applied in most classes. Class teachers praise pupils for hard work and good behaviour and show them good examples of courtesy and fairness. Each class has books for noting good and bad behaviour and these are regularly monitored. There is a good variety of rewards through stickers and certificates, praise postcards and letters home. For pupils with challenging behaviour, the behaviour support programme provides a helpful method of monitoring progress. The school has used outside agencies to assist with training staff and working with pupils on anger management programmes.
35. There are good arrangements for assessing and monitoring the pupils' attainment and progress. The information is used to form groups within classes for English, mathematics and science lessons. A range of standardised tests is used to monitor the pupils' progress in these subjects and each pupil has an assessment portfolio. The comprehensive tracking system starts in the nursery to show the gains that have been made by each pupil. The pupils' attainments and progress in all the other subjects of the curriculum are assessed at the end of each term or at the end of each unit of work. Test results, samples of the pupils' work and the teachers' plans are analysed to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance and in the school's provision. This influences most of the curriculum planning. Opportunities are used to moderate the teachers' assessments of the pupils' work and these are used to annotate and allocate National Curriculum levels to guide the teachers in planning for the next stages of learning. The school sets targets for English and mathematics and these are used to plan for individual learning. However, the emphasis is on what needs to be done rather than on precise guidance about how specific areas of weakness can be improved or how the pupils might work towards them on a daily basis. Not all the teachers ensure that the targets consistently reflect what is needed to help a pupil to attain the next level or part level. The school is aware of the need to extend the pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve by providing them with more precise targets that indicate how this can be done.
36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. There are many good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, including a house system. The school council is to be reinstated this year. Older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime, and in the library and assemblies. The personal, social and health education programme is effective. Class teachers monitor pupils' personal development carefully through class records, which are particularly good in the nursery and reception classes.
37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school calls parents on the first day of absence if no explanation is received. Registers are monitored on a weekly basis for patterns of lateness and absence and the vigilant Educational Welfare Officer is closely involved. A new scheme has been set up whereby families are contacted if a number of unexplained absences occur over a half-term period. Registration takes place quickly and effectively and ensures a calm start to sessions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The very small proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting were very appreciative of the school and all that it does for their children. They felt that their children liked school and that the school expected them to do their best. They were very satisfied with the teaching and with the leadership and management. All felt that the school worked closely with them and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems. A few parents were dissatisfied with the number of activities outside lessons. The inspection supports the parents' positive views and found the range of extra-curricular activities to be good.
39. The school has effective links with many of its parents. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The information the school provides for them is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents mainly comply with statutory requirements, although the latter does not include details of arrangements for dealing with pupils with disabilities. Both documents are clear and comprehensive, but very formal in tone. Newsletters are frequent but also formal. Some of the reports on pupils' progress are written in language not accessible to many parents. Very brief advance information on the curriculum is given in newsletters. Most parents have signed the home-school agreement.
40. The school has made many efforts to involve parents in their children's learning, but many parents remain unresponsive. A drop-in clinic is held each week for parents. Home-school liaison books are in place but not widely used by parents. Questionnaires have been sent out to try to gain parents' opinions on a variety of issues. The 'Share' scheme has been operating for several years, involving a good number of parents. There are a good number of consultation meetings each year and staff are always available at the end of the day. However, substantial numbers of parents have very little involvement in their children's learning. They do not attend meetings about the curriculum or support the homework provision and the school needs to investigate more effective ways of involving them in their children's learning.
41. A parent-teacher association has recently been revived and organises trips and visits in order to try and bring the school community together. A small number of parents make a valuable contribution to work in the school by helping in classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher and key staff are good and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. There is a very clear focus on raising standards and providing the best possible education for the pupils. All staff share the very good educational direction evident in most of the school's work. They are working very hard in challenging circumstances and have the agreed school aims at the forefront of their efforts. The aims and objectives are regularly reviewed. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff who work hard to ensure that the education provided is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and that the school remains focused on raising standards.
43. The senior management team meets weekly, with a range of agenda items in addition to the daily informal contact that takes place. The minutes do not provide an informative record of the meetings, however. The deputy headteacher has been very involved in restarting the parent-teacher association. The monitoring policy ensures that teachers and senior staff agree the focus of any monitoring in advance. Verbal feedback is given and a written observation form at a later date.
44. The performance management policy is in place and staff are regularly observed with feedback that provides a useful part of the professional development. This process, alongside the audit of future needs, provides part of the school development planning process. The development

planning is linked appropriately to the local authority planning and pays due attention to national initiatives. Plans are drafted by the school and then discussed by the governing body. Priorities are questioned and the governors monitor the plan in action at their meetings. The staff are all aware from the planning when their subjects are a focus for development and improvement. The level of delegation is good and effective in ensuring actions are completed appropriately.

45. The governing body provide a good level of support for the school and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they are aware of the weakness in science standards and the need to be fully involved in the local community, as well as the effect of the falling roll. The recently appointed chair is experienced in local government and education and is leading the governors well to ensure they act appropriately as critical friends of the school. The governing body meets appropriately and has a good structure of committees that provide an efficient way of organising the governors' business. They monitor the school's work through the detailed headteachers' reports and staff reports on curriculum subjects. A number of governors have curriculum monitoring responsibility. They are aware of the need for governors to try and visit the school more often, with an agreed focus for information gathering and monitoring purposes.
46. The head teacher is currently the special educational needs co-ordinator and she has a clear understanding of her role and its responsibilities. She deals with the administration and discusses the pupils' needs with the parents and outside experts. She monitors the teaching and the learning to ensure that all the lessons include work that is specific to the pupils' individual education plans. The school has effective links with the special educational needs support agencies and benefits from the advice of the behaviour support team to manage effectively the challenging behaviour of some of the pupils.
47. The targets set by the school for pupil achievement are appropriately challenging, although the school narrowly failed to meet those set for 2002. This has resulted in rigorous efforts to improve the English and science standards and the inspection evidence confirms that this is already proving successful. They are based on a system of tracking pupils' progress set up three years ago. Each child is assessed annually, work is kept in portfolios and the school keeps a good set of records that are analysed by staff each year and provide good information about progress that is used in setting targets.
48. The school secretary is very experienced and very effective. Administrative staff are efficient and ensure that the school runs smoothly. They are available to parents and ensure that visitors are made welcome. The day-to-day financial management of the school is efficient. Governors monitor the school's spending effectively and follow good procedures to ensure that the school achieves best value when committing its funds to specific resources or when making improvements to the building or school site. The caretaker manages the school site well and this is reflected in the clean and well-maintained learning environment provided for all the pupils.
49. The current staffing of the school is stable with one temporary teacher covering until the permanent class teacher returns to school. The school has adequate numbers of staff to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a good number of well qualified and experienced teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to the teaching across the school. Class numbers are relatively small compared with that found in most schools. The governors have maintained staffing levels to ensure that the quality of support, particularly for those who have learning difficulties or need one-to-one supervision, is maintained. The school has a good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff. There is an appropriate balance of experience and expertise and all staff are encouraged to develop their own skills through ongoing training. Support staff are valued as key players in the school's work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. The school's development planning contains appropriate priorities for continuing the good progress made since the last inspection and should be implemented as planned. In addition, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in English by: **
- improving speaking skills;
 - ensuring sufficient activities to develop advanced reading skills;
 - ensuring sufficient opportunities for writing at some length in all subjects.

(Paragraphs 2 – 6, 23, 60 - 72)

- (2) Raise standards in science in the junior classes by: **
- improving the use of scientific vocabulary;
 - applying more rigorous and challenging targets for the average and higher attaining pupils;
 - ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to predict, infer and draw conclusions.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 19, 83 - 88)

- (3) Improve the quality of teaching by:
- improving the use of plenary sessions to review and add clarity to the learning objectives;
 - ensuring the work is matched appropriately to all pupils' prior attainment, especially that of the more able pupils;
 - ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop investigative and problem solving skills, and to develop their thinking skills. **

(Paragraphs 13, 16)

- (4) Investigate more effective opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning.

(Paragraphs 39 - 41)

*** The school has recognised these issues and has plans to address them.*

In addition to the above key issues, the governing body should consider including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- Ensuring the policy for the marking of pupils' work is implemented consistently.
(Paragraph 18)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

57

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	29	21	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	51	37	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	191
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	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	36

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	10	13	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	9
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	18	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (83)	78 (87)	91 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	18	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (87)	91 (93)	96 (93)
	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	10	15	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	7
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (46)	60 (38)	60 (54)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	8	7	12
	Total	16	16	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (58)	64 (54)	84 (50)
	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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	169	13	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	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	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	448, 402
Total expenditure	447, 780
Expenditure per pupil	2, 285
Balance brought forward from previous year	9, 883
Balance carried forward to next year	10, 505

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	43	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	53	10	0	3
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	47	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	30	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	63	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	47	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	47	13	3	3

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

51. The provision for the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. There is one reception class with a nursery group working with a nursery nurse under the direction of the reception teacher. Children are admitted into the nursery when they are three years old and met the necessary criteria. In the September of the year in which they will be five they transfer to the reception class. At the time of the inspection there were 24 nursery children attending part time and a reception group of 23 pupils attending full time.
52. The staff work and plan very effectively together and this has a very positive impact on the good progress children make. The teaching is good throughout the nursery and reception. The well-equipped rooms have been improved since the last inspection, as has the outside play and learning space, and they now provide a very good quality, bright and stimulating environment. The attainment of most of the children on entry to the nursery is well below that expected, especially in their language and communication skills. They make good progress, which is continued in the reception class, and by the time they are ready to start Year 1 their attainment has improved although it often remains below that expected and few fully attain the expected early learning goals for five-year-olds. Although the school has broadly typical induction procedures, the staff are finding it increasingly difficult to involve parents with their pupils' learning in school, and this means that lessons learned in school are not always reinforced at home.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. The majority of the children make very good progress through the nursery and reception classes and are on line to achieve most of early learning goals expected for the end of the reception year. The teaching is good. In the nursery, children are introduced to routines designed to make school a safe and pleasant learning environment. This work is built on successfully as they enter reception. They learn to play with a range of toys and materials and very good progress is evident in the way they develop their skills of sharing and cooperating with activities. They are encouraged to take turns and the good role play provision gives children opportunities to act out a range of imaginative situations that have meaning to them and their lives. They are beginning to develop a good ability to sit in a larger group and listen to stories, as was evident in a class assembly.

Communication, language and literacy

54. The pupils enter the nursery with well below average literacy levels. They make good progress from this low base throughout the nursery and reception classes, and standards are rising steadily. However, the majority will remain below the standard expected by the end of the reception year. The teaching is good. They respond to stories the teachers read to them well, appreciating the humour. Their listening skills develop well, but their speech and communication skills are poor; the staff appreciate this and use every opportunity to try and get children to talk about their work. In the nursery, children are introduced to early phonic skills and they have a developing knowledge of initial letter sounds. In the reception class, the children learn to recognise and know the names of the characters from the main reading scheme used in the school. This helps encourage them to want to know what happens in the stories. Very few of the pupils make use of a public library but most do read at home as well as at school.
55. Good progress is made in writing skills. Most children can trace over letters by the time they start the reception year. After a few weeks they are copy writing under the teachers' example. Higher attaining children have lists of spellings of common three letter words to learn and they

can use a word bank to create their own sentences. Less able children have poor pencil control and show knowledge of only a few sounds. Writing has a high profile and teachers model examples and skills effectively. Both classes have writing corners where pupils can practice their skills.

Mathematical development

56. The teaching is good in both classes and the children make good progress over their low attainment on entry. However, few are likely to fully achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The nursery children have developed a good idea of the concept of three through their topic on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They are also able to compare the bears, their bowls and furniture in the very good role play area, to see which were the biggest, tallest, middle-sized and smallest bears. Children in the reception class can order numbers to 10, although they often reverse numbers when writing them. A small proportion of the pupils can order numbers to 20. They know some of the vocabulary of position, such as over, under and behind.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. The teaching of the nursery and reception children is good and most pupils make good progress but are unlikely to achieve all of the expected early learning goals. All use the computers confidently, particularly art software. In reception, children are able to click, drag and drop items of clothing onto the picture of a bear but many are unsure of the order of the clothing. In the nursery, they learn some of the ingredients needed to make porridge. Reception children know about the need for healthy teeth and during the Christmas period used the decorations they made to investigate dull and shiny materials. They know differences between night and day. The improved outdoor areas are being used to teach pupils about sowing, planting and looking after growing things.

Physical development

58. The children have better access to outdoor activities than they had at the last inspection, when this area of learning was a weakness. Now the teaching is good and most make good progress in learning to control their bodies and handle a range of tools and materials. They confidently use large toys and sports equipment, usually with appropriate guidance from the teachers. In the nursery, a lot of the activities are designed to improve the children's ability to handle and use small tools and materials, and they make good progress. The nursery nurse cleverly adapts activities as appropriate such as, for example, when it snowed, and the children were shown how to cut out paper snowflakes. Children develop their control of materials well through sand play, painting and a range of jigsaws. In reception, more formal physical education takes place and children develop satisfactory responses to the teachers' signals and move with growing control and balance.

Creative development

59. The quality of teaching is good and most children make good progress, although they are unlikely to achieve all aspects of the early learning goals expected by the time they are in Year 1. They enjoy a good range of experiences in music, art, story and imaginative play. The role-play usually reflects the topic being covered, in this case, Goldilocks and the three bears. The school has provided good resources to enhance this play and with good adult support from the teachers, nursery nurse and teaching assistant, the play, especially in the nursery is enjoyable, meaningful and purposeful. Children use paint confidently and with growing control and enjoy listening to stories.

ENGLISH

60. By the end of Year 2, standards are below the nationally expected levels in reading and writing. However, when compared to Year 2 pupils in similar schools, standards are above average in reading and average in writing. The girls attain higher standards than the boys.
61. The pupils enter Year 1 performing below the national expectations in communication, language and literacy. The good progress made in the nursery and reception class is built on effectively but this is not yet having sufficient impact on attainment by the end of Year 6, partly as the older pupils have not benefited from the Literacy Strategy throughout their time in primary school.
62. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are below average as few pupils attain the higher levels in the writing tests. Most of the pupils attain the same levels as the Year 6 pupils in similar schools. Recently the boys' attainment has improved to become close to that of the girls.
63. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs attain standards that reflect their individual targets. They are supported well and make good progress. The pupils benefit from a balance of whole class teaching, small group work and individual attention to their areas of difficulty. The teaching assistants play a significant part in this good provision. The school has used National Literacy Strategy intervention programmes, usually in small groups, effectively.
64. Standards in speaking and listening are improving but they are not yet in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Few pupils have well-developed speaking skills or are able to use interesting language with complex sentences. A significant number lack confidence in speaking. They do not use a wide vocabulary and are not articulate when explaining their ideas. The majority of them make good progress in listening carefully to their teachers and the other pupils and they begin to gain the confidence to talk about matters that interest them. The more able pupils make relevant contributions when discussing books during the literacy hour. Most of the pupils think carefully when they answer questions and explain their point of view and some can justify their answers and opinions in a mature way. Some can express their opinions about the style and effectiveness of the language the author uses to create a particular mood or atmosphere in a book. The more able pupils know that the words on the pages begin as ideas in an author's mind. During a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils demonstrated their understanding of this when they contributed their ideas for alternative versions of the traditional tale of Red Riding Hood. At the end of a good Year 3 lesson, they listened to other pupils' explanations of the need for the correct sequence of sentences when writing instructions.
65. Standards in reading are below average. The pupils are introduced to a structured reading programme supported by the systematic teaching of phonic skills and they make good progress. Most pupils can understand and respond to books by re-telling the stories and describing the characters and events. By the end of Year 6, the more able pupils read fluently and expressively and they are independent and enthusiastic readers who can use inference to discuss the meaning. They enjoy popular modern fiction by J.K.Rowling and explain why certain books appeal to them. Some are able to explain the range of strategies they use for dealing with unfamiliar words and for checking that the text makes sense but too few of the pupils have the skills necessary for this level of independence. Even when they can read the words, they cannot always explain their meaning. Most of the junior pupils know how to use the library catalogue system and most of the older pupils are confident about using the index and glossary of reference books. Throughout the school, the pupils use books and computer programs for research and to support their work in other subjects such as geography and history. The school is keen for the pupils to enjoy reading and they are encouraged to take their books home to share with their families. There is a home-school book-mark which is used by the teachers and some of the parents. This could be usefully extended into a diary to provide teachers and parents with information about progress, suggestions about how the children can

be supported with any difficulties and with guidance for the next stage. Many of the pupils are enthusiastic about the after school library club.

66. By Year 6 standards in writing, including spelling, are below average. However, the National Literacy Strategy has influenced the organisation of lessons and this is having a positive impact on the development of the pupils' knowledge of grammatical structures and the processes of writing in different styles for different purposes. The pupils make good progress with spelling as there is a structured spelling programme with direct teaching of rules and patterns. The spelling is regularly tested and standards are improving. The younger pupils look for familiar spelling patterns. They try to spell out the words or follow the rules such as 'the magic e' or 'the lazy k'. The older pupils become more familiar with the rules, conventions and irregularities of spelling. They learn about prefixes, suffixes and how to change the order of words to make their sentences grammatically correct.
67. From learning to write simple sentences, beginning with capital letters and ending with full stops, many of the pupils can sequence events in a story and develop their ideas into a sequence of punctuated sentences by the end of Year 6. The older pupils organise their writing and many use appropriate grammar and punctuation. They enhance their work with adjectives and adverbs identified during the shared reading section of the literacy hour. They are able to define what makes a good start to a story in order to capture a reader's attention. They prepare an initial draft of their work and the more able pupils can edit it to clarify their thoughts through their writing. There were some good examples of this in a Year 6 class when pupils shared their story drafts with a partner and negotiated which of the ideas should be included in the final word processed version. However there is a lack of fluency in much of the writing and the stories are mundane. Overall, the writing lacks imagination, characters and plot are not developed sufficiently and spelling and punctuation are inaccurate. There is evidence that the pupils are given a range of opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects but much of this is based on work sheets that restrict the opportunities for the pupils to organise their own work. The quality of handwriting is variable. Some Key Stage 1 writing has well formed letters of consistent shape, size and spacing. In Key Stage 2 there is some inconsistent formation and joining. Presentation is sometimes very good but teachers' expectations of this are variable.
68. The majority of the pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and they enjoy their lessons. They are well behaved and try to do their best at all times. However not all of them take sufficient care with the presentation of their work. During discussions, they are attentive, make relevant contributions and respect the ideas and opinions of others. They are clear about what they are expected to do and settle quickly and concentrate on their work. The majority work independently or collaboratively as required by the teachers.
69. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The teachers plan the work carefully and in the best lessons they explain clearly what they want the pupils to learn and set targets with them. These features were present in a good Year 5 lesson, where the teacher was skilled at using the pupils' stories to explain how they had used powerful verbs to create mood and atmosphere when rewriting their own version of a Greek legend. The planning was detailed and the skilled questioning kept the pupils focused on the individual and group tasks. The lessons are well organised and there is good deal of purposeful activity. There is no wasted time and the lessons generally move at a brisk pace with challenging behaviour managed well. The teachers use their questioning skills effectively to establish the pupils' understanding and then use the answers effectively to support and extend the learning. These strengths were evident in Year 4 when the teacher planned imaginative ways to introduce the pupils to the importance of adjectives and adverbs when describing moods and feelings. At the end of lessons the pupils are given opportunities to discuss what they have been doing but the teachers do not always involve them in discussing or reviewing their learning.

70. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and always offer praise. The best marking has comments about how the work might be improved. Most of the teachers give good oral feedback about the work in hand. In the best lessons they encourage the pupils to identify their own mistakes and think about how to correct them. The teachers make great efforts to gather information about their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Where the marking is good the teachers use their daily assessments of the pupils' progress to plan future work for all ability levels. The weakest marking is where the teacher has not provided any guidance about the next steps for the learning. The less successful marking is also where the teacher does not refer to any targets or objectives for the learning. The school sets individual targets and involves the older pupils with this process. In some classes the targets are too general with an emphasis on what needs to be done rather than on precise guidance about how specific areas of weakness can be improved. Not all the teachers ensure that the targets for reading or writing consistently reflect what is needed to help a pupil to attain the next level.
71. The school's resources are satisfactory, with a suitable collection of reading scheme books. The library and class collections have a satisfactory range of reference books. The pupils are taught library skills and pupils use books for independent research. Throughout the school, the pupils make good use of ICT for research and through word processing to enhance their written work. The older pupils make appropriate use of the computer editing facilities to improve their work. The contacts with an Italian school are providing the pupils with opportunities to exchange e-mails and tapes as well as conventional letters.
72. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic temporary co-ordinator covering for an absent colleague. The co-ordinator checks the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons, looking at the teachers' plans and the pupils' books and analysing the results of the statutory and optional tests. She is well placed to develop her role in supporting her colleagues and influencing the quality and standard of work. The school is aware of the need to ensure that standards of attainment are raised. A comprehensive assessment system has been established with a tracking system to record the pupils' progress to identify the value that has been added to their learning and to identify what needs to be done to raise standards. The school acknowledges that strategies and structures need to put in place so that the teachers can identify precisely what needs to be done to enable more of the pupils to attain higher levels in the tests.

MATHEMATICS

73. Since the last inspection, national test results show that standards have declined by the end of Year 2 but improved by the end of Year 6. The overall picture is one of improvement so that the present standards are close to the level expected nationally. This is due to the work the school has put into raising standards, through training and improving teaching styles. The national tests showed that by the end of Year 2, boys do less well than the girls, although they do better than girls by the end of Year 6. The inspection findings showed no differences in the attainment of boys or girls, or by any other groups of pupils in the school.
74. By the end of Year 2, standards are highest in shape, space and measure and a well above average proportion of the pupils reach the higher level in this aspect. Throughout the school, there are weaknesses in the use and application of mathematics, especially with regard to problem solving, due to the pupils' lack of clear strategies for organising their work and their below average skills in interpreting questions and problems.
75. Pupils' attitudes are usually good. They enjoy the tasks they are given and the challenges that are provided for them. For example, in Year 1 the teacher made very clever use of deliberate mistakes to enthuse and excite the attention of the pupils. Most pupils take a pride in their work although the recording in books varies in quality. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and thrive on the structure of the numeracy lessons when they find practical work more difficult to cope with.

76. In Year 1, the pupils' latest work shows they can double numbers to 20 and have a growing understanding of place value with tens and units. They can measure lengths using cubes and they know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes. They are able to identify coins well but when questioned only one pupil knew how many pennies made a pound. In Year 2, pupils can identify numbers and words to one hundred. They know place value to 100 and use a computer activity to show ways of making 10. Less able pupils are able to add and subtract but using smaller numbers. Higher attainers are able to convert digital to analogue time and add tens and hundreds. Pupils can count in fives to 100 mentally and are able to give ways of making 20. In one good lesson, they make good progress in learning to add by partitioning and then recombining numbers. The majority are working at an appropriate level although approximately a third of the class are below the level expected for their ages.
77. In Year 3, pupils can distinguish between regular and irregular two-dimensional shapes. They know simple lines of symmetry and are able to read scales accurately. Much of the presentation of their work is untidy and inaccurate but they are able to mentally double and halve some simple numbers and they have a growing understanding of the compass points and how to describe a route on a grid. In Year 4, the pupils are transferring their addition techniques to adding vertically rather than horizontally. They can work out the fractions of numbers and put simple fractions on a number line correctly. They know how to calculate a perimeter and higher attaining pupils are able to subtract using partitioning, although they are still to grasp this with hundreds, tens and units. They find it difficult to work together to solve problems when ordering objects by weight in groups, and the groups tended to be led, and the work carried out, by just one or two pupils. However, it is important for the development of their problem solving skills that more of this type of activity is devised throughout the school.
78. In Year 5, pupils are beginning to be able to read negative numbers on scales, and to manipulate these numbers by addition and subtraction. They have investigated shapes and diagonal lines in some detail, and have worked out the average and range of a set of data. The less able have some good work matched specifically to their prior attainment. In a mental session, pupils show a good understanding of the range of vocabulary used for multiplication. In one very good lesson, the teacher introduced the idea of improper and mixed fractions and his very effective style led to very good progress being made. By the end of the lesson, almost all could say how many fifths made 12 and higher attainers could accurately change improper to mixed fractions, and correctly put them on a number line. In Year 6, pupils have consolidated and built on the fractions and negative numbers work covered in Year 5. They are able to divide decimals and use brackets in a range of calculations. However, their ability to plan work and attack problems logically, and by understanding and interpreting the question is limited. They are able to do some good mental calculations such as how many 35p objects you can buy for £23.80.
79. The school has worked hard to improve standards in mathematics. The appointment of a leading mathematics teacher to the school has provided staff with a good deal of extra support. In addition, teachers have been supported by the local authority numeracy consultant and have attended a range of courses both within school and at external venues. The teaching has been monitored closely and effective feedback has been given to staff. The use of ICT, including, calculators has been developed and the planning has been improved with nationally accepted plans. These have been adapted by teachers to be specific for their classes, although the timing within lessons still varies and this reduces the effectiveness of aspects of the numeracy strategy. Finally 'booster' classes have been introduced to address those pupils who are underachieving when their prior attainment is taken into account.
80. All of these improvements have resulted in teaching that is now of good quality overall, throughout the school. This has also improved since the last inspection. The Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced, alongside improvements to the resources, and this has given more structure to the lessons. Teachers now have more confidence in their own subject knowledge and expertise. There are good relationships in most classes and good use is

made of praise and rewards to encourage the pupils. They plan tasks with a growing realisation that the pupils need more opportunities for collaborative work to develop their communication and problem solving skills. For example, in Year 4, pupils worked in small groups of mixed ability to order objects by estimating their weight. The assessment of pupils' progress is good and this is mostly used effectively to offer pupils activities that are well matched to their prior attainment. Teachers share the lesson objectives with their pupils and this helps them to understand what they are learning and how it links to their previous activities.

81. In some classes, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always correct important spelling mistakes or give pupils a good idea of what they have done well or what they need to do to improve. In a number of lessons teachers do not manage the time sufficiently well to provide a useful plenary or summary of work. This was good in one Year 6 lesson, where a mid-lesson plenary pulled together some common problems and enabled pupils to continue with fewer misconceptions.
82. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject, and she has been a leading mathematics teacher at a different school. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. A lot of work has been put into monitoring and supporting staff and this is having a positive impact on standards.

SCIENCE

83. Standards in science are below those expected by the end of Year 6. Although the national test results in 2002 improved on the previous year, standards are not high enough. Over the last three years the school has rightly focused its efforts on improving literacy and numeracy standards so that, during this time, science planning in the junior years has not received as much attention and lacked consistency. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected and this is clearly reflected in teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment in science.
84. Though standards are average by the end of Year 2, like the junior classes, there are weaknesses in the way science has been planned in the recent past. Recent changes to planning have started to make a positive impact on standards. The majority of pupils across the school make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment but are given too few opportunities to draw conclusions from their scientific investigations. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed experimenting with wires and batteries to work out how to make a bulb light. They made satisfactory progress as they began to link wires and a battery to form a circuit with most learning from others as they used trial and error to achieve the desired result. However, very little was concluded from their efforts and most could only explain in very simple terms what a circuit does and why the bulb does not light in some circumstances. Year 1 pupils were observed studying light sources and achieved well as they investigated torches and discussed how the sun provides light for the world. The pupils' limited language skills, particularly spoken language, hindered their progress as they found it difficult to articulate their thinking. This affects how other pupils learn during class discussions but teachers in the infant years do well to explain and support the pupils in order to clarify ideas.
85. In the junior years, the new and revised planning in science is beginning to have an immediate impact on raising standards. However, evidence from the pupils' previous work shows that they could do better. The school's national test results demonstrate that by the end of Year 6, very few pupils exceed the standards expected for their age, but in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school, they have made satisfactory progress. Also, a large number of pupils who join the school have communication and language difficulties, which greatly affects the progress they make. The school has recently raised its expectations by ensuring that science is planned so that, as the pupils move up the school, skills, knowledge and understanding builds on the work done in previous years. In Year 3, for example, the pupils made satisfactory progress investigating the permeability of different types of soil. The

teaching was effective in enabling the pupils to discuss their findings but most notably, the pupils found it very difficult to explain their conclusions after measuring how much water permeates through each type of soil. Year 4 pupils could not explain clearly why the separation of different solids could be achieved even though the teacher provided good opportunities for them to explain their ideas after sifting say, sand and rice. Increased emphasis on the development of their knowledge and understanding, together with continued stress on investigative approaches to learning is more evident in Year 5, where there is a very good balance of investigation and deduction. In the lesson observed, the pupils had been thoroughly prepared for their investigation of sound. In this lesson, the pupils were provided with clear learning objectives and the use of scientific language was more evident when compared with that seen in other lessons. Having prepared the pupils with the appropriate language such as 'vibration' and 'amplitude', they could begin to explain why for example, sound waves can be felt as well as heard. Year 6 pupils investigated how fast solids would dissolve. Most were making satisfactory progress but some were unable to draw conclusions from their experiment. Their limited use of scientific language hampered their understanding of the dissolution of liquids and solids.

86. The basic impediments to the older pupils' further progress are their low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy, though good progress is being made in these areas of their learning. The situation is significantly helped by the pupils' good attitudes towards learning, the recent improvements to the science curriculum and the shared commitment of the staff to improve science standards. Teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory and ranges from at least satisfactory to good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers provided good demonstrations of simple electric circuits, or torch light in a black box to contrast the brightness when the same light is held elsewhere, or how solids can be sifted to separate large and small particles in different substances. In the junior classes, the teaching is satisfactory overall with the most effective science teaching seen in Year 5. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared with resources to hand and learning objectives made clear to the pupils at the start. However, across the school, there is a difference in the way teachers prepare the pupils' tasks. In the most effective lessons, such as those seen in Year 1 and Year 5, the pupils were provided with a range of challenging tasks that evoked thoughtful discussion and explanation of ideas when comparing light in different environments or noticing how sound waves vary according to their pitch and distance from its source. In Year 5, the teacher set out clear learning objectives accompanied with the appropriate scientific language, which helped the pupils to explain their ideas and start to draw sensible and plausible conclusions. In satisfactory lessons, the planning is appropriate for the pupils but there is a lack of challenge for some average and more able pupils when it comes to the tasks set. Having explained what the pupils are to do, teachers do not always provide extension activities if some finish early or know what to do from the start. This has the effect of reducing the impact of the teaching so that in some lessons the pupils mark time or repeat what they have done until other pupils catch up. In the good lessons seen, teachers provide a broader range of tasks so that average attaining and more able pupils choose to investigate further or elaborate on their findings.
87. Boys and girls are equally motivated by the learning opportunities provided. The pupils with special educational needs are fully included even when withdrawn for literacy or numeracy support because teachers provide time for these pupils to re-integrate into the lessons when they return. During practical activities, most of the pupils provide a helping hand, supporting each other and pointing out significant features in the experiments and assisting with entries on recording charts, so that satisfactory progress towards knowledge and understanding is made in spite of language limitations. However, a significant minority of pupils in some lessons are too immature to cope with independent responsibilities. Even some Year 6 pupils struggle to cope or show initiative during practical investigations, as happened when the class were allowed to plan an investigation that required them to identify key features that would account for the speed that some substances would dissolve in a liquid. The teacher and teaching assistants had to spend most of the lesson closely supervising a few individuals who could not organise their experiment or draw conclusions from their findings.

88. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only just taken over this responsibility and has made a good start in improving lesson planning. This includes the development of effective approaches to enquiry-based learning. The curriculum also carries a strong focus on health education, supporting learning in aspects of personal and social education. The use of ICT is improving to include science lessons, with an increasing use of computers and other resources to support and enhance the pupils' learning such as, for example, the use of walkie-talkies as part of a lesson on sound. There is good use of community resources as, for example, when learning is supported by good quality educational visits including a residential visit for older pupils to Mid-Wales where the pupils study rivers, landscapes and natural resources as part of combined geography and scientific topics. The ongoing assessment of pupils' progress, with its potential for finer tuning of learning opportunities, is not yet sufficiently developed but the school makes good use of optional end of year tests in the junior years to track how well the pupils are doing and whether they are likely to achieve their attainment targets. This analysis of results has helped the co-ordinator and the headteacher to identify areas for further development. In this respect, the school is clearly committed to improve science standards and it seems that inspection findings indicate that a good start has been made to achieve this since the most recent revision of science planning.

ART AND DESIGN

89. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection so judgements are based largely on observations of work displayed around the school and in the pupils' sketchbooks and portfolios. Discussions were held with the pupils and their teachers, and teaching plans and school documents were studied.
90. The standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained and are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 6. All the pupils make satisfactory progress including those with special educational needs. Standards amongst boys and girls are similar.
91. Teaching was good in the lesson observed. It was managed well and the resources were prepared carefully. The teacher's explanations were clear so that the pupils understood what they had to do and how they were expected to behave. Through the planning and in discussions it is evident that the teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and this enables them to provide appropriate guidance about the techniques and suggest how the work might be improved. The pupils are encouraged to develop independence in terms of the techniques and materials used. They were given opportunities to express their opinions about the work completed in the lesson and given the opportunity to discuss what they had learned or how they might improve their own work.
92. The teachers give the pupils a wide range of experiences to develop their knowledge and their skills. They successfully encourage the pupils to explore and develop their own ideas. The pupils investigate and use a variety of tools, techniques and media such as pencils, paints, clay, weaving, printing and fabric collage to communicate their ideas. They use their skills to illustrate their work in other subjects such as English, history, geography, science and religious education. The pupils develop their observational skills by drawing and painting portraits, buildings and vehicles. They make satisfactory progress, successfully build on their skills and improve their pencil control and representational drawings.
93. The teachers ensure that the pupils develop their knowledge of colour, texture, pattern, line, tone, shape and form and how to combine them in different ways. They have investigated printing techniques to produce batik wall hangings. All the pupils contributed to mosaic work to produce a large-scale mural of the area around the school. Through their lessons, they are developing their knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of different types of paints and techniques. Their sketches demonstrate how they use photographs to show what might be

outside the given image and their understanding of proportion and perspective. There are many examples of the pupils' work displayed around the school. This often supports their work in other subjects. Notable examples are the African masks connected with their geography lessons.

94. Most of the pupils are enthusiastic about their work and take pride in the finished product. In the lesson they were very well behaved, shared the resources and showed appreciation of the work of the other pupils. The subject promotes their personal development well by providing them with the opportunities to explore values, and interpret and express ideas. The teachers' make appropriate use of art and design to promote the pupils' cultural development. Much of this is through studying the work of famous artists such as Lowry, Picasso and Van Gogh and producing their own pictures and collages in their styles. The school has a limited collection of good quality books, prints and posters to develop this aspect and to extend the children's understanding of a wider range of cultures.
95. The co-ordinator has written the policy from the National Curriculum guidelines and the pupils' work is assessed annually against these expectations. She has not yet had any opportunities to observe lessons but she checks the quality of teaching and learning by looking at the teachers' plans and the pupils' work. The evidence of the work shows the progression in skills but the pieces are not annotated and the co-ordinator is aware of the need for more detailed assessment system. She has a clear view of how the pupils' sketchbooks can be used to keep track of the pupils' progress and this puts the school in a good position to raise the standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Only two lessons were seen during this inspection. However, pupils' work and displays were scrutinised, and teachers' planning is also used as evidence of standards and the quality of teaching. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The previous inspection does not specifically comment on design and technology standards but the school has made good improvements to the curriculum since then, especially ensuring that it has been updated in line with national recommendations.
97. The pupils are expected to research and to plan their work and decide which materials should be used. Evidence from work displayed in classrooms shows that teachers regularly check what the pupils have learned. For example, Year 1 pupils have learned to draw simple plans as part of their topic, which required them to design a playground. The teacher prepared appropriate frames for the pupils to draw their playgrounds and to label each item identifying various activities normally associated with children's play areas. Year 2 pupils used computers to design 'snowmen' which are attractively displayed in the school hall. These are attached to folded paper to give a three-dimensional appearance and when touched they move as if attached to a spring. Good links are made with other subjects such as ICT and science. For example, the work being done in Year 2, where the pupils make a bulb light as part of their electricity topic, involves designing and making a lighthouse so that a simple circuit will make the light shine at the top.
98. The school has adopted a national scheme of work and this leads to pupils being given the opportunity to work with a range of materials. The pupils in Year 4 used computers to design a bookcover. This enabled them to evaluate and change their designs, again with good links to aspects of the ICT curriculum and, in particular, the use of graphics to aid the design process. Year 6 pupils are designing and making slippers. In the lesson observed, the pupils used their original designs to refine the finished product. The scheme of work is helping teachers to plan lessons that build on previous learning so the pupils develop their skills and understanding progressively. Evidence from other work seen across the school shows that they are making satisfactory progress. Year 3 pupils have evaluated and made different types of sandwich as part of food technology. Good links were made with health education and science as the pupils

considered how sandwiches could be made to provide a balanced and healthy diet. Year 4 pupils have studied different types of lever as part of a topic about 'moving parts'. They have produced model windmills and movable 'caterpillars' using a variety of pinning and joining techniques. Year 5 pupils have produced 'moving faces' using simple lever mechanisms. As the pupils move up the school, the quality of design and the range of techniques become increasingly complex and advanced, reflecting how well the curriculum is planned.

99. The pupils with special educational needs are helped to do their work through being given greater support by teachers and classroom support staff. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and especially involve them in class discussions or they observe how well these pupils respond to questions. This helps to draw out from the pupils what they like and what they do not like about the work they do and results in the pupils with special educational needs making a good rate of progress.
100. Teachers' plans, pupils' work and talking with pupils, confirm that all aspects of the subject are taught to pupils with appropriate emphasis on control technology, textiles, mechanisms and food. The pupils enjoy their work but they are not always fluent when they talk about what they have learned and the skills they have gained. The emphasis on research and planning, including the use of the Internet, contributes well to the development of the way in which they think and the way in which they talk about their work. Teachers could help pupils to improve their work by ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to finish their work and to consider how the work might be improved. The co-ordinator is clear about the areas that need to be improved and her plans to improve teachers' subject knowledge and to improve confidence in teaching design and technology are the right things to do. However, she is currently unable to check the work being done in classes because there is little time provided for this level of monitoring in design and technology. The co-ordinator recognises that assessment needs to be improved and has been identified as an area for whole-school improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All the pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time in their learning. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted new planning. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
102. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are aware of localities beyond their own and that different places have different characteristics. The pupils in Year 1 investigate their local area and use simple block graphs to represent how they get to school, such as by walking, car or bus. They have drawn routes to school so that they gain an early understanding of plans and maps. Year 2 pupils have continued to make satisfactory progress with examples of previous work showing work done investigating modes of transport, holiday destinations and the characteristics of life on the imaginary island of Struay. No lessons were observed in the infant classes because of the way the subject is planned. Planning indicates that all areas of learning will be covered. Discussion indicates that knowledge and understanding of local studies is limited.
103. By the end of Year 6, the pupils know that different places contain similar and different characteristics. The pupils in Year 3 talk about similarities and differences when looking at the effects that the weather has on holiday destinations. This was a good lesson and the pupils made good progress. This lesson included good use of computers as pupils searched the Internet and researched a choice of holiday sites. In Year 5, the pupils made good progress looking at the effects that cold climates have on different people. They were observed discussing the life of the Inuit tribe in Baffin Island north of Canada. The pupils showed great interest in the lessons because the teacher used good quality secondary sources, including a biographical account of a family of Inuit people who were discovered by the author and brought back to America in the late nineteenth century. Again, the lessons included good use of

computers to help the pupils research information as they start to compare how different communities cope in cold climates around the world. The research helped develop literacy skills to a satisfactory level. They use numeracy skills to produce and interpret a range of graphs and charts.

104. Teachers follow a two-year cycle of planning which helps to maintain continuity. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 study climate and how this affects the way people live; communities and localities around the world as comparative studies when looking at the local area; and the pupils learn to use and draw simple maps and plans when they plan a route to school or when planning a walk in the local area. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils study the British Isles in terms of its physical characteristics and extend these skills when looking at world maps. The teaching is satisfactory overall with good features observed in Years 3 and 5 during the inspection. Year 5 pupils can recall the names of the continents and also know that there are fundamental differences due to world climates between northern and southern hemispheres although some were a little unsure about the effects that equatorial climates have on the world.
105. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They can identify distinctive features on local route maps such as the shops, the school. For example, Year 1 pupils were taken on a walk to the local shops to help them understand characteristics of the local area by comparing natural and man-made features. The pupils can draw a map and identify distinctive features. The scrutiny of pupils' work across the school shows that pupils that are more able can produce neat plans and maps with appropriate labels to identify key features such as rivers, canals, roads and woodland. Lower attaining pupils need individual input from the teacher to complete the task. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they achieve well.
106. The co-ordinator for geography is well organised and provides good management of the subject. Resources are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is in the process of sorting out and updating resources. He has monitored planning but not teaching and learning in classes. There is a good policy and the school has undertaken a process of adapting national guidelines for the teaching of geography.

HISTORY

107. The pupils achieve standards in history that are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. Only two history lessons were observed during the inspection, both of which were in junior classes because geography and history are blocked with infant pupils studying geography this term. On the basis of evidence from pupils' past work, teachers' planning, displays and talking with the pupils, it is clear that history is appropriately planned into the curriculum and that pupils of all abilities are achieving satisfactorily. However, the pupils' limited language skills and, particularly spoken language, affects how well they articulate what they have learned. Many pupils find it difficult to communicate in detail, through speaking and writing, what they have learned. However, the teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their literacy skills by carrying out research using a wide range of information books, computers and other sources of evidence, for example, photographs, posters and biographical accounts.
108. By the end of Year 2, the pupils develop their knowledge of the lives of people in the past through story and looking at pictures. They can order pictures in Year 1 to show how a baby grows, which is well linked to their science work and helps the pupils to see changes set out in chronological order. Year 2 pupils look at items, such as toys and personal belongings from the past and compare these with modern artefacts and household items. They have looked at the life of famous people from the past such as Florence Nightingale and describe her as "the first real nurse". The pupils recall the key facts about the Great Fire of London and the progress of the fire. Teachers make history relevant and interesting to the pupils as when Year

2 pupils looked at their parents' toys and favourite dolls. This stimulated the pupils to write about their own favourite things which helped them to compare how familiar items like these have changed as time has moved on.

109. By the end of Year 6, the pupils use various sources of evidence to learn about different features of the Second World War. At best this involves some pupils in their own research, but too often the work is based on a common source. They know about the role of people such as the air-raid wardens and the Women's Land Army and their empathetic writing about the Blitz shows that they are aware of the immediate effects and feelings of those caught up in the bombing raids. In their accounts about the experience of evacuees they describe some likely feelings of what it was like to have to leave home. The pupils are acquiring a satisfactory factual knowledge of main events and important people from the past, although their understanding of possible changes in lifestyle that may have resulted because of these is limited.
110. The teaching in the lessons seen was either satisfactory or good. From the evidence drawn from the scrutiny of pupils' work the teaching is satisfactory overall across the school. In Year 6, the teaching seen was good because it is clearly planned with logical steps and stages for the pupils to follow. In Year 4, the teaching observed was satisfactory with well illustrated examples of the life of Boudicca to help the pupils begin to understand key characteristics of Celtic and Roman times in Britain. The pupils responded with interest as the teacher used good illustrations from a range of source books and documents. However, the pupils required a lot of guided supervision to help them research different sources and to draw sensible conclusions. Many of them could not use their own initiative or work independently to identify key features of what they have learned and which type of source the evidence was drawn from. In a good Year 6 lesson, the pupils enjoyed getting information from books to identify key features of Ancient Greek society. The teacher used a brief video clip to point out how historians gather evidence about ancient civilisations, for example, paintings and illustrations on excavated pottery. Again, the pupils lacked initiative and relied very much on adult intervention but in this lesson the teacher's questioning was more focused compared with that seen in Year 4 and this helped the pupils to achieve the main objectives of the lesson.
111. Planning for the development of pupils' knowledge, and opportunities to develop pupils' skills of historical enquiry, are satisfactory. There is some variation in coverage and expectations regarding the quality of the work done across the school. Assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress are satisfactory although the quality of teachers' marking varies so that it is not always clear how the pupils are being supported or encouraged to focus on areas that need developing further. The pupils have access to an appropriate range of evidence, including pictures, diaries, the Internet and, to a limited extent, historical artefacts. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and help bring the subject to life for the pupils. The co-ordinator managed the subject well, ensuring that teachers' planning is secure and consistent across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards of work produced by pupils throughout the school are broadly in line with those expected. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection when standards were below those inspected. This is the result of recent improvements to the teaching, curriculum planning and resources. Standards in lessons are broadly in line with those expected but older pupils have not had the experiences they should have met in the past and so the overall coverage of the curriculum is still below that expected. The new computer suite has enabled the teaching to be more focused on developing the whole classes skills and gives pupils more opportunities to spend time using computers. However, the use of computers in the classrooms varies and more needs to be done to ensure their potential is fully realised, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.

113. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress and there is no difference between the attainment of boys or girls, and those with special educational needs are well supported by the teaching assistants. Pupils' have opportunities to use tape recorders and calculators, and the older pupils are making good use of the available laptop computers. The younger pupils use the programmable robot with growing confidence and accuracy.
114. In Year 1, pupils can make labels for their pegs, demonstrating early word processing skills, editing and changing the text, font and colour. In Year 2 they extend their knowledge of the keyboard, using the shift key, space bar and enter key. They can use graphics packages to create imaginary islands and in mathematics, make pictograms. Early work with databases enables them to classify minibeasts. In a mathematics lesson in the computer suite, pupils are able to log on to the network themselves. They use a teacher prepared program to practise their knowledge and understanding of number bonds to 20. They can click on coins and drag them to create given amounts in piggy banks. They use the computers confidently and this supports their learning in the other subjects effectively. They can program a robot to move and turn in order to reach a given target. Some good art work has been produced in the style of modern artists such as Mondrian and Pollack, using art software.
115. In Year 3, pupils use tape recorders to record sounds. In using a word processor, pupils can change the font size and style by, for example, changing it to italic. They can use spreadsheets to create pictograms and bar charts and use art software to create pictures of insects. They are able to link a range of their skills when completing a topic such as producing a poster for a Halloween Disco merging different texts and pictures. Year 4 pupils have learned to send an e-mail and have a sound knowledge of the appropriate vocabulary, and they are able to create texts with different fonts, styles, colours and styles. By Year 5 good use of software linked to a reading scheme is used for pupils with special educational needs. In one lesson they created lines and shapes which they are able to move, rotate and resize. Year 6 pupils are able to redraft their creative writing using a word processor, working well in pairs. In a numeracy lesson, they used a computer program to convert pounds to euros. They have sent e-mails to a school in Italy, describing themselves and their homes. They use the Internet for research and some are able to download pages relating to their geography topic. In one very good project, pupils have produced a computer slide presentation describing and illustrating the residential visit they undertook earlier in the year. This involved merging text, sound and photographs. The pupils are able to open and run the slideshow on the computer. Pupils have opportunities to use a digital camera.
116. Pupils' attitudes are good, and often very good and this has a positive impact on their learning. They are keen and interested when using computers and they treat the equipment with appropriate respect. When working in pairs they co-operate well and discuss their work together, and are happy to share their skills with others, which assists the consolidation of their learning.
117. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. The teachers have successfully taken part in a national training scheme to extend their knowledge and understanding of the ICT curriculum. This has given them more confidence and expertise when teaching skills to pupils. The good relationships created by teachers enables the teaching of whole class groups to largely overcome the shape of the computer suite and the poor acoustics resulting. Sound use of the projector is made to illustrate techniques for the whole class. The assessment of pupils' skills is at an early stage and the school knows it needs further development. Teachers are putting a lot of effort into finding and creating appropriate tasks for pupils on the computers, rather than simply using commercial materials.
118. The school website was set up with support from local authority staff four years ago. It enables teachers to use ICT to publish work and celebrate the pupils' achievements more widely, as well as providing useful information for prospective and present headteachers. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has provided support for staff who have not

completed the training or who need extra support. Resources have been improved a lot recently and the introduction of broadband will improve the connection to the Internet. The co-ordinator has monitored the pupils' work. Good links with the local secondary school have been created through a secondary teacher visiting and observing infant and junior level work.

MUSIC

119. The standards of attainment reported at the last inspection have been maintained. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they are in line with those expected nationally and the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Boys and girls attain similar standards.
120. The pupils were heard singing in assemblies and in Year 2 and Year 3. In the lessons, they sing with clear diction, accurate pitch and give attention to phrasing and expression. They follow a beat and respond to changes in rhythm. This was evident in Year 3 when they were contributing their own choice of words to a traditional song and being careful to include words with the correct number of syllables to keep to the beat and rhythm. They increase the repertoire of songs they have learned from memory and practice to help them to improve the quality of their singing.
121. Throughout the school, the pupils listen to the music chosen for assemblies and in lessons they become confident when answering questions about what they hear. They are learning about music created by a range of composers and from other times and cultures and the ways in which mood and atmosphere are created. In Year 2, they discussed how the composer had used the music in 'The Carnival of the Animals' and in some cases to disagree with his portrayals as the sounds had created different pictures in their own minds. In the lessons the pupils listened with good concentration. They are beginning to understand the language and structure of music and the instruments that make up an orchestra. The pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to perform together. They are well motivated and display enthusiasm and interest in their work and a willingness to learn new skills. In the lessons and in assemblies there are generally mutually respectful relationships and this leads to most of the pupils doing their best.
122. The teaching is satisfactory. The lessons are planned carefully and the teachers' explanations are clear so that the pupils understand what is expected of them. The activities capture the pupils' interest and are suitably challenging. The plans show that, throughout the school, there are a variety of approaches and appropriate activities to support the pupils in developing their skills in singing, playing and appraising their own work and the work of others.
123. The school's policy is based on national guidelines and a published scheme of work. Music makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils of all abilities have equal access to the subject and the suitability of resources is carefully monitored. There are few close links with other curriculum areas except art and religious education. Music resources are satisfactory. There is a range of instruments and recorded music from other cultures and the pupils' cultural awareness is developed well. Information and communication technology is used to enhance provision through the use of tape recorders, CD players and keyboard. Pupils have the opportunity to have instrumental tuition from visiting specialists. They also have the opportunity to perform in the Christmas plays and school assemblies as well as events at a neighbouring school. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides support and advice for his colleagues. There is a consistent approach to teachers' planning and procedures are in place to assess annually the development of the pupils' skills. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject can be developed and has rightly identified the need to monitor the teaching and learning in a systematic way.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. The standards have been maintained at the satisfactory levels evident during the last inspection. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The good deployment of teaching assistants enables those with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons, except where their behaviour is poor and there is little progress made. In swimming, the majority of the pupils have opportunities to swim in Years 4, 5 and 6, and most are able to reach the expected level by the time they leave the school.
125. In Year 1, the pupils worked hard and responded creatively in dance and movement to music and story. They were able to respond to and interpret the music well, appreciating the mood and the rhythm. In a gymnastic lesson, the same pupils were able to perform a range of jumps and were able to link them together into a sequence of movements. Good direct teaching supports the pupils' learning and their awareness of, and their control over, their bodies are clearly developing well. In Year 2, the pupils perform a dance to a taped radio broadcast. The teacher used the tape appropriately, but the work did not show sufficient challenge or improvement over that done in Year 1. One able pupil was an exception to this. She moved very maturely creating the idea of waves and seaside with real skill.
126. In a very good lesson in Year 3, a specialist teacher from a local secondary school taught a gymnastic lesson as part of a cluster group sports project. She had a very good relationship with the children and very good subject knowledge and understanding, quickly assessing their abilities and what their previous experiences had been. The work involved pupils in developing a range of ways of travelling on and off apparatus. Due to the expert teaching and well-paced lesson, the pupils made very good progress in developing their skills. Year 5 pupils have satisfactory ball control and footballing skills. In the lesson observed, skills varied greatly but there was no difference in the tasks given to the pupils, resulting in a lack of challenge for the more able. However, the lesson developed into an opportunity for pupils to devise their own games and this provided all with an opportunity to use their knowledge and skills at an appropriate level. In Year 6, the teacher adapted her planning well to take account of the poor weather, and this resulted in a good racquet skills lesson being carried out indoors. Given the constraints on space, the pupils made good progress in controlling the ball and hitting targets.
127. Teachers use pupils to provide examples of work sensitively. The pupils are generally very keen to take part in activities and in most lessons their behaviour is good. However, the behaviour of a minority spoils this picture at times, especially in Year 4. Pupils use the apparatus sensibly, and get it out and put it away under the teachers' direction safely. Most of them work well together on group tasks.
128. The quality of the teaching is good overall. It is good and sometimes very good in the junior classes and satisfactory or good in the infant classes. In Year 1, the teacher made good use of a commercial tape to develop the pupils' skills. She interrupted it appropriately to reinforce the skills being practised and this enabled pupils to think about what they were doing and ways of improving it. The teachers make good use of the work done in previous lessons, putting the new learning into context. Teachers are very aware of safety matters and ensure jewellery is covered or not worn and that the hall is safe for activities to take place. Very effective use of outside expertise is made through the local schools sports project. In addition, professional coaches take football practices as an extra curricular activity.
129. A digital camera has been used to record examples of good gymnastic practice for display in the hall, helping to raise the profile of the subject and offer examples of good practice. The hall is of satisfactory size for the activities provided. The field suffers from poor drainage but the good hard play surface is large enough for many activities.
130. The headteacher is the co-ordinator at present, with the newly-qualified teacher shadowing her with the intention of taking on the responsibility in her second year. The last co-ordinator

monitored teaching and learning in the subject recently and produced a new policy and scheme of work. At present there are clubs for football, netball and rounders at lunch times or after school, and the school has taken part in a local swimming gala. Occasional projects involving local sports clubs, such as the Rugby Club, offer pupils enrichment and opportunities to extend their skills. On their very popular residential visit, Year 6 pupils experience rock climbing, canoeing, caving and a range of team building activities. Teachers make an assessment at the end of the year but there is little evidence of day-to-day assessments being made, or used to provide sufficiently challenging tasks for all pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. In Key Stage 1, standards have improved since the last inspection and, along with standards attained by the end of Year 6, are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Boys and girls attain similar standards. In addition to lessons, judgements are based on observations of work displayed around the school and in the pupils' books. Assemblies were attended, discussions were held with the pupils and their teachers, teaching plans and school documents were studied.
132. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity and other world religions. They demonstrate an understanding of what is involved in belonging to a faith community in terms of beliefs, practices and values. They can identify the similarity and differences between religions. The pupils are developing the recognition that different religions share similar features such as values, holy books and places of worship. They are developing an understanding that religious faith is important to many people and that these beliefs have an impact on their lives and their communities. They are being taught about the significance of ceremonies and the signs, symbols and practices of celebrations through particular forms of service, music and choice of clothing and meals. This provides good links with other subjects such as history, geography and art. In a good Year 5 lesson, the pupils were linking their geography and music studies with the story of Saint Columba's journey to the island of Iona and listening to recordings of Gaelic music.
133. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. The lessons are well planned from the scheme of work to build on the pupils' experiences. The teachers' questioning skills are good and they make effective use of the pupils' answers to develop their understanding. The interaction is good in the lessons but generally there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to discuss their learning. In the lessons and in assemblies most of the pupils are well behaved. They are attentive and interested and listen carefully to the teachers and to other pupils. Most share resources and work co-operatively. The teachers are sensitive in encouraging an open respect for the opinions and beliefs of others. In Year 2, the teaching was good as the pupils benefited from the expertise of a visiting clergyman who used parables to introduce them to the universal experience of the pain of loss. During one assembly, a visiting speaker made imaginative use of the story of Joseph to talk about forgiveness.
134. The school tries to ensure that the pupils learn about and learn from religion. These studies support the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also provide them with opportunities to develop their literacy skills. The current assembly theme of 'Families' provides the pupils with opportunities to discuss a range of moral issues such as the control of anger. Drama was used in Year 6 to stimulate debate about the range of emotions and beliefs common to people of most faiths. The co-ordinator has not yet observed lessons but monitors the quality of the teaching and the learning by looking at the teachers' plans and the pupils' books. The teachers are using the attainment targets from the Locally Agreed Syllabus to assess the pupils' progress. There is no rigorous system to enable the pupils to know how well they are doing. There is a satisfactory range of resources supplemented by effective use of visits and visitors to support and enhance the pupils' learning.