

INSPECTION REPORT

YEW TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Walsall, West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103974

Headteacher: Mr Howard Martin

Reporting inspector: Mr P McGaw
1206

Dates of inspection: 24 - 27 March 2003

Inspection number: 252938

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Birchfield Way
Yew Tree Estate
Walsall
West Midlands

Postcode: WS5 4DX

Telephone number: 01922 626926

Fax number: 01922 627766

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Richard Sugden

Date of previous inspection: 7 June 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1206	P McGaw	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? School data and indicators
9009	V Bradley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21816	B Thomas	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage curriculum	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23665	D Grant	Team inspector	Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs Educational inclusion English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
3909	J Lewis	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

The Kingston Centre
Fairway
Stafford
ST16 3TW

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Yew Tree Primary School is a smaller than average mixed 3 to 11 primary school which includes a nursery unit, situated on a large local authority housing estate in Sandwell local education authority. Many of the pupils come from families with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, just over 35 per cent, is above the national average. The number of pupils on roll had fallen at the time of the last inspection from 245 in 1998 to 163 in 2000. Since then the numbers have begun to rise. The current figure of 196 includes 182 full-time pupils in the main school and 28 part-time pupils in the nursery unit - equivalent to 14 full-time pupils. However, the school still has significant surplus accommodation which is a drain on the budget. The school has pupils of all abilities, although the proportion of more-able pupils is much lower than found in many schools. Data about pupils in the nursery and reception class indicate that pupils enter the school with well below average attainment. Evidence suggests that pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 were also well below average when they started school. There are 22 per cent of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs, and seven of these pupils have a statement of special educational need for specific learning difficulties. Both of these figures are above the national average and are similar to the figures at the time of the last inspection. Seven per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority families and three per cent, although fluent English speakers, have a home language other than English, both a little higher than found nationally. The school experiences high pupil mobility; at times this adversely affects its overall performance.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Yew Tree Primary school is an effective school with many strengths. The school is very well led and managed, teaching and learning are generally very good and standards are rising. Recent test and examination results have been well below average but have shown a continuing upward trend. In current classes, all year groups are attaining at the level broadly typical of their age groups in most subjects, having entered the school with well below average attainment. All involved in the school are focused closely on raising standards and improving the quality of provision still further for all pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are rising significantly in most subjects.
- The school is led and managed very effectively.
- The quality of teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed and are used well in other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they are very keen to learn.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.
- The school cares for its pupils extremely well.

What could be improved

- Attendance figures remain below average despite the significant efforts of the school to improve it.
- Tracking of pupils' academic progress over time is underdeveloped.
- Subject leadership in non-core subjects is underdeveloped.

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 inspected in June 2000, at which time it was removed from special measures, having been judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Since then, it has continued to improve and has made good progress in tackling almost all of the remaining key issues. Standards in most subjects have risen; pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy have improved significantly. The emphasis has been maintained on improving attendance although this has yet to improve the attendance of a minority of poor attenders. Teaching has improved considerably. The school has focused appropriately on improving standards in the core subjects and consequently standards and subject leadership of the non-core subjects have improved more slowly. As a result of the considerable improvements over the last three years the school has won the confidence of parents.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Whilst the attainment of children entering the nursery is well below average, they make very good progress so that they enter the reception class having improved their skills from well below to below those typically found in children of this age. By the time the children leave the reception class standards are generally below average in all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The majority will still be working within the early learning goals but will be close to achieving the nationally expected standards for their age. A few children will have exceeded them. Of the six areas, standards are stronger in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development, knowledge and

understanding of the world, and in listening than in creative development and the other components of communication, language and literacy.

Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, although below average in reading and well below average in writing, continued an upward trend. Mathematics results were slightly above the national average. In comparison to schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, results in reading and mathematics are above the average for similar schools whilst standards in writing were below average. Results in national assessments in science were just below the national average. Findings during the inspection indicated that standards in reading were typical for this age group, standards in writing were below average and standards in speaking and listening were at least in line with that expected and often were above that expected for this age group. Standards in mathematics and science for most pupils were judged to be broadly typical for this age group with a good proportion exceeding them in mathematics. Standards in most of the other subjects were also broadly typical for their age group. However, standards in history and geography are below average although sound progress is being made and standards are rising. In relation to the standards pupils were attaining on entry to the school these findings indicate that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are making good progress in most subjects.

Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, again although well below the national average in English and mathematics, continued an upward trend. The school's results in English are improving faster than found nationally. In science, results were slightly above the national average and were a rise on previous years. Girls outperformed boys in English but this was reversed in mathematics. Boys and girls performed similarly in science. In English, results were in line with those gained in similar schools. Mathematics results were well below the average for similar schools. In science they were above the average achieved in similar schools. In comparison to what pupils achieved when they were in Year 2, results in English and science were in line with what would have been expected, whereas in mathematics they were well below expectations. The results are not reflected in the work seen during the inspection. In class and in pupils' books many pupils are achieving standards overall in all three subjects broadly typical of their age group although few are exceeding such standards. Standards in most other subjects were also broadly typical for each age group and progress is good. However, history, geography and design and technology remain below average although sound progress is being made and standards are beginning to rise.

The mismatch between what is attained in class and in external tests can be explained, in part, by the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils which lowers the school's overall test results. The evidence suggests that achievements in lessons are better than indicated by previous external test results in most subjects because there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning owing to the clear school focus on these aspects.

The school made good progress towards its challenging targets for attainment in 2002. The targets set by the local education authority for 2003 are too high and are unlikely to be achieved. Targets set by the school for the future are ambitious but nonetheless achievable if the significant improvements to provision that the school has made over the last three years are sustained.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen to learn and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils move around the school sensibly and behave very well in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are friendly. Pupils are developing securely as individuals.
Attendance	Despite the strenuous efforts of the school and a wide range of appropriate strategies, the attendance of a significant minority remains unsatisfactory, hindering their progress and lowering the school's overall results.

The very positive attitudes that most pupils have, and the friendly and supportive ethos of the school contribute significantly to the quality of teaching and learning and hence to the standards pupils are achieving in class. The overall attendance figure is below the national average and has improved only slightly over recent years. However, well-targeted action has been successful in raising the attendance of a number of pupils but has been less successful with the most reluctant attenders. As a result, whilst attainment has improved for many pupils, the poor attenders still have a significant adverse impact on overall test results.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	Years 1-2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very 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.

Examples of very high quality teaching were seen in almost all classes. Teaching in Year 1 was satisfactory, elsewhere it was very good. Teaching in English and mathematics is very good. Literacy and numeracy is taught well in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support.

Teachers use a very wide variety of teaching methods and learning styles very effectively to engage pupils. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge. Time, resources and support staff are used to very good effect and discipline is secure. Consequently, pupils learn very well, showing interest and concentration, working hard and acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils well in lessons and day-to-day progress is monitored well. In the few lessons where teaching was less strong, it was usually characterised by inappropriate expectations and an unclear purpose for the lesson. Usually work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment but at times in science higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced overall and meets the needs of all pupils well. The curriculum in the nursery is particularly rich. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which broaden pupils' experience and aspirations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils make very good progress because of very well-judged provision.
Provision for pupils whose home language is not English	All pupils are fluent English speakers and so they are able to take advantage of all the school offers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' personal and health education is very good. Social education is excellent. Spiritual and moral education are very good and cultural education is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very effectively. The school is a very caring school. It strongly promotes excellent behaviour, mature relationships and racial harmony. Monitoring of pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development are very good but monitoring of academic progress over time is underdeveloped.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is contributing well to pupils' progress. The school meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities very well. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are beginning to be met appropriately. A concern for the welfare of all pupils is central to the work of the school. Staff work hard to support pupils, securely based on their excellent knowledge of pupils as individuals.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and very effectively managed. The headteacher has a clear vision which is shared widely by staff. Senior staff are developing their roles in promoting teaching and learning and raising standards well. Some subject leaders are developing their roles securely, although for some the role is not as well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very well informed and active. There is a good mix of experience amongst the governors which they use to good effect in support of the school.

Aspect (contd.)	Comment (contd.)
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher monitors teaching and learning well, evaluations lead to actions to improve weaknesses found. Other aspects of the school's work are also monitored well. Some subject leaders do not have enough opportunity to monitor teaching fully. The use of assessment data is underdeveloped in tracking pupils' progress over time.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is secure and is based upon the educational priorities of the school. Funding is targeted efficiently to tackle weaknesses and funding delegated for specific purposes is used effectively. The school understands and applies the principles of best value effectively.

The school has adequate levels of staffing. Whilst the school has significant excess accommodation, the quality of the learning environment is excellent. Resource levels are good in most subjects. The governors are making appropriate plans to deal with a potential deficit in the budget next year.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school; • Pupils make good progress; • Teaching is good; • The school is well led and managed; • School expects hard work and good behaviour; • The school is caring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of homework; • Extra-curricular provision.

The school works hard at developing links with parents. However, whilst some parents take an active part in their child's education others do not.

The number of returns of the parents' questionnaire and the number of parents at the parents' meeting were both low and hence caution needs to be taken in drawing conclusions about the representative nature of the views expressed. The inspection team agrees with the positive views. However, inspectors judged that the school sets appropriate amounts of relevant homework, and the extra-curricular provision is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Inspectors based their judgements on an analysis of test and assessment results, direct observations of pupils in lessons, hearing pupils read and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' present and past work. Discussions were held with pupils where other evidence was limited, to establish what pupils knew, understood and could do.

The school's results and pupils' achievements

2. Standards on entry to the nursery are well below average. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of the reception year, standards have improved and are now only below average in each of the six areas of learning. By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly in line with that typically found nationally. By the end of Year 6 standards are again broadly typical of this age group. Most pupils' attainment is improving appropriately throughout their time in school.

Foundation Stage

3. Whilst the attainment of children entering the nursery is well below average, they make very good progress so that they enter the reception class having improved their skills from well below to below those typically found in children of this age. The majority are still working within the early learning goals but will be close to achieving the nationally expected standards for their age. A few children will have exceeded them. Therefore, by the time the children leave the reception class standards are generally below average in all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. However, assessments carried out at the beginning and again at the end of reception reinforces just how far these children have progressed. Of the six areas, standards are better in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development knowledge and understanding of the world and in listening than in creative development and the other components of communication, language and literacy. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' performance.

Key Stage 1

4. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, although below average in reading and well below average in writing, continued an upward trend. In mathematics results were slightly above the national average. Standards in national assessments in science were just below the national average but continued an upward trend. In comparison to schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, results in reading and mathematics were above the average for similar schools whilst standards in writing were below average.
5. Findings during the inspection indicated that current standards in Year 2 in reading are broadly typical for this age group, standards in writing are below average and standards in speaking and listening are at least in line with those expected and often were above those expected for this age group. Standards in mathematics and science for most pupils are judged to be broadly typical for this age group with a good

proportion of pupils exceeding the typically expected standard in mathematics. Standards in most of the other subjects are also broadly typical for their age group. However, standards in history and geography are below average although sound progress is being made and standards are rising. In relation to the standards pupils were attaining at the start of Year 1 these findings indicate that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are making good progress in most subjects.

Key Stage 2

6. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, although well below the national average in English and mathematics for the proportions of pupils achieving Level 4 or better, continued an upward trend. Girls outperformed boys in English but this was reversed in mathematics. In science, results were slightly above the national average and were a rise on previous years. Boys and girls performed similarly in science. The 2002 results represent an improvement on the previous year's performance in all three subjects. The school's results in English are improving faster than found nationally. At the higher Level 5, the school's results were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science.
7. In comparison to similar schools where the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is used as the comparator, English results were in line with the average for similar schools, mathematics results were well below the average and science were above the average. In comparison to what pupils achieved when they were in Year 2, results in English and science were in line with what would have been expected, whereas in mathematics they were well below expectations.
8. Again the results are not reflected in the work seen during the inspection. In class and in pupils' books many pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards overall, in all three subjects, broadly typical of their age group although few pupils are exceeding such standards. During the inspection, there were no significant differences noted between boys' and girls' performance.
9. Standards in ICT, art and design, music, physical education and religious education are also broadly typical for Year 6. However, attainment in history, geography and design and technology are below average.
10. The apparent mismatch between what is attained in class and in external tests at the end of both key stages can be explained by the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils which lowers the school's overall test results. The evidence also suggests that achievements in lessons are better than indicated by previous external test results because there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning owing to the clear school focus on these aspects. Furthermore the school's own careful analysis of individual pupils' results indicates that those who spent the whole two years in Key Stage 1 or the whole four years in Key Stage 2 in the school and attended regularly achieved much better results than those who joined the school during the key stage or those whose attendance was poor.
11. The school made good progress towards its challenging targets for Key Stage 2 in 2002. The targets set by the local education authority for 2003 are too high and are

unlikely to be achieved. Targets set by the school for the future are ambitious but nonetheless achievable if the significant improvements to provision the school has made over the last three years are sustained.

Progress and Achievement by Age 11

12. Children make very good progress during the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning and are well set to gain from their experiences in Key Stage 1.
13. In literacy, pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and good progress in Year 2. In all classes in Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress in literacy. Pupils' skills in listening are developing well as they move through the school. Reading and speaking are also developing securely. Speaking and listening skills in particular have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils are confident in making their point orally and they listen attentively. Most pupils can read with confidence and understanding. The school has focused on improving pupils' writing skills and there are clear signs that this focus is beginning to have positive results. Pupils' written work shows a sound understanding of the structure of a story and pupils use imaginative language to express themselves. However, non-narrative writing is less strong. Writing is planned to remain a focus in the school for further improvement in particular through the development of teaching and learning strategies. Literacy skills are used well by pupils in other subjects through the way that activities are planned, introduced, discussed, recorded and evaluated and through the use of very good word banks, which highlight the scientific, technical and creative vocabulary being used within particular aspects of work.
14. In mathematics there has been good improvement since the last inspection. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, most have made good progress and most pupils are on course to achieve the nationally expected Level 2, and about half are working within Level 3. Pupils understand the place value of digits and their mental skills are developing securely. They can identify common two and three-dimensional shapes. Their skills in solving word problems are not as well developed, however. By the end of Year 6 pupils' understanding of place value has increased and they have good understanding of fractions and decimals. They can multiply three-digit figures by two-digit figures and have secure understanding of ratio and proportion. The overall progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6 is good. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as geography, design and technology and science. Pupils use and interpret line and block graphs well, and generally these are drawn neatly and accurately.
15. Standards in science are improving. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and in Key Stage 2 many pupils make rapid progress. This is as a direct result of clearly planned learning experiences. Pupils carry out a number of good practical science activities to learn and practise their investigative skills. The way that activities are presented by teachers and their assistants gives good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their real understanding of what they have learned. Higher attaining pupils, whilst generally working at a level appropriate for them, at times have insufficient direct and focused support and challenge, which means they are not always pushed to reach their fullest potential.

16. Pupils are making very good progress in ICT and good progress in art and design and physical education. In art and design in Years 3/4 and in music across the school, the progress made by pupils in developing their creative and musical skills has been particularly rapid. Sound progress is being made in history, geography, religious education and design and technology. ICT skills are beginning to be used effectively by pupils to support their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils use their computer skills effectively to research work on the Internet for topics in other subjects. Pupils are developing good critical thinking skills including inference, evaluation and hypothesising, through the excellent range of teaching and learning strategies used in the lessons.
17. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school because the provision for them is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are strengths of the school. They enjoy coming to school, concentrate well in lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work. Pupils appreciate the opportunities offered to them and they show respect for each other, for staff and school property. Pupils develop self-confidence and good levels of personal responsibility as they move through the school. Parents recognise the high expectations of the school and are very pleased with the significant improvement in behaviour over the last three years.
19. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good because the school sets clear and high expectations which are shared with the pupils. In the majority of lessons, behaviour is very good. It is linked directly to the teachers' very good use of a wide range of teaching styles and very effective class management skills. In all classrooms good displays show pupils the rewards available for hard work and good behaviour. These are common throughout the school. No bullying or other offensive behaviour was seen during the inspection and the pupils did not believe this to be a concern. There have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions over the last year.
20. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils are trustworthy, polite and courteous. They greet visitors in a friendly way. They are proud of their school and take great care of it. Pupils cooperate well together, take turns and share ideas. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those identified as having special educational needs mix well with their peers as well as relating effectively to teachers and support staff. A Year 6 pupil commented that what he liked most about the school was that there was no racism and that all pupils were treated with equal respect. The high overall standard of relationships contributes significantly to the very good learning environment.
21. Pupils' personal development is very good. Staff know their pupils very well. The school's programme from personal, social and health education effectively contributes to pupils' knowledge and understanding about sex education and drug abuse. When given the opportunity, pupils can take responsibility for their own learning and work well without supervision. Many pupils are given responsibilities within classrooms and around the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the playground 'buddy'

scheme and the range of monitoring tasks available to them. Pupils contribute through the school council to making whole-school decisions. They were able to talk about the process of school council elections, their roles on the council and the way in which the council operated. They spoke very responsibly about the council and were proud of the way they have been able to make a positive contribution to school life.

22. The attendance rate at the school in the last academic year was well below the average nationally. The unauthorised absence rate was slightly less than the national average.
23. The school has given a high focus to improving attendance, and is being increasingly successful in its endeavours. A target to improve attendance levels by two percentage points has been set, and the school is currently on course to achieve that target. Authorised absence has been reduced following good levels of intervention from the school, discussing with parents the importance of regular attendance at school, and the detrimental effect on their children's learning when holidays are taken in term time. However, there remain a number of parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.
24. Most pupils now arrive punctually at school, ensuring a prompt and effective start to the school day. Punctuality has improved following active intervention by the school reminding parents of the need to ensure their children arrive at school on time. Once in school, lessons start promptly, and no time is wasted.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Main data

25. In response to the previous inspection report, the school has made significant progress in improving teaching and learning. This has been achieved through well-judged recruitment, training and a closely monitored focus on developing teaching skills and raising expectations. The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good and is very effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers are hard working, enthusiastic and committed to providing the best education for their pupils. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons observed. Of that percentage, teaching was good in 27 per cent, very good in 43 per cent and excellent in a further 20 per cent. These noteworthy figures reflect the very high quality of teaching in the school and are a very significant improvement on those found in the last inspection. Overall teaching was very good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stage 1. Only in one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory, in Key Stage 1.
26. Examples of high quality teaching were seen in most subjects. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good in Key Stage 2 and Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 1. Teaching is also very good in most other subjects. It is satisfactory in history, geography and religious education.
27. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught and also form an integral part of other subjects. Good support is provided for small groups of pupils who are withdrawn for additional literacy and numeracy teaching through the National Literacy Strategy's support programmes and the National Numeracy Strategy's Springboard programmes.

This support is well planned and effective, with teaching sessions having clear, measurable objectives. ICT is beginning to be used effectively in all subjects to extend learning, including good use of the interactive whiteboard system.

Strengths of teaching

28. Teachers generally have sound subject knowledge. In English, teachers' subject knowledge is very good. This contributes well to the very high quality teaching, and consequently pupils gain knowledge and understanding because teachers' explanations are clear and new ideas are presented well. Teachers teaching ICT as a subject show good subject knowledge and technical skills. In mathematics, a few teachers have gaps in their subject knowledge which is hindering the fullest development of the teaching in their classes. The school has plans to extend opportunities for these teachers to attend the local education authority's five-day mathematics courses to improve their subject knowledge.
29. Most teachers plan their lessons very well using assessments of pupils' prior attainment and learning to focus lesson planning and activities. Teachers use the day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning well in planning future work. Objectives for lessons are very clear and specific and allow the teacher to make accurate and meaningful assessments of pupils' progress in the lesson. Marking of pupils' work is very good. Marking includes useful and constructive comments which let pupils know what it is they should do to improve their work. For example, in English books, marking regularly reminds pupils of their individual targets in writing. There are regular reminders to check particular aspects of their work - for example, spelling and use of capital letters, before considering it to be finished and complete. Such strengths in day-to-day assessment contribute significantly to the generally very good match of tasks to pupils' needs and hence to the rapid pace of lessons and the good progress pupils are able to make.
30. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. In most lessons pace is engaging and brisk, and so pupils concentrate well and complete tasks. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson on speculation and how best to construct arguments, the teacher had high expectations of the pupils and consequently used challenging questions to engage them and extend their thinking about the issues such as dogs being banned from parks. Teachers use high quality work well to exemplify standards to which pupils should aspire. In a Year 4/5 English lesson on narrative poetry, the teacher used good examples of pupils' work to show the high standards and quality of presentation expected of them. Pupils rose to this challenge and produced good work.
31. Teachers use a very wide range of teaching and learning methods to manage, organise, question, enthuse, encourage, motivate and challenge pupils. Very interesting work is being carried out in the school on different learning styles and this is having a significant impact on how teachers plan and teach their lessons. Introductions to lessons are purposeful and intended outcomes of the lesson are shared with pupils so that they have a clear sense of purpose and understanding about what they are going to learn. The main teaching and learning styles to be used are also discussed with pupils, who have clear understanding about these different styles. For example, pupils

throughout the school understanding the technique called 'snowballing' involves them in paired discussions then pairs join up to make fours and so on. Consequently, they are fully engaged with the learning and make good progress. For example, in a Year 3/4 English lesson on story writing, pupils were clear about what they were going to learn and that they would be engaged with paired talking, visualisation, mind mapping and brainstorming so they were highly motivated from the start to take a full and active part in the lesson and to understand the ideas involved.

32. Explanations, demonstrations and modelling are used very well to help to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher demonstrated very well the use of the empty number line to model subtraction so that pupils were able to follow this example and solve money problems. Questioning is a strength of the teaching. Teachers pose questions which challenge pupils to think deeply and to apply their knowledge to new situations. For example, in a Year 3/4 science lesson on water transportation in plants, the teacher posed challenging questions to help pupils think about what was happening when the plant stem soaked up coloured water.
33. Class management is excellent. Teachers maintain very good discipline and behaviour which results in the lessons moving forward well and pupils making good progress. When teachers wish pupils to extend their learning through sharing ideas and opinions, they organise and manage pupils working in pairs and groups very effectively.
34. Teachers often intervene in a timely way to check pupils' understanding of a topic or to promote further enquiry and sustain concentration and interest. For example, in a Year 4/5 religious education lesson on moral dilemmas, the teacher intervened during group discussions to check pupils had grasped the idea that people are responsible for the choices they make and the consequences that flow from these choices. Having found that pupils had understood the ideas involved, the teacher moved the discussions forward into area of Peter's feeling about the choices he made about denying Jesus. Most teachers make effective use of the resources available. For example, in a Year 6 ICT lesson very good use was made of the *Microsoft PowerPoint* presentation software to prepare an advertisement on Yew Tree School. In most lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to think for themselves or to develop independence. For example, in a Year 3/4 music lesson pupils were encouraged to explore a wide range of instruments. Homework is generally well used to extend pupils' classroom work.
35. Within many lessons, teachers give very good oral guidance and they develop extremely positive rapport and relationships between themselves and their pupils. These effective relationships, built upon trust and mutual respect, make a significant contribution to pupils' good working habits. Teachers help pupils to collaborate with each other by teaching them how to work efficiently and effectively in groups and in pairs and to value each other's contributions. An excellent example of this was seen in a joint Year 2 and 4/5 English lesson where pupils were asked to role-play aspects of a poem. Small groups of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils took part sensibly and sensitively, showing respect and care for each other.

Weaker features of teaching

36. In the few lessons where teaching was less strong, it was usually characterised by inappropriate expectations and an unclear purpose for the lesson. In these few lessons, pupils made less rapid progress. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, pupils were not sure of what to do, consequently pace was slow and the lesson drifted along without a sense of urgency or value. Usually work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment, but at times in science higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

Special educational needs

37. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Relationships are very good and pupils are well known as individuals by their teachers. Work is pitched at the appropriate level to match pupils' learning needs and motivation. Lesson planning takes very good account of the needs of all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, where planning includes a section specifically designed to target additional support needs of these pupils. Individual education plans are well developed and give helpful guidance to teachers about pupils' needs. Teachers use positive comments to encourage pupils and raise their self-esteem. Tracking of pupils' progress is in place and targets are updated regularly. There were some particularly good examples of support teaching and work that was well matched to pupils' individual needs. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on money, pupils with specific learning difficulties were given very good individual support so that they could make very good progress. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs, supporting individuals and groups of pupils very well and ensuring they make rapid progress in the classroom.

Pupils' learning

38. Pupils' learning is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good overall, especially where teaching focuses upon the application of knowledge and the use and refining of skills. Pupils are very keen to learn and show great interest in their studies. They concentrate well, and are keen to take part in all forms of learning from group discussions and role-play activities to more mundane consolidation exercises.
39. Pupils can work independently and there are many opportunities in lessons to show initiative. A very good example was observed of pupils in Year 4 working independently using ICT to recreate different three-dimensional shapes using cross-section pictures and movable nodes. Pupils complete tasks and generally work productively and in many areas the tasks they undertake promote imaginative and creative responses which involve the higher levels of thinking. Pupils are encouraged to carry out enquiries for themselves, and they achieve well. For example, in Year 3/4, pupils researched the construction of Viking longboats using books and articles from the Internet.

40. There are some good opportunities for pupils to assess themselves and evaluate each other's work. For example, an excellent initiative with Year 4 pupils hearing pupils in Year 2 read allows pupils to assess others and also to be involved directly in assessing their own performance. Pupils are helped to understand their strengths and weaknesses as teachers identify these in their marking and provide effective feedback in lessons.

Issues to address

In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning still further the staff should:

- improve their subject knowledge in mathematics where gaps exist;
- increase the challenge for the higher attainers in science;
- ensure all lessons have clear purpose and appropriate expectations; and
- share best practice so that all teaching is improved to the standard of the best.

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

41. The quality and range of curriculum provided for all pupils are good because the schools' curriculum planning has both breadth and depth. Statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. The provision for English and mathematics is very good. The use of ICT within other subjects is developing well. The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to the enriching experiences that are provided outside lessons. The school has responded very well to the key issues identified in the previous inspection. Pupils' experiences have been enhanced in music, the school has organised more extra-curricular activities and visits and more visitors come into the school to enrich the curriculum.
42. The Foundation Stage curriculum is rich and exciting, offering children very good experiences in all areas of learning. It is most effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and includes a strong programme of outdoor activities where children can develop their motor and social skills.
43. Since the last inspection, the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 has continued to develop well. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education receive an appropriate allocation of curriculum time. There are very good arrangements in place to provide pupils with personal, social, health and citizenship education. Sex education is set very securely in this context. Well-structured guidance about the dangers of misusing drugs and the importance of exercise is also given. The school enables its pupils to make choices about their health and well being, and the importance of healthy eating and exercise is also stressed.
44. The school has responded well to the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has led to considerable improvements in reading and listening but has yet to lead to similar progress in writing. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted purposefully and has been effective in improving the progress pupils make in mathematics and as a result standards are rising. The school has successfully managed the implementation of the additional support programmes in English and

mathematics for those pupils just below the typical level of attainment for their age for whom these programmes were designed. Schemes of work for the other subjects of the National Curriculum have been improved with the use of the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). This has in turn resulted in better lesson planning with sharper objectives. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. The assessment of pupils' progress towards the key objectives within each scheme of work is currently underdeveloped, however.

45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. It is excellent in the Foundation Stage where a pupil with a statement of need has excellent levels of support and arrangements to meet that pupils' need. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are beginning to be met appropriately - for example, in mathematics two gifted pupils are taking GCSE examinations in Year 6 this year.
46. The school provides good opportunities for extending pupils' learning both within the school day and outside it. During the inspection, well-attended and successful activities were seen in action - for example, tag rugby. Pupils are taken on many day and residential educational visits and they also have the benefit of working with sports coaches and visiting speakers. Collectively, all of these activities help to broaden pupils' experience, strengthen their self-confidence, encourage leadership and increase their maturity.
47. The school makes good use of the local community to add depth and breadth to pupils' learning through very good liaison with the local police, nurse, fire station, library, hospital, Sandwell College and the University. The school works with the West Bromwich Albion football club study support centre to raise pupils' motivation, self-esteem and achievement. The school provides many initiatives for parents to be involved in the school. The Tree Zone after-school club and the Twiglets pre-school group all are used to make close links between the school and the local community. There are good links with the partner secondary school to help to ensure that pupils transfer confidently to Year 7.

Personal development

48. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
49. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The ethos in school establishes a strong set of values and beliefs, which encourage pupils to respect others and to expect to be respected in return. Daily acts of collective worship contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual development and many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others in assemblies and in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 assembly pupils were asked to reflect on how their mother was special to them. In a junior assembly pupils were asked to consider justice and fairness and were provided with time to quietly reflect on what justice meant to them and how being fair to each other was important. In a Year 4/5 lesson on moral dilemmas pupils were allowed time to reflect on occasions of personal dilemma in their own life and how they had dealt with the situation.

50. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and from a very early age pupils are taught how to distinguish right from wrong and to understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The acts of collective worship provide good opportunities for reflection on moral issues, and in lessons pupils are asked to discuss moral questions – for example, the conservation of a rain forest. All classrooms have displays which include the reward system, house points charts, and the range of sanctions for poor behaviour. Pupils are knowledgeable of the system and can explain it well. The behaviour policy is underpinned by high expectations of good behaviour and pupils are constantly reminded of the expectations. This results in a school community which shows respect for others, politeness and care and good manners from everyone. There were no incidents of bullying or racism seen during the inspection.
51. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Teachers positively encourage pupils to work cooperatively in a range of situations. In lessons they are asked to work in a variety of groups, which means pupils learn the social skills necessary to work with a wide range of peers. Many of the teaching strategies used – for example, paired talk, snowballing and feather mapping - are well understood by pupils. They are used as excellent tools to promote collaborative work and encourage pupils to cooperate, communicate, negotiate and persuade others. All pupils benefit socially from being valued and fully included in all activities, regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnicity. Pupils carry out many responsibilities as monitors in class or around the school. The school council encourages pupils to share opinions and to make decisions about how the school can be improved. Residential experiences to Edmond Hall and Plas Gwynant contribute well to improving pupils' personal and social skills. The range of educational visits and the extra-curricular activities all contribute to a greater understanding of society and becoming good citizens. Pupils show care for those less fortunate than themselves through their contribution to national charities.
52. The overall provision for cultural development is good. The school fully understands its role in promoting racial equality by slowly increasing elements of cultural diversity in its curriculum. A good range of visits and visitors have provided all pupils with a good awareness of their own local culture. Studies of local land use in geography and how the local amenities on the Yew Tree Estate serves the community are used well to raise pupils' awareness about their local area. Lessons in religious education, geography, history, music and art and design have promoted some good cultural understanding - for example, considering how people live in other cultures. The use of the Internet in geography and history is providing a valuable resource through which pupils learn about other cultures. Very good displays in the school, especially in the library area, reflect the school's commitment to broadening pupils' cultural horizons. A very good display in the corridor shows clearly the school's promotion of anti-racism. The provision for multicultural aspects is sound and opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the richness of the multicultural society in which they live is developing.

Issues to address

The school should:

- develop the assessment of pupils' progress towards the key objectives in the subject schemes of work; and
- continue to develop opportunities to promote pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural and multicultural issues.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. The school continues to provide very good support, advice and guidance for its pupils, and this is a significant strength of the school. Relationships within the school are very good. All staff provide very caring and thoughtful support to all pupils; they are accessible and responsive to pupils' pastoral needs. The very good relationships throughout the school create a very good learning environment and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and all have full access to all opportunities provided. Parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children.
54. The school has high expectations of good behaviour, which are clearly explained, defined and understood by all. Pupils respond very well to the praise and encouragement from all members of staff. They understand and appreciate the system of rewards, and try hard to gain points towards their house totals. Weekly assemblies provide good opportunities for celebrating pupils' individual work, effort and good behaviour. The school places great emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem, and encourages them very effectively that "they can do it". Good levels of supervision in school and on play areas at break and lunchtime have a beneficial effect on behaviour, and good relationships between pupils and the lunchtime supervisors are evident.
55. When inappropriate behaviour does occur, the school has very good procedures in place for consulting with both pupils and their parents on ways to improve that behaviour. The level of care and support to pupils at risk of exclusion is very good. There were no exclusions during the last school year. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour or bullying during the inspection but there are systematic and sensitive procedures in place to deal effectively with rare instances should they occur. The team of 'buddies', clearly identifiable by their green jackets, play a useful role in helping to defuse minor disputes between pupils during breaks and lunchtimes. There is plenty of space for pupils to play in, and a good range of play equipment and activities is available to promote good social interactions. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure within the school and the playground. The school council provides a very good forum for pupils to raise issues that concern them, and discuss ways of addressing them.
56. Monitoring of pupils' social development is informal, but effective. In addition to class teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors know pupils well, and play an important role in the care of those pupils, supporting their social development well. The school has a good policy to promote good race relations which it monitors closely.

57. School procedures for recording and reporting pupils' attendance meet statutory requirements. Parents know what to do when their child is absent. The school has identified the very adverse effect that poor attendance has on pupils' attainment throughout the school and on the school's overall results in national tests. Consequently it has put into place very good procedures to identify and target families and pupils whose attendance record is poor. These procedures are having an increasingly positive effect on levels of attendance. The school has set itself an ambitious target of improving school attendance by two percentage points this year, and is currently on course to achieve this target. The school regularly reminds parents, both individually and through the newsletters, of the improvement in attendance levels already achieved, and the need to improve them further, recognising and pointing out to parents the direct link between poor attendance and reduced levels of attainment. However, there remain a few parents for whom these strategies have failed to work. The school plans to continue and to extend such strategies.
58. Child protection procedures are good, well established and meet statutory requirements. The headteacher and another teacher are designated as having responsibility for child protection. The school recognises the need to ensure that all staff are regularly reminded of the procedures to be followed if there is concern, and is currently organising refresher training for all members of staff, including lunchtime supervisors.
59. The health, well-being and safety of pupils is given a high priority. The school has achieved its silver Healthy Schools Award, and is now working towards the gold award. Healthy eating and healthy activities are very effectively encouraged throughout the personal, social and health education programme. Fresh fruit is available to pupils during the morning break, and pupils have their own bottle of drinking water for refreshment during lessons. Regular safety checks of the school premises are carried out, and members of the building and premises committee of the governing body carry out regular inspections. All required risk assessments are in place. The school has an appropriate Internet safety policy and close monitoring by the ICT assistant ensures safe use of this resources. The site manager and cleaning staff keep the building clean and well-maintained, so contributing to the safe and very positive learning environment for pupils.
60. The monitoring of progress of those pupils with special educational needs is very good and all statutory requirements are met. Very effective procedures identify their academic and personal needs at a very early stage. Individual education plans, written by the co-ordinator and the class teacher with contributions from pupils and parents, are clearly focused to enable good progress to be made. Teaching assistants also provide very good support in and out of classrooms. Appropriate external agencies are involved as needed.
61. Procedures for assessing, recording and analysing pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall. The school uses a range of standardised tests and national tests to assess pupils' achievement, particularly in literacy. Analyses of assessment information in English is well used to identify general weaknesses across a class, to guide teachers' planning and to support target setting for individual pupils. The assessment process in mathematics is less well developed and does not make

judgements of pupils' progress against the key objectives from the national strategy. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects is underdeveloped. Furthermore, there is no whole-school system in place to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Issues to address

The school should:

- develop a whole-school system to monitor pupils' academic progress as they move through the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Most parents have a very positive view of the school, and appreciate greatly the improvements that the school has made during the last three years. Although under a third of parents returned the questionnaires and attendance at the parents' meeting before the inspection was very low, both sources of information indicate that pupils enjoy coming to school. Those parents who responded feel welcome in school, and able to approach the headteacher and all staff. They appreciate the support and guidance given to their children. Parents value the school's emphasis on encouraging their children to work hard and do their best. They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees with the positive views. However, on the few areas some parents would like to see improved, inspectors judged that the school sets appropriate amounts of relevant homework, and the extracurricular provision is good.
63. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging parents to be involved in the education of their children, and the headteacher works hard to ensure effective communication. The policy of convincing parents that the school and parents can work effectively together has been successful in improving standards of behaviour. Attendance at the termly consultation evenings is good.
64. Despite ongoing intervention by the school, and staff contacting parents when pupils are not in school, there remain a number of parents, most with more than one child who should be in school, who do not ensure their children's regular attendance or who take holidays in term time.
65. The school has consulted parents on a range of issues by means of surveys and uses the information gained constructively. In order to inform parents for whom education was not a positive experience, the school is organising curriculum evenings when different areas of the curriculum will be explained. The school actively supports the Tree Zone facility, which provides care after school and during school holidays. Arrangements for the youngest pupils and their parents to become familiar with the school and school personnel are good. Home visits are made, and the Twiglets pre-school group offers a good opportunity for prospective pupils and their parents to take part in supported play sessions.
66. The information parents receive is good. Regular newsletters give parents a good range of useful information about school events and successes. Newsletters have also been used to remind parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and

of the progress that is being made towards achieving better levels of attendance. The prospectus is an informative document which contains all required information as well as additional useful guidance.

67. Parents are encouraged throughout the school to hear their child read on a regular basis, and reading records show that most parents respond positively to this encouragement. There is a clear homework policy, and parents know how much homework their child is required to do weekly.
68. Annual reports of pupils' work are sound. The reports give parents a good range of information concerning what their child knows and can do. Reports tell parents how their child has progressed, but some comments are too broad, and reports do not always tell parents how they can help their child progress further. Parents have an opportunity to comment during the parents' consultation evening which follows the distribution of reports.
69. A number of parents regularly help in the classrooms. Some volunteer parent helpers are able to use their classroom activities to support their own educational programmes - for example, as part of a Sandwell College course, to promote their own skills and abilities. The school is also in the second year of a SHARE project, which promotes parents' learning alongside their children - for example, in mathematics. The school makes its computer suite available for classes twice weekly, and has consulted parents on ways to increase community use of the computer facilities. All these initiatives are part of the school's long-term strategy to work closely with the community to raise attainment. A significant number of parents provide valuable support when educational visits take place. The help provided is very much valued and appreciated by the school.
70. The school works hard continually to improve its relationship with parents and is successful in encouraging an increasingly close partnership with parents and carers. Nearly all parents respond well and are very supportive of the school.

Issues to address

The school should:

- continue to improve the content of annual progress reports;
- maintain the focus on improving attendance of the small minority of pupils with poor attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The school is very well led and managed. There have been significant improvements since the appointment of the current headteacher and the school being removed from special measures in June 2000.
72. The school's ethos reflects a clear commitment to high achievement, an effective learning environment and good relationships. Its clear aims, values and policies are well reflected in its work. There is a shared sense of purpose amongst staff and governors to raise standards further and improve the quality of provision for all pupils.

Leadership and management

73. The governing body is developing its 'critical friend' role appropriately and is contributing positively to the development of the school. Governors take their legal responsibilities seriously and all statutory requirements are met. The governing body is well led by an enthusiastic and committed chair of governors who involves himself fully in the work of the school and is keen for the school to advance its status in the community through raised standards and improved provision. The widely experienced and skilled governing body is supportive and keen, and is involved actively in the work of the school. For example, the governing body receives regular briefings and updates about aspects of the school. The governing body has good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is also developing appropriate systems for evaluating the impact of changes and outcomes of decisions or spending in terms of improvements to standards. Working relationships between staff and governors are good and are based on mutual trust and respect.
74. The headteacher provides very effective and assured leadership. He has a clear vision and high aspirations for the future development of the school and has brought about significant improvements in the time since his appointment. For example, he has made significant advances in improving the quality of teaching and learning. He leads by example, providing a very clear direction for improvement, and works hard to achieve a consensus for the aims and vision for the school. He manages change well and is a good communicator so that all staff are clear about his views and the focus for improvement. He has built a very high performing team of staff through well-judged appointments and well focused training. His initiative is complemented by the deputy headteacher who shares the headteacher's vision for the school. She is firm and resolute in her approach and provides good and complementary support in terms of developing sound systems and procedures for carrying through changes. The deputy headteacher has a key role within curriculum development. The senior management group, which also includes the advanced skills teacher and the Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, work very well together. This group provides very good leadership in key areas of improving teaching and learning – for example, in developing teachers' skills in effectively using different learning styles to maximise progress.
75. The management of special educational needs provision is very good. Systems and procedures are secure and the needs of these pupils are met very effectively. The governor who overviews special educational needs provision has sound knowledge and understanding of the issues and provides good support in this area.
76. The quality of middle management in the school is generally sound. Most subject leaders carry out their roles and responsibilities with growing effectiveness. The leadership and management of English and ICT are particularly strong. In mathematics and science, management, leadership and planning skills are sound but the person responsible for these areas also has responsibility for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and personal, social and health education. This range of responsibilities is too extensive and as a result the subject leader lacks the time to be fully effective. Subject leadership in the other subjects is sound but because the school has rightly focused on improvements in the core subjects, less time has been available yet for the

subject leaders to develop their roles fully. The school plans to address this imbalance over time.

Planning

77. The school's development planning process is good and is contributing positively to the improvement of the school. The annual whole-school plan is agreed following a wide consultation and involves staff and governors fully. The priorities for improvement are appropriate and show good awareness of the school's needs for change. The school improvement plan includes all the important features to enable targets to be tackled effectively and success monitored in the future. Planning over the longer term is good. This strategic planning includes the timely decision to bid for New Opportunities Fund backing for improvements to the outside facilities for physical education. This bid is well judged and fits closely with the school's vision for its future as a high quality resource for the local community.
78. Most subject development plans are allied closely to the priorities in the whole-school plan and therefore the focus and direction for change is consistent across the school. Subject plans also contain clear and appropriate targets related to the specific needs of the subject and of staff, derived from useful audits of provision. Planning for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is good.
79. Educational developments are supported effectively through good financial planning. Clear long-term plans and detailed annual development plans provide an effective mechanism within which the school deploys its budget. This sensible approach ensures that spending is linked carefully to the school's educational priorities for improvement and the budget is well deployed to stimulate and support improvements – for example, the improvement of the learning environment. The school makes good use of additional sources of funding - for example, the Standards Fund - to pursue its aims. It uses these funds well - for example, to target support for pupils who are at the borderline of Levels 3 and 4 through programmes such as Springboard 6 and Booster classes. The control of finance in the school is good and the principles of best value are well understood and applied carefully. However, the school is heading for a deficit in its budget owing to the reduced roll and to the impact of the excess accommodation. The governors have considered a number of appropriate scenarios to manage this deficit and are taking purposeful action to tackle the situation.

Self evaluation

80. The outcomes of changes and developments are monitored and evaluated with growing surety. Information gathered is used well to guide future planning and actions to tackle identified weaknesses and build on recognised strengths. The school carries out some valuable checking of its performance. Attendance and behaviour are monitored very effectively. The senior managers carefully evaluate the school's performance in national tests. They carry out a detailed analysis of available data, including the use of the DfES's Autumn Package and the local education authority's analyses, to make comparisons with all schools nationally and with similar schools. This information is used to set challenging targets for national test results. However,

the school is not deriving the maximum benefit from such information because it does not have a whole-school system in place to track pupils' progress over time.

81. Subject leaders are involved in classroom observation through the performance management cycle. The performance management system for staff has been implemented well. It is promoting improvements in teaching because staff training has been linked closely to the priorities identified in the school's development plan - for example, improving teaching skills, and providing for a wide variety of learning styles. There is also a good system for monitoring teaching and learning by the headteacher which operates alongside the performance management process. The advanced skills teacher who has teaching and learning as her whole-school responsibility has also been involved in classroom observations and support. However, with finances tight, there has only been limited opportunities to release other staff to carry out a systematic schedule of classroom observations. For example, some subject leaders have not been able to develop this aspect of their role because there has been a focus on the core subjects and so they have had only a small allocation of time for classroom observations. The school has plans to redress this balance over time. Other monitoring includes looking through samples of pupils' work and analysis of assessment data. The monitoring of classroom work has resulted in closely focused actions and targets being devised for individual teachers and for subjects which include support from the school's advanced skills teacher and whole-school focuses – for example, on learning styles. There is clear evidence that positive outcomes have resulted from this approach - for example, in improving teachers' understanding of how to use different learning styles to maximise progress. Overall, there has been some significant improvements in the school's monitoring of its performance since the last inspection.

Resources

Staffing

82. The school now has a settled team of hard-working and committed staff. There is an appropriate number of well-qualified and experienced teachers for the size of the school. Staff are appropriately deployed. There is a very good team of teaching assistants who give very effective support to teachers and pupils, contributing greatly to the quality of provision. Technical and learning support member of staff has a positive impact in ICT. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by an appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff.
83. The school has well-developed systems of administration and communications. There is a very competent team of administrative assistants. All administrative staff use ICT effectively to aid them in their work. Members of this team provide a very welcoming reception to the school and form a very knowledgeable and helpful focal point for parents and visitors.
84. Arrangements for supporting newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school are effective. Teachers joining the school feel well supported by their colleagues.

Accommodation

85. The school has an excess of accommodation. The first floor of four classrooms is unused. The accommodation in use has been improved greatly by the school and provides an excellent and exciting learning environment. The library and ICT suites are outstanding examples of stimulating and effective learning environments. Classrooms are bright and well organised. Displays throughout the school are an excellent mix of pupils' work and stimulating materials. The school has a swimming pool, which is used well to provide swimming for all pupils in the school. The outside of the building is well kept and the facilities for both physical education and social play are good. The site manager provides excellent support in keeping the school facilities in good repair.

Learning resources

86. The curriculum is resourced satisfactorily except in some subject areas - for example, in physical education, design and technology, and art and design - where limited resources are hindering fullest development. The library is used well by pupils and its contents are generally adequate for most subjects. English, ICT and the Foundation Stage are very well resourced.

Summary

87. Very effective leadership and management have ensured that this is an effective and improving school with many strengths. Although there are aspects which require further work, the school clearly has the capacity to enable these further improvements to be tackled successfully. The school gives good value for money.

Issues to address

The school should:

- ensure that all subject leaders have opportunities to monitor systematically the provision in their subject including opportunities to carry out classroom observations;
- improve resources levels when funds allow; and
- develop a whole-school system for tracking pupils' progress over time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to raise standards and continue the improvements in the school the senior managers and governors should:

1) **Maintain the focus on improving attendance.**

(Further references to these issues can be found in the numbered paragraphs of the full report: 10, 22, 23, 57, 64)

2) **Develop whole-school procedures for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school.**

(Further references to these issues can be found in the numbered paragraphs of the full report: 36, 44, 61, 68, 80, 81, 149, 162, 169, 176, 183, 191, 208, 214, 220)

3) **Continue to develop the role of subject leaders in raising standards, including providing further opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning in their subject.**

(Further references to these issues can be found in the numbered paragraphs of the full report: 76, 81, 151, 162, 169, 176, 183, 191, 201, 208, 214, 220)

The school should also tackle the *Issues to address* in aspects that are given within the main report and the *Areas for development* noted in subject reports.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	21	13	4	1	0	0
Percentage	20	43	27	8	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	13	9	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	18	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (82)	73 (82)	91 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	19	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (82)	82 (88)	82 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

* Actual numbers of pupils are omitted where numbers of boys or girls (or both) are 10 or less

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	11	13	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	13	21
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	58 (56)	54 (52)	88 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	15	21
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	54 (48)	63 (52)	88 (78)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

** Actual numbers of pupils are omitted where numbers of boys or girls (or both) are 10 or less*

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
White – British	158
White – Irish	0
White – any other White background	4
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7
Mixed – White and Black African	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0
Black or Black British – African	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0
Chinese	0
Any other ethnic group	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	0
Information not obtained	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
White – British	0	0
White – Irish	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	0	0
Information not obtained	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222.72

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	652445
Total expenditure	663063
Expenditure per pupil	3157
Balance brought forward from previous year	11189
Balance carried forward to next year	571

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	50	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	16	0	2
The teaching is good.	52	43	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	57	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	43	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	0	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	36	57	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	43	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	7	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	35	14	5	14

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

Overall, provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.

Strengths

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage;
- The very good progress children make in the nursery, particularly in personal, social and emotional development;
- The consistently very good teaching;
- The development of listening and speaking skills;
- The provision for children with special educational needs;
- The opportunities the children have to develop their ICT skills.

Areas of development

- The use of imagination in art and design, imaginative role-play and story making;
- The ability to use a pencil and hold it effectively when writing and learn how to control and use paint brushes in order to improve artwork;
- A more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics.

89. The Foundation Stage curriculum is rich and exciting, offering children very good experiences in all areas of learning. It is most effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and includes a strong programme of outdoor activities where children can develop their motor and social skills. By the time the children leave the reception class the majority will still be working within the early learning goals but will be close to achieving the nationally expected standard for their age. A few children will have exceeded them. This represents good progress and achievement for these children as most enter the nursery with standards of attainment well below that expected for children of their age.
90. Links with the pre-school group are strong and the teachers welcome the involvement of the parents. Home visits have taken place and there are good opportunities provided for children and their parents to visit before they start school. During the first few weeks teachers assess the children using a commercial scheme. The assessment carried out at the beginning and again at the end of reception shows just how far these children have progressed.
91. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. However, the leader has too many responsibilities within the school to focus fully on the work of the nursery and reception classes. There is very good support from the classroom assistants. Learning resources for all areas of experience in the Foundation Stage are very good; they are well organised and accessible to all children.

Personal, social and emotional development

92. Children's personal, social and emotional development in both nursery and reception is given high priority to very good effect. Many children enter the nursery with immature skills in this area. By the time they leave the reception class most will be close to achieving the early learning goals owing to the very good teaching particularly in the nursery where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Classroom organisation and the management of the children are extremely effective. Adults are very caring, supportive and encouraging. Adults are very good role models, listening with genuine interest to what the children have to say and always prepared to spend time talking to them. This promotes children's self-esteem and confidence.
93. It takes the children only a few weeks in nursery to learn the teacher's structured routines and begin to gain in confidence. Encouragement to speak and work with others and to form friendships is promoted very well in nursery, this gives children the confidence in reception to work and play with others, take turns and to share. This shows very good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching. The teacher's relationship with the children and care of them is very good. Children with special educational needs receive the best in care.
94. The social training during the milk and food time is particularly good. Children respond well, learn to know what is right and wrong quickly and why they should behave in a certain way. They take care of their property, hanging up their coats, and their environment, tidying away effectively after playing outside. Simple class rules are understood well by everyone. In reception, most children develop their independence in dressing and undressing and take care of their personal hygiene well.

Communication, language and literacy

95. When the children start school many of them have very limited early reading and writing skills and many have poorly developed speaking skills. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is very good and children make very good progress. Few will be on course to meet their targets by the end of the reception year because some children have not as yet developed confidence in saying final sounds in words and linking sounds to letters and others have not sufficiently developed their knowledge of letter sounds well enough towards writing more complex words. Teachers and support staff plan their main activities together well and this has a significant impact upon their learning, taking into account the needs of the children, particularly those with special educational needs and speech problems.
96. Much of the learning that takes place in nursery is through being taught to listen intently to the teacher. As a result the children learn to listen very well indeed for short periods of time. This is having a good impact on learning. Children in reception build on the speaking and listening skills developed in the nursery very well indeed. There is a strong focus on talking to adults, to each other and to their group, as well as listening to stories and rhymes, and all of this helps them to make significant gains in their learning. In one lesson the learning technique of 'hot seating' was used to great

effect. A girl decided to be the mother in the 'hot seat' and answer questions from other children about how she spent her day and the jobs that she did.

97. Books have a high profile in all work. Stories are planned to link with each topic studied. Books are enjoyed, as are songs and singing games. Children are encouraged to read and they get off to a good start with their reading. In reception most children are beginning to read the first books in the Oxford reading scheme they learn to recognise 'dad', 'floppy', 'biff', 'kipper', 'up', 'at', 'and', 'mum', 'the', 'chip'. This helps them to read their first books well. Taking the books home enables the parents to share in effective learning activities with their children. When using the big book, *Once Upon A Time*, children learn about the cover, title, illustrator and publisher and how to read and handle a book well. They are encouraged to join in with the reading of the pictures as well as the words. As a result, children in reception are aware and handle books well.
98. There are some good clear notices, labels and instructions related to the themes in the classrooms, which help children to recognise and appreciate the need for writing words and reading them. In reception, elements of the literacy framework are used, the children use white boards effectively, as they see at once if their efforts are wrong and can instantly correct them. However, for some children some of the sessions are a little long and they begin to lose concentration.
99. In the writing areas there are good examples of marks on paper as the children attempt to write using a variety of pencils. In the reception class about half the children can write their names independently. The higher attaining children are now beginning to be able to write simple sentences. In writing, the children in the nursery can join dots and make letter patterns. Children are not given enough opportunities to practise holding and using a pencil effectively to make recognizable letters, which are correctly formed.

Mathematical development

100. When children enter the nursery class the attainment of most in mathematics is well below that of children of a similar age. Children's mathematical understanding is very low. Provision for the development and awareness of mathematical language and teaching is very good, which helps children learn and make very good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage a significant number will still be working within the steps of the early learning goals because of the difficulty in understanding mathematical vocabulary and concepts. The few higher attaining children will have achieved the early learning goals. These children can count to at least twenty, recognise the numerals from one to ten, sort and match objects, and have knowledge of shapes and colours, others count to ten but have no idea about the value of numbers. Most children in nursery can count rhythmically to 10 but as yet they have no concept of the value of the numbers beyond five.
101. The analysis of work and discussion with the children show a lack of understanding of mathematical language, which is preventing them achieving the higher levels in mathematics. As yet the majority are unable to solve practical problems, understand

the concept of addition and subtraction, and talk about three-dimensional shapes and their properties well enough.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

102. Provision and teaching for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them is very good. This helps children's learning and they make very good progress in most areas. The majority of children enter school with very little general knowledge. Teachers build on their natural curiosity and help them to understand the world in which they live very well indeed. By the time they enter Year 1 many will be on course to almost achieve the nationally expected level and a few will have exceeded this. Children will be well beyond the expected level in ICT.
103. Nursery children make very good progress in this area. They have planted bean seeds and bulbs, which they have watched grow into plants. The planters full of spring bulbs make a very attractive feature in their play area. In reception the children have understood, using pictures, the changes in the life cycle of a frog and some of their drawings representing the inside of an apple and broad bean show that they are beginning to observe well. Good use is made of stories to help children show an understanding of simple routes, for instance the route that the Gingerbread man took. Teachers use the well thought out large school grounds to follow routes to develop this learning. All of these activities make the children confident investigators, curious about living things and events and to identify some of the features of things they observe, able to look closely for similarities and differences and ask questions about why things happen and how things work.
104. Visitors to the nursery enhance the curriculum and help children to understand the different jobs people do and what it is like to be a mother of a newborn baby. This gave the opportunity to think about how special mothers are. Children have the opportunity to follow a recipe, have made gingerbread men and were making biscuits to take home for their 'special' mother.
105. In the nursery children experience an electronic till and calculator, use a cassette player to listen to the story tapes and experience using a programmable toy called a roamer. Children in reception are given very good opportunities to develop their skills in ICT in the school's ICT suite. With the teacher using the interactive whiteboard well they gain knowledge of the computer and learn how to change colours, which key changes the shape, how to remove the picture and where the first letter of their name is found. This very good teaching helped all pupils to succeed, and confidently control the mouse using the *Dazzle* program to produce a picture. The children enjoyed this experience especially when they saw their work coming out of the printer.
106. They are beginning to have a sense of time through the study of daily and weekly events, for instance, birthdays and the first day at school. The children have taken part in the festivals of harvest, as well as Christmas and listened to well-known Bible stories.

Creative development

107. Children enter school with limited skills and brush control and some of the pictures of themselves show their immaturity when using paint. Staff provide children with a rich environment for creative development so that their creative skills expand and develop well. This area of learning is well taught in both the nursery and reception classes and the majority of children will have almost reached the standard expected at the end of the Foundation Stage of education. The displays show that teachers respect the children's efforts and help to stimulate further learning.
108. Particularly good is the skilful way the children are introduced to music both in the nursery and in reception classes. All the children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and a range of other songs, joining in enthusiastically and responding to actions. Reception children enjoy playing the untuned instruments and joining in with the chanting and singing of familiar songs and commands.
109. Children have opportunities to make a card for mother's day but this is teacher led because the children still lack imagination. Although there are opportunities in the role play areas for children to engage in activities where they can choose and play, these are not adult led or structured enough to help them progress in their learning, develop speaking skills, or give time for them to work in depth and complete an activity.

Physical development

110. Before entering the nursery class, some of the children have had little opportunity to develop their climbing and balancing skills from visits to a local play area. The children have had less opportunity to use small objects and tools for practical tasks. Teaching in most areas of the children's physical development is very good and children of all abilities make very good progress overall. Children will be close to achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
111. The imaginative development of the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage has been a major factor in helping the children to make this very good progress in the development of their physical skills. They can run, jump and climb and ride the very good selection of wheeled vehicles well, trying to follow each other around the areas on the playground. Using the good range of equipment they show an awareness of the needs of others in the space around them.
112. The opportunities for the children to move more confidently, imaginatively and control movements are carefully planned and demonstrated by the reception teacher in the very good physical education lesson seen. The children moved safely and with growing confidence. They were beginning to control and co-ordinate their bodies as they travelled along the benches and across the mats. In reception the children are beginning to work things out for themselves as they piece together jigsaws from the good selection provided. There are good opportunities everyday for all the children to play with sand and water using colanders, sieves, jugs, buckets and spades, as well as small objects such as threading beads and rolling and cutting to develop their skills.

113. Although there are many opportunities provided for children to use pencils, paintbrushes, crayons, scissors, pastels, paste spreaders and collage materials to develop hand and eye co-ordination, teachers are not as successful in developing a high degree of skill in holding and using a pencil and paintbrush correctly.

ENGLISH

Overall, provision for English is very good.

Strengths

- The very good planned teaching and learning strategies;
- The improved assessment procedures;
- Excellent subject leadership;
- The excellent teaching in Years 3 to 6;
- Pupils enjoy their literacy lessons;
- The provision for lower attaining pupils and for those with special educational needs.

Areas for development

- The standards in writing and spelling;
- A systematic approach to learning phonics.

114. In the tests in 2002, seven-year-olds achieved below average standards in reading and well below average standards in writing compared to all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools reading was above average and writing below average. Results in English in 2002 for eleven year olds were well below the national average. In comparison to similar schools standards were in line with the average. Standards in spelling are weak.
115. The previous inspection identified that standards in English in Year 2 and Year 6 were below average. Over the last three years, results show an upward trend much greater than found nationally. In 2002, results in English were low because of weaknesses in writing; and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels.
116. Inspection findings indicate that the school has taken suitable action to rectify many of the weaknesses in the 2002 results and that the standard of attainment in the current Year 6 is better. These pupils are currently achieving standards broadly in line with that typically found for this age group in reading and handwriting, with improving standards in writing. Standards of speaking and listening are high but standards in spelling are low. However, a number of Year 6 pupils are working below their expected level in writing.
117. Whilst there were differences in the performances of boys and girls in 2002, this was because of a high percentage of boys requiring special educational needs. However, no significant or consistent differences between the performances of boys and girls were noticeable during the inspection.
118. The poor attendance and the number of pupils who move into and out of the school in any one-year can cause a variation in standards; just as small numbers of pupils in any

one year group can affect overall percentages in the national tests. The school is attempting to overcome these problems successfully to increase standards as reflected by the rapid increase in progress over the last two years in Years 2 to 6. However, as yet these have not been reflected in the statutory test results.

119. The pupils' work in English, analysed and seen during the week of the inspection indicates that each year group has a wide range of ability. Overall, all pupils including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their ability and make very good progress. The standards of the higher attaining pupils across the years are just above expectations for their age group. The school has introduced the three National Literacy Strategy support programmes successfully to help those pupils who are experiencing difficulties develop their literacy skills. This is proving to be effective.
120. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy particularly in the past two years has helped considerably to ensure a consistent approach to planning and teaching which is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. A strong focus on teaching basic skills and the emphasis on guided reading and shared text work has improved fluency and expression in reading. However, as yet, it is not having the same impact in writing.
121. The National Literacy Strategy has extended the knowledge and understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts well. Pupils enjoy reading and regularly take books home. This is of great value to many pupils, as well as to parents who enjoy sharing the books with their children. Pupils said they prefer to read where it is peaceful, in the library or in bed. When pupils enter Year 3, most are self-motivated, confident readers. They progress well. Standards of reading and comprehension in Year 6 are in line for the age group at this stage in the term. The limited numbers of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 show understanding of a range of texts, select essential points and can use inference and deduction appropriately. Their progress in reading is very good. The reading skills and the skills needed to read with deeper understanding of the average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts but the reading lacks expression. The pupils with reading difficulties receive support individually or in groups and achieve well. The pupils in Year 6 can talk about a range of authors and texts they are reading. They know why they liked the books, but few are able to talk about their work in depth.
122. The library is very welcoming, owing to the colourful displays and the good wide range of artefacts which act as a visual stimulus. Pupils are able to find and use books for information, and are familiar with the contents and index pages of non-fiction texts. They make good use of the fiction books, handle them well and can explain how to locate the books they want. Pupils act as librarians, and look after and run the library well. The use of the library contributes effectively to meeting the National Literacy Strategy objectives and is well used in other subjects for research.
123. Overall, current pupils' attainment in speaking and listening represents very good progress since starting school. Throughout the school, all pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately. Pupils of all ages show an awareness of audience. At the end of Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are likely to be in line with national

averages for pupils of this age, with some pupils exceeding them. These pupils have benefited from a shared planned literacy programme with Years 4 and 5. This is an ideal and enjoyable way to develop their speaking skills as they share play scripts, poetry and drama together, and their listening skills as pupils listen attentively and are interested in what other pupils say.

124. Speaking and listening skills are well developed by the end of Year 6. This is because teachers in Years 3 to 6, who guide learning sensitively, encourage the use of Standard English. In addition, they provide opportunities for pupils to use speaking skills well in lessons, frequently using hot seating and snowballing techniques. Consequently, most pupils are beginning to speak with fluency and understanding. Very good questioning by teachers ensures that all pupils are drawn into the subject being studied and all are given many very good opportunities to contribute their own ideas. Each class has to plan and present a class assembly each term, which gives the pupils a real sense of performance and improves their formal speaking abilities.
125. The whole school target to improve the purpose and organisation in pupils' writing has not yet been successful in raising standards. Writing for a number of pupils across the school is still below average. Few pupils meet the levels expected of higher attaining pupils. Writing lacks spark and imagination.
126. Marking is very good in Years 2 to 6. This procedure is beginning to enable the teachers to track the progress of individual pupils in writing, for each group to work on their identified target, and is having an impact on the standard of writing. It is not happening in Year 1 because teachers are not providing opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning before moving on. Work does not link closely enough with the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage for some pupils. There were some good examples of pupils developing their writing. Year 2 pupils used a mind map well to understand the appearance, personality and feelings of Anansi the spider. Year 3 and 4 pupils were able to plan the main events as a structure for their story writing in a few words. They responded well to the 'freezing dungeon' as a setting for a traditional tale. Year 6 pupils identified features of play writing well - for example, the asides, 'nervously shuffling, flushing slightly, speaking sharply, and ushering her to the door.'
127. Pupils across the school enjoy poetry. Year 1 pupils were good at finding rhyming words, Years 3 and 4 used alliteration to write dragon poems. In Years 4 and 5 pupils used feather maps to help them recall the story and visualise the scene of Beddgelert. They improved their style, structure and vocabulary as they planned, edited, revised and redrafted their work – for example, one wrote, 'He sees the blood on the baby's quilt and draws his sword...'
128. In response to reading *The Chocolate Cake*, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were able to discuss how well the words suited this narrative poem and predicted what would happen next. There was good encouragement for pupils to think independently and come to an opinion. In addition, as a class they decided to focus on loneliness, 'there I am all alone, now I am worried'.

129. In Year 6, pupils believed that with a bit of imagination things can become almost anything they want them to be - a secret hiding place, a moon, a city, a magical kingdom. They described the atmosphere as 'magical, especially with its fantastic castles and colourful palaces of Kings,' after reading *Block City*.
130. The achievement of the pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is owing to teachers planning a good range of activities to motivate the pupils and good support from the teacher assistants. Their work matches the levels they are working at and they receive very good support throughout the school. This helps their learning to be productive.
131. Inspectors saw that the standard of writing in pupils' exercise books in subjects other than English was lower than it should be. The subject leader is aware that the opportunity to write more extensively in other subjects is an area for development. She has already plans in place to address this next term. However, where teachers identify key technical vocabulary - for example, in science and design and technology - this helps to improve the accuracy of the writing. In history, the work on the Great Fire of London gave pupils the opportunity to complete spider webs, sequence the fire, create a newspaper, write a diary and list a set of instructions to rebuild London. In geography, pupils made a passport for Barnaby Bear and made lists of objects to take on holiday to Austria as well as writing letters to the fictional character, Katie Morag, asking about living on an island. Pupils used writing frames well to prove or disapprove a hypothesis about whether the amenities of the Yew Tree Estate serves the needs of the people.
132. Grammar is taught across the school. Pupils' understanding of it is beginning to enhance reading and writing skills. Pupils in Year 6 use dictionaries and thesauri to improve their work. Pupils understand basic punctuation well.
133. Standards in spelling are below average. The teachers are beginning to plan from the National Literacy Strategy spelling bank booklet and use the lists of words and ideas set out in it. There is good emphasis on the context in which words are used. However, as yet these have not raised standards.
134. The analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicated that the teaching of handwriting is improving, with standards of pupils ranging from below to above average. In Year 2, handwriting is just beginning to reach the standard expected. In Year 6, handwriting shows control of a printed or partially joined up script in which letters and words are appropriately spaced. However, there is still not enough attention given to the way the pupils hold and use their pens and pencils.
135. The overall quality of teaching and learning are very good overall, with excellent teaching in Years 3 to 6. The National Literacy Strategy has improved teachers' subject knowledge and understanding and in nearly every case the first part of the lesson started very well indeed. What pupils are to learn in the very well planned and structured lessons is clearly identified and shared with pupils. Lessons end with a skilful drawing together of the main points, to check learning and understanding. Staff have high expectations and use a wide variety of strategies to improve learning.

Relationships are very good. When teaching is not as good, the purpose of the work set is unclear and expectations are inappropriate.

136. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and spelling is tracked well using Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) annual tests. There is very good monitoring, analysing and evaluation of results. This information guides future planning well. Consequently teachers are well aware of the pupils in class who need extra support.
137. ICT is contributing greatly to raising standards in English. The integrated learning software is having a very positive effect on the targeted pupils. The software supports the key objectives of sentence and word level work from the National Literacy Strategy. The information it provides about each pupil's progress is very good. This enables the teachers to see at a glance what is happening and to intervene if appropriate.
138. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well motivated and eager to learn. During the literacy lessons observed, pupils' behaviour was very good. They retain concentration well during lessons and follow instructions diligently. They participate fully in discussions and work well together in pairs and groups.
139. Leadership and management of English are excellent. The leader is very secure in her knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. There is a thorough and incisive action plan in place to raise attainment in English. She has had the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning programmes to help those pupils who have fallen behind. There is a shared commitment to the improvement of the subject, particularly in writing, to ensure every pupil succeeds. Resources are of very good quality.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning;
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour;
- Teachers' use of day-to-day assessments to guide their planning;
- Provision for pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs.

Areas for development

- Teachers' understanding of the progression from mental to written calculation methods;
- Pupils' problem solving skills;
- Use of key objectives for assessing pupils' attainment;
- A whole-school system for tracking pupils' progress over time;
- Opportunities for the subject leader to monitor classroom work.

140. In the 2002 national assessments for seven-year-olds results were slightly above the national average. Results were above average when compared with similar schools. Over the last three years standards have continued to rise.
141. Pupils' performance at age eleven in the 2002 national tests was well below the national average for both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. These results were a slight rise on the results in the previous year. In comparison with similar schools – based on free school meal entitlement - pupils' performance was again well below average as it was when the comparator was prior attainment measures. Boys outperformed girls.
142. On the evidence available at the time of the inspection, many pupils in the current Year 2 are attaining standards which are broadly in line with those expected nationally with a significant number attaining above the level expected for their age. In the current Year 6, standards are broadly average, with only a few pupils consistently achieving at higher levels. The difference between previous national test results and the standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work is partly explained by the distorting impact on the whole-school results of a few poor attenders. The rise in standards reflects the clear improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection particularly in the older infant class and in the junior years where most of the teaching is now very good. The improvements in teaching and learning also build on the structure and consistency provided by the National Numeracy Strategy. Consequently most pupils are achieving much better standards although future whole-school results may continue to be adversely affected by poor attenders.
143. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and all teachers are using the structure well. There is a good balance between the different aspects of mathematics although problem solving is an area that is less secure. In the infant years pupils acquire a secure foundation in mathematics especially number. They add and subtract accurately with numbers of increasing size. They have a good grasp of place value to 100 and can partition two-digit numbers to aid them in their calculations. They successfully perform simple multiplication calculations based upon familiar tables and recognise time and clock-faces. They can estimate and measure accurately. They have a good understanding of symmetry and accurately and carefully produce simple tally and bar charts. Throughout Years 1 and 2 there is a strong emphasis on practical mathematical activities. Most of the current Year 2 pupils are working at Level 2, and a significant number are working at the higher Level 3.
144. By the age of seven, high attaining pupils understand place value of number to 100, begin to explore numbers to 1000 and mentally recall table facts to 3, 4 and 5 times. Pupils of average ability understand place value and use numbers to 100. They also recognise patterns relating to the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Most Year 2 pupils can identify common two and three-dimensional shapes. They recognise odd and even numbers and can solve addition problems using doubles and near doubles and know how to adjust by 1 when adding or subtracting 9 or 11. They have good mental skills and solve money problems using sound strategies. Lower attaining pupils practise simple addition and subtraction with numbers up to 10 and sequence larger numbers.

Pupils make sound progress in Year 1 with satisfactory teaching and rapid progress in Year 2 with very good teaching.

145. The emphasis upon number continues in Years 3 to 6. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that the oldest pupils work accurately with fractions, decimals and percentages. They can carry out long multiplication, recognise prime numbers and find factors. They can relate the attributes of two-dimensional shapes such as quadrilaterals and of regular three-dimensional shapes such as cuboids. They have a good understanding of area and perimeter of regular shapes and of reflective and rotational symmetry. They can work with group data producing frequency bar charts. Pupils can use calculators effectively, making choices when the use of calculators is appropriate. They use mathematical language with precision. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, particularly science, design and technology, and geography. Problem solving skills are less secure, however, across the school.
146. By Year 6, the few high attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value to more than 1000 and use fractions and percentages confidently. Pupils multiply and divide decimals to two places using the standard formal written methods. They have a good understanding of ratio and proportion and are beginning to handle negative numbers well. Average attaining pupils multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers using partitioning and the grid method. They measure perimeters and calculate areas of shapes. Lower attaining pupils have a good understanding of the place value of numbers but are less confident when using a range of strategies to multiply large numbers. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by teachers and teaching assistants. These pupils are managed well by teaching staff who recognise their needs and respond appropriately. Good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6 as a result of teaching that is consistently of very high quality.
147. The oldest pupils show a good grasp of tables and of the strategies necessary for accurate mental calculations. Teachers recognise the importance of these skills and provide regular opportunities for practice. The development of mental mathematics is well established. For example, in Year 2, pupils were successfully subtracting amounts of money to calculate the amount of change. They were also able to explain their calculation using a blank number line.
148. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 1 and very good in Years 2 to 6. The high quality teaching and learning are enhanced by the work of teaching assistants. Most teachers' subject knowledge is secure but a few have gaps in their knowledge of the progression from mental to written calculation methods so that on occasions pupils are moved too quickly to standard formal written methods for multiplication and division. Expectations are high throughout the school. Teachers have a clear grasp of the standards which pupils should be achieving, and progress is increasingly brisk. There is evidence that potential higher attainers are being extended through appropriately challenging work. For example in Year 2, higher attaining pupils were dealing with challenging calculations in money. The school has also begun to provide for gifted pupils – for example, two particularly gifted Year 6 pupils are taking a GCSE in mathematics this summer. Lower attainers are given good support in lessons and through well-judged

additional teaching based on the National Numeracy Strategy's Springboard programmes. For example, in mixed Year 4 and 5 class, lower attaining pupils were given close attention and good support by a teaching assistant with their work on simple equivalent fractions. There is also very good support provided for pupils with special educational needs. Where teaching is best, teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject, so inspiring pupils to greater efforts – for example, in Years 3/4. There is very effective use of whole-class teaching, group and individual work within each class. ICT is making a significant contribution to the teaching of mathematics, with particularly good use being made of the interactive whiteboard for modelling.

149. The quality of teachers' planning is very good and provides for tasks which meet the needs of the range of abilities and ages within each class. For example, in Year 6, the teachers' planning included different tasks within the same topic on quadrilaterals for different ability groups. As a result all pupils were able to make good progress in understanding the attributes of different types of quadrilateral. Day-to-day informal assessment of pupils' work by teachers is good. The quality of marking is good. Information from these assessments is used well to guide planning of future lessons. Formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory. Teachers regularly use standardised and other test materials to focus their planning. However, assessments are usually given National Curriculum levels subdivided by the teachers into three parts, such as Level 3a, 3b or 3c, rather than focusing on the attainment of the key objectives from the programme of study for the year group. Consequently teachers' assessments merely indicate a level and do not give enough information about what a pupil actually knows, understands and can do. Such assessments do not indicate particular strengths and weaknesses in terms of mathematical topics or skills. Instead they are useful at the end of a key stage when formal national assessments must be made. The information from formal assessments during the year therefore is not as informative or useful for guiding planning to ensure pupils tackle their weaknesses and build on their strengths. The tracking of pupils' progress over time is also underdeveloped and so pupils moving up through the school are apt to linger on aspects they have mastered early in the year until their new teacher is able to assess their mathematical learning needs.
150. Learning objectives, taken from the National Numeracy Strategy's Framework, are always shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this results in them understanding what it is they are going to learn and do during the lesson. Teachers also outline the teaching and learning styles that will be used in the lesson. For example, in Years 4/5 the objective of learning about equivalent fractions was explained carefully in terms pupils understood along with the teaching and learning styles of paired talk and providing time to think and snowballing again which pupils understood clearly. This enabled pupils to engage quickly with tasks and little time was wasted. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards mathematics. They are attentive, co-operative and very well behaved. They work well in groups or independently. The strengths in the teaching and learning alongside the well implemented structure and consistency of the National Numeracy Strategy underpin the good improvement in standards in mathematics seen across the school.

151. The subject leader provides good leadership for the subject and has a clear view of the standards being attained. There has been some monitoring of mathematics teaching but the subject leader has too many additional responsibilities to enable her to develop the role fully.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.

Strengths

- The improvement in pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6;
- Improvements in pupils' science investigation skills;
- The healthy eating initiative and its links with developing pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding;
- The range of science activities that the pupils experience.

Areas for development

- The provision for higher attaining pupils;
- The role of the subject leader;
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress over time.

152. At the end of Year 2, standards in national assessments in 2002 were just below national average for seven-year-olds but continued an upward trend. The 2002 results, however, represent a significant improvement since the last inspection. In comparison with similar schools results were below the average but at the higher Level 3 were in line with the average. Inspection evidence indicates that, at this stage of the year, most pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards broadly typical for their age group.
153. The results in national tests in 2002 at the end of Year 6 show that standards in science are below the national average. However, in comparison with similar schools, they are above the average. The proportion of pupils gaining the threshold Level 4 or higher is slightly above the national average; the proportion of those achieving the higher Level 5 is however, below the national average. The inspection evidence confirms these test results and that, at this stage of the year, the current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are broadly typical for this age group.
154. All pupils in Key Stage 1 are making sound progress. In Key Stage 2 most pupils are making rapid progress. This is as a direct result of clearly planned learning experiences by teachers with good subject knowledge. Higher attaining pupils are generally working at a level appropriate for them but a lack of focused support and challenge means they are not making the fullest progress of which they are capable.
155. By the end of Year 2, pupils can observe and describe the features of a range of plants and animals. They show a good understanding of the conditions of growth, and seed dispersal. They are aware of some sources of light and the use of electricity in everyday appliances. Their current work on plants and living things and the recent

fine weather has meant that they have been able to make effective use of the nearby wood and wildlife area to begin to watch and understand how plants grow.

156. Pupils cover a full range of ideas in science by the end of Year 6. They build on previous skills and can now carry out investigations with confidence and understanding. Pupils can explain 'fair testing' with one variable and make predictions based on their prior learning. They are beginning to evaluate their results as well as to comment on how they could improve their investigations, although more work is still required to prepare pupils for appraising their own work at a higher level. Pupils learn a suitable number of facts about the physical world, including studying about light, how it travels, the effects on our senses and how shadows are formed. They make effective use of ICT to record the outcomes of their investigations. Currently they are working on investigations to separate insoluble materials by filtering out and testing whether, and how, they can be separated. The investigation is leading them to look at how the separation occurs and what methods can be used to do this. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 confidently use the scientific enquiry skills to suggest improvements to an activity for separating different solids.
157. Pupils undertake a number of good practical science activities to learn and practise their investigative skills. Most of their work in science is recorded appropriately and accurately. The presentation of their work is also good and on some occasions it is very good. The way that activities are presented by teachers and their assistants gives good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their real understanding of what they have learned.
158. As pupils move through Year 3 to Year 6, they continue to learn an adequate range of new scientific ideas. For example, in a mixed age lesson in Year 3/4, pupils investigate how water is transported through a plant and record their observations through drawings and written text. They also will often use ICT appropriately to present their outcomes. In Year 4/5, pupils investigate the effect of bones and skeletons on life styles and habitat and explore the effect to themselves of eating healthily. Pupils are able to draw on their previous experiences and use terminology such as hypothesise and prediction frequently. Pupils make constant reference to the technical and scientific word banks displayed around the room to help them with their recording. Year 5 and 6 pupils are also able to explain how they use the Internet to find out the difference between habitats during their investigations of life and living things. Most pupils know how a simple electric circuit works, however, by the age of eleven pupils do not yet know how to investigate circuits and the brightness of bulbs in series and parallel circuits.
159. Pupils have positive attitudes towards science. This represents continued improvement since the last inspection. Pupils work together well and are willing to engage in discussions before making final decisions about their investigations. Discussions with pupils confirmed that they cover a broad range of work and develop sound investigative skills as they move through the school. Often the experimental work excites them. For example, in Year 3/4 pupils were amazed when using celery sticks and dyed water to investigate how liquid is transported up the stem and likewise, pupils in Year 1 were surprised and excited by the range of smells, flavours and textures they could sense. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well

and relationships are very good. This adds to the quality of learning for all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence is high; a direct result of the value which teachers place on the contributions of pupils.

160. Numeracy skills are used well in recording pupils' work. Charts and graphs are present in most classes. Pupils use and interpret line and block graphs well, and generally these are drawn neatly and accurately. Literacy skills are being developed well through the way that activities are planned, introduced, discussed, recorded and evaluated and through the use of the library and very good word banks, which highlight the scientific and technical vocabulary being used within a particular module of work.
161. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. In Year 2 and Key Stage 2 it is of high quality and in Year 1 it is satisfactory. The best teaching is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge; the sharing of what is to be learned with pupils; brisk pace to the lesson, very good intervention by the teacher; and appropriate time for pupils to complete their activities. These are the lessons in which pupils get good opportunities to learn by exploring and investigating, rather than being given information and being told what is going to happen. Pupils take greater responsibility for their planning. Teachers' planning is thorough; activities are well matched to pupils' individual needs, particularly in Key Stage 2 where teachers amend their lesson planning to take account of how well pupils have met the learning objectives from the previous lesson. As a result of this rigorous procedure all pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress during lessons and over time. Teachers use a wide range of very good teaching strategies to keep pupils motivated, enthused and clear about what it is they are expected to know, do and understand. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson the teacher's excellent questioning skills and purposeful strategy for encouraging pupils to talk about their investigation kept them focused on the task and promoted deep enquiry into how the plant draws its nutrition. Pupils with special educational needs cope well with the practical work and clear thought is given to how their work matches the targets in their individual education plans. The scheme of work covers all areas of learning appropriately and ensures continuity year-on-year. There is, however, insufficient focus on ensuring that the higher attaining pupils are challenged fully. Sex education is satisfactorily planned and taught as part of the personal, health and social education and science curriculum. When teaching is less strong, opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their experiments is less well defined and pupils are often given less clear advice about recording their activities.
162. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. The school has an effective policy and scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. She has made a good start in auditing the strengths and weakness of teaching and provision in science and by monitoring pupils' work and assessing the outcomes against the National Curriculum levels. She has encouraged the other class teachers to do the same in order to secure a whole-school view of pupils' progress. The procedures are not yet secure and the recording of pupils' progress does not give a clear picture of progress against key objectives as they move through the school. Though national and school tests are analysed, this has not yet led to setting targets for year groups or smaller groups of pupils. The subject leader's current plan of action includes the evaluation of the present scheme of work and observation of teaching and learning to iron out

inconsistencies. The lack of a systematic approach to classroom observations is limiting this development, however. The subject leader is also responsible for mathematics, Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and personal, health and social education. This range of responsibilities is too great to enable the coordination of science to be developed fully.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The leadership by the subject leader;
- Improving standards in both key stages;
- The use of high quality resources to stimulate pupils' thinking;
- Some large scale design and model making in Year 3/4.

Areas for development

- Three-dimensional work using a wider range of materials;
- Observational drawing;
- The range of resources;
- The role of the subject leader;
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress;
- The use of assessment information.

163. Standards in art and design are in line with those typically found in Years 2 and 6. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Whilst it was only possible to observe two lessons in art and design, a substantial amount of evidence was collected through scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' sketchbooks and art and design work on display. All the evidence indicates that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and rapid progress in Key Stage 2.
164. Pupils in Year 1 make sound progress overall in drawing and painting but in Year 2 they make rapid progress because these skills are taught more consistently. They begin to use line and shape with growing confidence and their skills in observational drawing are developing appropriately. Pupils in Year 1 drew detailed pictures of leaves they had observed, demonstrating a sound use of pencils to create straight and curved lines. A different range of hard and soft pencils are not used, however, to help pupils develop the techniques of creating texture through shading. By Year 2, pupils' work in art and design demonstrates that they have learned to mix colours appropriately and that they are developing techniques to create remembered or imaginary ideas. They have produced some good quality large-scale images using pictures cut out from magazines to guide their observation technique. They also use the work of other artists to guide their creativity, expression and drawing technique. They also experiment with different printing and stencilling techniques and use ICT such as the *Dazzle* program effectively to create images.

165. As pupils move through Year 3 to Year 6, they apply their skills in an increasingly wide range of media. Year 3 pupils use the same computer program as Years 1 and 2 to print pictures using straight black lines and blocks of colour to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. In Year 4/5 pupils also use the *Dazzle* program to create pictures in the style of Van Gogh, trying hard to replicate his unique style of brush stroke. They also use their painting and colour mixing skills appropriately to paint in the Van Gogh style and draw comparisons between their computer and paint generated images. Their finished pictures show that they build on their previous experience where many pupils are able to use colours to create a particular effect. They know about famous artists such as Van Gogh and Miro and can identify some of their works. Year 6 pupils study other artists, for example Lowry, and create pictures using a range of media. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils used the stimulus of a Lowry print and their observation drawing skills to produce reasonable drawings of a tree and a fence on the school site using charcoal, gaining an understanding of perspective, tone and shade whilst doing so. Pupils' work in observational drawing has improved since the last inspection but still remains an area for further development if pupils are to move onto the higher levels of achievement in art and design. The use of a wider range of materials and working in groups to produce large-scale designs and constructions has been developed well, inspired by pupils' observations and research, teachers' very good subject knowledge and a flexible approach to the use of published guidance materials - for example, in Year 4/5, pupils have produced excellent chair designs.
166. Pupils do not do enough to satisfactorily explore art from different cultures and traditions - for example, from India and Africa. The excellent display of artefacts in the library and around the school, however, provides pupils with an awareness of different cultures and artistic themes. Pupils use ICT well in art and design, where pupils, from an early age, take risks with art and design based software to create some noteworthy images. The curriculum is broad and balanced and supplemented by visits to the local area, but opportunities to visit art galleries and museums to stimulate pupils' interest further are limited. Sketchbooks are used consistently well throughout the school but pupils do not use these sketch books enough for experimenting with sketching and painting techniques and for recording research. Pupils also work with only a limited range of materials such as textiles and clay and in three-dimensions.
167. The quality of teaching and learning across the school are good. One of the lessons seen was good and the other was very good. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced. Teachers spend an appropriate amount of time intervening and demonstrating to the pupils the skills to be explored and developed, often using their own work as examples. They have high expectations of their pupils, who respond very well and work with diligence and care. Teachers and teaching assistants give suitable advice to individual pupils without interfering with the ownership of their work.
168. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons, as are their attitudes to art and design. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work. They enjoy designing and making models and willingly discuss their work as it progresses and when it is completed.
169. The subject is well led by the subject leader. The school has an effective policy and scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. Pupils' work is now assessed at the end

of the year, which is an improvement since the last inspection, and whilst a portfolio of work is not maintained, the excellent display in the school's art gallery and around the school gives clear indications of the standards required and achieved. However, the assessments made across the school are not sufficiently focused on key objectives to assist teachers in their on-going assessment of art and design. This means that assessments are not useful guides to teachers about what pupils should learn next. Resources are satisfactory, well organised and accessible but are limited in the range of soft and hard pencils, pastels, printing mediums, paintbrush sizes and materials from which to create large abstract three-dimensional forms. Teachers' subject knowledge has been improved significantly through recent training led by the subject leader. The subject leader has observed some others teaching and has developed clear guidelines to help form her judgements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning;
- Some making of products.

Areas for development

- Attainment in Key Stage 2;
- Opportunities to design and make to a higher standard;
- The range of resources used - for example, textiles, sheet materials and wood;
- The role of the subject leader;
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress.

170. It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and displays of finished products and models and from discussions with pupils and teachers, the available evidence indicates that at the end of Year 2 standards in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. This is an improvement on what was seen in the last inspection. However, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 remains below that which is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils across the school are good at discussing their work whilst it is progressing, most feel confident to make and accept suggestions. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in Key Stage 1. However, pupils' progress is slower than might be expected in Key Stage 2 because not enough high quality work is being covered in this subject in the later junior years.
171. There was only limited evidence of design and technology work in Years 5 and 6. The work scrutiny showed that pupils have been involved in discussing how cams are used and they have made simple models of a cam and follower mechanism. Overall, however, the lack of evidence of high quality work in design and technology and of pupils' progression through the required designing and making elements of the National Curriculum show that the school, whilst meeting basic National Curriculum requirements, has yet to develop the subject fully in Years 5 and 6 because there has been an intense focus on improving literacy and numeracy standards.

172. In the Year 2 lesson observed pupils made a start with the design of a model car based on their experiences. They discussed materials they might use and readily offered suggestions for their use. For example, one pupil suggested that elastic bands could be used for tyres around wheels made from thick card. Pupils made good quality, detailed drawings and labelled them clearly. Those with special educational needs and the lower attaining pupils were well supported in labelling their drawings. At the end of the lesson, pupils discussed their ideas and a range of ideas about how they might attach to their models. All pupils made sound progress at the design stage of their work. Also in Year 2 pupils have worked well together in groups to produce a multi-coloured coat for Jacob, using the theme presented in published materials. The final product is proudly displayed in the classroom and pupils were keen to talk about how they designed and made it.
173. Occasionally, numeracy and ICT skills are used in recording pupils' work. Charts and graphs are present in most classes. Pupils use and interpret line and block graphs well, and generally these are drawn neatly and accurately to record the outcomes of questionnaires and surveys. Literacy skills are being developed well through the way that design activities are planned, introduced, discussed, recorded and evaluated and through the use of very good word banks, which highlight the design and technology vocabulary being used within a particular module of work.
174. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good in lessons. They show enthusiasm for their work and enjoy designing and making.
175. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. In the two lessons observed it was very good in one and excellent in the other. In both these lessons, the teaching was characterised by very good planning which ensured that the tasks were suitably matched to the needs of the pupils and very good strategies to ensure that all pupils were fully engaged in the lesson, such as intervention and talking together in pairs to discuss a design idea. Other strong points included: skilful use of questioning that challenged pupils' thinking, in particular the higher attainers; good management of pupils; and high expectations that secured pupils' intense commitment.
176. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school makes effective use of the QCA schemes of work that help teachers to plan a balanced programme of work for pupils across the school. Good links are made with other subjects such as science, mathematics, music and art and design. Resources for design and technology are satisfactory, well organised and accessible but lack width in the range of materials from which to create products to a higher standard. Further resources have been purchased since the last inspection to support the planned scheme of work. Pupils' work is now assessed at the end of the year, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the assessments made across the school are not sufficiently focused on key objectives. This means the annual assessments are not able to guide curriculum planning fully. Monitoring of planning and pupils' completed work is regular but the subject leader is not able to check out progress in the practical skills through lesson observations owing to a lack of time. At best, therefore, the subject leader has a partial view of pupils' progress.

GEOGRAPHY

The provision for geography is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The use of a wide range of teaching and learning styles;
- The programme of visits;
- Use of ICT and, in particular, the use of Broadband Internet;
- The subject leaders' audit and subject action plan.

Areas for development

- Standards of attainment;
- The role of subject leader in the area of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- Storage of resources and support materials;
- A system of assessing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and for tracking progress over time.

177. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. Taking into account work seen in pupils' books, discussions with pupils, and the subject leader, displays around the school and teachers' planning, standards are judged to be below those expected nationally by the age of seven and eleven but are improving. The impact of ICT, although improving the provision, has not been in place long enough to impact strongly on standards.
178. In Year 2 the pupils can identify Scotland and the fictional island which is the home of Katie Morag. Their study of this island has widened their understanding of places and lifestyles. A letter written to Katie gave a good opportunity to use their literacy skills. Previous work shows that pupils have carried out weather surveys with Barnaby Bear and recorded their information by tallying and charts.
179. In Year 6, pupils had made a study of a river, had researched a conservation project and were currently studying a mountainous region of the world. Pupils were able to use atlases to locate their mountain area and were comparing climatic changes on the mountain with increasing height for sea level. Evidence of the use of the Internet was seen in pupils' work supporting research projects. There was evidence of good understanding of the local area in relation to the amenities on the Yew Tree estate and how it served the needs of the local people. Pupils had classified buildings by use – for example, homes, shops, leisure - and had carried out surveys, used tally charts and bar charts to show their results and as a result had drawn conclusions from their work. Evidence from digital camera photographs relating to places in the local area were used in an excellent display.
180. Progress is sound for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make rapid progress as a result of the high quality of support provided by teaching assistants. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Curriculum guidelines based on national recommendations are in place, enabling regular and progressive gains in knowledge and understanding over time.

181. Pupils have an excellent attitude to their learning and they are interested and very eager to be involved in paired talk and discussion groups to share their views. Pupils listen very carefully and are able to concentrate and work independently. In group discussions they collaborate well and show respect for the ideas of others.
182. Teaching is good, overall. In the one lesson observed the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher clarified the learning objectives with pupils, and used detailed planning to present a very well organised lesson. High expectations on presentation and behaviour were shared with pupils, high quality open questioning encouraged pupils to think. A very good use of a range of learning strategies – for example, feather mapping, paired talk - ensured that pupils made very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress as a result of careful matching of tasks to their needs and their opportunity to work directly with the teacher. Marking of pupils’ work is of high quality containing positive feedback underpinning the lesson learning objective with suggestions about how improvements could be made.
183. Subject leadership is sound. The subject leader has completed a useful audit of geography and has developed a sound action plan for development. There is no monitoring and evaluation of the subject and no effective system for tracking pupils’ progress in the development of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.
184. The learning environment is of high quality with many colourful displays which support work in geography. Resources are adequate, but storage of them is disorganised and inefficient. There is evidence of good use of the library for research and of the local environment to support geography. Visits to Rhyl, Plas Gwynant, and Edgmond Hall provide good practical opportunities for learning and reinforcing geographic skills. The use of ICT and, in particular, the Broadband Internet access has made a significant positive impact on pupils’ independence to research for information. Video tapes and CD-ROMs are also available to pupils for research.

HISTORY

Overall, the provision for history is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Impact of ICT and, in particular, the use of the Internet to access historical information;
- The use of whole school teaching and learning strategies;
- The subject development planning.

Areas for development

- Standards of attainment;
- The role of subject leader in the area of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- The storage system for artefacts and resources;
- A system of assessment based on key learning objectives to track pupils’ progress.

185. It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection. Taking into account evidence from discussions with pupils and the subject leader, displays around the school and teachers' planning, standards are judged to be below those expected nationally by the age of seven and eleven.
186. Infant pupils have visited the Tay Museum in Birmingham and there was evidence that they had listened well as they were able to recall and record events. An attractive display of pupils' work with photographs provided a good record of their visit.
187. In Year 6, pupils' enquiry skills are developing slowly. They are beginning to link information gathered from books in the library and on the Internet to gain and extend their knowledge and develop their understanding of the Tudors and, more recently, the Greeks. The work shows satisfactory overall use of historical terms and an understanding of chronological knowledge of the world of Ancient Greece.
188. Progress across the school is sound for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the high quality of support provided by teaching assistants.
189. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour in lessons are good. They are enthusiastic and respond well to the activities provided for them and take pride in their achievements. Pupils respond with interest to the teaching and treat each other and historical resources with respect. In the infants, where pupils learn about past times, they take great interest in a range of kitchen utensils and handle them with care. They listen sensibly and are confident to answer questions and offer explanations during discussions.
190. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. During the inspection a good lesson was observed in Year 3/4 where pupils discussed Viking longboats. The teacher had good subject knowledge; she used a range of teaching and learning styles and used well matched tasks well to challenge each ability group enabling them all to make good progress. The good quality planning made the learning objectives very clear and included specific reference, through an additional support sheet, to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. This had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is very good and involves positive feedback with supportive indications of how to improve, and in many cases pupils respond to the teacher's comment.
191. The subject leader has carried out an audit and as a result, has drawn up an effective action plan for the development of the subject. Her role in the monitoring and evaluation of the subject is underdeveloped, however. There is no effective system to record information about pupils' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. The history policy, the scheme of work adapted from the most recent national guidance for history, the whole school long term plan of coverage and the good quality of short term planning provide a very sound basis for future improvement.
192. The accommodation is very attractive and supportive of learning with colourful displays in all classrooms. Resources for history are adequate. The storage of artefacts and books is unsatisfactory. There is adequate use of the local environment.

The use of ICT has increased and has made a significant positive impact on pupils' independence in searching for information and has improved the quality of their presentation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall the quality of provision in ICT is very good.

Strengths

- Effective use of high quality resources;
- Consistently good teaching;
- Leadership and management of the subject;
- Improving standards of pupils' work;
- Very good technical and in-class support;
- Use of interactive whiteboard technology.

Areas for development

- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to control models and log data;
- E-mail communication links.

193. The ICT provision is a strength of the school.
194. It was only possible to make three lesson observations during the inspection. In addition a wide range of evidence of pupils' work was scrutinised, and discussions held with older pupils who demonstrated the work saved on the school's network system. Pupils were also observed using the computers during lessons in a range of subjects and contexts across the school. This evidence indicates that at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards in ICT are similar to those typically found in pupils of these age groups. Standards show even more improvement than was seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress throughout the school. There were examples of above average attainment in some pieces of work and the school is well placed through its very good provision to improve standards even further.
195. Teachers provide very well planned ICT lessons to every pupil in the school at some time during the week, lasting for about 50 minutes on average. This excellent provision uses a range of very good software to help pupils develop their ICT skills in designing, word processing, desktop publishing, making presentations and modelling, and handling and presenting mathematical and scientific data. However, there are limited opportunities as yet to use ICT to control models, log data and use email. The school also provides significant support to those pupils who have difficulty in making progress with literacy, through a commercial integrated learning package. The school is also connected to Broadband to enable pupils to access the Internet for research and investigation, something they do with regularity, confidence and competence. It also has an interactive whiteboard which is used well to enhance pupils' learning. This provision would not be as successful as it is without the support of a dedicated technician and support teacher; this high quality support is ensuring that pupils are able to make very rapid progress in developing their ICT skills.

196. Pupils in Year 1 were seen using programs to reinforce their understanding of symmetry and repeating patterns. They show good mouse control and this work supports their learning in mathematics. In Year 2, pupils have used their word processing skills effectively to produce a book review. Pupils in Year 3/4 were seen using geometrical shapes to make patterns and then rotating them and using 'search' and 'tools' to locate information and display results of surveys using different graphs on the theme 'about me'. They have also used the *Dazzle* program effectively to produce repeat patterns for art and design work and to design a chair. Some pupils are currently using digital cameras and video cameras to produce a video of the school for publicity purposes.
197. ICT skills are beginning to be used effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. For example in a Year 4/5 literacy lesson pupils produced a piece of instructional writing. Charts and graphs are present in most classes. In Year 4/5, pupils have used *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheets to produce graphs to show bone sizes in humans as part of their work in science. They have also produced a table in religious education to show information they have found on the Internet about Muhammad. Pupils use and interpret line and block graphs well, and generally these are drawn neatly and accurately to record the outcomes of questionnaires and surveys, for example in food technology. In Years 4/5 pupils use the *Dazzle* program well to produce images in the style of Van Gogh and Mondrian and improve the quality of their art and design work as a result. In Year 6, pupils have used the interactive graph to show shadow length in science. They have used their computer skills effectively to produce work for other science topics that they have researched on the Internet. Some pupils in Year 4/5 and 6 have been given the task to research and produce their own information booklet on a country, for example, Greece. The finished booklets demonstrate all the skills that the pupils have learnt and are well presented.
198. Pupils' attitudes to ICT and their behaviour in lessons are very good. They listen to instructions and pay close attention when teachers demonstrate the use of software. They stay on task and cooperate well when working in pairs. Boys and girls, and those less confident in using computers, are given equal opportunities to learn new skills and to consolidate them.
199. Teaching and learning are very good in ICT. Teachers show good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned to develop pupils' knowledge and skills systematically. Teachers give clear demonstrations and instructions as to what the software can do, as was the case in one Year 6 lesson when the teacher demonstrated how to produce presentations using the *Microsoft PowerPoint* presentation software. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and they persevere and concentrate. The pace of lessons is always good. Lessons take place in the outstanding computer suite where sufficient computers and excellent support teaching mean that the teaching sessions are followed by practice and then evaluation of progress. This is a very effective use of these excellent resources. Pupils respond well to their ICT lessons and confidently use the skills and knowledge learned to support their learning in many other subjects of the curriculum.
200. Assessment often takes place when teachers or other adults intervene to support pupils experiencing difficulty. This often culminates in a shared and negotiated judgement

on a pupil's progress and achievement, which is then recorded appropriately and put into the pupil's file as evidence of progress and capability in ICT. This is good practice.

201. The leadership and management of the subject is very good. Monitoring and evaluation are progressing well and have provided the subject leader with a broad view of ICT across the school. The subject leader is thus able to focus support where it is most needed, including further training. The subject leader has a precise view of where further improvements are essential to raise standards further. These strategies are defined in a very good subject development plan. The headteacher and governors have successfully made the development of ICT a priority for the school.

MUSIC

Overall, the provision for music is good.

Strengths:

- Quality of teaching and learning;
- The music room facility;
- The choir and its development in the community.

Areas for development:

- The role of subject leader in the area of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning;
- Opportunities for pupils to observe and experience live performances;
- A system of assessing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in music;
- The use of ICT within music.

202. A judgement on standards has been made after having observed three lessons with junior pupils, discussions with pupils and the subject leaders, scrutiny of teachers' planning and of pupils' previous and current work and displays. Evidence indicates that standards are typical for pupils of seven and eleven. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The recent appointment of a music specialist to teach Year 2 to Year 6 has already started to make a significant positive impact on standards.
203. Lower junior pupils are able to explain musical terms such as tempo, pitch, dynamics and timbre and can describe an ostinato. They can use improvised body percussion patterns to warm up their voices. Pupils are able to talk about instruments in relation to animal movements and express their feelings about the sounds. They play a wide range of percussion instruments drawn from many cultures, divided into drum shakers, metal instruments and wooden instruments.
204. In Year 6, pupils can work as individuals, groups or as a whole class to improve diction when singing and to play instrumental accompaniments to songs. Pupils are able to use four beat phrases, play sequences and read simple notation cards. Using the song Kumula Vista the pupils understand musical elements of pitch, dynamics and tempo. Pupils sing well together and, by using evaluation, are able to improve their personal performances. Through playing chime bass as a group they are able to play

simple chord patterns. The appraisal of their performance showed that pupils listen carefully and that they can identify areas to improve.

205. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sound and often good progress. All pupils have full access to the full range of musical experiences.
206. Pupils have an excellent attitude to their learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils are very clear about the expectations of them and are keen and motivated to enjoy the lesson. Pupils respond readily to the challenge of the task, engage with it enthusiastically and want to do well.
207. The recent appointment of the music specialist has transformed the music provision. In the three lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning were never less than good. The very detailed planning, focusing on learning objectives, ensures very organised lessons. The specific information provided for pupils with special educational needs in the planning ensures that these pupils can make rapid progress. Introductions to lessons are fun and involve a range of activities for all pupils to warm up their voices. The range of activities, the very good questioning of pupils and their continuous involvement in the lesson ensure a stimulating learning opportunity. The teacher's own musical skills, knowledge and understanding and her ability to share these with the pupils provide rich learning experiences.
208. The role of the subject leader is underdeveloped. There has been an audit of the subject and a sound subject action plan has been written. There is no monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and there is no systematic process for tracking pupils' progress. The school choir performs at the local community centre and supports events in school at Easter and Christmas. The school provides few opportunities for pupils to observe live performances. There is little involvement of ICT in the teaching of music and little use of electronic systems to record work prior to completion. The music room provides a good dedicated space in the school for active music making to take place. The displays of musical instruments and posters support well the teaching of music. Resources are adequate but are well supplemented by those brought by the teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the provision in physical education is good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning;
- Use of high quality external coaches;
- On-site swimming pool and standards in swimming;
- Very good facilities for indoor and outdoor programmes;
- Excellent residential experience for older pupils;
- Enthusiastic and talented subject leader.

Areas for development

- Shortages of equipment;
- Pupils' skills in assessing other's performance and making suggestions for improvement;
- Monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leader;
- Formal assessment procedures and tracking of pupils' progress over time.

209. It was only possible for inspectors to observe two lessons of physical education, one in each key stage, during the inspection. Pupils were also observed at general play during lunchtime and in the after-school tag rugby session as part of the extracurricular provision.
210. Overall, standards in physical education are similar to those typically found for all age groups. Pupils show developing ball skills where activities are designed to develop catching and throwing skills. Older pupils in the juniors develop their games skills in basketball. Generally, ball skills are developing well and both boys and girls demonstrate good throwing and catching skills by the end of the infant years. Swimming standards are higher than average as pupils in every year have swimming as part of their physical education curriculum in the school's own swimming pool.
211. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching seen was good in one lesson and excellent in the other. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and pay appropriate attention to health and safety with clear warm up and warm down routines. Lessons proceed at a good pace. The two halls provide a very good resource for indoor activities and the outside hard play and grassed areas are good resources for a range of outdoor games. However, there are shortages of equipment which is hindering fullest development. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on ball skills where pupils were working in pairs, there were only sufficient large balls for one between four pupils which meant that some pupils were not actively involved in the skills session for the period whilst each pair practised with the balls.
212. When appropriate, teachers make good use of demonstrations by pupils. However, pupils assessing each other's work and offering ideas for improvement is underdeveloped. The school uses external coaches for basketball and for tag rugby through excellent links with local clubs. The quality of this coaching is very high. Pupils respond well to their lessons working hard and all pupils made clear progress in body and ball control during the lessons seen.
213. The planned curriculum covers all aspects of the national physical education programme including outdoor and adventurous activities during the excellent residential visits in Years 5 and 6. The scheme of work is based on the QCA framework and the Dudley scheme but has not been reviewed for some time. There is a growing range of extra-curricular provision in sport and a growing use of ICT. The school takes part in a range of competitive games with other schools. For example, the school is planning to take part in inter-school basketball games.
214. The recently appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and talented. She has clear ideas about what needs to be done to raise the profile of physical education in the school and to raise standards and improve the teaching and learning further. For example,

priorities in the subject action plan include targets for staff training, improving out of hours learning and restocking the equipment levels for physical education. However, she has been unable to monitor teaching and learning owing to a lack of time because the school has been focusing on the core subjects when considering release to carry out such monitoring. The subject leader has sound links with the local school sport co-ordinator and there is a developing relationship within the local cluster of schools to aid development in school. The school is planning to seek the Activemark Silver award and is beginning to put in place improvements in provision to meet the criteria for this award. Day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are good and are used well to guide planning of future lessons. However, formal assessments of attainment, particularly at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are not based on the end of key stage statements in the National Curriculum and the school does not track pupils' progress over time.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the provision for religious education is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The use of parents to widen pupils' experience of world religions;
- The use of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies.

Areas for development

- The role of subject leader to include the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- Storage of resources and artefacts;
- The number of basic texts – for example, Bibles.

215. A judgement on standards has been made after having observed three lessons, discussions with pupils and the subject leader, scrutiny of teachers' planning and of pupils' previous and current work and displays. Evidence indicates that standards are in line with those given in the locally agreed syllabus for Years 2 and 6.

216. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they are developing a good factual basis of topics they have studied. In both infants and juniors, pupils not only learn about religion, but also learn from it. In the infants, pupils become familiar with stories about Jesus as a special friend. They have knowledge about the concept of belonging and being a Christian. In the juniors, they continue to learn more about Christianity, pupils study several aspects of Hinduism and Islam. They are able to talk about Diwali and Rangoli patterns and the reading of Qu'ran and how Moslems pray at a mosque and make pilgrimages. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect, and one particular lesson had focused on "how I behave and work". Most pupils are making sound progress and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All pupils have full access to the full range of religious education experiences.

217. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and behaviour in lessons is very good. They engage very well with tasks, they understand what is expected of them

and maintain concentration and interest. They work well together and engage with paired talk and group discussions in a mature, sensible way.

218. The quality of teaching and learning are good. In the high quality lessons observed teachers had good subject knowledge and used clear learning objectives to focus pupils' learning. Teachers used very good explanations and open questioning to encourage pupils to explain and discuss ideas. There was very good use of time, and lessons moved at a brisk pace to keep pupils motivated and on task. There was extensive use of discussion strategies - for example, paired talk and feather mapping - which encouraged pupils to talk together and instilled a respect for others' views. There was excellent use of hot seating in a Year 4/5 lesson when the teacher adopted the role of Peter at the Last Supper in a lesson about moral dilemmas. The impact of this role-play was to draw out very mature questioning from the pupils and they clearly understood that choices had responsibilities and consequences attached to them. This was a very well planned and sensitive lesson by a teacher who has very high expectations of all her pupils. They responded well, worked hard throughout and built on their previous learning. Marking is of high quality, providing pupils with good feedback and suggestions or questions to prompt the next steps in learning.
219. The well planned programme for religious education is based on the Sandwell locally agreed syllabus. School assemblies play an important part in the school's work in religious education. Themes of the week are focused to link with appropriate festivals or to promote the personal development of pupils. During the inspection, a Year 2 assembly had the theme of Mother's Day and, in particular, a Simnel Cake. Pupils listened well to a story; answered questions posed by the teacher and had a good opportunity to reflect on their own mum's qualities. In a junior assembly about traditions the pupils listened very carefully to a story and the teacher used paired talk effectively to encourage pupils to enter the discussion about fairness and justice. Pupils were given an opportunity to reflect about fairness and how they could be fair to each other.
220. The role of subject leader is underdeveloped. The subject audit and subject action plan have been a good start, but there is no evidence of recent monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching and learning. There is no systematic process for tracking pupils' progress.
221. Resources for teaching Christianity and other world religions are adequate, but their storage is disorganised and inefficient. The provision of Bibles is limited – for example, in the Year 4/5 lesson groups of pupils had to share a Bible. The library is used effectively for research. There are some good displays of world religions in classrooms. There are some opportunities for pupils to visit buildings related to world religions and the use of parents as visitors to talk about world religions is developing well.