

INSPECTION REPORT

MARY HOWARD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Edingale, Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124249

Headteacher: Mrs M Knuckey

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 3rd and 4th November 2003

Inspection number:

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	32
School address:	School Lane
	Edingale
	Tamworth
	Staffordshire
Postcode:	B79 9JJ
Telephone number:	01827 383245
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Clayton-Smith
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd October 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With only 32 pupils, this village school is much smaller than other primary schools. In 2002/3 there were 9 pupils in Year 6, but in all other cohorts the numbers range between 3 and 5. Almost all pupils are of white UK heritage; a very small number from other ethnic groups. There are 6 pupils with special educational needs; as a proportion of the whole school this is about average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The attainment of the small cohorts that enter the school varies considerably from year to year, but overall is broadly average.

In 2000, the school was placed in special measures. It was removed in October 2001 because the major weaknesses had been addressed, and in 2003 the school received an Achievement Award. The number of pupils on roll has fallen by about a third in the last few years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English, history, art and design, design and technology geography, religious education, music, Foundation Stage curriculum

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory**. It is continuing to improve at a good rate and now has many strong features though standards are not yet as consistently as high as they should be. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The effective leadership of the headteacher and the good support of the governors have brought considerable improvement
- Standards are continuing to rise. The pupils are achieving well in English and attaining above average standards
- Standards in mathematics are improving but, although the pupils are achieving satisfactorily, they are not yet reaching the standards they should
- The school development plan is comprehensive, but not sufficiently focused on raising standards particularly in mathematics
- The pupils are well behaved, concentrate well and have positive attitudes to learning
- The teaching is good and the lessons are well managed
- The curriculum is broad, interesting and enhanced by a range of activities

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is now much more effective overall. Standards have risen in English, and the most able pupils are achieving well. However, standards in mathematics are not yet high enough. The headteacher has more time to guide the work of the school and there is a comprehensive development plan. The accommodation has improved and the classrooms are now attractive places for the pupils to work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall; it is good in Years 1 and 2. Standards in English have improved and are above average throughout the school. In mathematics, they are above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, the children achieve well. They have good opportunities to develop their confidence and skills and are well on course to exceed the early learning goals.

The cohorts in each year group are very small and, therefore, the results of the national tests must be viewed with considerable caution. This is very evident in the 2002 results where attainment was in the top 5 per cent nationally at the end of Year 2 and in the lowest 5 per cent by the end of Year 6. This comes about because the results of one or two pupils have a disproportion effect on the overall results. However, the 2003 results reflect the efforts made to improve the pupils' writing and above average standards are now evident in their work. The results of the annual tests taken in the school also show that the pupils are now achieving well and making particularly good progress in English. The average standards now evident in mathematics are satisfactory, but are not high enough by the

end of Year 6. The older pupils' work in mathematics lessons shows evidence of recent improvement, but the pupils' previous work and results show that the more able children should do better. Standards in science are now average and improving because the pupils have good opportunities to carry out investigation and consequently they are doing well in lessons.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, both in lessons and around the school. They are enthusiastic about their work and the other activities the school offers. **The school cultivates pupils' personal qualities well.** The Christian ethos promotes a sense of spirituality in the school. The levels of attendance are above the national figure and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is now good** and is the key reason why it is continuing to improve. **Teaching and learning are good.** The lessons are well planned and tasks are modified for children of different ages and abilities. Relationships with pupils are very good and the teaching assistants support learning effectively. Marking is good and helps the pupils to improve their work. The assessment of writing is particularly effective.

The curriculum is broad, interesting and well planned, but the pupils have insufficient opportunity to use and apply their mathematics skills. The school provides a wide range of additional activities for the pupils, including visits and visitors to the school to enhance the curriculum. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.

The school cares for and supports pupils well. They are consulted and have good opportunities to be involved in school improvements, notably through the school council. The school has good relationships with parents and uses its links with the community well. The information the school makes available to parents is of good quality. There are good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school effectively and has a clear commitment to ongoing improvement. The governance of the school is good, and the governors are particularly active in monitoring its work. The chair of governors supports and works effectively with the headteacher, and together they have been successful in bringing about many improvements. The management of the school is satisfactory. Although the development plan is comprehensive it is not sufficiently focussed on activities that will raise standards further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are happy with the quality of the education their children receive, and they support the work of the school. They are particularly pleased with the many improvements that have been made to the educational provision and to the building. The pupils enjoy school and the older ones are very pleased with the improvements to the classrooms and the friendly and caring attitudes of other children. A significant concern for parents is the small number of pupils in each year group. The headteacher and governors share this concern.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to continue the good rate of improvement are:

- Increase the pupils' achievements in mathematics to enable them to attain higher standards
- Ensure that the school development plan is more precisely focused on raising standards in key areas

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall; it is good in Years 1 and 2 and in English throughout the school. Standards are above average in English, but only average in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well and are on course to meet and exceed the goals set for them
- Standards in writing have improved and are now above average. The pupils are achieving well in English
- They are achieving satisfactorily in mathematics and standards are average. However, they are not as high as they should be

Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well because the adults consistently promote their self-esteem and enable them to develop confidence to become effective learners. They have good opportunities to develop their language and mathematical skills through a balance of directed and self chosen activities. They are well on course to exceed the early learning goals.
2. Standards have continued to rise since the last inspection. The school has been particularly successful in improving the quality of pupils' writing through challenging tasks, detailed assessment and precise target setting. As a result, they are achieving well and standards in English are now above average throughout the school. Although there are improvements in mathematics and pupils achieve satisfactorily, standards are not yet as high as they should be.
3. The cohorts in each year group are very small and therefore the results of the national tests must be viewed with considerable caution. This is very evident in the 2002 results where attainment was in the top 5 per cent nationally at the end of Year 2 and in the lowest 5 per cent by the end of Year 6. This is because the results of one or two pupils have a disproportionate effect on the overall results. However, the 2003 results reflect the efforts made to improve the pupils' writing and above average standards are now evident in their work. The results of annual tests taken in the school also show that pupils are now achieving well and making particularly good progress in English.
4. Results over recent years support the view that standards in mathematics are not high enough by the end of Year 6. The position is much stronger in Years 1 and 2 and higher standards are now well established. A detailed scrutiny of the older pupils' work and performance in mathematics reveals evidence of improvement, but also the capacity for higher standards. An analysis of the completed work and results from last year indicates that the lower attaining pupils made good gains and achieved well, but some who achieved the expected level should have done better. Results of annual tests show an increased rate of improvement, and observation of lessons and discussion with pupils show that they are appropriately challenged. Scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals that they do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
5. Standards in science are average, they are continuing to rise and pupils are doing well in lessons. Their work shows that they carry out and record a good range of experiments and that they are now progressing well.

6. The very small numbers in each cohort make it very difficult to identify any variation in the overall achievements of boys and girls; none was evident in the lessons seen. The few pupils from ethnic minority groups are fully included and doing well.
7. Although the school has a comprehensive development plan with an overarching purpose of raising standards, it does not set out precisely how, for example, it is going to raise standards further in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, both in lessons and around the school. The school cultivates their personal development well. Levels of attendance are above the national figure and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are enthusiastic about their work and the other activities the school offers
- The school encourages them to be supportive and responsible within the school community
- The Christian ethos promotes a sense of spirituality in the school
- Attendance has improved and is above average.

Commentary

8. The headteacher has been very successful in bringing about improvement in pupils' attitudes to work, particularly amongst the younger ones. Pupils now concentrate hard in lessons and apply themselves thoroughly to their tasks. In a Year 3 and 4 numeracy lesson, for example, the boys achieved much in a short time and were able to move on to extension activities because of their positive attitudes. The pupils love all the clubs and extra activities, especially music, available to them and the take-up is very good.
9. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and often very good in the playground and around the school. The key to this is the quality of relationships within the school. All members of staff encourage pupils to respect and support one another, and this is evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils help one another in lessons and appreciate the efforts made by others, for example when playing instruments in assembly. The school takes advantage of its small size by giving all pupils, but particularly the older ones, good opportunities to take on responsibility, and they respond ably to the challenge. Older pupils are encouraged to show their maturity by looking after younger ones. They do this very well so that the youngsters in their turn feel settled and secure in school. The school's activity days, where everyone works together on a common project, typify its success.
10. The school has a strong Christian ethos at the core of its work. A sense of spirituality is present in assemblies and in the emphasis placed on the development of the pupils as individuals. The school seeks to give them an insight into their own worth and place in the school and in the wider world. The rural location helps pupils to explore the wonders of the natural world. The science garden, which the staff and pupils set up during an activity day, is an excellent example of how the school makes the most of its own qualities as a small, country school to create something special. Several commented on how important the science garden was to them because they had made it themselves.
11. The pupils enjoy coming to school because it offers them so much, and their parents make sure that they are not absent unless they are ill. As a result, attendance is above the national figure, which represents a significant improvement over the last two years. It means that the pupils do not miss out on work and fall behind. Similarly, punctuality is also generally good because the

parents ensure that their children arrive on time each day, so that the morning session gets off to a good start.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is now good and the key reason why the school is continuing to improve. The curriculum is broad, interesting and well planned, and the teaching and learning are good. The school cares for and supports its pupils well.

Teaching and learning

The teaching, learning and assessment of the pupils' work are all good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and tasks modified for different ages and abilities.
- Teaching assistants effectively support learning
- Marking of the pupils' work is good, and the assessment of their writing is particularly effective.
- Adults' relationships with the pupils are very good

Commentary

12. The teachers consistently manage the mixed age groups in each class effectively and take full account of the needs of all their pupils. This is very evident where the Foundation Stage children are taught alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The teacher makes sure that the youngest children have a good balance of directed and self-chosen activities and plenty of opportunities to extend their play and their social development. Many activities are carefully modified to provide an appropriate degree of challenge for the different groups in the class. This is also the case in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 where, for example, the teacher adjusts the questions in mental mathematics to the different levels at which the pupils are working.
13. Lessons are well planned. Teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and write the lesson objectives on the white board so that the pupils are fully aware. They refer to them throughout the lessons to maintain the focus for learning. Lessons generally have a good pace and include all pupils. Those with special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and teaching assistants who often work with them individually to good effect.
14. The marking of the pupils' work is thorough and helps them to improve. The assessment of writing is very detailed and is based on the clear and precise targets that teachers have set for the pupils. It has contributed significantly to the improvement in standards. Although pupils' mathematics work is also well marked, assessment and recording are not as detailed and therefore the target setting is not as precise.

15. The teachers expect pupils to behave well and as a result they respond well in lessons. The children are happy at school and have a good relationship with their teachers. They settle to the tasks they are set, and are encouraged to put in greater effort by the teachers when their concentration lapses. The oldest children are encouraged to leave the 'comfort zone' and work in the 'challenging zone'. The pupils are aware of their targets and the increased expectations placed upon them as the school continues to raise standards and ensure that the pupils achieve the levels they should.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	1	9	3			

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and interesting. The school provides a wide range of additional activities for the pupils. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and organised, but the pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use and apply their mathematics skills
- Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum
- The range of extra curricular activities is very good
- The accommodation is attractive and used well

Commentary

16. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved as a result of a comprehensive review. Planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum takes full account of the stepping stones and Early Learning Goals. Planning of the National Curriculum utilises national guidance very well and takes into account the needs of mixed age classes. The literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. Religious education is taught following the guidance of the locally Agreed Syllabus, the diocesan handbook and the QCA schemes of work. The strategies that the teachers employ to deliver the curriculum are good and ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement, including those with special educational needs. The teachers work well together and use the well-organised resources creatively. For example, the artefacts to support the older pupils' study of Islam in religious education are displayed attractively to encourage the pupils to be inquisitive. This contributes to the good ethos that has been created in the school.

17. Discussions with the pupils reveal a motivation and interest in learning. This is because the topics selected within the curriculum framework are well planned and presented in an interesting way by the teachers. Visitors to the school enhance the curriculum as, for example, in history when an actor playing the role of Samuel Pepys visited the school. In discussion, the pupils recall their residential experience with relish and would dearly love to do it again because they 'had a great time.' The pupils also visit places of interest such as Lichfield Cathedral.

18. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology are satisfactory and the school is now seeking to increase them right across the curriculum. The older pupils participate in a mini-enterprise project that provides a very worthwhile opportunity for them to use their literacy and numeracy and to develop an interest in business. A specialist teacher extends the opportunities available to pupils in music and the creative arts. Pupils with special educational

needs receive good support and the work is well planned to meet their needs. For example, they have good support in class and are aware of their targets. They also have good one-to-one support, for example, in mathematics and reading.

19. The extra-curricular provision is very good. On four evenings each week, there are activities such as the gymnastics club that takes place in the village hall. The pupils also play competitive sport with the football and netball teams involved in matches with other local schools. Strong links with the community also make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning. The local vicar, for example, is a frequent visitor to the school and often leads collective worship.
20. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers for the number of pupils on roll. The accommodation is attractive and the resources are well organised and accessible. Although the use of the hall as a classroom is not ideal, it is well furnished and provides good space for the pupils to work in. The school grounds are being improved and the pupils are fully involved in both the planning and planting. These developments increase the potential use of the grounds in the curriculum. The youngest pupils have a role play area and a safe outdoor area to meet their particular needs.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for and supports pupils well. They are consulted about and involved in the various school improvements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All members of staff know pupils very well, and the parents and pupils are aware of this
- Pupils have many opportunities to make their voices heard, both formally and informally

Commentary

21. All staff, and particularly the headteacher, know all the pupils and their individual traits and foibles very well. This is clearly evident both in the daily life of the school and in the very good reports that go out to the parents each year. In lessons, the teachers provide academic and personal guidance matched to every pupil, and at break and lunchtime staff know who they need to keep an eye on. The annual reports to the parents are honest and straightforward, so that targets for improvements on all fronts stand out. Parents and pupils alike are reassured by this knowledge, which results in good care and support for every pupil. The pupils feel secure and happy at school, and their parents know that they can talk to a member of staff at any time if there are any concerns. As a result, pupils are ready and able to learn well.
22. As the school is so small and the pupils are so well known, at any time they are easily able to express their feelings and views to staff, who are always ready to listen. The school council also works well as a formal channel for the pupils' ideas, and the representatives have the determination to pursue their aims, such as the "fruit for all" scheme.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good relationships with the parents and uses its links with the community well. There are also good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information the school makes available to parents is of good quality
- The annual written reports are very good and provide the parents with very useful information
- There are good links with the local pre-school provision and the secondary school

Commentary

23. Most parents are happy with the quality of education that their children receive and they support the work of the school. They are particularly pleased with the many improvements that have been made to the educational provision and to the building, although some feel they are not kept well enough informed about how their child is getting on. Termly consultations, very good annual written reports and the availability of teachers before or after school provide adequate opportunity for all parents to ascertain how well their children are doing. The reports are very good because they give parents a clear picture of how well their children are progressing and what they need to do to improve further. The school prospectus is attractive and informative and newsletters keep the parents abreast of what is happening in the school.
24. Some parents have concerns about the small cohorts and the gender imbalance, particularly where, for example, there is just one girl in a year group with three or four boys. This is a concern shared by the headteacher and the governors who have met parents to discuss the issue of falling rolls.
25. The school has good links with the local pre-school provision. The preparation of the oldest pupils for their move to secondary education is good because of the strong links between the two schools. The headteacher of the secondary visits the school to meet the pupils early in Year 6 and provides information about how former pupils are getting on. The school uses the village hall for physical education and a group of senior citizens join the children for lunch two days each week.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school effectively; the governance is good and the management satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear commitment to ongoing improvement
- The chair of governors supports and works effectively with the headteacher
- The school development plan is comprehensive but is not sufficiently focussed on activities that will raise standards further.

Commentary

26. The school is maintaining the momentum of improvement well under the effective leadership of the headteacher and with the strong support of the governors. The school has been successful in developing a very positive ethos and an interesting curriculum, and in improving the accommodation. Overall, standards are rising, most notably in writing, but the information gleaned from self evaluation and analysis of performance data is not being used effectively enough to highlight priorities for further improvement.
27. The headteacher has a commitment to ongoing improvement which is shared by the teaching team. Together they have reviewed and planned the curriculum to ensure it is broad and interesting for all pupils. Overall, they manage the curriculum well. The teaching team has been very effective in generating a caring and respectful community where the pupils feel valued and get on well with each other. Activity days, where younger and older pupils work together, have done much to extend these values. The headteacher's promotion of high expectations in regard to the behaviour and the standards that the pupils attain has resulted in a positive atmosphere within the school. She likens the process that has brought this about to 'turning round an ocean liner'. The school is now clearly sailing in the right direction.

28. The governors challenge and support the headteacher and staff. The monitoring committee plays a central role in collating information which allows the governors to both question and evaluate the extent of the school's improvement. The work of this committee and the strong influence of the chair of governors contribute well to the overall strategic development of the school and are helping to shape its future direction.
29. In the recent past, the governing body has been concerned to bring about improvements on many fronts and this is reflected in the school development plan that is wide ranging. The school is increasingly effective in analysing the data from both national and annual tests. Whilst the small numbers of pupils make comparison with national data questionable, the analysis of progress of individuals and cohorts provides useful information. However, this is not being used to determine priorities for school improvement. Equally, the school development plan does not focus precisely enough on raising standards in key areas, notably mathematics, nor does it set out clearly the actions that will bring about improvement.
30. The relatively minor issues arising from a recent audit of financial management have been addressed. The school development plan contains a clear indication not only of the costs involved but also the time needed to support each action.
31. The falling number of pupils now attending the school is a matter of considerable concern to the governors, staff and parents. A further decline in numbers may prove a significant barrier to further improvements because the current staffing levels will clearly come under scrutiny.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	168 730
Total expenditure	166 975
Expenditure per pupil	3 883

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40
Balance carried forward to the next year	1 755

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well because the adults consistently promote their self-esteem and enable them to develop confidence to become effective learners
- There are good opportunities for the children to develop their language skills
- They also have regular practical mathematical activities
- The children have a good balance of directed and self chosen activities

32. Three children are taught in a class containing Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and taught and ensures a good balance over all areas of learning. Considerable emphasis is placed on the development of social skills, literacy and numeracy. The classroom accommodation provides adequate space for the creative activities that are normally associated with the early stages of learning. For instance, there is provision for a large role-play corner, sand and water trays and a carpeted area for construction and other activities. The outdoor accommodation is attractive, but does not allow for tracks for wheeled vehicles or climbing facilities. However, it is arranged to provide interesting first-hand activities that enhance the science aspect of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The good support children receive, for example, to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, enables them to achieve well. They are well on course to exceed the early learning goals.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

33. The children generally have well-developed social skills when they begin school. Therefore, they settle very well to their learning and can sustain concentration, for example, when they work with the teaching assistant to practise their numeracy skills. They quickly develop independence as they access the classroom equipment, such as paints, brushes and aprons. All the children confidently entered the role-play area to participate in imaginative play with other older pupils. This is because the ground rules about classroom behaviour have been well established. Children listen carefully to the adults and await their turn to answer questions. Adults make their expectations very clear and consistently reinforce them so that the children are secure in what is expected of them. The children are helpful to each other, sharing equipment and assisting each other, for example, to put on clothing for painting.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

34. The children make good progress because the opportunities to speak are many and varied. The teacher's questioning skills are strong and she encourages the children to expand their vocabulary through listening carefully when questioned. Her questions are skilfully framed to ensure that children of different abilities can fully participate in responding. The children enjoyed hearing the story of "Tom and the Island of Dinosaurs", and the attractive bookstands in the class appear to be well used. Regular phonic practice ensures that the children are achieving well in recognising letters and their sounds. Their workbooks show that they are acquiring the ability to record well-formed letters, and simple sentence structures are beginning to be established.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

35. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good. Children recognise a range of numbers to ten and are gaining confidence in matching them to a series of objects. There was little recorded work by the current cohort, but work from the previous year showed evidence of children making good progress in adding and subtracting numbers and recognising the attributes of two-dimensional shapes. The concept of more or less to compare numbers is consistently developed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

36. Children show a keen interest in the lives of people from different cultures. This is in part because the planning for religious education is imaginative. The activities are lively and interesting, for example, when a lesson on Diwali was linked to an art lesson in which the children made and decorated clay divas. The lesson ended dramatically with the classroom blinds lowered and the children sitting, hushed and with rapt attention while the divas were lit. This was also a useful experience to extend the pupils' learning and understanding as they discussed the symbolic importance of light in religious festivals. In one lesson, the children developed confidence in loading a CD Rom and expanded their understanding of the use of icons to navigate its contents.

PHYSICAL AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

37. The children's motor control skills as they use paint brushes, form their letters and join pieces of construction equipment are well developed. The adults are very alert to opportunities for promoting this aspect of the children's development, for example, by ensuring that children hold pencils comfortably so that they acquire correct letter formation at an early stage of learning. The children's painted self-portraits on display also show that a good start has been made in developing their ability to mix skin, hair and eye colours and to observe details such as eye shapes and hairstyles. They are already achieving well during their short time in school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and standards in writing are above average
- Good teaching is enabling pupils to learn and achieve well
- Assessment of the pupil's progress and attainment is regular and well focused
- The children with special educational needs are making good gains in their literacy skills

Commentary

38. Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They have risen, notably by the end of Year 6, as the result of a careful analysis of the pupils' written work and the test results over the last few years. This reflects the good progress made since the last inspection.

39. Boys and girls, including those pupils with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school. The higher attaining pupils also achieve well, and the school is currently working hard to drive up reading standards still further. For instance, it is developing an effective strategy for improving the pupils' higher order reading skills. The support and encouragement given to all pupils are good. Consequently, they achieve well and have a positive attitude towards their work.

40. Many pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils respond clearly and confidently to the teacher's questions, and in Years 5 and 6, they make interesting and extended contributions to classroom discussions. In paired discussions, older pupils can articulate points of view clearly and respond to those of others. The teaching and support staff know how to extend the pupils' vocabulary during discussion and develop the confidence of more hesitant speakers.
41. The pupils achieve well in reading because they are well taught and have access to a good variety of books in their classrooms. The phonic work undertaken in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 provides a firm foundation for tackling words of increasing complexity. The older pupils achieve a good standard in their reading; they decode words accurately and read fluently, though not always with sufficient expression. This is being addressed effectively through a range of strategies such as listening to the teacher read, and reading in pairs or small groups. The teachers encourage reading at home and are concerned for more parents to support their children. Fiction and non-fiction books are prominently displayed in the classrooms.
42. The teachers are successful in driving up standards in writing. In recent years, standards of writing have been high in key stage 1, but the oldest pupils have borne a legacy of previous low achievement. Standards have risen because of good teaching, the main characteristics of which are as follows:
- a very effective approach to assessment, including regular and detailed assessments of set writing tasks
 - the effective planning of subsequent work based on this assessment information
 - the increasing use of interesting text to improve the older pupils' awareness of different genres of writing and widen their knowledge and use of appropriate vocabulary
 - the compilation of class anthologies of writing e.g. poems
43. Overall, the pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are satisfactory, but some aspects need further improvement. The spelling skills of a few older pupils are weaker than they should be because they do not sufficiently check spellings when editing their work. These aspects are often commented upon in the marking of work to encourage greater care resulting in a steady improvement.
44. Teaching is good. The teachers have identified very effective strategies for improving the pupils' literacy skills, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Their planning of work at different stages and for pupils of different abilities ensures that tasks match the pupils' needs and promote progress from one level to the next. Teachers employ a range of questioning techniques to encourage pupils to think for themselves as they plan pieces of writing. This was very evident as the oldest pupils prepared to write about the differences in content between the novel of "The Railway Children" and a film version. Teachers and support staff are encouraging. Relationships are very good and result in pupils enjoying their work and wanting to improve.
45. The headteacher, teachers, support staff and governors have worked well to improve the standards of teaching and learning. They are well aware of how they can continue to raise standards in literacy so that more pupils will achieve the higher levels appropriate for their ages.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. The school has made very positive efforts to plan literacy tasks, for example, in conjunction with work in religious education and design and technology.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, but are not yet as high as they should be by the end of Year 6
- Pupils are making increased progress because the teaching is good
- The set tasks are challenging, but pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use and apply what they have learned

Commentary

47. Three mathematics lessons were seen, and in each one the teaching was good. The lessons were well planned and catered appropriately for the different age and ability groups within each class.
48. In Years 1 and 2 the cohorts are very small, but the teacher meets their needs well. The pupils begin the lessons with a mental warm-up that practices their counting and adding. The teacher modifies these activities well so that the older and more able pupils, for example, add on 10 or 20 whilst some of the younger Year 1 pupils are adding on 1 or 2. A variety of tasks are similarly modified and well supported by both the teacher and the teaching assistant, the latter giving particularly good support to individuals with special educational needs. Some tasks involve pupils playing mathematical games whilst others are written. For instance, a small group of more able older pupils relished a series of subtraction problems with an appropriate level of challenge that illustrated their mathematical competence well. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years, as might be expected of such small cohorts but they are predominantly above average. The evidence of current work also supports the view that standards are above average and pupils are achieving well.
49. In Years 3 and 4 the teaching was clear, systematic and logical and helped the pupils to increase their understanding of multiples and factors and to achieve well. In this lesson, the pupils were challenged and well supported by the teacher. In Years 5 and 6 a good mental activity led to work on the perimeter of regular shapes. The pupils with the potential for higher attainment were moved on quickly to calculating the perimeter of irregular shapes and they responded well. Pupils with special educational needs were set appropriate tasks and achieve well in the lesson.
50. Although the pupils' achievement in lessons is good, this does not provide a complete picture. A detailed scrutiny of older pupils' work and performance in mathematics reveals not only evidence of improvement, but also the capacity for higher standards. An analysis of the completed work and the results from last year's national tests indicate that some of the pupils who achieved the expected level should have done better. A scrutiny of pupils' work also reveals that they have insufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This may well contribute to some pupils' underachievement in the national tests. The results of annual tests show an increased rate of progress by the current Year 6 pupils over the last year, but this followed a period of little progress.
51. The marking of the pupils' work is thorough and helpful. Older pupils know what is expected of them and their teacher is encouraging them to move from the 'comfort zone' to the 'challenging zone'. In this there is recognition that greater urgency is needed for them to achieve high standards.
52. Nevertheless, there is good evidence to support the view that standards are rising and that the school's overall development strategy is beginning to have an effect in mathematics. However, the current school development plan is neither focussed nor precise enough to bring about rapid improvement and ensure those with the potential for higher attainment reach the levels they should by the end of Year 6. A clearer strategy for raising standards in mathematics is needed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils make some use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in their science investigations they are required to record their findings in tables and present their results in graphs. The oldest pupils take part in a mini enterprise project during the final term of Year 6 and this provides a very good vehicle for them to use of a range of mathematical skills. Overall, however, their range of opportunities to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum is not wide enough to contribute to a rapid improvement in standards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' achievement is good and standards are improving
- The teaching is good

Commentary

54. Three science lessons were observed and a sample of the pupils' work was scrutinised. Standards are broadly average overall, but in Year 2 they are currently above average. In all of the lessons seen, the teaching was good and pupils were making good progress and achieving well.

55. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils are learning about forces. They talked confidently about pushing and pulling objects and the Year 2 pupils are beginning to recognise that friction may work to slow down and stop a wheeled toy they have pushed. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils created simple circuits and used the correct vocabulary, such as positive and negative, to discuss their work. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made good gains in their learning about changes in the state of materials. Although they were able to recognise the key characteristics of liquids and solids they were clearly puzzled when considering the properties of a gas. In all of the lessons, the pupils collaborated well and shared their ideas.

56. A scrutiny of work from last year supports the view that standards are improving; most pupils are attaining the expected level and a few are exceeding it. It also shows that pupils are involved in a good deal of investigative work, that they record their observations and findings well and have gained a secure knowledge of a range of topics.

57. In the three lessons seen, the teachers were very clear about their aims, made the objectives plain to the pupils and returned to them repeatedly during the lesson to maintain the focus for learning. They questioned pupils and challenged them to think, to draw on what they already knew and to have the confidence to try and answer even if they were unsure. The provision for pupils with special educational needs was good, thereby enabling them to play a full part in the lesson and make steady progress. The resources were easily accessible and used well to support learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

58. Two lessons were observed but an insufficient range of evidence was available to make an overall judgement about the provision in ICT.
59. In both of the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory and the pupils consolidated and extended their skills. Their achievement is satisfactory. The main barrier to more rapid progress is access to the available equipment. Although the school has a reasonable number of computers, it is impossible to site them in one location. Consequently, when Years 4, 5 and 6 were developing their use of control programs there were occasions when four pupils were working at each computer. For the most part, however, this lesson was well managed with some pupils working with a programmable toy, others practising the issue of precise commands to each other whilst another group used the computers. The oldest pupils were engaged in a web-based activity to control a turtle using a Logo style language. This provided useful consolidation of their existing skills, but the limitations of the commands available to them restricted their progress. The teacher intervened quickly and moved them to a more advanced activity which demanded far more of the pupils. They became very motivated and there were spontaneous cheers when they were able to give the correct commands to a robot arm to pick up an egg and place it in an egg cup.
60. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils were introduced to some of the basics of using a CD-ROM. Here again access to equipment limited the options available to the teacher. Whilst the youngest children developed an understanding of the kinds of information that can be found on a CD-ROM the older children in the class were developing their use of an index in a book to find information.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Pupils make use of word processing to produce work in other subjects, most notably in English for example, to write poems. The pupils make good use of software to create graphs; the oldest pupils presenting the results of science experiments.

HUMANITIES

62. Two lessons in religious education were observed, but no **history** or **geography** lessons were taught during the period of the inspection. A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised in all three subjects but there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall provision in history and geography.
63. From examples of the pupils' past work in geography and history, it is evident that standards are about average. Pupils are acquiring satisfactory skills, for instance, to identify, compare and contrast features of different environments and to appreciate change over time in history. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are aware of the usefulness of maps and plans and can identify features of the past in their local area. They know about some of the significant events in the past such as the Great Fire of London, which they recorded in the striking form of a very large collage. Older pupils showed a keen interest in the life of King Henry VIII and had a satisfactory understanding of the lives of rich and poor people during his reign. The recorded work of older pupils provides evidence of the link between geography and science as they used globes and atlases in discovering that people in different parts of the world experience a variety of problems. For example, they found that conditions in some African countries lead to eye problems and the difficulties of providing spectacles.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision for the teaching and learning in this subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and the tasks that they set their pupils are interesting
- The subject is used effectively to promote literacy
- The resources, such as photographs and artefacts, arouse the children's interest

Commentary

64. Standards of attainment are above average. In one lesson, the older pupils achieved a very good standard of work, showing that they had a firm grasp of key aspects of Islam. The work in Years 1 and 2 centres mainly on discussion and involves recording in mainly pictorial forms. The older pupils regularly use their literacy skills to record a good volume of work. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made good progress in understanding the importance of celebration, for example, in the Christian and Hindu faiths.

65. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good and had some very good features. The teachers are very effectively encouraging the pupils to be reflective and to ponder the deeper meaning underlying religious practice. Older pupils, for example, achieved very well in a lesson where the importance of the Hajj was discussed. The resources are used imaginatively to stimulate interest. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils have considered how Hindus celebrate Divali. Some divas were made available for the pupils to look at before they themselves made and decorated their own examples. They then sat hushed while the teachers lit the candles to underline the central idea of "light" in various religions. The artefacts and photographs on display arouse the pupils' curiosity about the symbolic aspects of religion and also about places of worship. Good links with the local church enhance the pupils' understanding of Christianity. Further visits to other places of worship are planned.

66. Assessment in this subject is currently through the marking of work, which is done thoughtfully and provides useful information about what pupils do well and what they need to improve.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**, **music** or **physical education**. One lesson in art, linked to work in religious education was seen in Years 1 and 2. The orchestra was heard playing in assembly and the pupils sang. There was also available a small amount of composition work recorded on tape. A sample of art and design work from across the school was also examined. Nevertheless, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in these areas.

68. In art and design the youngest pupils make good progress in mixing colours, for example, to apply skin tones in their portrait painting. They also have sufficient observation skills to add lively detail to their portraits. Pupils have used their observations of buildings during history lessons to appreciate and record the materials used in buildings in the past – brick, timber, thatch and tiles. Some pupils produced aesthetically well composed collages using a variety of shells. The older pupils have been encouraged to collect visual information around their classroom as a starting point to explore shape and tone in unusual ways.

69. In design and technology, teachers' planning and a few photographs of pupils' previous work show that the younger children have developed satisfactory cutting and joining skills. This was evident in examples of felt T-shirts that had been sewn, stuck or otherwise fastened together.

Older pupils have developed satisfactory skills for producing objects with moving parts, such as fairground rides, and can use their knowledge of science to add batteries to light up various products. Some evidence of written evaluation that resulted in modification of designs was available, for example, in designs for hats produced by older pupils

70. In music, a good standard of work is recognised by the parents. There are opportunities for children to perform together in recorder groups and in the orchestra, which includes a good range of instruments. The pupils learn songs from a variety of cultures and sing expressively in assemblies. The school benefits from the expertise of a specialist teacher who ensures that all aspects of the statutory curriculum for music are covered and that pupils have opportunities to perform as outlined above. In addition, a Christmas production is one of the highlights of the school year, and many pupils enjoy participating and performing in the music clubs.
71. The school does not have adequate facilities on the school site for physical education lessons, but the village hall provides the necessary accommodation for pupils to have a full physical education curriculum. Extra-curricular activities including a gymnastics club, football and netball team enhance the provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. Only one PSHE lesson was seen during the inspection, in which pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were asked to reflect on their friendships. The wide age range resulted in the younger and older pupils having different perspectives, but with respect for their different views. The lesson illustrated the school's commitment to tolerance and pupils' positive attitudes and caring behaviour. These positive features are the result of the PSHE programme and the teachers' successful efforts to improve the whole ethos of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).