

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS' CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kidsgrove

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124380

Headteacher: Andrew Carey

Reporting inspector: Ian Knight
23031

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 2 July 2003

Inspection number: 248597

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Poplar Drive
Kidsgrove
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Postcode: ST7 4HT

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Chair of governors: Mr D Shemilt

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

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| 23031 | Ian Knight | Registered inspector | Science | The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 11229 | Michael Freeman | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 16892 | Julia Elsley | Team inspector | Foundation stage Art and design Music Physical education | |
| 22831 | Clive Lewis | Team inspector | Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology | |
| 2200 | James Stirrup | Team inspector | Educational inclusion English Geography History | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Thomas' Church of England school is an average sized voluntary aided primary school, serving parishes in the Kidsgrove area near Stoke on Trent. One hundred and eighty nine pupils are on roll, of whom the vast majority are of white British backgrounds. No pupils with English as an additional language are at the early stages of acquisition. Thirty one pupils are on the special needs register, of whom three have statements of special need. Most of these have learning problems. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals varies year-on-year; this year it is about average. Similarly, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies widely. This year it was average, but it has been well below that in the past.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school with strengths. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of good teaching. This is based on a sound curriculum, with very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Relationships in the school are very good. This all reflects the school's aims to offer a Christ-centred curriculum in a caring environment. The leadership structures in the school are being amended from September. Currently, leadership and management are satisfactory, but the roles of senior managers are unclear and monitoring of the school's work is not developed enough. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils develop very good attitudes and behaviour within a positive, caring and Christian ethos
- Teaching is good; specialist teaching in music and physical education is very good
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, and very well in music and physical education by the time they leave the school
- Children get a flying start to their education in reception
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of very good provision

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of the senior management team in order to lead the drive for higher standards across the curriculum

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, standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 have improved more quickly than the national picture, and standards in Year 6 tests have improved at about the same rate as nationally. High standards in music and physical education have been maintained. Standards in information and communication technology were below expectations and were made the subject of a key issue. This has been addressed, and standards are now in the expected range. Teaching has improved: more lessons are now good. Some key issues have been addressed effectively: schemes of work have been written for all subjects, and improvements have been made to the outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage. However, curricular co-ordinators still do not monitor the curriculum enough, and the quality of teaching is still not

systematically monitored. Assessment procedures are only now being developed for most subjects. Progress on the key issues was hindered by problems with staff absence, especially the absence through illness of the previous deputy headteacher. Overall, the school has made as much progress as could be expected since the last inspection.

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 | C | B | D | E |
| Mathematics | E | B | E | E |
| Science | C | A | D | D |

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

Standards fell for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 because this group of pupils entered the juniors with lower attainment than usual and included a high proportion of pupils with a special educational need. In the tests for pupils in Year 2, standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing but well below average in mathematics, because few pupils gained the higher Level 3. This was the same when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that children in the Foundation Stage attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas, exceeding them in some areas. This represents very good achievement for these children. Standards in Year 2 are in line with expectations in all subjects except for mathematics in which standards are below expectations. In music and physical education a secure judgement was not possible. These pupils entered school with standards that were well below expectations, and have achieved well. In Year 6, standards are in the expected range for all subjects except for music and physical education, in which standards are above expectations. These judgements represent good achievement for these pupils. Test standards in Year 2 have been improving year-on-year. In Year 6, they improved until 2002. Provisional results suggest a further improvement in 2003. The school set challenging targets for its performance in tests for Year 6; provisional results suggest they have been achieved.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils show very good levels of enthusiasm for the school and are very interested and involved in activities. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and show very good respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils show good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. Relationships are very good. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Good | Good |

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

The teaching of both English and mathematics is good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to which they respond. Management of pupils is good, so that time is not lost maintaining order and pupils can learn at a good pace. Support staff are effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs so that they learn very well. Talented musicians are catered for well by specialist teaching. Although pupils have targets for improvement, these are not consistently referred to by teachers, so pupils' knowledge of their own learning is sound.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. Good provision for personal, social and health education. The school is very inclusive. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good, leading to very good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. However, consistent assessment procedures are not in place in all subjects. |

The school works well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory. The responsibilities and accountability of the senior management team are unclear. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but do not play a big enough part in developing the school's strategic view or in holding the |

| | |
|--|---|
| | school to account. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. Data is analysed effectively and the analyses used in planning. However, the monitoring and development of teaching are unsatisfactory, as too little occurs and it is not rigorous enough. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. Educational priorities are well supported in financial planning. Specific grants are used effectively. |

The school has sufficient staff and resources. The accommodation is good. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Teaching is good, so their children make good progress and become mature and responsible • They are comfortable in their dealings with the school • The school is well led and managed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of reports and information on how their children are getting on • The range of extra-curricular activities |

The inspection team agreed with most of parents' positive views, although they found leadership and management to be satisfactory. They found reports and the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the good teaching they receive.
2. The latest National Curriculum test results for which national comparisons are available are those taken in 2002, over a year ago. In those tests, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were well above average in reading, above average in writing, but well below average in mathematics. Mathematics is weaker because, although healthy numbers of pupils gained the expected Level 2, too few gained the higher Level 3. The same picture emerges if the school is compared only to those with a similar intake. Over the last few years, standards have been steadily climbing in reading and writing; mathematics has improved, but less steeply. There are no tests in the other core subject of science, but teachers' assessments show that standards were overall about average, although fewer than nationally attained the higher Level 3. Again, this picture was repeated when the school is compared only to those with a similar intake.
3. Standards in Year 6 were somewhat weaker. Standards in English and science were below average, and standards in mathematics were well below average. When the school is compared to schools with a similar intake, then standards in mathematics and science remained the same, although English was worse, being well below average. The school explains that this group was weaker than previous year groups and contained a very high number of pupils with statements of special need. Weight is added to this argument when it is noted that this group also had weak results in Year 2, but that when the school is compared to others with similar Year 2 results from four years ago, then pupils made average progress in Years 3 to 6. Since 1998, results have fluctuated year-on-year: overall the trend has been in line with the national trend, although results fell in 2002. Although national comparisons are not yet possible, early indications indicate an improvement overall in 2003, with significant improvement in mathematics.
4. The school set very challenging targets for its performance in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 6. Provisional results indicate that these have been exceeded in mathematics and met in English.
5. However, test results can only tell part of the story. They are over a year old and refer only to two year groups in the core subjects. They can give no clue as to standards in other subjects, or to pupils' *achievement*, that is, are pupils doing as well as they can? Inspection evidence includes a scrutiny of pupils' completed work, discussions with pupils and adults, observations in lessons and analysis of assessment results and can plug some of those gaps.
6. Children entered the Foundation Stage with attainment broadly as expected for their age, although this fluctuates considerably year-on-year. Following very good teaching, they make good progress, especially in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Lessons are planned to challenge them well, and basic skills are taught very well. As a result, children learn well and achieve very well. They are well prepared for the rigours of the National Curriculum in Year 1 having achieved all of the Early Learning Goals, exceeding the goal regarding personal, social and emotional development and making particularly good progress in mathematical development.

The combination of good progress and challenging teaching indicate very good achievement in reception.

7. Pupils continue to make good progress in most curricular areas in Years 1 and 2. National comparative tests show that the pupils currently in Year 2 had much lower attainment on entry than usual. They have made good progress in the core subjects to attain standards that are in line with expectations in English and science, but below expectations in mathematics. Standards in music and physical education could not be judged, as it was not possible to see any lessons in these subjects. However, pupils have made good progress in all the other subjects thanks to good teaching so that standards are in the expected range for all other subjects. The high expectations evident in lessons and this good progress show that pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2.
8. Continued good teaching in Years 3 to 6 means that pupils make good progress in most subjects, except geography and history in which progress is satisfactory. Progress is very good in music. This good progress results in standards that lie within the expected range in all subjects except for physical education, in which standards are above expectations, and in music, in which standards are well above expectations. These pupils attained standards that were below, or well below, average in their National Curriculum tests in Year 2, so attaining the expected standards in Year 6 is evidence of their good progress and achievement.
9. Pupils with a special educational need are identified appropriately and receive very good support. As a result, they are making very good progress in terms of the targets contained in their individual education plans. The school has no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school does not maintain a register of pupils considered to be gifted or talented. However, talented musicians in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress and achieve very well because of the school's high quality of instrumental tuition.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and a strength of the school. They are eager to learn and co-operate well with each other and with adults. They work hard and diligently, take pride in their work and are interested and involved in their lessons. They display a good respect for the school premises, grounds and equipment and there is a pleasing lack of graffiti and litter throughout the school and its grounds. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly way and are helpful and polite to adults. They show good respect for the values, ideas and beliefs of others and are friendly and supportive of each other. They play well together and present a picture of a harmonious, well-integrated and caring, learning community.
11. A further real strength is the very good behaviour of pupils. There have never been any permanent exclusions, and hardly any short, temporary exclusions over the last five years. The school has a good, well-structured, agreed policy for managing behaviour and clear, mutually agreed classroom rules, which, coupled with a simple and clear reward system, contribute effectively towards the very good behaviour of pupils. There is a singular absence of racism or bullying and the relationships of pupils with adults and amongst themselves are very good indeed. All the staff present good role models to the pupils and enjoy their confidence and respect. The school makes good efforts to instil and enhance personal development and self-esteem amongst its pupils. The school council is very successful and pupils take their roles within it seriously and grow in independence, assuredness and confidence. Similarly, all pupils undertake a wide

range of tasks throughout the school, for example, register monitors, eagerly and competently; this helps to develop their independence and sense of responsibility. Many pupils also support local and national charities, like Red Nose Day and the NSPCC, and make visits to retirement homes.

12. Attendance is satisfactory overall and is improving slowly under the impact of a range of effective measures introduced by the school to obtain better attendance. Owing to the longstanding tradition of 'local industrial holidays' (which are out of phase with normal school holidays), some parents take their children out of school for family holidays in term time; this has a negative effect on those children's learning and on school attendance figures. Unauthorised absences are followed up swiftly and are now below the national average. In general, pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly.
13. These very good attitudes to learning combined with very good relationships and behaviour contribute substantially towards good learning throughout the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Good teaching, leading to good learning, is the main reason that pupils achieve well throughout the school. Of the 34 lessons, or parts of lessons, observed, teaching was judged to be excellent in one, very good in a further ten, good in thirteen, and satisfactory in the remaining ten. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This profile certainly suggests that teaching is good overall. This is confirmed when pupils' work is scrutinised to give a picture of the quality of teaching over the whole year.
15. The quality of the teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The reception class staff play a crucial role in helping the children to develop their personal and social skills very well. They lay very good foundations for future learning. The children are enthusiastic about their learning because they find the activities they are offered challenging, exciting and stimulating. The activities, including the introductory sessions, are well planned and organised, and clearly explained by the teacher to promote children's interest through practical tasks. This focus on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and of personal and social development, together with the very high expectations of all adults, means that children achieve very well, try very hard and work at a brisk pace.
16. In Years 1 to 6, the flying start pupils have in the Foundation Stage is further consolidated with good teaching and learning. Teachers' good understanding of the needs of young learners is translated into good teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. High expectations are expressed in the sound planning. Good teaching methods are chosen wisely to engage pupils. Teachers discreetly ensure their expectations of attitudes, behaviour and workrate are understood. Consequently, pupils make good progress, making good levels of effort. They show good levels of interest and concentration. However, marking of completed work is not consistent across the school and, although pupils have individual targets for improvement, they are not reinforced consistently. As a result, some pupils have only a sound understanding of their own learning.
17. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with a special educational need with good, and frequently very good, quality support. In most lessons tasks are matched appropriately to their needs. Although the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs is only in school for a nominal two afternoons a week, she has a very good understanding of the special needs within the school and liaises very well with teachers, support staff and parents. Learning support assistants work very well with class teachers and

provide good and frequently very good support for pupils, monitoring pupils' progress and providing an appropriate blend of help and challenge. Support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the school community. Although the school does not yet have a register of gifted and talented pupils, some talented instrumentalists receive specialist tuition and consequently learn very well. In the subjects of the curriculum, teaching was judged good in English, mathematics, and science, and satisfactory in art and design, geography, history, and information and communication technology. No judgements could be made about infant teaching in music and physical education, but in the juniors, teaching in both subjects is very good because of the specialist teaching. No secure judgement could be made about the teaching of design and technology.

18. In the best teaching, all the features of good teaching come together harmoniously so that pupils are really challenged to do their best and make huge leaps in learning. This happened in a reception lesson aimed principally at communication, language and literacy. Children were learning initial and final sounds and making lists. Children with a special educational need, or who were simply lacking a little in confidence, were taken under the wing of the learning support assistant so that they could take a full part in the lesson. The teacher seized opportunities as they arose, for example, reinforcing the 'magic e' in 'rake', which some children had suggested putting on their list, although this use of a final 'e' to amend the preceding vowel sound was not a specified learning intention for the lesson. Children's understanding of lists was reinforced by the teacher's lively and enthusiastic delivery: all were in awe as they role-played packing a case. The lesson had a rigorous pace so that children learned very well as the result of very good teaching.
19. Teaching was also very good in a mathematics lesson for Year 1. In this lesson, pupils were learning about representing information in tables and block graphs. The high quality of relationships throughout the school was similarly in evidence in this lesson. The teacher used exciting methods to really motivate the class in the opening mental mathematics session. Afterwards, pupils had a clear understanding of what they were expected to do because the teacher had translated the learning objectives into language they could readily understand. Tasks were carefully matched to pupils' needs so that all were able to make very good progress at their own level, supported very effectively by the teacher and the learning support assistants. As a result, all pupils learned very well in a supportive and enjoyable atmosphere.
20. Not every lesson goes absolutely to plan. This happened in a very good science lesson for pupils in Year 6. This formed part of a 'bridging' project to be continued in Year 7 in local high schools. The focus of the lesson was on practical and investigative science, as pupils were expected to decide which of three different washing-up liquids produced the 'best' bubbles. Pupils enthusiastically suggested possible criteria for 'best', including size, length of time before bursting, and even colourfulness. They showed a clear understanding of fair testing as they ensured that the mixtures were the same. However, it became very difficult for them to actually get a mixture that would consistently produce bubbles. The lesson could have ground to a halt at this point, but the teacher, recognising the problem, redirected the pupils to investigate which ratio of liquid to water worked best to produce bubbles. Whilst pupils were not able to say which liquid produced the best bubbles at the end, as expected in the planning, they did learn a valuable lesson about trial and error, and the need to be flexible when carrying out experiments. The teacher's timely intervention and refocusing ensured that pupils' understanding of practical science was reinforced very effectively and resulted in very good learning overall.

21. The excellent lesson was seen in physical education, in a lesson for pupils in Year 6. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 enjoy specialist teaching from the knowledgeable co-ordinator. In this lesson, the athletic techniques of throwing, skipping and jumping were being reinforced. The objectives were clearly shared with pupils, and the importance of a good warm-up was emphasised. This section had brisk pace and a clear emphasis on safety. A clear focus on how to improve skipping technique resulted in pupils being challenged to discover why, for example, jumping less high was better. Pupils worked very well with partners in this section, evaluating their own and their partner's performance. A brisk pace was maintained throughout the lesson by the teacher, who demonstrated the skills very well, and questioned pupils very effectively to challenge their understanding. A very good focus on the improvement of skill, and the judicious use of praise, led pupils to persevere at the task. Pupils clearly understood that, when they watched the performances of others, the emphasis was to celebrate their efforts and not to make fun, and they responded exceptionally well.
22. Of course, not all teaching can be this exciting. When lessons, whilst still satisfactory, lack this sparkle, then some opportunities are missed and pupils are not as well motivated. This happened in a science lesson for the infants. The focus of the lesson was on how people are similar or different. The teacher guided pupils to consider measurable differences and provided them with prepared sheets to record lengths of handspans and middle fingers, thus missing an opportunity for pupils to decide for themselves what to measure. Pupils' block graphs were drawn without using rulers: having noted this, the teacher demonstrated the use of a ruler after pupils had attempted theirs. However, pupils may have produced more accurate graphs had this technique been demonstrated earlier in the lesson, as it was the first time they had attempted to draw such a graph on squared paper. In a satisfactory lesson on information and communication technology in the juniors, the lack of resources in the classroom meant that, although the teacher demonstrated well what the class were expected to do using a data projector connected to a laptop, most of the class did not have the opportunity themselves to enter data into a computer. Those who could not work on the computer did work industriously interpreting graphs.

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

23. The school provides a generally broad, balanced and satisfactory curriculum. It meets all statutory requirements, reflects the aims and objectives of the school and meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school now meets statutory requirements regarding information and communication technology, a key issue from the last inspection, though the headteacher recognises that there are still some concerns related to the subject. The school week is of an appropriate length, though there are some inconsistencies in the time devoted to some core and foundation subjects. Appropriate time is also devoted to personal, social and health education, though the school has yet to consolidate the provision for pupils' understanding of citizenship. The school curricula for English and mathematics follow the national strategies. The curricula for science, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects are guided by nationally approved documentation. The school provides pupils with a number of 'booster' activities to support and extend their learning immediately prior to national assessment tasks.
24. The school governors have suitable policies in place for drugs awareness and sex education. These aspects of the curriculum are taught both within science and personal, social and health education lessons, with a particular focus in Year 6 when

the curriculum is enhanced by visits by the school nurse and the local community police officer.

25. The curriculum for the youngest children is carefully planned to ensure thorough coverage of all the recommended areas of learning. This provision has improved since the last inspection. The children's learning is heightened within each area of learning by the good use of structured play activities. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the use of the outdoor classroom to support the learning. For example, during an observed introductory session, there were missed opportunities to allow the children to make the decision for themselves as to whether the activities provided would be better suited to be completed outdoors.
26. Strategies to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the planned curriculum and extra-curricular activities are securely in place. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are very good. A detailed and comprehensive record of special educational needs is kept by the special educational needs co-ordinator and very good quality individual educational plans are provided for pupils on the register, written by the co-ordinator following consultations with pupils, teachers and parents. The provision of additional support for pupils with statements of educational need is of very good quality. The positive atmosphere of the school promotes the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life. However, the school does not currently have a register of gifted and talented pupils.
27. There are co-ordinators for all areas of the curriculum, though their role is under-developed, with not all co-ordinators being in the position to monitor the delivery of the curriculum in classrooms. Teachers' long, medium and short term planning is satisfactory. Currently, there is no overall curriculum plan or overview, with specific strategies as to how literacy and numeracy are to be delivered throughout the curriculum.
28. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This constitutes good improvement since the previous inspection when provision was described as good.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their own and others' experiences through the religious education programme, the well-planned rolling programme of weekly assembly themes which embody clear, consistent values, and cross-curricular links through the personal, social and health education curriculum.
30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a very strong, positive, whole-school ethos and a clear moral code for good behaviour that is promoted consistently throughout the school by all school staff, who provide very good role-models. The programme of themes for assemblies and sensitive discussion of issues allows pupils time to reflect and consider their behaviour. Through personal, social and health education activities, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the consequences of actions beyond the confines of the school, such as recent international breaches of the moral code.
31. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. From the time they enter the school, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, take responsibility for their work and for others and be as independent as possible. Responsibilities increase

appropriately as pupils get older and there is a well-developed school council with systems for election, voting and advertising for posts. Pupils support a good range of charities.

32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions, taking part in a range of local events and visiting local historical and cultural sites. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures through stories in literacy lessons, studies of art and the study of other religions in religious education lessons. During the school year a good range of visitors talk to, perform for and work with the pupils. Music is very highly valued in the school and the school choir and orchestra regularly perform in the community.
33. There are good links with the school's two main feeder high schools, with pupils being given the opportunity to take part in taster days in the summer term of Year 6. Satisfactory links exist between the school and the local community. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include a choir and an orchestra, a football and rugby club, sewing and gardening clubs, a computer club, school magazine and a prayer group. Pupils are given the opportunity to visit a number of places of an educational interest. These, combined with a good range of visitors to the school, help to provide pupils with an extended and enriched curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The high quality of pastoral care, welfare and guidance provided by the school was remarked upon by many parents and is a tangible strength of the school. Child protection measures are satisfactory and the headteacher is the nominated and trained person for child protection within the school, with the deputy headteacher as the reserve. However, not all of the school's staff have received a basic training in child protection.
35. Starting in the reception class, the well-planned induction programme helps the children to settle quickly and happily into school. Their parents are fully involved in this process. This helps them to feel confident in re-assuring their children as they take their first major step towards independence.
36. The pastoral system is well organised and effective. The everyday care of pupils and the promotion of their personal development is largely carried out by the individual class teachers. They know their pupils well and provide very good pastoral care, guidance and support. They keep appropriate records of their pupils' development and achievements, and monitor progress and personal development well. Any problems arising beyond the scope of class teachers are passed on to the appropriate member of senior staff, for example, the headteacher, for resolution.
37. The systems in place for recording and monitoring attendance are good. Registers are marked promptly and accurately, stored securely and meet statutory requirements. The internal monitoring of registers is good, swift and accurate and the education welfare officer is involved effectively when appropriate. Any absences are followed up rapidly on the first day and this system is working well. The school takes a firm stance on unacceptable behaviour and its array of rewards and sanctions works very effectively. There is a notable absence of bullying and racism and the school is a happy, caring and harmonious community.

38. Health and safety measures are good; there are well-organised and effective health and safety audits and the school pays a high regard to safety in general. First aid boxes are well stocked and appropriately located; any accidents are logged efficiently and parents kept well and promptly informed of any mishaps to their children. Fire precautions are good and there are termly fire drills and an annual Fire Risk audit. Fire equipment is checked regularly and is well maintained. Risk assessments are automatically made for every educational visit, and this is good practice.
39. These high standards of pastoral care, health and welfare make a significant contribution towards the creation of a safe, harmonious and relaxed learning environment throughout the school.
40. The assessment, recording and tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory, with the focus being the assessment of the core subjects. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when assessment and recording procedures in Years 1 to 6 were deemed to be unsatisfactory.
41. In the reception class, the children are formally assessed during the first weeks of schooling. This gives the teacher a clear indication of their personal and social development, linguistic and mathematical achievement. The new national profile has been introduced during the course of the year. Good on-going assessments by both the class teacher and the learning support assistant are noted systematically across all areas of learning. This information is suitably used in the curricular planning but the staff recognise that they have some headway to make. For example, the portfolio of individual children's work is not annotated to show which level the child is achieving against the criteria set in the Early Learning Goals to indicate progress and support teachers' planning of the next stages of learning. The current records are passed to the class teachers in Years 1 and 2.
42. There are very good assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs and the data obtained is used well to provide well-targeted support for these pupils, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy and, in a number of cases, for behaviour difficulties. The school maintains a comprehensive record of pupils with special educational needs; there are appropriate procedures for placing pupils on the register and a good indication of the success of the school's provision is the fact that pupils are regularly removed from the special needs register because of the very good progress they make. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational need very well.
43. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place in English, with pupils having individual running reading records, and with guided reading records contributing to the assessment of pupils' reading skills. Pupils are assessed in their reading skills each year.
44. All pupils engage in a common writing activity each term, with individual pieces of work being assessed against National Curriculum levels. These pieces of work are carried out in pupils' 'Golden' books. This system was introduced in September of last year, with the intention that teachers will be able to follow pupils' progress over time and that the book will act as a record of achievement. Assessment in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils respond to a series of questions before they start individual topics with pupils' answers to the same questions at the end of the unit giving information as to their gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers also use this information to record National Curriculum levels on their pupils' mathematics target sheets. Some teachers also use end of unit assessment tasks built into one of the

structured mathematics schemes used by the school. Pupils engage in end of topic or unit assessment tasks in science, though these procedures are in the early stages of development.

45. Pupils are involved in the production of their own targets for improvement and place them in their 'Target and Achievement' booklets. Pupils do not all have ready access to these booklets, and targets for improvement are not always placed in their literacy books. All pupils take part in the required and optional national assessment tasks. Results from these tasks are analysed by the assessment co-ordinator. All data is entered on the school's own computerised system, with information being used to predict grades for the following year. There are also subject-tracking sheets for reading, writing and mathematics that identify National Curriculum levels. These enable teachers to identify progress from Years 1 to 6. There are currently no formal assessment and recording procedures in most foundation subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The partnership established with parents is very good, leading to good support and encouragement of pupils at home and at school. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise its strengths. They are greatly impressed by the standards of behaviour the school maintains and the way the school encourages their children to develop in maturity and responsibility. Parents value highly the way in which the school works closely with them and they find the staff approachable, friendly and always eager to resolve any problems amicably and satisfactorily. The induction of 'new parents' is carried out well and they are given good, helpful information to enable them to settle their children into school.
47. Parents' views are sought regularly and acted upon. The active Parent-Staff Association raises welcome funds for school equipment and is well supported by parents. Additionally, there are regular events in school, for example, the Coffee Afternoon and Children's Concert, which are well supported by parents. The school values the help offered by parents, particularly the small number of parents who help on a regular basis in school. Parents support their children well and are engaged with their work and learning at home. Although a school-wide homework diary system has not been instituted, parents are generally satisfied with the amount and frequency of homework given.
48. The information provided by the school to parents is good. The prospectus is clear, readable and informative and there are regular newsletters and advance curricular notices. The parents' noticeboard gives useful current information. Letters to parents are clear and concise. The annual report of the governing body, whilst informative, is, however, an uninspiring document, unattractively produced and dull. The annual reports on pupils' progress are generally good and provide a clear concise picture of pupils' strengths, weaknesses and progress, although targets are not always included. The termly Parent-Teacher consultation meetings are well attended and helpful to parents, providing them with a good opportunity to discuss their children's progress. Disappointingly, the last annual meeting of the governing body attracted no parents to attend.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The school has suffered considerable disruption in its senior management structure because of senior staff illness since the last inspection, and for much of the time the headteacher had no deputy headteacher in place to assist him. Nevertheless, the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. The school does now, however, have a stable staff. The headteacher and senior managers are providing sound leadership and management to the school. The governing body carries out its statutory duties satisfactorily. The school monitors its own performance satisfactorily overall, makes sound use of resources and uses the principles of best value satisfactorily.
50. Currently, the senior management team is being reorganised. Previously, the school had co-ordinators for the juniors and infants, as well as the headteacher and his deputy on the team. This structure is being replaced in September by a team based on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with the expectation that senior managers will take the lead in the drive for higher standards. In the past, senior managers have mainly carried out tasks that are administrative, making rotas, for example, but have not held meaty whole-school responsibilities like oversight of the curriculum or assessment. They have had little involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning as a whole, although the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have carried out some monitoring in their curricular areas. In addition, consultation with senior managers over, for example, the school improvement plan, has been limited. The headteacher has, for some time, been obliged to carry a heavy leadership and managerial load because of staff illness. The formation of a stable staff and senior management team creates an opportunity to accelerate the pace of improvement within the school, and for this reason the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Currently, however, senior managers are unsure about how their roles are to evolve. The team is heavily biased towards the junior department, with no obvious representation from the Foundation Stage.
51. Co-ordinators of science and the foundation subjects have not yet had opportunities to monitor their subject areas, although this is planned. The school's provision for special educational needs is managed very well. The school cares very well for those pupils who need particular care and attention. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and parents are kept very well informed of progress or any changes made. The school is working hard to integrate pupils with hearing difficulties, and is a designated centre for the surrounding area. These pupils are included effectively into the school: for example, the whole school sing some songs in assembly and classes have received specialist teaching on deafness awareness. The school is working very closely with the local authority in this area and is developing a resource area especially for deaf pupils. The co-ordination of music and physical education is good, and satisfactory in all other subjects. However, strengthening the role of co-ordinators was a key issue from the last inspection and remains outstanding. Consequently, delegation is not currently effective and most staff with management responsibilities are not currently in a position to contribute to whole school issues effectively.
52. The school aims to provide a 'Christ-centred curriculum', based on Christian values. These aims are clearly evident in all aspects of school life. Assemblies are enjoyable occasions in which those values are reinforced. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour clearly reflect the school's positive ethos. In addition, the quest for high standards, both academically and socially, is evident in the achievement judgements made in this report.
53. The governing body is a committed and supportive group. They meet as required and monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan. However, they are not

involved enough in its initial drafting. Consequently, they play a satisfactory role in setting the school's strategic direction. Through their discussions with staff and the headteacher's reports, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their role as a critical friend to the school is less well developed, however.

54. A target in the school improvement plan relates to empowering all co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their areas. This is not happening enough at the moment except in the core areas of English and mathematics. Even here, monitoring has not yet led to clear foci for improvement. Similarly, co-ordinators do not routinely examine pupils' work in their areas. The headteacher maintains an informal log of his observations when 'walking the school', which is a valuable source of information for him about strengths and weaknesses. Test results are analysed and assessments used to direct staff's attention to areas requiring development. Overall, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are satisfactory, but the lack of rigour in the direct monitoring of teaching, and the lack of involvement of co-ordinators, mean that the sharing of good practice is not taking place and the development of teaching following monitoring and evaluation is unsatisfactory.
55. Despite the lack of consultation, the targets in the school improvement plan are appropriate to the school and should assist the school in raising standards if implemented rigorously. The action taken so far to meet the school's targets has been satisfactory: standards have improved, but there are key issues that have not yet been addressed fully regarding assessment and the role of co-ordinators. The other key issues have been successfully addressed, however: standards in information and communication technology have improved, schemes of work are in place, and outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage is better. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, when the disruption caused by staff absence in the intervening period is also considered.
56. Staffing throughout the school is satisfactory and is now stabilised. The teaching staff are able, well qualified and hard working. An energetic team of learning support assistants provides valued and effective support in the classroom. The school has instituted a satisfactory and appropriate appraisal and performance management system for the teaching staff, although a structured performance management scheme for non-teaching staff is not yet in place. New staff are inducted well into the school and there is good support and mentoring given to newly qualified teachers. The school has adequate accommodation to teach the curriculum and, under the good care of a hard working janitor and her team, this accommodation is kept in a very good, clean and safe condition. Accessibility for disabled pupils is good throughout the school. The premises are secure and the grounds, gardens and playgrounds well maintained and attractive. The multi-purpose hall is well maintained and used efficiently and classrooms are attractively decorated, well lit and comfortable. This well cared for and modern school building helps to establish a good, comfortable learning environment for pupils. There is a generally good range of resources present in school, well organised and with plenty of appropriately located storage accommodation available. The library is an attractive, if cramped, central resource that is rather under-developed. The stock of books is in generally good condition and is fairly well chosen. The reference stock is, however, obsolescent in many areas and is in need of careful review and replacement and a broadening of its range. There is no catalogue, internet access, or journals and newspapers.
57. Educational priorities are supported well through careful financial planning. Where it is possible to do so, the school budgets systematically for expenditure, is clear about

costings, and the pupils benefit from these wisely targeted spending decisions. The school has identified relevant priorities for improvement and spending decisions clearly relate to these priorities. Systems for financial control are unobtrusive and efficient and keep the way clear for classroom teachers to concentrate on their work. Useful, detailed, up to date costings and analyses of the school budget are prepared for the governing body and the headteacher reports to the governing body on a regular basis.

58. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies. Specific grants received by the school, such as funding for additional literacy strategy initiatives and training, for 'booster' classes and for additional special needs support, are being used appropriately for the desired purpose. The school development plan is well organised with a clear focus on evaluating the effect on pupils of any decision made and with clear links to the school's budget. The very good management of the office by the school administrator ensures systems for financial control are unobtrusive and efficient and keeps the way clear for classroom teachers to concentrate on their work.
59. The governing body and senior management team of the school are aware of the best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition and, where practicable, apply these principles in their decision-making. The headteacher and governing body consider alternative providers for school services, comparing charges from a range of providers and considering alternative solutions. The school consults appropriately, both with local education authority financial and curricular advisors and with parents, keeping them appropriately informed about significant changes to the school curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to allow the school to progress further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Clarify the roles of senior managers so that they are able to:
 - a. contribute effectively to strategic planning and the implementation of the school development plan
 - b. monitor teaching and pupils' work in their own subjects and across the school so as to share good practice and eradicate inconsistencies in practice
 - c. ensure that other curricular co-ordinators carry out regular monitoring
 - d. ensure that rigorous and workable assessment procedures are developed in all subjects
 - e. ensure that gifted and talented pupils are recognised in all subject areas and that they have appropriate work and support to progress as well as they can.

(Paragraphs 9, 26, 27, 41, 44, 45, 50, 51, 54, 98, 102, 109, 111, 118, 124, 131, 138)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 34 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 34 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 3 | 30 | 38 | 29 | 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 almost three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 189 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 12 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | YR– Y6 |
|---|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 31 |

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 | 11 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 5 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.5 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.4 |
| National comparative data | 0.4 |

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 | 15 | 11 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 14 | 15 |
| | Girls | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| | Total | 26 | 25 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 100 (81) | 96 (81) | 96 (96) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| | Girls | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| | Total | 25 | 26 | 26 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 96 (81) | 100 (96) | 100 (96) |
| | 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 | 14 | 16 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 9 | 9 | 11 |
| | Girls | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| | Total | 19 | 19 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 63 (86) | 63 (86) | 77 (100) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| | Girls | 10 | 7 | 10 |
| | Total | 17 | 14 | 18 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 57 (N/A) | 47 (N/A) | 60 (N/A) |
| | 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 | 183 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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) | 9.15 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.8 |
| Average class size | 26.7 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 92 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2001/02 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 377679 |
| Total expenditure | 358358 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2002 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 1474 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 8281 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 2.4 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2.4 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 189 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 76 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 69 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 61 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 75 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 51 | 38 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 68 | 28 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 44 | 43 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 78 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 75 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 63 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 76 | 19 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 65 | 32 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 49 | 32 | 11 | 0 | 8 |

Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that the computerised reports on their children's progress were not helpful enough.

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

61. Since the last inspection, the school has enhanced the quality of education it provides at the Foundation Stage and now makes good provision for these children. The teaching is consistently good across all areas of learning with a significant proportion that is very good. There are 30 children in the reception class who enter school in the year that they are five. Most have had some playgroup experience. The results of the assessment tasks that the children did on entry to the reception class show that their attainment was average at that point, although this is not always the case year-on-year.
62. The children quickly settle into the routines of the school and they make very good progress because the quality of the education they receive is consistently good and the teaching of early literacy and mathematical skills is very good. As a result, the majority of the children in the class should reach the Early Learning Goals set out in the National Framework for Learning by the end of this school year across all aspects of learning. Furthermore, a substantial number of children in this group are likely to achieve beyond the expected level in their physical development, and in their personal, social and emotional development. A significant number of the children are already working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum in reading, writing and number.
63. Both members of the staff team have a strong commitment to continuing their improvement of the curriculum for young children. Although the staff recognise that they still have some headway to make in linking the outdoor learning more constructively with the planned indoor activities, they have made significant strides forward since the last inspection in ensuring that an appropriate curriculum is provided to meet the particular needs of all of the children. As a result, there are no significant differences in the achievements of various groups of boys and girls in any aspect of the curriculum. The assessment of the personal, social and emotional development and their academic achievements is good. A significant feature of the school's work is the early identification of children with special educational needs. In the current group there is one pupil with special educational needs, and a very small number of children who require additional support with their learning. Steps have been taken to ensure that they will be allocated support to help them to meet their targets. There are no children for whom English is an additional language.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The children's attainment in this area of learning exceeds that expected of children of this age. They have a very good start to school life. This is because the adults' major focus has been to settle the children into good routines and, through the carefully planned curriculum, ensure that the children accept responsibility and become independent learners. As a result, the children have developed an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs and feelings of others and have learnt to establish relationships very well. Most children listen well to adults, and value each other's contributions, share equipment and take turns as they go about their role-play activities. Their behaviour is very good and they show respect for those about them. The sharing time at the end of sessions reinforces good behaviour. The staff work very well together and have established firm routines for both indoor and outdoor work. This provides a good structure within which the children begin to learn to co-operate and play well together. As a result the level of children's independence is high, although more could be done to foster independent decision-making, for example, allowing the children to have some

part in the decision as to whether a set task could be achieved more efficiently indoors or outdoors. Both boys and girls tidy away at the end of sessions. There are no significant differences in the responses due to the good support provided by the staff. The adults show a very caring and sensitive approach to the children and maintain very good relations with their parents.

Communication, language and literacy

65. A major part of the work of the school focuses on supporting children's spoken English and their listening skills. At the start of the year, the children's spoken English was as expected nationally but their listening skills were below that expected. The staff have placed a good emphasis on encouraging the children to listen to instructions, to stories, and each other. As a result, children's speaking and listening skills are now good. The staff give good attention to the development of spoken English, for example, during the literacy sessions, when they encourage the children to ask questions, or respond giving their views and opinions of what, for example, might happen next in the story. Here, the adults' skilful and sensitive questioning is fostering and encouraging the children to respond in extended sentences rather than two or three word utterances. Moreover, the good levels of adult interaction in the role-play experiences such as in the 'space capsule', are extending the use of both technical vocabulary and the use of extended sentences. In the group time, there are good opportunities for the children to speak clearly and share their thoughts and ideas, to ask questions of each other and adults with confidence and interest, as well as enriching their use of vocabulary.
66. A significant feature of the teaching is the initial session during the literacy session. The introductions to new activities are clear and precise: learning points are highlighted very well, enabling all children to share in the teachers' explanation and extend their knowledge. The adults have stimulated children's interest and their love of books and stories through the good focus on, and the presentation of, the selection of books. The stories and information texts are a source of pleasure and children are beginning to have a good understanding of the written word. A substantial number of the children have already begun to read some words and sentences. Most can recall a story eagerly and fairly competently. They know the author of a book and that a story has a beginning, middle and end. They can identify the main character, sequence the events and recall in the correct order. They are keen to offer their opinions about the illustrations in the books.
67. On entry to school, the children have writing skills that are in line with pupils of similar ages, and the children are making very good progress. The teacher has paid good attention to handwriting and the formation of letters. As a result, most children can write their names using correctly formed upper and lower case letters. The excellent use of role-play by the teacher, for example, ensured that the children fully understood the purpose of writing a list. The children fully engaged themselves in the role-play and as a result they were learning to recognise the words associated with the items in the suitcase. Their enthusiasm, enjoyment and responses clearly indicated their understanding of the planned learning. However, the approach to writing mostly uses printed worksheets. This prevents children recording their creative and imaginative thoughts as the teacher directs the task. When writing for different purposes during the play activities, children write far more 'words' imaginatively and can read confidently and competently what they needed to say. In many cases they use the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and leave gaps between words as well as remembering to add a full stop.

Mathematical development

68. The teaching in this area is very good, because the provision for mathematical development allows the children to learn to match, sort and handle objects in all the structured play opportunities. The numeracy sessions enable the children, including those with special educational needs, to make very good progress in their understanding of number. This is because the teaching has a quiet rigour, challenge, and precise explanations. It allows good opportunities for exploration, enquiry and discovery through practical situations. Most pupils have reached the levels described in the national framework and a substantial number are already working well within the National Curriculum Level 1. The oral sessions of the numeracy sessions are well paced and involve all the children in counting up to ten and back through carefully structured activities such as, 10, 9, 8, ..., 0 - 'Blast Off' to the moon. The children love this game, and as a result recognise individual numbers as well as their sequence. Another good example is through the use of song. As the children go about their work you often heard them singing number rhymes or counting down to 'Blast Off'. The higher attaining children are recording numbers to ten in simple addition and have begun orally to do subtraction, for example, 'two less than nine'. They confidently use the terms 'more than' and 'less than'. When work is completed the staff ensure that the numbers are formed correctly. Most children tackle mathematical tasks confidently and competently and with sustained concentration because the staff make the learning fun through many role-play situations. The very good use of mathematical vocabulary by the staff in its appropriate context allows the children to acquire the terminology naturally and to use it in everyday situations as well as the specific tasks they are engaged in. There are no significant differences in gender response due to the high quality adult support and provision.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. The staff make good provision to develop this aspect of learning and as a result the children are making good progress. The foundations of scientific enquiry, discovery and exploration are being laid through the suitable use of sand and water play, as well as a small garden plot where they have the opportunity to sow seeds or simply dig. They know how to use a pulley, for example, because they have made a rocket using triangles, rectangles, and pieces of string. When they pull on the string the rocket moves up and down: this is a very good link to their mathematical learning. The children are currently learning about the planets in the solar system. They know that earth is one and can also name most of the others. They know the biggest and the smallest planet. The children are developing their observation skills and have a good awareness of their own environment. Construction toys both small and large are also used to a suitable standard to support learning. The children further extend their learning and acquire a greater understanding of their short life span by looking at pictures of themselves as babies and comparing them with what they are now doing. In computer technology, the adults are effectively developing the children's keyboard skills and their control of the mouse. The children follow the instructions on the screen, and have begun to see how the computer can help them. A good emphasis is placed on the teaching of these skills in order to allow the children full access to the functions of a computer. They also acquire a greater understanding of the world around them by going out into the local environment and by visiting places of interest, for example, they are gaining knowledge of special places that have a significant meaning, like the church and their own special place at home.

Physical development

70. The physical skills of the children are being suitably developed and most of the children exceed the age-related expectation as described in the National Foundation Curriculum

guidance. They are using a suitable range of larger equipment outdoors confidently and competently. The children enjoy the challenge and show pleasure in their achievements as they push and steer the trucks around the painted tracks on the playground surface. Parents have made significant contributions in providing road signs to stimulate learning. Another good feature is how role-play is extending the children's understanding of the world around them. The children fully take on the roles of other people. For example, the 'traffic warden' stands poised with her writing pad and pencil and stops and books the speeding truck. When the children first start school the finer physical movement skills when, for example, using small tools, jigsaws and pencils, crayons are less well co-ordinated but they have made very good progress in acquiring the skills. The regular opportunities for the children to use a range of crayons, pastels or pencils when drawing, or using clay tools is good. The adults explain very clearly how they need to improve the grip and position, for example, of the pencil or a pair of scissors. This helps their hand control.

71. The teaching to foster the children's physical development is very good. The adults ensure an appropriate balance between vigilance about safety and encouraging independence. This was very evident as the children used the playground space with their wheeled toys. The children know how to use the different outdoor areas so that no one is put at risk. The children greatly enjoy physical activities and know how to take turns, for example, on the bicycles, and to co-operate with each other.

Creative development

72. The children's creative development is in line with the age-related expectation and this is because the teaching and opportunities for learning are good. The staff place a good emphasis on well-structured activities to extend the children's skills, knowledge and understanding of tools, equipment and materials when working in the art area, or for example, role-play activities. All available space is used imaginatively and creatively both inside and out to allow the children to experience a wide range of activities. These present good opportunities to enrich spoken English, make friendships and develop skills and techniques through investigation and discovery for themselves. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
73. Most children like to draw, paint, and mix colours through a wide range of experiences, for example, mixing a range of yellow tints when drawing sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. Most of the work is used to support other areas of learning such as scientific and geographical work.
74. A significant and strong feature is the use of role-play both indoors and outdoors. The well-planned 'airport' or 'space capsule' allowed the children to negotiate their roles and responsibilities: for example, who was to be the 'check-in' and baggage handler, or the passport controller. They carried out their tasks purposefully and constructively. They used equipment, such as the stamp, an old keyboard and computer screen completely 'in-role'. This play linked very closely to the development of their reading and writing skills, as they checked the tickets and the passports. The staff participated sensitively, but unobtrusively, in the children's role-play, in order to promote enquiry or to extend their learning, and kept them purposefully engaged.

75. No musical activities were observed during the inspection but the teacher's planning indicates that there are opportunities for music making on a weekly basis. A few musical instruments are accessible should the children wish to make music either in the indoor or outdoor environment. There are also opportunities for the children to listen to music as well as tapes of stories.

ENGLISH

76. Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
77. Pupils in Year 2 did well in the 2002 national assessment tasks with attainment in reading being well above average when compared both to national averages and to schools with a similar intake. Pupils' attainment in writing was above average on both measures. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards in line with expectations.
78. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was below average when compared to the national average, and well below average when compared to similar schools. This group of pupils was weaker than usual, as shown by their low standards four years previously in Year 2. In addition, there was a high proportion of pupils with a special educational need in this group. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2 and are attaining standards within the expected range
79. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills in Years 1 and 2. They are good listeners, and many pupils are keen to contribute to oral activities. Pupils are given the chance to talk in pairs and groups about the activities they are involved in. As a result of this sound provision pupils display satisfactory oral skills by the time they are seven.
80. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their oral skills in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have good social oral skills, though many are less confident in their ability to speak in anything approaching a formal situation and have problems in articulating their ideas and opinions in clearly structured, extended sentences. In lessons, teachers do not always expect enough when questioning pupils so that quieter and more passive pupils do not make a full and active contribution to oral activities and pupils as a whole do not speak in enough detail or at length. Although pupils are given the chance to engage in 'hot seating' activities, for example, with pupils in Year 6 questioning a boy in the role of the captain of the Titanic, role play and educational drama is under-developed as a means of developing pupils' oral skills. Speaking and listening skills at 11 are as expected.
81. Reading is well taught in Years 1 and 2. Pupils develop satisfactory phonic skills and learn to decode words and sentences. Structured reading schemes are used well to promote learning. Pupils with reading problems are promptly identified and given good additional support by teachers and learning support assistants. As a result of this good support, overall standards in reading at seven are in line with expectations with a number of more able pupils reading fluently with good expression. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read a satisfactory range of books, though there are too few opportunities for pupils to read poems and stories from other times, traditions and cultures. Although most pupils display good technical reading skills, a number of pupils are less secure in their comprehension skills and do not always fully understand what they are actually reading. This issue is addressed during guided reading activities, though some of these periods are not used in the most efficient manner.

82. Pupils have satisfactory retrieval skills when gathering information from individual books. They are less secure in their library skills and their ability to gather information on their own. The range and number of books in the school library are somewhat limited. Standards in reading at 11 are in line with expectations overall with a number of pupils having good reading habits and displaying a positive enthusiasm for reading.
83. Attainment upon entry into Year 1 in writing varies significantly and ranges from some pupils being able to join words together to make simple sentences to those pupils who can only make some meaningful marks on the page. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 improve their handwriting skills over time and develop basic English skills relative to their age. Pupils can produce short written responses about events in their life and re-tell in a simple manner the stories read to them in class. Pupils also develop an understanding of rhyming words and produce their own short poems. As a result of this sound provision attainment in writing at seven is in line with expectations. Pupils continue to achieve well in their written work from Years 3 to 6. They produce a satisfactory range of written work, including book reviews, letters, stories and poems. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils to consider how language can be used to convey information in different ways, for example, through the consideration and production of advertisements, newspaper reports, pamphlets and brochures. Although pupils regularly plan their own work, with good support for lower attaining pupils, they rarely re-draft their work, and opportunities are lost for them to use this important strategy to improve the quality of their written work in terms of length, detail, style and the use of more imaginative language. Pupils produce little extended written work. Literacy across the curriculum has yet to be developed as a strategy for developing pupils' writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.
84. The satisfactory, and often good, progress made by pupils is enhanced by their positive attitudes towards the work and their ability to work with sustained concentration. Pupils with a special educational need are supported very effectively in the school and consequently make very good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. The school has not yet identified pupils who are gifted or talented.
85. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school has responded well to the National Literacy Strategy, with teachers using the literacy hour effectively. Lessons are well planned and organised. A number of teachers use timed targets to ensure that pupils stay on task and these lessons move along at a brisk pace. The final part of lessons is well used to see if the objectives for the lesson have been achieved and to share and celebrate what pupils have learned. Good working relationships exist between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. This makes a positive contribution to learning. Although there were some good examples of work being closely matched to pupils' needs during the period of the inspection, the analysis of pupils' earlier written work shows that this is not consistently the case. There were examples where all pupils were involved in the same activity, immaterial of their ability. This failed to challenge more able pupils. Some teachers do not always have the highest expectations of pupils' abilities, reflected in their willingness to accept brief and poorly presented pieces of work, even from those pupils deemed as being higher attainers.
86. The school uses a satisfactory range of assessment procedures, though pupils are not all aware enough of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work because their individual targets for improvement are not on display. There are some inconsistencies in marking procedures, with some work not being marked and corrected. Even when teachers mark pupils' books, pupils do not correct their own errors and chances are lost for them to learn through their own mistakes.

87. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. In the comparatively short time he has been in post, the subject co-ordinator has developed a good understanding of what needs to be done in order to raise standards in the subject and has produced a good action plan for English. When these strategies are embedded in practice, the school will be in a more secure position to move forwards.

MATHEMATICS

88. National comparative data is not currently available for the 2003 National Curriculum tests. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the attainment of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven was well below the national averages. However, when comparing attainment with that of pupils nationally, it is important to take into account pupils' well-below average attainment on entry to the school and the particularly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 cohort in 2002. Provisional results of the 2003 national tests arrived during the week of the inspection and these suggest significant improvement has been made, particularly in the attainment of pupils in Year 6. Lesson observations, a scrutiny of work undertaken during the current school year, and discussions with pupils during lessons indicate that overall attainment in Year 2 remains below that expected nationally. Nevertheless, pupils have made good progress from a very low level of attainment on entry and are achieving well. By the time they leave the school at 11, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations, again good progress and good achievement taking into account their low level of attainment at the age of seven. This constitutes broadly satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection.
89. The school has adopted and implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and all lessons observed followed the recommended lesson format. Samples of pupils' work during the year demonstrate that they undertake a variety of work on shape, space and measures, and tackle a range of problems involving handling data and investigation. Lesson observations confirm that pupils make appropriate use of their numeracy skills in other subjects like science, geography, and design and technology, and there is good use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons.
90. Most Year 2 pupils are able to count on in fives to 100 and, some with support, in twos and threes to 20 and 30. They can make and describe shapes, patterns and pictures using pin-boards and elastic bands, templates and information and communication technology. Most are able to draw 'a very tall rectangle' and a triangle on their whiteboards when instructed to do so by their teacher and pupils working at the class computers can click and drag to form two-dimensional shapes, adding colour. Most of the pupils in the Year 6 class are able to give the number of degrees in a triangle and to read numbers to six figures, as demonstrated in a very effective mental warm-up activity – 'Millionaire Maths' - designed by the class teacher. They can describe the properties of an isosceles triangle, know how to work out the area of a rectangle, and are able to convert between metric measures, for example: 0.043km to m. The majority are able to name and recognise different parts of a circle and use circle properties to draw new shapes. Pupils with a special educational need receive targeted support, and as a result they make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.
91. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed in the infant department ranged from very good to satisfactory and was good overall. In the juniors, where teaching and learning ranged from very good to good, they were similarly good overall. The quality of learning and the progress made is, in most cases, linked directly to the

quality of teaching in individual lessons. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm ensures pupils are well-motivated and the pace of the lessons is good. In most cases, teachers' management skills are very effective in ensuring pupils concentrate on their work, the pace of the lessons is good and teachers utilise a good range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils. Teachers plan lessons well, providing an appropriate range of resources. They use praise and questioning well. They ensure all pupils are paying attention, use correct mathematical vocabulary and terminology and provide opportunities for pupils to explain their methods and practice what they know. Most lessons observed included an information and communication technology activity and particularly good use was made of information and communication technology in a Year 6 lesson observed. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good overall, and are typically very good where teaching is very good and teachers motivate pupils particularly well. Most pupils enjoy, and are enthusiastic about, their mathematics work, especially the brisk mental and oral activities which introduce each lesson, and most respond well to their teachers and work together without the need for constant intervention.

92. Systems for assessment, although relatively new, are in place and are beginning to be used to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the school, although the role of subject co-ordinator is not fully developed and there have been difficulties in ensuring all staff fully comply with decisions made. Funding has been allocated appropriately to purchase additional resources to support the numeracy strategy; resources for mathematics are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

93. Pupils achieve well in science because of good teaching throughout the school.
94. Teachers' assessments of pupils in Year 2 in 2002 showed that all pupils attained at least the expected Level 2, which is a high proportion, but that below average numbers attained the higher Level 3. The same picture emerges if the school is only compared with schools with a similar intake. This is confirmed by inspection evidence this year, which suggests that most teaching is aimed at Level 2. The results of National Curriculum tests in Year 6 in 2002 were below average overall. In this year group, the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was about average, but too many pupils attained the lower Level 3. Assessment records support the school's assertion that this group were weaker than previously, with high levels of pupils with special needs. Provisional results from the 2003 National Curriculum tests indicate that standards have now improved. With the exception of 2002, standards have been improving yearly, in line with the national picture.
95. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in both Year 2 and in Year 6 are currently in line with expectations. Much of the work in Year 2 is completed on commercially produced worksheets and pasted into their books. A scrutiny of their completed work shows that they know about health and growth and the effects of exercise, and understand about safety with electricity. They know that forces can push or pull and that they can change the shape of soft dough. They have carried out experiments, for example, how different surfaces affect the distance travelled by toy cars and how sounds can be made. Because of the excessive use of worksheets, opportunities to reinforce literacy or to use information and communication technology are limited. The scrutiny shows that pupils have made good progress over the year. When this progress is considered in the light of the challenge that pupils meet in lessons, then

achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 for all pupils, including those with a special educational need.

96. Pupils in Year 6 have covered all the aspects of science expected. They understand the symbols used in electrical circuits, and, in a good link with numeracy, have interpreted a graph charting the use of electricity over a day in a house. They understand food chains and food webs, and some pupils have used desk-top publishing to illustrate them. Pupils have studied forces in greater depth, including friction, and the structure of the solar system. They understand reversible and irreversible changes, noting that in irreversible changes, a new substance is created. They have separated mixtures by filtration and by condensation. There is little evidence that tasks have been varied to meet the needs of different pupils, but, in marking, the most capable are sometimes given further challenges. For example, after an experiment in which candles in an enclosed space went out after a period of time, a pupil had remarked that the oxygen was used up, and carbon dioxide remained. The teacher posed the question, 'What do we use carbon dioxide for?', to which the pupil replied, 'to put out fires'. Pupils have made good progress over the year. When this progress is considered in the light of pupils' starting points, then pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with a special educational need, achieve well.
97. Science lessons in each class were observed. Teaching was very good in one lesson, good in a further three and satisfactory in the remaining two. When this evidence is combined from that obtained from the scrutiny of completed work, then it is clear that teaching and learning are both good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching in the junior department was judged satisfactory. A number of teachers are qualified in science and this is reflected in their good knowledge and understanding of the content, and in the improvement in standards over the last few years. At the time of the last report, the school was working to improve the area of investigative science, and this is now taught well alongside the other areas. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and pupils' capabilities. This leads pupils to make good levels of effort and make good progress. Pupils with a special educational need are supported by the hard working and effective learning support assistants and make good progress as a result. The positive whole-school ethos permeates science teaching, so that minimal time is lost maintaining order. Very good teaching has a brisk pace and seizes opportunities. This happened in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 as an experiment with soap bubbles failed. The teacher was able to refocus the group so that their understanding of investigative science was reinforced effectively. Less effective, whilst still satisfactory, teaching lacked this pace and urgency.
98. The school mostly follows a published exemplar scheme of work, but assessment is currently inconsistent across the school. The co-ordinator has prepared a model for use that is due to be implemented from September. She teaches in Year 2 and checks teachers' planning, but has not scrutinised pupils' completed work, nor visited classes as yet. These are due to take place next year as science becomes a priority in the school improvement plan. Although there is a partner co-ordinator in the junior department, the co-ordinator is unable to gain a whole-school view of the subject and thus act as a true subject leader. She is available for informal support for colleagues, however. Overall, co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Standards in art and design are just within the expected range in Years 1 to 6. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. There were no lessons timetabled for art and design during the inspection in Years 1 and 2 and only one lesson was observed in the juniors. Judgements are also based on the work analysis, which clearly shows that there is a secure coverage of the National Curriculum.
100. A significant feature is the use of crayon and pastels to support the work in history, geography and science on display. The displays have improved since the time of the previous inspection and also show well labelled use of subject specific language to support and enrich pupils' own vocabulary. Pupils are acquiring a good knowledge about the work of famous artists, including those from non-European countries. They have studied the work of Aboriginal desert tribes where the pupils have really looked at how the use of the 'earth-colours' from sand and soil were used and have tried to reproduce this effect in their own work. A group of pupils have been engaged on a large sculpture based on their history topic about the Greeks. Their enthusiasm for this was exciting, lively and infectious as they talked about and worked alongside the parent who is a local potter.
101. Art and design as a distinct subject has too little emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills, techniques, and the use of a wider range of materials, tools and equipment. This is substantiated by the fact that despite the very good teaching seen with the oldest pupils they found it very difficult to grasp the concept of perspective and apply it to their own work. The lesson objective was very clear, and the whole was well prepared and organised. It showed that the teacher had a good subject knowledge and this allowed the pupils to gain a very good insight into the life and work of Arellano. However, when given the task, most of the pupils were hesitant and somewhat mystified as to what to do or how to go about sketching a scene. The teacher realised that this was a real and ambitious challenge to the pupils and despite further demonstration, the majority of the pupils did not have sufficient experience of sketching techniques to be able to produce a piece of work in three sections. The most significant thing, however, as they struggled to complete the desired effect of a foreground, middle and background, was their determined effort and perseverance to try to succeed.
102. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory given that the subject has not been a high priority on the school improvement plan for a considerable length of time. The co-ordinator supports teachers' planning, gives advice where required and ensures that resources are readily available. She recognises that a greater use of the sketchbooks for the specific purpose of improving skills, techniques and close observational drawing would significantly improve the art curriculum. As yet, the school does not keep a portfolio of samples of work, which means staff cannot currently see the progression in the development of basic skills, techniques and creativity and are not supported and guided when making assessments on the pupils' work. Assessment is a future development, as is the monitoring of the art and design curriculum in the classroom environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection, in Year 2, and this provided insufficient information on which to base secure judgements about the overall quality of teaching and learning or of pupils' attitudes to the subject. Additional evidence was obtained from a survey of samples of work on display throughout the school, design work in pupils' books, and from discussions with teachers and with pupils. This indicates that pupils throughout the school undertake an

appropriate range of activities in which they design, make and evaluate products and that attainment is in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven.

104. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils were making a pop-up greetings card, following the teacher's step-by-step instructions. They measured, marked, cut and shaped materials and assembled and combined materials to a satisfactory standard. Previously, pupils had designed and made a coat of many colours for Joseph, designed and made wheeled vehicles and made a variety of castles using construction kits. Pupils in Year 6 have designed and made bird boxes, dismantled, designed and made slippers and worked with robot-controlling systems.
105. Attitudes and behaviour in the one lesson observed were good. Most pupils clearly enjoyed the activity and took part enthusiastically although a significant minority of pupils needed constant reassurance that their work was 'right'. Both teaching and learning in this lesson were satisfactory: the teacher explained and demonstrated the task well but the activity provided limited opportunities for pupils to use and develop their own design skills.
106. The co-ordinator for the subject has been responsible for the subject for several years and has introduced a whole-school scheme of work for design and technology based on the government-recommended scheme of work. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

107. It was only possible to observe one short period of geography during the period of the inspection that took place in Year 2. This, along with an examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning documentation, indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards broadly in line with expectations for their age by the time they are seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs receive good help from teachers and learning support assistants and make good progress in the subject.
108. Pupils in Year 2 could be seen to be making satisfactory progress in their knowledge of the local environment as they engaged in a survey on the local area. They focussed on the issue of parked cars and local traffic signs. Pupils' understanding of signs to convey information contributed to their development of mapping skills. Good cross-curricular links with mathematics could be seen in this activity as pupils recorded their finding in the form of a bar chart.
109. The examination of pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 indicates that they are given the chance to explore all areas of the National Curriculum, including studies of the local area, comparison with other towns in the United Kingdom as they consider and visit Llandudno, and internationally as they make comparisons between Kidsgrove and an Indian village. Pupils also develop a satisfactory understanding of the weather and the impact of physical features and the environment on peoples' lives. The time devoted to individual topics and the amount of work produced by pupils varies considerably. Pupils' written work also provides evidence that the outcome of individual topics is directed by teachers, with too few opportunities for pupils to develop research skills and to become independent learners.
110. It is not possible to make a secure judgment on the overall quality of teaching. The single lesson observed was well planned and organised, with learning support assistants and parents making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The analysis

of work shows that teachers rely too much on worksheets and photocopied materials that fail to challenge some of the more capable pupils in classes. Written work is quite short, with lost opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills within the subject.

111. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is an appropriate scheme of work in place to support teachers in their planning but there are currently no assessment procedures for the subject. All pupils are given the chance to take part in a number of field trips to support their learning.
112. Pupils work well together when they are given the opportunity to do so. With the emphasis on concern for the local and world environment and the chance to consider a number of societies and countries around the world, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
113. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

HISTORY

114. It was only possible to observe two history lessons during the period of the inspection, one in Year 1 and one in Year 3. These lessons, plus an examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning, indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards broadly in line with expectations by the time they are seven and eleven. Pupils with a special educational need receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants and make good progress.
115. Pupils in Year 1 displayed a simple, yet satisfactory, understanding of chronology as they placed different teddy bears on a timeline. They also had some understanding of how things change over time as they compared old and contemporary teddy bears. Discussion with pupils in a Year 3 class indicated that they have a secure knowledge of key events in the domestic and military life of Ancient Greece, as well as having some understanding of Greek myths and gods. Pupils also showed a good understanding of Greek theatre as they engaged in the creation of Greek theatre masks in play dough.
116. The examination of pupils' written work indicates that pupils cover all the required topics in the history curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop a simple understanding of societies and cultures from the past as they consider the domestic and political life of Ancient Greece and Rome. They have an understanding of the impact of invaders and settlers on the peoples of Great Britain and recognise the significant changes that took place in Victorian England and how these changes impacted on peoples' lives. Many of these topics, however, are covered in a superficial manner, with too many colouring-in activities and the production of brief written responses on photocopied sheets. This fails to challenge more capable pupils. Although good examples of pupils writing in the role of historical characters were observed, there is little extended writing in the subject, with lost opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills within this area of the curriculum.
117. The satisfactory progress made in the lessons observed was helped by pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and their interest in the activities they were involved in. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching. The two lessons observed, however, were well planned and organised, with teachers using resources in an effective manner to promote pupils' learning.
118. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. There is an effective scheme of work to support teachers in the planning of their lessons. There are

currently no assessment procedures for history. The activities and the outcomes of work are decided by teachers, with little opportunity for pupils to engage in private research and to become independent learners.

119. With its emphasis on the study of past societies both in Great Britain and around the world the subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
120. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards are broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. This constitutes good progress since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below expectations. The school has successfully addressed the key issues of the previous inspection that had led to inconsistent coverage of the subject and below average attainment. With the purchase and installation of a much improved, but still only broadly satisfactory, range of new resources, ongoing training of the staff and the adoption of a government-recommended scheme of work, pupils are now making appropriate progress in the subject and attainment levels have improved considerably. However, with the current organisation of resources, pupils are unlikely to make good progress in the subject. This is because the school does not have a dedicated room for the subject, now commonly found in primary schools. As a result, although teachers work hard to ensure good use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, both teachers and pupils are tied to a system of demonstration lessons, frequently with all pupils huddled around the class computer, followed by a rota of small groups undertaking the activity unsupervised during the following week. As a consequence, the amount of instant hands-on computer activity available for each pupil is very limited.
122. Pupils in Year 2 have used a basic database program to produce pictograms, used the internet to find information and answer questions about castles for a history topic, and to research the island of St. Lucia for a geography topic. In an observed lesson, pupils were learning how to gather information, about their favourite ice creams, and record it in the form of tally marks prior to inputting data onto a database. Although this was a satisfactory lesson, it was a typical example of the difficulties caused by the limitations on resources in the classroom: the teacher demonstrated the activity at the beginning of the week, pupils had no hands-on experience during the lesson, and were told they would be carrying out the activity 'in turns on Friday'. Pupils in Year 6 have produced posters about the food chain for a science topic, designed a spreadsheet to calculate costings for a party and used a control system with buzzers and lights in a link with a local College of Technology.
123. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the lessons seen were good. Most pupils enjoy the opportunity to work at the computers and work individually or with their partners, taking turns and sharing resources. The quality of pupils' learning in lessons seen was satisfactory; most pupils respond appropriately to the opportunities for 'hands on', practical experience. Teaching in the three lessons observed ranged from good to satisfactory and was satisfactory overall; the teachers gave clear instructions and guidance to pupils, had high expectations for behaviour, supported pupils with special educational needs appropriately and used subject vocabulary consistently, ensuring that pupils did the same.

124. An appropriate whole-school scheme of work for the subject has been put in place and the co-ordinator has overseen the improvements in the quantity and quality of equipment. However, there is currently no system for assessment, and in-house opportunities for control and modelling are limited due to lack of resources.

MUSIC

125. Music is notably one of the school's strengths. Standards by the age of 11 are above that expected nationally and are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The high quality teaching by the specialist teachers for individual tuition and classroom music has been maintained.
126. It was not possible to make a judgement about the standards and pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2. This was because no music lessons were timetabled to take place during the inspection days. Two class lessons in Years 4 and 6, musical performances, singing and individual instrumental tuition were seen. The school's planning indicates that the music curriculum follows the national guidance and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.
127. The class lessons were coherently structured and the very good teaching ensured that the pupils understood the planned learning experience. The pace of the lessons had a quiet rigour and the pupils had very good opportunities to develop the basic skills of rhythm, timbre, and duration as well as furthering their understanding of dynamics. This they did effectively through the use of the voice, because they had very good opportunities to practise, evaluate and improve upon their performance as the lessons progressed. Those that had an instrument to play had very good opportunities to perform in front of their peers with confidence. However, the playing of instruments was limited to a few pupils at a time because of the small accommodation area in which the lesson took place. This restricts the composition element of the curriculum to a very small number of pupils at a time. The frustration and impact of this showed significantly on the faces of a considerable number of pupils who had to sit and watch. Here the pace of the lesson diminished. However, those that did get the opportunity to play an instrument enjoyed their musical activities and took great pride in their achievements.
128. In assemblies the singing was good. The pupils all sang enthusiastically with expression, and were spontaneous in their body actions as they moved rhythmically to the music. They clearly enjoyed singing the hymns. Pupils sang in tune, and they made very good attempts at the higher pitched notes. At the beginning of one assembly, a hymn was played for the pupils to listen to as they entered the hall. However, no music was played as the pupils came into the hall in the other assemblies seen. As a result, there were missed opportunities for the pupils to hear a range of styles, or other forms of music to support, and extend their understanding of the musical appreciation element of the National Curriculum.
129. The significant strength of the school's music provision is the individual instrumental tuition. The pupils have good opportunities to learn to play the violin, 'cello, flute, clarinet, the trombone or the cornet. These lessons provide the pupils with a very good foundation in basic skills of notation, rhythm, knowledge of musical language, and the mastery of the instrument, because the quality of the teaching is very good. This involves at least 35 pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs. The standards they achieve are well above that expected of this age group. A substantial number of these pupils go on to reach high standards in external examinations.

130. Similarly the extra-curricular opportunities during the lunch breaks provided are a strength. They are led by the co-ordinator. The pupils have a good opportunity to learn to play a recorder or sing in the choir. These activities are purposeful. For example, during the choir practice, good focus was placed on the singing techniques of diction, breathing, posture and note intervals. There are a large number of both boys and girls who are actively involved in these activities and they clearly enjoy the musical experience. The pupils enjoy performing in front of an audience who listen attentively and appreciatively and like to celebrate their achievements with them.
131. Taken overall, the co-ordinator has a very active role in the pupils' musical development and leads the subject through her own very good teaching. She takes the majority of classes for music. However, she does recognise that in-service training for the non-specialist classroom teacher would be beneficial to support the recording and assessment of what pupils know, understand, and can do, and this is an area for improvement. There has been no monitoring of the class music lessons led by non-specialists or individual tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Physical education is a strength of the school. The standards achieved in Years 3 to 6 are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and have been maintained at a high level. This is because the quality of teaching is very good and, on occasions, it is excellent.
133. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards, and pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2, because no physical education lessons were timetabled to take place during the course of the inspection. This was similar to the previous inspection where insufficient opportunities were available to form secure judgements. The school's planning indicates that the physical education curriculum follows the national guidance. The evidence provided for Year 2 pupils, shows that their achievements in swimming are good. The majority of pupils has achieved their ten metres and most can swim a length of the swimming pool.
134. By the end of Year 6, standards are above those found nationally. This is similar to the position found at the time of the last inspection. Physical education is one of the school's strengths and this is because of the excellent teaching by the specialist teacher. The majority of pupils make very good progress in developing a range of skills and movements typical for their ages. The planning is very secure. It enables the teacher to apply his expertise, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum to challenge all pupils and focus his teaching on the progressive development of a range of skills to ensure improvements from year group to year group.
135. During the inspection only two lessons, in athletics, were seen. Because of inclement weather, the lessons took place in the hall. The planning was efficiently and effectively modified to take account of this. In each lesson, the teacher very clearly demonstrated the skills needed to learn to do, for instance, a triple jump, how to use the wrist movement when skipping, and the action and positioning of the hands when throwing. Furthermore, these skills were continuously reinforced by both the pupils and the teacher. These very good demonstrations helped to guide pupils towards improving their performance. They were given excellent opportunities to practice and refine these skills having evaluated what they as individuals needed to do in order to improve. The teacher generated enthusiasm and interest by the skilful use of praise. As pupils were commended and encouraged, they increased in confidence and were willing to experiment. The behaviour was very good and pupils obviously enjoy their lessons.

The teacher was careful to give guidance without it becoming overly directive, so that the pupils not only followed the given patterns of movement, but also experimented for themselves. For example, those who found skipping difficult, particularly a few of the boys, got a tremendous sense of achievement after persevering to skip with the support of the teacher. They could see for themselves the strides forward that they had made with his help and support. The pupils all listen well and follow instructions. All pupils are able to move about the hall safely with good awareness of their space and that of others. They show the same care and attention when using the equipment. Very good attention is given to the warm-up, and warm-down sessions and pupils know why this is necessary because of the effects of exercise on the heart and muscles.

136. The planned provision indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met and that the pupils have good opportunities to participate throughout the year in dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. Swimming standards are high and the majority of the pupils leave the school able to swim at least 25 metres. Most can swim much further, with a significant number of pupils passing tests in water survival skills.
137. The school's provision for extra-curricular physical education is good. There is a wide range of clubs offering the pupils the opportunity to compete in a variety of competitive sports such as football and netball, to participate in rugby training and, until this year, swimming galas and athletics.
138. The subject is led enthusiastically by the co-ordinator who is a specialist teacher of physical education. This has a significant impact upon high quality provision and maintenance of the above average standards. He is aware of the need to develop the recording and assessment of the individual pupils' progress and recognises this as an area for improvement, as is the monitoring of the physical education curriculum.