

INSPECTION REPORT

BREDENBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bromyard

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116654

Headteacher: Stephen Brennan-White

Lead inspector: Sid Freeman

Dates of inspection: 29th – 30th June 2004

Inspection number 255595

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	56
School address:	Bredenbury Bromyard Herefordshire
Postcode:	HR7 4TF
Telephone number:	01885 483253
Fax number:	01885 483253
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Cave
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bredenbury Primary is a smaller than average school in the village of Bredenbury, situated to the west of Bromyard. It serves the immediate area, but also attracts two-thirds of its pupils from outside its designated catchment area. There were 55 pupils aged 4 -11 during the last inspection and there are now 56. There is an imbalance of boys and girls in most year groups. Two pupils are from ethnic minority communities; all pupils speak English as their mother tongue.

Pupils who join the school in the Reception class show a distribution of ability similar to that found nationally, with the majority of average ability. A high proportion of pupils joined the school after the Reception class. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs; this is above the national average. The school takes pupils from all socio-economic backgrounds, though most are from socially advantaged backgrounds. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. This proportion rose steadily from five per cent in 1999, but doubled to the present level in 2003, largely due to the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals who joined the school in Years 4 - 6.

The school achieved an Eco School award in 2000. It is also involved in the National Primary Leadership Programme.

The school ethos statement in the prospectus says that:

- * 'At Bredenbury Primary School everyone, in partnership, contributes to an environment which is safe and happy, stimulating and caring.
- * Within the ethos the children are able to achieve high standards in all areas: academic, physical, aesthetic, spiritual, social, moral and emotional.
- * The welfare and development of our children is the first priority of the school.'

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2636	Sid Freeman	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Information and Communication Technology; Design and Technology; Geography; History; Religious Education.
9053	Vivienne Phillips	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18346	Rod Bristow	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Special Educational Needs; Mathematics; Science; Art; Music; Physical Education.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Bredenbury is a very caring school, highly valued by pupils and parents, where teaching and learning are good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and achievement are good; relationships are very good. Standards in Year 6 National Curriculum tests were very low in 2003 compared with schools nationally; in particular due to the numbers of pupils with learning difficulties joining the school in Years 4 and 5. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff, the overall management of the school and governance are satisfactory. Costs per pupil are high because of the size of the school; nevertheless, it provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good care, welfare and support are provided for pupils and the school has a very strong partnership with parents.
- Pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and very good relationships enhance their learning.
- The headteacher has insufficient time and support to fulfil management responsibilities.
- Achievement is good; pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well, due to good support and teaching.
- Assessment is not used consistently or effectively to improve pupils' progress in Years 3 - 6.
- School self-evaluation procedures are not sufficiently effective in improving teachers' performance or pupils' progress.
- Standards in mathematics in Years 3 - 6 are below average.
- Most pupils use information and communications technology (ICT) skilfully and confidently.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since last inspection

Overall, improvement since the 1998 inspection is satisfactory. The school has addressed the key issue in the last report concerning school development planning. The following were satisfactory in the previous inspection and are now good: pupils' attitudes, behaviour and achievement, teaching and learning, provision for children under five and for pupils with SEN, as well as standards in science. Relationships with parents were good and now they are very good. National test results for Year 2 and Year 6 have declined in comparison with schools nationally, but provisional results for Years 2 and 6 show improvement in 2004. School self-evaluation is now in place, but has had insufficient impact on teaching, learning and improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good overall. The majority of children who enter the Reception class are of average ability; most attain, and a minority exceed, the goals children are expected to reach by the age of five. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, the results for reading and mathematics were well below the national average and writing was average; these results were below average for similar schools and lower than in previous years. Year 2 boys' attainment has been persistently below that of girls, which reflects the national picture in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. Year 2 girls' attainment has fallen in relation to girls nationally since 2000. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, given below, were in the lowest five per cent when compared with schools nationally and well below the average for schools where pupils had similar attainment in Year 2. National test results show large annual differences, but year groups are very small, the movement of pupils in and out of the school is high and the gender and attainment balance fluctuates considerably, so these results need to be viewed with caution. The majority of Year 6 pupils in 2003 joined the school in Year 3 or later and most of these pupils had learning

difficulties. The school has analysed test results, improved the curriculum and teaching methods and inspectors found that standards have risen for both boys and girls. Standards for most current Year 2 pupils are above average for speaking and listening, mathematics and science, and average in reading, writing and ICT. Year 6 pupils' achievement since Year 2 is good and standards are above average in English, science and ICT; but below average in mathematics. The 2004 provisional national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 indicate support for these findings.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E*	E*	E
mathematics	E	A	E*	E
science	D	B	E*	E

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships are very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good.** The **quality of teaching is good.** Very good teaching leads to very good learning and achievement for the youngest and oldest pupils. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. Teaching and learning are very good in science and good in English, mathematics and ICT. Learning in ICT is very good. Teachers assess work thoroughly, but the use of assessment data to improve pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is balanced; it is enriched by a good range of activities. Care for pupils' welfare is very good. There is a very strong partnership with parents and there are good links with the community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good, the leadership of other key staff and the overall management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, who teaches for three days a week, has insufficient time and support from colleagues to fulfil management responsibilities. Governance is satisfactory; governors ensure statutory requirements are met. Procedures for school self-evaluation are in place, but they are not sufficiently effective in improving teaching or pupils' progress.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school, have a very good relationship with it and are grateful for the individual support which staff give their children. Pupils are very proud of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Ensure the headteacher has time and support to fulfil school management responsibilities.
- Use assessment consistently and effectively to improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Use evaluation procedures rigorously to achieve consistently high quality teaching.

- Improve standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils with SEN achieve well through the good support they receive. The majority of children who enter the Reception class are of average ability; most attain, and a minority exceed, the goals children are expected to reach by the age of five. Standards for most current Year 2 pupils are above average for speaking and listening, mathematics and science; they are average in reading, writing and ICT. Year 6 pupils' achievement since Year 2 is good and standards are above average in English, science and ICT; but below average in mathematics. The 2004 provisional national test results for Years 2 and 6 indicate support for these findings.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children achieve, and a minority exceed, the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class.
- Achievement is good overall; it is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 but very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils and make good progress. Their achievement in Years 5 and 6 is very good.
- Standards in science are above average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards of English and ICT are above average in Year 6, but the standard of mathematics in Years 3 - 6 is below average.
- Trends since the last inspection indicate that boys' attainment in Year 2 is persistently below that of girls; also girls' achievement has fallen in relation to girls nationally since 2000.
- The national test results of Year 6 pupils in English declined against all pupils nationally from 1999 to 2003, but provisional results for 2004 show improvement to above average attainment.

1. The majority of children who enter the Reception class are of average ability; most attain, and a minority exceed, the goals children are expected to reach by the age of five. Inspectors found that standards for most pupils at the end of Year 2 are above average for speaking and listening, mathematics and science, and average in reading, writing and ICT. Standards attained by Year 6 pupils are above average in English, science and ICT; but below average in mathematics. The 2004 provisional national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 indicate support for these findings.

2. National test results show large annual differences. However, year groups are very small and the gender and attainment balance fluctuates considerably, so conclusions drawn from the results achieved in a single year may be unreliable, because the performance of a single pupil can have a disproportionate effect on the school's overall performance. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, the results for reading and mathematics were well below the national average and writing was average; these results were below average for similar schools and lower than in previous years. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were in the lowest five per cent when compared with schools nationally and well below the average for schools where pupils attainment similarly in Year 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.6 (23.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.6 (28.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.4 (29.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Trends in national tests since the last inspection indicate that boys' attainment in Year 2 has been persistently below that of girls, which reflects the national picture in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. Year 2 girls' achievement has fallen in relation to girls nationally since 2000. Also, the national test results of Year 6 pupils in English declined against all pupils nationally from 1999-2003. The school has analysed test results, improved the curriculum and teaching methods and inspectors found that standards have risen for both boys and girls. This appears to be confirmed by the unvalidated 2004 national test results. Nevertheless, statistical trends in the school's performance need to be viewed with caution, because the movement of pupils in and out of the school during the course of their education has increased over the past few years and is now high. For example, six of the eleven Year 6 pupils in 2003 joined the school in Year 3 or later and most of these pupils had learning difficulties. The school, the local authority and this inspection team have investigated these trends and found no conclusive evidence for them beyond the issues of class size and mobility identified above.

4. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Very good teaching of language and literacy in the Reception class enables children to achieve very well and extend their communication skills. Evidence from school records indicates that Year 6 pupils' achievement since Year 2 is good. Very good teaching in almost all lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 led to good or very good achievement; whereas a higher proportion of satisfactory teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 led to satisfactory achievement in half the lessons observed in this class. Evaluation procedures have not ensured consistency in teachers' performance or in pupils' achievement as they progress through the school.

5. Pupils with SEN achieve well, make good progress and attain standards which are appropriate for their age and ability because of the good quality teaching and support they are offered. The provision for pupils with SEN in Years 5 and 6 is very good and these pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well to attain standards in line with those expected for pupils aged 11. No pupils are currently identified as gifted and talented. Previously, one exceptionally able pupil was placed in a higher year group; another was transferred to secondary school a year early. Provisional national test results indicate that an increased proportion of more able Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 this year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; relationships are very good. There have been no exclusions. Pupils' personal qualities, based on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, develop well. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and show signs of improvement, with fewer unexplained absences. These factors offer a firm base for better achievement and higher standards than in the past. Improvement has been good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and achievement have improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons, which helps them to make the most of school life.
- In most lessons, learning is good and the school stimulates a desire to learn; but pupils are not consistently encouraged to think, to ask searching questions or to relish learning.
- Relationships are very good, so that pupils show care and understanding for others with problems.
- Personal qualities, such as knowing the right thing to do and consideration for others, develop well, but cultural awareness is more limited, as there are fewer opportunities to explore different ideas and customs.

Commentary

6. Parents and children confirmed that pupils 'like the school as it is' because they are happy, feel secure and enjoy being with 'nice, friendly teachers'. As a result, they are willing to work and keen to please staff. They show great enthusiasm for the activities they find most interesting, such as 'making photo frames and teddy chairs' in art and design technology; also in ICT where, 'I wasn't any good, but they showed me how and I've really learned'. Pupils are less keen on mathematics, English and religious education, which they say are sometimes 'boring and not very creative'.

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and achievement were satisfactory in the previous inspection and are now good; relationships were good and are now very good. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds respond well to encouragement to do what is right, think of others and to be helpful, so they learn to behave well in school. Their understanding of what is expected varies when they join the school, but the very good example set by adults and other children makes a real difference in helping new pupils to adopt the high standards required. Pupils are very tolerant of others whose initial response to school life may be different from theirs. If someone forgets the rules, others usually help them by simply getting on with their own work, to set a good example. This results in a calm working atmosphere in lessons and happy, lively playtimes, both of which offer good opportunities for all pupils to do well and to gain in maturity and social skills.

8. In most lessons the school stimulates a desire to learn. In the best lessons, particularly in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils respond well to teachers' higher expectations and are motivated to learn enthusiastically, independently and collaboratively. They thrive on the challenge to solve a problem, crack a code, or tackle a task through perseverance and creative thinking. In a minority of lessons pupils were not challenged to excel, so that pupils tried to do well in response to what was expected, without seeking to achieve their very best. In these lessons opportunities to invite reflection and curiosity were missed, preventing pupils enjoying moments of inspiration and acquiring a love of learning.

9. The school prides itself on nurturing concern for others and furthers its aim through warm, high quality relationships. This results in a very strong sense of community. Pupils comfort anyone who is sad or unwell with a friendly word or hug. Familiar school routines result in gradual gains in maturity and independence, regardless of pupils' individual differences and backgrounds. This is because pupils learn respect for others and for themselves within a safe, caring environment that ensures everyone gets on well together, with no unresolved issues of bullying. Those who lack confidence become more assured. Pupils' personal development is promoted satisfactorily, but there is no coherent programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Some useful discussion takes place within assemblies and in subjects, but work lacks continuity and is not evaluated. The opportunity to deepen understanding systematically by sharing hopes, feelings and ideas unrelated to particular subjects is also missed. Despite work undertaken in religious education and geography, the school recognises that pupils have limited awareness of the value of diverse, rich cultural traditions and experiences, so this aspect of development is just satisfactory.

10. Relationships for pupils with SEN are very good, and they thrive on the value which is placed upon their contributions. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They work well together, are well behaved, self-esteem is high and they are proud of their achievements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-3

Authorised absence (%)	
School data	6.2
National data	5.8

Unauthorised absence(%)	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good, the quality of learning is good, but the use of assessment data to monitor and improve pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- During the last inspection all the teaching was satisfactory. During this inspection two-thirds of the teaching was either good or very good, including over one-third which was very good.
- Very good teaching in science leads to very good learning for all pupils.
- Teaching of pupils with SEN, including the support provided by learning assistants, is good.
- Assessment for pupils with SEN is thorough and targets are modified at least half-termly.
- The least successful aspect of teaching and learning is assessment, although it is good in the Foundation Stage.
- Assessment data is not used sufficiently effectively to monitor pupils' progress or teachers' performance.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9	6	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. During the last inspection all the teaching was satisfactory. During this inspection two-thirds of the teaching was either good or very good, including over one-third of teaching which was very good. This shows good improvement.

12. The quality of teaching is not consistent across the school and the strongest teaching is experienced by the youngest and oldest pupils. Teaching in all but one of the lessons observed in the Year 5 and 6 class was very good; whereas teaching in the majority of lessons for Years 3 and 4 was satisfactory. The teaching of science is very good and leads to very good learning. The teaching of English, mathematics and ICT are good. Learning is very good in ICT, as pupils develop skills early in the school and they are often highly motivated by the technology. Teachers also appear to increase the challenge and expect the most of pupils when ICT is involved. Not enough evidence was collected during the inspection to enable judgements to be made about teaching and learning in other subjects.

13. In the very good lessons seen, the teachers' presentation was lively, skilful and engaging, even inspiring. Lessons built well on pupils' understanding and skills gained in previous lessons. Pupils were encouraged to think for themselves, before sharing ideas and working with others. The pace and vitality of lessons, including time-limited activities, launched pupils into action and assisted them in the completion of their tasks. Teachers had high expectations and produced challenging work, well matched to the needs and abilities of higher, average and lower attaining pupils. Pupils were motivated to complete these tasks, with help as necessary. Teachers assessed pupils' understanding and progress through astute questioning and careful supervision. Lessons were very well managed and pupils were expected and enabled to manage their own work or their group activity. Plenary sessions were used to draw threads together, celebrate pupils' work and to explore thinking and processes. In the best lessons, pupils reflected, evaluated and discussed how their work could be improved. The quality of pupils' learning and their achievement were high because pupils were ready, willing and able to respond to the challenge and to do their best. In the minority of lessons observed where teaching was satisfactory, it led to satisfactory learning and achievement.

These lessons were well planned and structured, but characterised by a more mechanical approach to teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils were given work which was appropriate for their abilities, but allowed to work within their capacity, and sometimes at a leisurely pace, rather than being urged to excel. There was also some evidence of pupils relying too much on teachers or assistants, rather than thinking for themselves. Plenary sessions tended to be short and to focus on summarising the learning objectives and activities, usually with some time for pupils to 'show and tell' what they had been doing, but with limited reflection or evaluation.

14. Teaching for pupils with SEN is good and activities are well matched to their needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons. Teaching assistants make a significant impact on the quality of learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond very well to the very good levels of teaching. Teachers are fully involved in writing, reviewing and revising SEN targets termly. Relationships are strong and all contributions are valued highly. Pupils are included in all activities, are provided with a full range of opportunities and their talents are fully explored.

15. Higher attaining pupils were given very challenging work in the best lessons and supervised well by the teacher, so they made rapid progress, persisted with their work and their achievement was very good. In other lessons these pupils achieved their objectives and then slackened their pace, so their achievement was satisfactory at best.

16. The least successful aspect of teaching and learning is assessment. Inspectors were looking, in lessons and across the whole school, for thorough and constructive assessment of pupils' work, for the use of assessment to help teachers' future planning and target-setting to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups and for evidence that pupils understand how well they have achieved and how they can improve. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1 - 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 - 6. It is generally thorough and constructive in English and mathematics, though not in science or ICT. There was little evidence during the inspection of the use of assessment by teachers to guide them in planning the next stage of pupils' learning. There appeared to be little annotation or modification of plans drawn from the school network in order to incorporate the individual learning needs and ensure the progress of pupils in classes observed. However, teachers know pupils well and were able to adapt plans as necessary.

17. The main area for development in assessment is the use of assessment information, including National Curriculum Levels, to set challenging targets with, and for, pupils, enabling them to know how they can improve, and using assessment data to monitor and improve pupils' progress. Teachers have developed a range of different approaches to the handling of assessment information and this inconsistency is unsatisfactory. This year the school has begun to draw together, for pupils in Years 3 - 6, data based on annual standardised tests, to use it to forecast a grade and to identify those who fail to meet, meet or exceed their forecast. Very recently, this data has been used to suggest targets for pupils. This analysis is in its infancy, but when it is understood and accepted by teachers, it could be used to monitor and improve pupils' progress, evaluate and improve the performance of teachers and to evaluate the effectiveness of subjects, year groups and the whole school. This data holds vital performance information for pupils, parents, staff and governors. Its consistent and systematic use for monitoring and evaluation could be a key to improved achievement.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It offers a good range of activities in the Foundation Stage and the expected mix of subjects for pupils in Years 1 - 6. A good range of activities outside lessons enriches the curriculum well. The accommodation and resources for learning are good. The school dealt with the key issue from the previous inspection effectively by ensuring that school development planning includes reviews of National Curriculum subjects, so improvement has been good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links are made between different subjects so that activities are interesting, but work does not always focus sharply enough on the skills pupils need to develop in each subject.
- Arrangements for teaching PSHE are satisfactory, but do not provide a programme that is coherent, valued and good enough to help raise achievement rapidly.
- Although the school is small, it offers a good range of after-school clubs and other activities that enrich the curriculum and pupils' experiences imaginatively.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and enables children to achieve well and to be very well prepared for moving on to work in subjects of the National Curriculum.
- Pupils who have SEN are catered for well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

18. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well structured, well managed, enables children to achieve well and ensures they are very well prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1. Teachers plan work for mixed-age classes in a two-year cycle for Years 1 – 6, in order to give each subject adequate coverage with reasonable continuity from one year to the next. The school uses national guidance to plan outlines of work for pupils of different ages and abilities, although assessment is not used well enough to ensure a close match of the curriculum to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with SEN are included in all activities and have full access to the National Curriculum and to activities outside the normal school day. Teachers plan work conscientiously in English, mathematics and science to enable them to cover all key elements of these subjects. The curriculum is broad, balanced and satisfactory, but it is not managed to best effect to allow skills to be developed in one subject through work in another. Some useful links are made between themes and subjects, as in Year 3 and 4 art and history lessons based on the Egyptians, but opportunities are missed to use links imaginatively to save time and achieve a range of subject objectives. There is also too little use of literacy across the curriculum, especially the use of different styles of writing. Well-established use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies helps pupils to achieve well, whatever their different starting points. In ICT the curriculum and range of resources have improved greatly since the last inspection, resulting in better learning, achievement and standards.

19. The school has a strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social development, which is pursued through the daily life of the school. School documentation indicates that the curriculum for PSHE is to be achieved through school assemblies and through various subjects. This approach is satisfactory, but a more coherent approach would provide a firmer foundation for PSHE and citizenship and the progressive development of knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout the school. The school recognises that not all pupils are self-assured, confident and outgoing. A few pupils, particularly those who enter the school from Year 3 onwards, take a long time to reach the point where they are ready to make real strides in their learning. A coherent programme of PSHE could consolidate and accelerate these pupils' progress. Statutory requirements for collective worship are met. School assemblies are planned to teach pupils core values, such as caring for the environment, that are at the heart of the school's ethos. As a result, pupils are quick to show visitors their pride in newly-planted seedlings and how well they look after the school grounds.

20. In spite of its small size, the school offers a wide range of clubs, special events and activities that enrich the curriculum and give pupils the opportunity to try something new. For example, the bowls club, a recent innovation, has allowed youngsters to learn from, and practise with, older local residents, which both groups have enjoyed. Over half the children attend after-school clubs regularly. Pupils enjoy the Big Art Day and musical events. Everyone takes pride in the school's Eco School status and pupils take their responsibility very seriously for recycling paper or tending herbs and vegetables. Pupils enjoy visits to places such as the Birmingham Think Tank, London and the Palace of Westminster and to local sports tournaments, all of which broaden their horizons. The school is aware of the need to add a global dimension to the curriculum, which is developing through partnership with other schools which have an interest in the Earth Summits and climate change, also through an e-mail link with a school in Africa.

Care, guidance and support

The school gives a high priority to caring for its pupils and keeping them safe from harm, which it does very well. Insufficient support, advice and guidance is given to help pupils understand how to improve their work and achieve more. The school is good at seeking pupils' views and involving them in making improvements to its work. Improvement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils grow in confidence, feel safe and are happy to try new activities because of the way the school nurtures their self-belief and sense of belonging to the school community.
- Pupils are not clear enough about how well they are doing and how to do better in order to raise achievement and standards.
- Induction arrangements are very good, so that children settle in very happily when they start school and newcomers feel very welcome, which helps them to do well.
- Relationships reflect very good levels of trust, so that pupils feel able to talk to someone when something worries them.
- Pupils feel that adults listen to them and welcome their views on how to make school life better.

Commentary

21. All policies and procedures related to care, including those for child protection, are in place and well known to staff. For example, when deliveries are made and vehicles need access to the playground while children are using it, everyone follows a well-established routine to keep pupils in a safe area well away from the turning space and the road. Parents and children are full of praise for the warm welcome and care the school offers. One parent wrote 'I am eternally grateful to all the staff for their unstinting support and care – they all go that extra mile to make the school a very special place for all the children in their care'. This goes to the heart of the school's values and work. Pupils feel very well cared for, so, in general, they are outgoing and happy to attempt a task, such as using an interactive whiteboard to set out calculations, without fear of making a mistake. Those in Year 6 say they will miss the family feeling and friendly people that have given them the confidence to feel ready to move on to secondary school.

22. The boost in self-confidence that pupils enjoy is reinforced through Friday celebration assemblies, which are appreciated by pupils and parents. These reward achievements such as 'excellent observational drawing of the adventure playground', 'brilliant understanding of time and time bands', 'being kind' and 'helping the dinner ladies without being asked', but surprisingly few references to 'stunning progress'. The school has not yet harnessed its strengths in caring for pupils' welfare to promoting their academic success. Pupils are unsure how well they are doing and whether they are aiming high enough, because their abilities and academic goals are sometimes unclear. The assessment, target-setting and monitoring procedures do not make sufficiently clear to pupils the progress they have made and whether it was good enough, the targets to aim for and the specific steps to take for greater success.

23. Staff take great care to prepare children very well for starting school, with visits to playgroups and meetings with families that allow everyone to share information about particular needs or skills. As a result, children settle in very happily. The school encourages parents of children who join the school later to come and visit on a typical day and talk to pupils and staff. It offers pupils a very warm welcome and, where there are learning difficulties, additional help.

24. Pupils feel able to share their worries with someone because people are very friendly and can be trusted to listen and offer help. They appreciate the fact that 'teachers give up their time for us', so they feel valued. They are proud that the school council has been a success because

suggestions have been taken seriously, including the introduction of healthy snacks at break, the herb garden and vegetable patch and involvement in designing the new adventure playground.

25. The provision for pupils with SEN is good and all statutory requirements are met. Individual needs are identified early, teaching and support is managed and organised effectively. Targets are shared with pupils and revised every half term. Outside agencies are used very well. Often pupils are grouped according to their ability and the quality of learning is good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents, which makes an important contribution to pupils' achievements, particularly the development of their personal qualities. Links with the community and other schools are good and help pupils to move on to new schools with confidence. Improvement has been satisfactory, with strengths in partnerships with schools and the community and improved relationships with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very pleased with the school and grateful for the way it has encouraged their children to become more self-confident and happy to join in a wide range of activities.
- Links with people and organisations outside the school extend and enrich pupils' experiences.
- Parents are kept well informed about school life and children's progress, but this information is not always clear enough about their role in helping to raise standards and achievement.
- There are very good links with parents of pupils with SEN.

Commentary

26. Parents are very supportive of the school and have no particular concerns about its work. Everyone who returned the questionnaire felt comfortable about approaching the school with any queries and thought that their children were fairly treated, liked school and were making good progress. Inspectors agree that the school is welcoming to all and concerned for pupils' happiness. The friendly atmosphere helps pupils to feel confident to join in activities and do the work set. Parents praised the school for its warmth and encouragement, which have helped individual children who were shy, unsure of themselves or may have experienced failure elsewhere. Communication is good: 'being a small school in a rural community, it is sometimes difficult to get all parents' views, but the school sends out regular newsletters and asks for parents' input and support'. As 'the school is family based and parents are encouraged to participate in many of the activities', they feel involved. The Parents' Association and everyday links with school are flourishing. Parents help willingly on Big Art Day and with environmental projects.

27. The school draws in parents and visitors from the local area and other schools to help with special events, such as the Christingle service, Eco School activities and healthy schools' initiatives. Good relationships with the adjacent preparatory school have ensured that sporting activities can go ahead in spite of drainage problems with the school field. Links with the local 'pyramid' of schools allow some pupils to experience teaching at the local secondary school and others to benefit through help from the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Liaison with the local bus company has ensured that children have access to a daily service to and from school. Participation in the TES Newspaper Day led to an enthralling visit to London which was supported very well by parents and helpers. Through good community links pupils have valuable opportunities to enter work in competitions, including poetry for publication and artwork for the Bromyard Gala and Stoke Bliss Ploughing Competition.

28. Parents have a good idea how their children are doing, because informal day-to-day contact is very positive and friendly, so they talk regularly to teachers and the headteacher, who make themselves readily available before and after school. This ensures that there are opportunities to

swap information and deal with minor worries before they erupt. Reports on pupils' progress are very detailed. Some suggestions are very clear and give parents a good idea of how the child can

improve. It is not always so clear whether the children have done well enough for their age, ability and their attainment at the beginning of the year, or how parents could help. As a result, the school does not enable parents to encourage their children to aim higher or to help them achieve particular goals.

29. Parents of pupils with SEN are very well informed and, at the pre-inspection meeting, were delighted with the level of provision. Targets are amended each half-term. Often details of progress in skills, knowledge and understanding are shared more regularly. There is good support from within the cluster of schools and good links with them when transferring to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff, the overall management of the school and governance are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- The headteacher has insufficient time and support to fulfil management responsibilities.
- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.
- The governing body is highly committed and supportive of the school.
- Success criteria in the school improvement plan are not directly related to improvement in teaching, learning, standards or achievement.
- School self-evaluation procedures are not effective enough in improving teachers' performance or pupils' progress.

Commentary

30. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governors are strongly committed to the school and enthusiastic supporters of its work. Most governors are also parents of children in the school. Governors help to shape the vision and direction of the school by their close association with it and by their involvement in the approval of the school improvement plan. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, but limited understanding of its weaknesses and how it might improve. They provide a strong challenge and support for the headteacher. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Some governors visit the school to learn about its work and support subject co-ordinators.

31. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He is strongly committed to his vision of a school where every individual matters and where each pupil reaches his or her full potential. He strives very hard for this in his teaching, his leadership and his pastoral support for staff, pupils and their families. He epitomises the caring approach which is central to the school's ethos. Governors decided that their top priority was to maintain three classes and that the headteacher should teach for the three days each week, in order to meet budget constraints. The benefit of this decision is the maintenance of small classes; the cost is that the headteacher has insufficient time to fulfil his management role and responsibilities, despite his willingness to work exceptionally hard within and outside school hours. He is also responsible for six areas of the curriculum. This is an unacceptably high level of curriculum responsibility. Governors have decided that from September 2004 the headteacher's teaching commitment will be two days each week, but this will not solve the management issues. Greater delegation is required, particularly to senior teachers, if the staff are to function as an effective team.

32. The previous inspection required the school to improve the quality of school development plans to cover the period beyond the current academic year and to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, clear responsibilities and a review of the National Curriculum provision. These requirements have been implemented, but two additional problems are evident in the current school improvement plan. First, in addition to its statutory performance targets for pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests at age 11, the governors have approved four key targets for the year: school self-evaluation, assessment procedures, presentation of work and spelling. However, the school has 22 issues or priorities, each with a 'to-do' list and a further four action plans for 'key areas'. The governors do not have a clear idea of the key school priorities. The headteacher and staff meet termly to monitor progress, but there are too many priorities and energy is dissipated by this lack of focus. Secondly, success criteria in the school improvement plan are not directly related to improvement in teaching, learning, standards or achievement. Therefore, they cannot be used by the governing body to hold the school to account for the effectiveness of the plan in improving the quality of education or raising standards.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	200,080.00
Total expenditure	181,892.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,566.50

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19,558.00
Balance carried forward to the next	37,746.00

33. The headteacher administers the budget effectively and exercises good financial control. He reports on the budget monthly to the governing body finance committee, who undertake their responsibilities conscientiously and rigorously. Governors make every effort to obtain best value, but do not have the procedures, or receive the information, to judge cost-effectiveness by the impact of spending on pupils' attainment and progress. The local authority has approved the use of a large proportion of the school SEN allocation to provide smaller classes. The school has retained a proportion of its total budget to finance a reduction in the headteacher's teaching commitment to two days, and to fund two more teaching assistants, from September 2004.

34. The co-ordinator for pupils with SEN maintains the register of pupils efficiently. She has good subject knowledge and has played an effective part in encouraging and enabling staff to respond to pupils' needs. A good programme of extra classes is managed well in literacy and numeracy and progress is recorded. There is a governor responsible for monitoring the provision for pupils with SEN. The governing body is well informed and carries out its statutory duties.

35. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Leadership and management of subjects are satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators assist colleagues to plan and teach their subjects, but they are not perceived as the leaders or managers of improvement. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science undertake classroom observations as part of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. These assist the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to improve the curriculum and offer increased help to colleagues. Observations are not seen as part of a school accountability and improvement programme, so no judgements are made on the quality of teaching and learning observed and teachers are not given a focus for improvement. Similarly, data is collected annually on pupils' attainment in standardised tests; this is used to set an annual target for pupils and discussed termly with teachers in order to monitor pupils' progress. This is intended to be part of the school's performance management procedures, but teachers are not held accountable for the quality of their teaching or for pupils' progress, so school self-evaluation procedures are not sufficiently effective in improving teachers' performance or pupils' progress. Consequently, the quality of teaching is not consistent as pupils' progress through the school and their achievement fluctuates accordingly. Through participation in the Primary Leadership Programme, key staff have gained a greater understanding of school self-evaluation. Governors will be able to judge the effectiveness of this programme by its impact on teaching and learning.

36. The overall effectiveness of the school is good. It is a very caring school, highly valued by pupils and parents, where teaching and learning are good. Relationships are very good. Pupils'

attitudes, behaviour and achievement are also good. Standards in Year 6 National Curriculum tests were very low in 2003, compared with schools nationally. The governance, leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Improvement is satisfactory. Costs per pupil are high because of the size of the school; nevertheless it provides satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (Reception Class) is **good**. Children achieve well and are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Reception class is well led and managed.
- Teaching of language and communications skills is very good.
- The teaching assistant contributes significantly to the good quality of teaching and learning.
- Most children reach, and a minority exceed, the expected levels (Early Learning Goals) before beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Progress in the Reception class is measured regularly and this information is used well to enable children to improve.
- Links with parents both before and during the Reception class are very good.
- Attitudes are very good and learning contributes very well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

37. Eleven children have joined the Reception class after a very well planned programme of visits and sharing of information, so that children quickly adapt to new routines and settle in quickly. Strong links with parents are valued and contribute to the progress made. Children join the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are four. Although the intake varies from year to year, the majority of children who enter the Reception class are of average ability and enter with the expected skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. Children progress well through the measured stages of development (Stepping Stones). Good information is gained about attainment on entry to the Reception class. This is used to identify the next steps in teaching and learning.

38. In the five full lessons and several parts of lessons observed, teaching and learning were good. In the two literacy lessons, teaching led to very good achievement. This has been an improvement since the last inspection. Children achieve well as a result of the higher quality of teaching, making significant progress in language and mathematical development. All are confident, enjoy their activities and have been encouraged to make decisions involving the good range of experiences provided for them. The teaching assistant is used very well to extend children's learning. By the time children progress to Year 1, all children have reached the Early Learning Goals in the required areas, with one in four children having already exceeded these levels. Children benefit a great deal from working with older children in the same class, having good role models and opportunities to work with pupils in Year 1. Higher attaining children achieve very well.

39. The provision for children with SEN has improved since the last inspection and is now good. They are managed well and usually receive teaching which is matched to their needs. Occasionally, when the teacher is introducing experiences to the whole class, sitting and concentrating is of limited value for the youngest children. The teacher links areas of learning exceptionally well. In the 'Vet's Surgery', role play is used to care for animals; develop stimulating communications skills; managing and recording the order of customers; writing prescriptions; weighing patients and developing very good social experiences. Children thrive on the very good relationships and the value which is given to their contributions. Learning is exciting and challenging. The accommodation for the Reception class is very good and the good range of resources stimulates learning.

40. The teacher leads and manages the Reception class well and the staff are an effective team. Assessment procedures are well maintained and information is used effectively to plan for

improvement. The teacher examines children's work exhaustively and uses the analysis to plan for the next stages of learning. This is recorded meticulously in children's Foundation Stage Profiles, which accompany children as they progress through the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very supportive environment to encourage learning.
- Relationships are exceptionally good.
- Children are confident, feel secure and are eager to learn.
- Independence and decision-making are encouraged effectively.

Commentary

41. Relationships are very good and children flourish in a safe and secure environment in which their contributions are encouraged and valued. Children enjoy each other's company, enjoy their activities, concentrate well and sit quietly when appropriate. Most use resources independently; work well together in groups and take turns. They benefit significantly from being in the company of good role models. They understand the differences between right and wrong and realise they are expected to apologise when necessary. These qualities help children to learn more effectively. Children achieve well and most will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals before they transfer to Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Children use an exciting range of speaking and listening skills.
- Children use their knowledge of letter sounds to recognise, record and read words.

Commentary

42. Children achieve very well and extend their communication skills. They speak and listen well and enjoy the many opportunities which are provided. Role play encourages children to be aware of the needs of different audiences. The very good teaching skilfully combines reading and writing skills so that children are already using methods from the National Literacy Strategy.

43. Basic skills in literacy are taught purposefully from the start, with most pupils recognising more frequently used words and many using letter sounds to build the sounds of new words. The recent farm visit enabled children to record their experiences. Lower attaining children wrote simple sentences with the help of staff, 'the hen is noisy', and higher attaining children wrote more complex sentences, 'I liked the eggs because they were warm'. Many will have exceeded the expected levels before joining Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and enjoy investigating number.

Commentary

44. On entry to the Reception class most children have sound mathematical development. By the time they leave the Reception class, higher attaining children are confident when finding one more and one less, when using numbers to 20. They are aware of numbers to 100. Lower attaining children sequence numbers to 5 and know the names of two-dimensional shapes. Impressively, children are beginning to use well-taught strategies. They know how to count on from a given number and use number lines to experience patterns of numbers in twos, fives and tens. A scrutiny of work completed since the beginning of the year indicates that all children make very good progress, due to very good teaching. Constructive play was very well managed by the teaching assistant to prompt and reinforce number skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a well-planned programme of experiences.
- Visits play an important part in their learning.

Commentary

45. The teacher and her assistant provide good experiences to extend children's natural curiosity. A recent farm visit has developed a good understanding of farm animals and allowed children to discuss what they liked and disliked; 'the horse is smooth', 'pigs scoffed'. In a science lesson, pets were introduced to encourage pupils to consider living and non-living things. In the 'vet's surgery' children were encouraged to become receptionists, nurses and customers. 'What's the matter with him?' 'His heart's stopped beating', replied the vet with a shake of the head. Computers are accepted as a natural learning experience, and children are developing good skills. Most will have exceeded the required levels before leaving the Reception class.

PHYSICAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical and creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use a range of media for picture making.
- Children are highly motivated when listening to stories.
- Children have a very good awareness of healthy practices.
- They use space safely when climbing and running.

Commentary

46. Children use a range of media, such as paint, pastels and crayons when illustrating their experiences. They sing simple songs from memory, but have limited experiences in making music. When sharing a story with the teacher, children suggested and often predicted the text accurately under each picture. In the playground, and when using the adventure play area, children use space safely and have a good awareness of others. They have sound fine motor skills when handling paintbrushes and scissors. They recognise the need for cleanliness and explain why they eat healthy food. In the surgery, children wash their hands before treating patients, and wipe the operating table before examination.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils' achievement, including those with SEN, is good throughout the school.
- Standards of speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- By Year 6 most pupils are keen readers.
- The national test results of Year 6 pupils in English declined against all pupils nationally from 1999 - 2003; but standards have risen and are above average this year.

Summary of key inspection judgements

Standards by Year 2 are average	Standards by Year 6 are above average
In 2003 Year 2 results in national tests were well below average in reading and average in writing	Results were very low in English in Year 6
Achievement in Years 1 - 2 is good	Achievement in Years 3 - 6 is good
Quality of teaching is good	Quality of learning is good
Leadership of the subject is satisfactory	Management of the subject is satisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory	

Commentary

47. Overall, achievement is good. Standards for most pupils at the end of Year 2 are average in reading and writing, but above average for speaking and listening. Year 6 pupils' achievement since Year 2 is good. Standards are above average for pupils at the end of Year 6; specifically, they are above average in reading, speaking and listening and average in writing.

48. In the 2003 Year 2 national tests, reading results were well below the national average and writing was average. Compared with similar schools, the results for reading were below average, but those for writing were above average. Boys' attainment was below that of girls, which reflects the national picture. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 were in the lowest five per cent compared with schools nationally, and well below the average for schools where pupils had similar attainment in Year 2. The national test results of Year 6 pupils in English declined against all pupils nationally from 1999 – 2003. The school has analysed test results, improved the curriculum and teaching methods and inspectors found that standards have risen for boys and girls. The 2004 provisional national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 indicate support for these findings.

49. Standards of speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is good. Pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils and make good progress through the good support they are offered. By Year 2 most pupils listen attentively. Pupils are given structured opportunities to develop their speaking and listening and adults use questioning well to promote these skills. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to speak, listen, question, make presentations and evaluate each other's contributions. A notable feature of Year 6 group work is their willingness to listen and value the contribution of others, to question one another and to explore ideas together. Teachers make good use of pupils' whiteboards and paired discussions to enable pupils to think, crystallise ideas and to shape their oral responses.

50. Standards of reading are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Achievement is good. Spelling was identified as a weakness in 2002, so a systematic development of spelling strategies was introduced from Reception to Year 2. This has improved pupils' spelling and reading and the approaches are now influencing teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4. During shared reading sessions, teachers provide good role models to develop pupils' skills and interest in reading. Pupils use a range of clues, including the illustrations and the context of the story, in order to establish meaning and to predict developments. Pupils enjoy reading and are encouraged to read regularly at home. There are good resources in classrooms to assist learning. Older pupils also use the public library for fiction and non-fiction books. Activities like World Book Day, where pupils and staff dress up as characters from books, serve to emphasise the importance and fun of reading. By Year 6 most pupils are keen readers. In discussion, higher attaining Year 6 boys shared their keen interest in books and spoke confidently and fluently about their favourite authors' styles, characterisation, plot and structure, making reference to the text to illustrate their views.

51. Standards of writing are average in Year 2 and Year 6; achievement is satisfactory. The school is concerned about underachievement in writing, particularly extended writing. This has been in the school improvement plan for several years. New schemes of work have been introduced and new methods explored. Standards have improved this year for boys and girls; however, by Year 6 writing generally lacks the complex sentence structures, consistent use of punctuation, well-structured paragraphs and wide vocabulary required to achieve the higher Level 5. There was very limited evidence in pupils' books of drafting and redrafting, though pupils are accustomed to producing notes as a prelude to word processing. Handwriting was identified as a problem in national and annual tests, so handwriting lessons and handwriting books were introduced. Now handwriting in Year 2 is average, but the quality of handwriting does not match Year 6 pupils' attainment in other aspects of the subject. The impact of handwriting lessons can be seen in Year 4 handwriting books, where pupils are writing legibly in pen, using cursive script, consistent letter formation and achieving above average standards. This contrasts with writing in Year 6, which is commonly in pencil, in print or a mixture of print and cursive script, using inconsistent letter formation. However, the skills taught in handwriting lessons are not consistently applied in other contexts. Throughout the school ICT is used very well to support the development of English. In Year 2 and Year 6 boys showed some reluctance to write; but in sharp contrast to the limited handwritten work of pupils of average and above average ability in Year 6, all boys, their word processed work in a range of subjects is often comparatively lengthy and shows imagination, flair, adventurous vocabulary and excitement over language, images and ideas.

52. Teaching is good. The National Literacy Strategy has developed teachers' technical understanding, assisted them to structure and sequence their medium-term and lesson planning, and promoted diverse approaches to writing. Teaching was good or very good in all of the language and literacy lessons observed in the Reception class, and in two-thirds of the lessons observed in the rest of the school. Where teaching was very good, lessons had life and dynamism; the methods and content engaged and motivated pupils, encouraged very good learning and challenged all pupils to higher achievement. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory, it was more mechanical and less engaging, with a marked reduction in challenge for the most able. Also, during group work, teachers paid too little attention to the pupils outside their focus group, so that some pupils achieved too little because they were unsure what they were meant to be learning, or completed work superficially. Good provision for pupils with SEN occurs through carefully focused teaching, well selected resources and tasks, grouping by ability for some activities within lessons and the use of

learning support assistants. Too little opportunity is taken to ensure that pupils apply the skills learned in literacy or handwriting lessons when producing written work in other subjects. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is conscientious and supportive, but teachers give too little guidance to pupils in Years 3 - 6 on how they might improve their work. There is insufficient and inconsistent use of pupils' attainment data to improve standards and improve the quality of teaching. Until very recently, teachers have been willing to accept predicted levels of attainment for pupils in Years 3 - 6, based on achievement in Year 2, rather than establishing appropriate and challenging targets with and for pupils, then enabling pupils to achieve better.

53. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has analysed national test results and promoted changes in planning and teaching which have improved standards. She has undertaken classroom observations, which have helped her to improve the curriculum and support for colleagues. These observations were not concerned with accountability, so no judgements were made on the quality of teaching observed. The school procedures are unsatisfactory and have permitted inconsistencies in teaching, learning, standards and achievement. In the last inspection, all aspects of English were satisfactory, except reading, which was good; so improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Pupils are eager to speak and they listen well to teachers and each other in all subjects. In many classes pupils are given an opportunity to think individually, then to talk in pairs to crystallise thinking, before sharing ideas with the teacher and the class. Sometimes teachers encourage extended oral responses by asking supportive supplementary questions, but often single word answers are required or accepted. Pupils are encouraged to read silently and aloud, from books, the interactive whiteboard, computer screens and printed documents.

55. A limited range of written work is produced across the curriculum, but a satisfactory balance is maintained between writing used to aid thinking, including notes, instructions or brainstorming, and the production of polished text. In Years 3 - 6 pupils are encouraged to use technical language, but there is limited support for this on classroom displays. Where this was available in Years 3 and 4, pupils used it. There is not enough extended writing in the foundation subjects and religious education, though pupils are required to write more extensively for a range of purposes and audiences in Years 5 and 6. In this class there are good opportunities for pupils to exercise choice about content and expression, even though the form or structure may be constrained; conversely, pupils may have set content but be encouraged to choose their own form of presentation. A school response to lower standards in writing was to have additional writing, handwriting and reading lessons beyond the literacy hour, which has increased pressure on the time available for the foundation subjects and religious education. The school is now thinking more creatively about the range of writing tasks undertaken in subjects other than English rather than engaging in these decontextualised exercises.

56. Boys and girls, the most able and those with special needs, were delighted to talk about their participation in such whole school events as World Book Day, also about their prizes in poetry competitions. The annual National Newspaper Day engaged pupils in real writing, editorial and publication tasks to tight deadlines; they were justifiably proud of their awards for this work. Such events emphasise the importance of reading and writing and extend the purpose, audience and value of pupils' individual and collaborative work.

Modern Foreign Language (French)

57. The school provides one term of conversational French for pupils in Year 6. During the inspection the school had a Spanish visitor, so Year 6 learned Spanish instead of French. There is insufficient evidence to make any judgement on provision.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below what is expected nationally by the age of 11.
- Achievement is good for all pupils, regardless of age or ability.
- Standards of teaching and learning are good overall and pupils enjoy mathematics.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Standards by Year 2 are above average	Standards by Year 6 are below average
Results in national tests in 2003 were well below national average in Year 2	Results were very low in Year 6
Achievement is good in Years 1 - 2	Achievement is good in Years 3 - 6,
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership of the subject is satisfactory	Management of the subject is unsatisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection is good.	

Commentary

58. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection, especially by the end of Year 2. Provisional national test results for this year indicate that standards are above average for Year 2, with an increased proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Standards of attainment in pupils' work seen in Year 6 are below average. The effects of small numbers of pupils in Year 6, and a growing proportion of pupils with SEN since the last inspection, have depressed standards when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Unvalidated national test results for Year 6 indicate that standards will remain below those expected nationally, but with all pupils reaching their predicted targets, based on their attainment in national tests in Year 2. They have achieved very well from their starting points, having added good value to their knowledge and understanding, regardless of gender or ability.

59. An analysis of previous work indicates that there is a good coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum and that the National Numeracy Strategy has added consistency to the quality of teaching and learning and ensured that pupils progress step by step. Teachers have group targets for improvement. Pupils would benefit from targets being matched more closely to individual needs and abilities.

60. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing good mental skills and are being taught well how to apply these skills when solving problems. All pupils know how to count on from the largest number and many have explored patterns and sequences to well above 100. At least one pupil in four is achieving at the higher Level 3, which is an improvement since 2003. A good understanding of place value enables pupils to use all four operations to two places of decimals in Year 6 and then to calculate fractions and percentages. Mental skills are well developed and lower ability pupils are eager to demonstrate their good recall of table facts. Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 work at the higher National Curriculum Level 5. Their understanding of mathematics is very good. They choose from the wide range of strategies taught and they are expected to explain how they have arrived at their solutions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in the subject and all pupils, especially those in Year 6, use computer technology very well to record and represent data graphically. All pupils achieve well, and teaching assistants, when available, contribute significantly to the good quality of teaching and learning for the above average proportion of pupils with SEN, many of whom who have joined the school recently.

61. Six lessons were observed. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and the quality is now good overall. Where teaching was at its most effective, in Years 5 and 6, the pace was stimulating and all pupils, regardless of gender or ability, were highly motivated to

contribute and succeed. Teaching was less effective in Years 3 and 4: introductions were too long; the pace gave pupils less time to complete tasks, and lower attaining pupils were supported at the expense of higher attaining pupils. Planning for each year group is good and ensures that all pupils in the school share the same good range of mathematical experiences. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and using and applying of skills is given a high priority. Teaching would be even more effective if teaching and learning objectives were more closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy mathematics and share the enthusiasm of their teachers. Pupils' very good behaviour and eagerness to complete their tasks improves the quality of learning.

62. The leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. The subject action plans are linked to the school improvement plan. Continuous professional development has raised staff awareness; although the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning has limited the identification of areas for improvement. Appropriate procedures for assessment are in place, but their use is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has analysed test results and identified strengths and weaknesses. Testing occurs at the end of each half-term but there is no clear evidence that this information is used to challenge pupils to higher achievement. It is now more appropriate for teachers to share with pupils how they might improve by producing targets directed at smaller groups and individuals and to ensure that marking tells pupils how they might improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. The use of mathematical skills in learning in other areas of the curriculum is good. Charts, tables and graphs are used effectively to record investigations in science. From an early age pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills when weighing animals in the vet's surgery in Reception, surveying the growth of teeth in Years 3 and 4, and when studying musical notation in Years 5 and 6.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Years 2 and 6 most pupils attain knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected nationally.
- Very good teaching and learning contribute to good levels of achievement for all ability levels.
- Pupils are enthusiastic when developing scientific enquiry skills.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and learning.
- Management of science is unsatisfactory.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.

Summary of key inspection judgements

Standards by Year 2 are above average	Standards by Year 6 are above average
Results in national tests were low in 2003 with few performing at the higher Levels 3 and 5	
Achievement is good in Years 1 - 2	Achievement is very good in Years 3 - 6
The quality of teaching is very good	The quality of learning is very good
Leadership of the subject is satisfactory	Management of the subject is unsatisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.	

64. When compared with all schools, and those of a similar nature, trends in Year 6 national tests have fluctuated widely since the last inspection. Results were above average in 2002, yet very low in 2003. This fluctuation is attributed to the varying size of the year group and to the growing proportion of pupils with SEN, which is above the national level. Lower standards were mainly the result of the

relatively small proportion of pupils performing at the higher Level 5. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 achieve very well to gain the minimum Level 2, but in the past have failed to attain the higher Level 3. Standards in lessons and in work undertaken during the year have improved in Year 2 and Year 6, with pupils performing at the higher levels. Other pupils have achieved very well to reach predicted levels. Unvalidated national test results for 2004 indicate that standards are above national averages for Year 2 and Year 6. Scientific exploration and investigation have improved significantly.

65. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 2 indicates that they have experienced a good range of scientific activities. They have investigated materials; have a secure understanding of pushing and pulling, and the effects of friction on 'forces'. A farm visit has played a significant part in the good understanding of 'living and non-living'.

66. In the three lessons observed, all pupils achieved well, with lower attaining pupils reaching the expected levels and higher attaining pupils challenged to perform at higher levels. Pupils enjoy their activities and demonstrate good social skills when working in groups to discuss or plan their investigations. All pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are eager to contribute to whole class discussions. Pupils are introduced to 'fair testing' and 'making predictions' from Year 2 onwards. By the age of 11 pupils make informed decisions built on their good levels of scientific knowledge. There are no evident differences between the achievement of boys and girls.

67. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now very good overall; they were consistently very good for Years 3 - 6. Where teaching was at its best, pupils were challenged consistently well and responded admirably. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to aid learning. Pupils use computer technology very well, whether entering and interpreting data or recording their findings. Teachers ensured that all pupils were involved fully and, when available, teaching assistants contributed significantly to the standards attained by lower achievers. Marking is at its best in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are informed not only of their achievements but also how to improve.

68. Leadership of science is satisfactory. Teachers now follow national guidelines covering all elements of the science curriculum in a balanced way. Management is unsatisfactory. Although test results are analysed, the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor the quality of teaching of learning in other classes. Assessment procedures lack consistency. Targets for improvement for all pupils would improve standards significantly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils use ICT skilfully and confidently; their achievement is good and standards are above average by Year 6.
- Teaching is good, learning is very good, but assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively across the curriculum, enhancing the quality and range of pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good, though the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

Summary of key inspection judgements

Standards by Year 2 are average	Standards by Year 6 are above average
Achievement in Years 1 - 2 is good	Achievement in Years 3 - 6 is good
Quality of teaching is good	Quality of learning is very good
Leadership of the subject is good	Management of the subject is satisfactory

Commentary

69. Achievement in ICT throughout the school is good. Pupils' standards of attainment by Year 2 are average; standards are above average in Year 6. Achievement by pupils with SEN is good and they attain standards appropriate to their ability.

70. Most pupils use ICT equipment skilfully and confidently. During the inspection, pupils were observed using computers before school, during break and lunchtimes and after school, to extend their learning. Little direct teaching of ICT was observed during the inspection, but the quality was good; pupils' skill, confidence and motivation led to learning which was very good. Samples of work from all classes and various subjects showed evidence of pupils word processing, plotting data, exploring issues, searching the Internet, manipulating visual and audio images and conducting individual and collaborative investigations.

71. Pupils present their work in increasingly complex formats; by Year 6 findings are presented through graphs, charts, booklets, posters and PowerPoint presentations. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are very positive. Pupils of all ages and abilities talk enthusiastically about the work in their books, on classroom and corridor displays around the school, or presented in booklets in the school entrance. Lower attaining pupils, and those with SEN, are able to gain full access to the curriculum and equipment with help. Pupils with SEN are engaged and motivated by ICT activities, so that their work is improved and enhanced by the technology. Work is usually well planned, though on one occasion, with Years 3 and 4, an apparently simple task, choosing and applying fonts for maximum impact, proved very time-consuming because of pupils' limited skills and discernment, and led to unhelpful dependence on the support assistant.

72. Overall, leadership and management of the subject are good. The headteacher provides enthusiastic and innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum. He has a clear vision of the development of the subject and, through his strategic planning, good financial and resource management and effective staff development, he has ensured that the school is very well equipped to achieve its educational priorities. Pupils have ready access to computers; the school network provides one computer for every three pupils. There was evidence of slow loading and access to programs on some computers, but most are well equipped for pupils' needs. Two of the three classrooms have interactive whiteboards and staff are beginning to use this new equipment very effectively to enhance teaching and learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and aids pupils' development of knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of the subject. There are inconsistent approaches to assessment and recording of the development of pupils' skills throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is not matched against National Curriculum Levels and pupils do not receive clear guidance on their progress and attainment, also on what they could do to improve. There is also no systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, staff and pupils in a small village school have easy access to the world and very effective ICT support for learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is good. The application of ICT is not integrated into subject schemes of work, but it appears in teachers' weekly plans, is used extensively to enhance the quality and range of pupils' work. Pupils were observed in English, mathematics and science, also in the sampled geography and design and technology lessons, learning effectively when word processing, handling data, using computer simulations to think through ideas and develop skills, controlling equipment and using spreadsheets. The participation of all classes in the TES National Newspaper Day mobilises pupils to write for a purpose - creating and publishing a newspaper in one day. They gather, sift and organise news items; conduct interviews; draft and word process, edit and present stories; take, process, select and use digital photographs; download images from the Internet, consider and use data; structure and format pages, choose and apply fonts and graphics. Pupils are very proud to be prize winners in this event. The process and the results are well displayed in the main corridor.

HUMANITIES

74. Due to the priorities for the inspection, insufficient evidence was collected to enable judgements to be made about standards, achievement or provision in geography, history or religious education. No teaching was observed in these subjects, due to timetable constraints, so evidence is taken from school documentation, discussion with pupils about their work and discussions with the headteacher, who co-ordinates all of these subjects.

Geography

75. The curriculum for geography is planned to give pupils a broad range of knowledge, understanding, skills and experience. Very thorough use is made of the school and local village environments. The Reception class and Year 1 and 2 explore the local environment through investigation of an issue, 'How can we make our school safer?' This is important, particularly in view of the very busy road next to the school and the parking issues. Years 3 and 4 look at the local area, village settlers and improving the environment. Years 5 and 6 build on this understanding with a traffic survey and computer analysis, also Internet investigations on environmental issues, including tourism and pollution. Pupils' understanding and perspective is also broadened through studies in contrasting areas, including Shrewsbury, Llandudno and Craven Arms, then through studies of life in Africa and India. Some initial e-mail links with an African school are developing.

76. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes through close examination of the local area, a visit to Sea World, studies in climate change and examination of different regions, deserts, oceans and polar regions; as one Year 6 pupil put it, 'Everything from ants to mountains!' They learn about environmental change and sustainable development throughout the school. Becoming an Eco School in 2000 gave fresh impetus to environmental interests and concerns. Pupils of all ages show a good interest in, and knowledge of, their local environment and environmental issues. Year 6 pupils spoke knowledgeably and passionately about environmentally friendly transport, issues of energy production, pollution and resources. Very good use is made of ICT in geography throughout the school to gain access to information, to investigate issues and to present pupils' findings in a range of formats.

History

77. The curriculum for history is planned as a two-year rolling programme in order to make sure that pupils cover a relevant range of activities over time within the mixed-age classes. The scheme of work is based on nationally approved schemes and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The programme is designed to develop an understanding of chronology and to build the relevant skills systematically. History is made more meaningful throughout the school by the effective use of visits and visitors, drama, art, literature, imaginative displays, video, the Internet and a good range of artefacts.

Religious Education

78. From school documentation, discussion with pupils and a discussion with the subject co-ordinator, it is clear that the school is still developing its response to the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus (2001). The school's curriculum for religious education is in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus, but the three-year cycle does not match the school's two-year curriculum rolling programme. There is some evidence from the pilot implementation phase that there is too much content in the programme for the time available, especially as the school is seeking to meet the requirements of 'learning from religion' as well as 'learning about religion'. Pupils in Year 6 have benefited from both these strands. For example, they have recently studied Hinduism and were able to recall stories and aspects of the faith, including the significance of the many faces of Brahman. They were particularly impressed by their visit to the Hindu mandir, especially the vibrant building and the worship, also the warmth and hospitality they received from worshippers and the opportunity for personal reflection. They were able to make comparisons and contrasts with their study of the local

church, including different approaches to statues and images. The school has made good use of the parish church and the visit to the mandir to achieve a number of aspects of social and cultural development, as well as enabling pupils to reflect and explore spiritual aspects. Pupils' knowledge and understanding beyond their most recent work was sketchy.

79. The school has not developed approaches to assessment that match the non-statutory guidelines in the Agreed Syllabus. The headteacher received an introduction to the Agreed Syllabus in January 2002, but neither he nor the staff have received any training in implementing the syllabus. The headteacher's reports on the subject to the governing body, included as evidence in the co-ordinator's file, mention only acts of collective worship, not religious education. Apart from the development of a policy in 2002-2003, the subject has not been a priority in the school improvement plan, nor is it a planned priority from 2004 - 2006. Ensuring that religious education is taught effectively throughout the school requires higher priority.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

80. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of art and design due to the subject not being a priority for inspection. No lessons were observed.

81. The annual 'Big Art Day' has given an impetus to the development of art. Parents and children worked side by side to accomplish an inspiring underwater scene on the school pavilion, following a visit to 'Sea World'. The corridors have been transformed and pupils are proud of their achievements. Displays brighten the walls and pupils show skills in line with national expectations.

Design and technology

82. It was possible to observe only part of a design and technology lesson and the application of technology in an art and history project, so further evidence was gathered from planning documents, photographs and discussions with pupils.

83. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. All the sources of evidence indicate that pupils are given ample opportunity to discuss designs, make choices and reflect on their work. However, limited emphasis is placed upon improving pupils' practical skills, which was evident in the Year 5 and 6 class observed. In a recent Technology Day, pupils in the Foundation Stage made a garage or train shed to link with a transport project and those in Year 1 and Year 2 made castles to link with a history topic. They also photographed their work and produced thoughtful captions describing their product and giving their reflections on their work, by dictation (Reception class), in handwriting (Year 1), or word processing (Year 2). The process of designing, making and evaluating is applied well in Years 3 and 4, as observed when pupils learn to design a motif and make print blocks, based on their studies of ancient Egypt. So, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have understood the importance of evaluation: 'We think how we could make it better and then we change it. We usually do it automatically, but sometimes the teacher has to remind us.' Pupils in Year 6 also talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the design and technology projects they have undertaken. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety.

84. Through a balanced curriculum covering food, textiles and both natural and manufactured resistant materials, pupils consider products and packaging, function and appearance. Good use is made of ICT in the subject. They make, or design and make, a range of products. There is some evidence of increasing complexity in these products. For example, in Class 1 pupils design and make a simple trolley, through tasks which are suitably differentiated for pupils in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2. In Years 5 and 6 they move on to an electric powered mechanical toy, having investigated control of movement through a computer simulation and a Romer. The school

is imaginative in its curriculum enrichment, so a unit on bread-making is supported by a visit to the local supermarket bakery. Environmental projects within the school and in its grounds are used to improve pupils' design and practical skills, develop moral, social and environmental awareness, cultivate partnerships with parents and forge good links between technology and other curriculum areas.

Music

85. Having observed only one lesson, it is not possible to make a judgement on the overall provision for music.

86. Enthusiastic teaching in Years 5 and 6 moved pupils on skilfully from earlier experiences. Pupils were highly motivated, and achieved levels above what is expected nationally by the age of eleven, as they composed music in groups before being challenged to add variation to their composition. Pupils amended notation and chose a variation of rhythm, timbre, dynamics and texture. Very good social development contributed to the very good achievement experienced by all, regardless of gender or ability. Pupils enjoy singing tunefully during class worship. Activities in addition to the normal school day encourage singing and the playing of guitar and recorder. Pupils and parents enjoy the good tradition of annual musical performances; recent involvement in a music festival has enabled older pupils to extend their musical skills.

Physical Education

87. Due to the restriction of time, it was not possible to sample development and to make a judgement on the provision for physical education.

88. Both the indoor and outdoor accommodation is good and difficulties in using the field throughout the year are being addressed. Planning indicates a balanced coverage of National Curriculum requirements and guidelines which assist teaching and learning. Resources are good both for planned activities during lessons and for imaginative play before school and during lunch times. Activities outside the normal school day have added an additional dimension to pupils' physical development. Skills are developed and extended in the many outdoor activities provided, according to the season. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their club activities and improve their skills in gymnastics and table tennis. Very good links are forged with the community, which enable pupils to experience a greater range of sports, including golf and bowls.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).