

INSPECTION REPORT

St Chad's CE VC Primary School

Lichfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124259

Headteacher: Ms. T. Coles

Lead inspector: Mr M.J.Johnstone

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th April 2004

Inspection number: 257613

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: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 210

School address: St Michael Road
Lichfield
Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Dr. M. Preston

Date of previous inspection: 16.03.98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Church of England voluntary controlled primary school is situated close to the centre of Lichfield in Staffordshire. It is an average sized primary school with 210 pupils who attend full-time and 17 who attend part-time in the Reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were 45 children in the Foundation Stage including the 17 children attending part-time. There are eight age specific classes including the Reception class. Almost all of the pupils are of white UK heritage with just a few from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Four pupils have English as an additional language but they all speak English well. The first languages spoken by these pupils are Danish and Japanese. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational needs is below average and two pupils have a statement of special need. Most of the pupils on the register have moderate learning difficulties. Socio-economic indicators are broadly average. The Local Education Authority results from testing children entering school indicate that most pupils have below average attainment, although the full range of ability is present. The school received the Investors in People Award in 2001 and a school Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education English as an additional language
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
21450	Dan Kilborn	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some significant strengths. Standards are very high by the end of Year 6 and throughout the school most pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. The headteacher, supported effectively by all staff and governors, leads the school very well. There is a clear commitment to continuing improvement and care for all pupils. The pupils like school and try to do their best. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall standards in English, mathematics and science are very high by the end of Year 6
- The headteacher leads the school very well, governance is very strong and effective and the school is managed well
- Teaching and learning are good overall and are particularly strong in Years 5 and 6
- Standards and pupils' achievements are not high enough in Year 2 and teaching is not strong enough to bring about significant improvements
- Pupils have very good attitudes, work hard and behave very well
- Children are given a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in support of other subjects
- Attendance is very good

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen at a faster rate than the national upward trend. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now much better and standards have risen. The school development plan is now an effective blueprint for improvement and there has been good progress in the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum development. Assessment is much more effective and has brought about substantial improvement in meeting the needs of the more able pupils. The role of the deputy headteacher has been developed well and pupils have a greater awareness of multi-cultural issues. All statutory requirements are now met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools by prior attainment
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	A	A*
Mathematics	C	A	B	A
Science	E	B	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement is mostly good throughout the school. Children in the Foundation Stage (FS) make good progress and most are likely to reach the goals they are expected to achieve by the time they enter Year 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are close to the national average in Year 1 but are below average in Year 2. Despite a higher number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Year 2, their achievement should be higher. Standards and pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are good and progress accelerates rapidly in Years 5 and 6. Standards in the present Year 6 closely mirror the results in last year's national tests; they are well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Standards in reading are very good and there is

some very high quality writing. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are very strong and support learning in other subjects very well. Examples of extended writing in support of learning in other subjects, however, are limited and place some restrictions on pupils' achievements. Throughout the school, standards in ICT have improved and are now similar to national expectations. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. In all subjects, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils who have SEN also achieve well due to well-targeted and effective support.

The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. There are very good relationships in the school and pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave very well. Punctuality is excellent and attendance is well above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are mostly good and ensure that pupils achieve well overall. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection with more good and very good teaching seen. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is now good with better planning, organisation and teamwork. Pupils' achievements in Year 2, whilst satisfactory, are not as high as in other year groups since the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics lacks sufficient structure and rigour. In most year groups there is a high level of challenge in the work and pupils of all abilities achieve well as a result. The more able pupils do particularly well. English and mathematics are taught well in most lessons and there is some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 that results in high quality work. In subjects such as religious education, history and geography, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills to support learning. Support staff are effectively deployed and have a good impact on pupils' achievements, particularly the less able pupils and those with SEN and EAL. Pupils are keen learners who want to do well. They work productively both individually and in groups.

The breadth of curricular opportunities is good and includes a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sport and the arts. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good and the school has a strong partnership with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are good. This leads to a culture of effective self-evaluation and continuing improvement. The governors fulfil all their statutory duties and have a strong strategic influence on the work of the school. The headteacher has high aspirations, enthusiasm and a clear sense of direction. The school runs very smoothly and there is very good budgetary control.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school. They feel that their children are made to work hard, are treated fairly and are making good progress. Pupils say they enjoy school, like their teachers and feel safe.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The headteacher, governors and staff should now:

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements and strengthen the quality of teaching in Year 2
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills to support learning in other subjects

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

While there are some variations between subjects and year groups, overall standards and the achievement of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, standards in English and science are high: they are above average in mathematics
- The more able pupils do very well in English, mathematics and science
- Standards are not high enough in Year 2
- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage (FS)
- Pupils are not using their writing skills enough to support work in other subjects

Commentary

1 Local education authority testing procedures indicate that most pupils enter school with below average attainment, although there is a significant minority who enter with good early language and mathematical skills. Children achieve well and are likely to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. In their personal, social and emotional and creative development, they are likely to exceed them.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.2 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.5 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 Over the past few years, there has been a slight downward trend in the school's results at the end of Year 2. In the 2003 national tests, standards were below the national average in reading, average in mathematics and above average in writing. A higher than average percentage of pupils, however, attained the higher level 3 in all subjects. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading and mathematics were below average and not high enough. This gradual fall in standards should be set against a backdrop of steadily declining attainment on entry. For pupils who are currently in Year 2, standards are below average in the three subjects and also in science. They are not as high overall since there are fewer more able pupils in the group and a larger than usual percentage of SEN pupils. Nonetheless, the teaching seen on the inspection, while satisfactory overall, was not rigorous or focused enough to bring about substantial improvement in pupils' achievements. There was no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls or the different ability groups. The re-organisation of the Foundation Stage is helping to provide a stronger base for improvement.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.1 (29.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.8 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3 There has been very good improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 and the trend is above the national trend. Standards have risen markedly from 2001. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In relation to the standards these pupils attained when in Year 2, achievement in all three subjects is very high. In English, pupils' achievements matched those of pupils in the top five percent of schools in the country. In relation to similar schools, standards were also well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. In all subjects, a greater than average percentage of pupils reached the higher level 5 than is the case nationally. Girls have tended to do better than boys in all three subjects but both boys and girls do better than boys and girls nationally. Current standards at the end of Year 6 reflect the 2003 results and the very good overall achievement. The school's realistic targets for the next two years would be likely to maintain these high standards.

4 At all stages, as a result of good additional support, pupils with SEN do well and achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. Similarly, pupils who have EAL settle well into school, receive good support from teachers and support assistants, and achieve well.

5 Through Years 3 to 6, all aspects of English, mathematics and science are developed well. The key strengths in English are pupils' very good speaking and listening skills, which support learning well across all subjects. Pupils write well across a range of styles and read accurately with expression and meaning. Pupils have good mathematical understanding and good mental strategies. Science is taught well and pupils have a very good general scientific knowledge and are able to apply this to investigative work. Pupils use their reading and numeracy skills well across relevant subjects, although writing does not support learning so well in subjects such as religious education, history and geography. This limits overall achievements in these subjects.

6 In religious education, history, geography, music and physical education the work seen was largely similar to national expectations. Standards in singing are good and some good work was seen in history in Years 5 and 6. Standards in ICT, art and design and design and technology have improved and the work seen during the inspection was similar to national expectations. Overall achievement in these subjects is satisfactory, although there has been good progress in ICT and pupils are now achieving well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Their personal development is very good. Attendance is very good. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are very hard-working and enjoy their work
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good
- Behaviour is very good and has a significant impact on pupils' achievements
- Attendance levels are well above average and punctuality is excellent
- Attitudes are sometimes weaker in Year 2 lessons

7 Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected in the very positive attitudes they show in lessons. They concentrate very well, show a very good interest in their work and try hard to please their teachers. Teachers use this motivation well in most classes and this has a strong impact on pupils' achievements at the school. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher's use of appropriate games using the interactive whiteboard stimulated pupils' responses and set them on track with great enthusiasm and alertness to use division to help them in a range of challenging problem-solving tasks. In some lessons in Year 2, teaching does not reflect the same positive responses because teaching does not generate sufficient challenge or interest.

8 Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in the very good interest they show towards the life of the school and their very keen attitude to the range of activities provided outside lessons. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes is very good. Pupils and parents say there is no serious bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and potential incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the school rules and know what to and who to speak to if minor squabbles or accidents happen. Pupils are very polite and well mannered. Relationships throughout the school are very good.

9 The school builds well on pupils' very positive attitudes through the very good provision for their moral and social development. Pupils develop very good levels of confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities, including involvement with the school council. Personal development, especially social and cultural, is enhanced by the opportunities to take part in residential visits, including a visit to France, in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' interest and success in areas such as poetry and art is encouraged and celebrated well. Pupils raise monies for a wide range of charities and are involved in local cultural events such as the Lichfield Arts Festival. These promote the early ideas of citizenship well. The school prepares pupils well for life in a culturally diverse society.

10 Attendance levels are well above the national average. Punctuality is excellent and lessons start promptly. Procedures to record and monitor attendance are very thorough and parents follow them well ensuring that there are very few cases of unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	155	1	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good and there is a good curriculum. Care arrangements and the partnership with parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good overall**. Assessment has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now good. Information from assessment is used well to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in most year groups with work that is matched well to pupils' needs
- Teaching and learning are particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 and result in very high standards
- All teachers use resources and teaching assistants effectively to support learning
- Pupils have a strongly developed work ethic and want to do well
- Teaching is not strong enough in Year 2
- In all year groups not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their writing skills in support of other subjects

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (16%)	26 (60%)	10 (24%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

11 Teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This good teaching ensures that all children make good progress and meet the goals set for them by the time they enter Year 1. There is some particularly good teaching, for example, in the personal, social and emotional and creative areas of learning. All staff work closely together to give thoughtful help to all children. Children with special needs are identified at an early stage so that effective support can be given to them. All staff are involved in the good on-going assessments of children's learning that are an important feature and help ensure the children achieve well.

12 The teaching of English, science and mathematics is mostly good and is sometimes very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The teachers' high expectations, the pupils' very good work ethic and behaviour, and the pupils' capacity to work independently and collaboratively are key reasons for the very high standards achieved at the end of Year 6. Speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy are generally taught well. However, in the Year 2 classes, teaching of these key skills lacks the rigour, imagination and inspiration found in other year groups. Given the below average attainment on entry of most pupils and higher numbers of pupils with learning difficulties, this is not strong enough to bring substantial gains in the pupils' standards and achievement by the end of Year 2. The scrutiny of pupils' work in this year group also indicates weaknesses in expectations of presentation and what pupils might achieve.

13 Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of all lessons and reviewed and assessed at the end. Occasionally, these end sessions are too rushed and lose their impact. All lessons are planned and structured consistently well across the school and in most cases information from the good assessment systems is used well to plan what pupils do next. This ensures that most of the work is planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and offers good levels of challenge; for example, there is no complacent acceptance of average work from more able pupils. Good questioning that challenges pupils' thinking is a consistent feature of the good and very good lessons. Target setting is becoming well established throughout the school but is not refined sufficiently at an individual pupil level, for example, to target specific reading and writing weaknesses of pupils in Year 2. Marking is mostly good, with the best examples having clear targets for improvement. Appropriate use of homework is a consistent feature of the teaching and supports learning well.

14 All teachers have a strong desire to improve their teaching. This is exemplified in the growing expertise and confidence they are showing in the teaching of ICT and in the success they have had in raising the achievements of the more able pupils since the last inspection. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their ICT, speaking and listening, reading and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills, for example, support good discussion in all subjects. Across the school, however, a weakness in the teaching of subjects such as history, geography and religious education is the missed opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills to greater effect. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used effectively to stimulate interest and aid understanding.

15 The teaching and additional support for pupils with SEN is good. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils to select interesting materials and to plan carefully to provide achievable challenge and take account of what different pupils can already do. This enables pupils to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding in each lesson. Pupils with SEN are fully involved in lesson discussion sessions. Good individual educational plans support learning well. For example, they have small but relevant and achievable steps so that pupils are able to see for themselves the gains they make. This boosts their confidence, self-esteem and progress. There is good teaching and additional support for pupils who have EAL and this helps them achieve well. Support teachers from the local education authority provide useful ideas for teachers of these pupils.

The curriculum

The good curriculum provision enables all pupils to extend their learning effectively. A range of sporting, musical and artistic activities enriches these opportunities. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance and breadth in the learning opportunities
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage (FS) is good and has improved since the previous inspection
- Teachers ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to take part in all of the school's activities
- Activities outside the classroom enrich the pupils learning
- Writing skills are not sufficiently developed in all subjects

Commentary

16 The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the FS curriculum, the National Curriculum and religious education. The school provides very well for the pupils' personal, social and health education. It has appropriate arrangements for the teaching of sex education and drug abuse. This involves the school nurse and police. It is agreed with parents as a correct approach to developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding in these sensitive issues.

17 The induction programme for the FS children is comprehensive. This good beginning of preparing the children for their next stages of education is followed through effectively when they move into Year 1. Pupils are not so well prepared when they leave Year 2 since standards in key subjects are below average. This picks up markedly and by the end of Year 6, pupils are prepared very effectively for the next stage of their education.

18 The curriculum is planned thoughtfully to enable all pupils, including those who have SEN and EAL, to have their needs met effectively. The school meets its statutory requirements for all pupils with statements of special educational needs. Specified provision is implemented effectively including access to specialist staff. All pupils who have an entitlement have good, well-focused individual education plans (IEPs). An appropriate emphasis is given to the inclusion of all pupils in all activities. As a result, all pupils have equal access to aspects of the school's provision. Different levels of work matched to the needs of the pupils are a regular and effective feature of the planning and have successfully helped raise standards for pupils of all abilities. Innovative approaches to curriculum developments, such as the provision of interactive whiteboards and 'brain gyms', are regular features that enhance the pupils' learning.

19 The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established in the school. They support the teaching of English and mathematics appropriately. The school has begun to use them imaginatively. It is just beginning to give consideration to adapting them and transferring the skills, in literacy particularly, to work in other subjects. This has not yet had a sufficient impact on the development of writing skills across the curriculum, and this limits pupils' achievements in other subjects.

20 The planning and timetables confirm that there is a good balance and breadth in the curriculum. Pupils growing maturity is testament to the way that the curriculum is being developed in the school. The pupils are supported through the residential visits made in Years 5 and 6. In other classes carefully selected visitors help to support the growth in their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues. All of these strategies support the pupils in extending their personal development effectively.

21 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. An effective mixture of visitors and school staff ensures that pupils' chances of following an interest are maximised. Sporting, including competitive sports, musical and artistic activities are well supported by the enthusiasm of the pupils. All pupils are given opportunities to take part in this range of activities.

22 There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is good in the FS class. It is good externally throughout the school and satisfactory in other parts of the school. Some rooms are on the small side and can cause some difficulties in developing practical activities successfully. It is only careful planning by teachers that makes it possible to develop some activities effectively. Staff make good efforts to create an attractive learning environment for the pupils. Work is displayed carefully and successfully helps the creation of a school where the pupils feel their work is valued. They want to work hard and do so conscientiously. A good level of resources for most subjects, including those for information and communication technology, supports teachers and pupils well to develop learning effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are very secure child protection and health and safety procedures
- Parents and pupils feel they are supported very well
- Pupils are very well involved in the school's work and development
- Pupils are very well prepared for secondary school
- The monitoring of academic development is good and of personal development is very good

Commentary

23 Very close attention to health and safety, child protection and fire precaution procedures ensures pupils work in a safe and healthy environment. Parents and pupils agree that the school takes very good steps to provide a very safe and caring environment in which children flourish. The school is very clean, tidy and secure. All members of staff know the pupils very well. The strong family, caring ethos ensures every pupil feels valued and cared for. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and high standards of maturity and confidence.

24 All members of staff listen to and value the opinions of pupils. Pupils feel that members of staff listen to what they say, for example in forming school rules. The school council provides a very good forum where pupils can raise issues, concerns and ideas. In the school council, pupils from Year 1 onwards feel they are very well involved and consulted on issues and that decisions are explained very clearly to them. This allows them to feedback to their classmates.

25 Educational support and guidance is good. Very good induction arrangements help children to settle quickly in the Reception class, form very positive relationships and make good progress. Pupils are confident about their move to secondary education. Advice and guidance is based on good assessment information and pupils are well aware of general targets for development. Personal development is monitored very thoroughly, ensuring pupils are very confident and self-assured by the time they leave the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very effective links with parents, the community and other schools that have a very positive impact on children's learning. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have great confidence in the school
- Parental support is well nurtured and used by the school
- Very good information is provided for parents
- There is a very strong partnership with local schools and the community

Commentary

26 Both in their response to the pre-inspection survey and at the pre-inspection meeting parents expressed very positive views about the school. The high degree of importance parents place on their children's education was reflected in the comparatively high response level to the survey and the turnout to the meeting. Their support is recognised and nurtured very well by the school and is a key factor in the pupils' very positive attitudes to school.

27 Parents ensure their children attend regularly and promptly. In particular, parents' financial contributions through the Parents and Friends Association have been crucial in providing the school with additional resources, especially in relation to ICT and outdoor play facilities. Parents have also given invaluable help in classes, for example with reading and visits. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are appropriately involved in annual review meetings and the school seeks the views of parents and carers for reviews of individual educational plans. These procedures keep parents well informed about their children's progress.

28 The school builds on parents' interest and enthusiasm very well by providing them with very good information about their children's progress and encouragement to be involved in their education. Annual reports are very informative about progress and standards and also indicate areas for development and how parents may help. Very good consultation sessions, where the needs of the working arrangements of parents are taken account of, are much appreciated by the parents. Newsletters, written in a very accessible style, are very informative about school activities and encourage parental involvement. Members of staff are accessible and very good relationships with parents further enhance the family feel of the school. This is supplemented very effectively by the school's efforts to involve grandparents, for example, by inviting them to share assemblies and lunches.

29 Pupils are involved in a range of local and church events and the school uses the local area well to support learning. Community support has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in relation to their personal development and involvement in creative activities, such as music and dance. The partnership with the local group of schools ensures pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school, for example in providing "transition units" in relation to English and mathematics. The very close links with the University of Central England in relation to teacher training provide mutual benefits that the school makes good use of in relation to staff development and expanding experiences for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and managements of the school are good overall. Governance and the leadership of the headteacher are very good and the school is well managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher articulates a clear vision, is highly motivated and dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards
- The governing body makes a major contribution to school development
- The school is organised efficiently and managed reflectively
- Strategies to improve standards, raise achievement and strengthen teaching in Year 2 have not been effective enough

Commentary

30 The headteacher provides very good leadership. Her enthusiasm, optimism, commitment and clear vision enable her to provide a very good role model for staff and pupils. She is dedicated to the highest possible standards and achievement in all aspects of the pupils' development. With the

governing body and staff, there is a highly developed, shared view of the school and the direction in which it is going. This sense of direction and purpose are reflected clearly in the jointly produced school improvement plan. This is well presented with key priorities linked firmly to raising achievement. There are clear links to the budget and sensible time allocations for completion. Comprehensive reviews are regularly built in and presented to the governing body. Educational change is managed well and the school is open to innovation. All leaders in the school are committed to the development of an inclusive school in which each individual matters.

31 The leadership provided by the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders is good overall. Staff work effectively in teams, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Since her appointment two years ago, the deputy headteacher has brought new ideas and impetus to the school. The Foundation Stage is well led and has brought greater structure and organisation to children's early learning. The leadership of SEN is good and has ensured pupils make effective strides in their learning. The special needs coordinator meets regularly with class teachers to reflect upon pupils' progress and formal planned meetings involving the headteacher and teachers ensure provision is appropriately matched to need. Systems for keeping and updating paperwork are well organised and readily accessible. Good use is made of outside agencies such as the psychological, behaviour and health support services to the direct benefit of the pupils. Regular reports from curriculum leaders keep the governing body well informed about quality and standards.

32 The governance of the school is very good. The governors, led by a very able and knowledgeable chairman, provide strong and effective strategic direction for the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have very good knowledge of the implications and use of performance data in order to hold the school accountable for its performance. The governors fulfil their statutory duties and have formulated clear aims and policies in all areas, including racial equality. They are fully involved in the formulation of the school improvement plan and its subsequent reviews. Most governors have observed teaching in the school and this has given them a good overview of aspects where it is strong and where it might be improved. Through their committee structure, the governors apply the principles of best value well. They monitor spending, seek the views of parents and compare the school's results critically with those of other schools; for example, they know that standards in Year 2 are not as high as they should be when compared with similar schools.

33 The management of the school is good. The performance management policy is well implemented and is integral to the school development system. The school uses performance data well to track pupils' progress and assessment is used well to identify areas of strength and weakness. There are well-established monitoring systems, for example senior managers and most curriculum leaders observe teaching and sample pupils' work and teachers' planning at regular intervals. This has been highly successful, for example, in raising standards and pupils' achievements by the end of Year 6. There has also been particularly marked success in improving the achievements of the more able pupils. This has increased significantly the numbers achieving the higher levels of the National Curriculum throughout the school. The headteacher and governors are fully aware of the shortcomings in Year 2 and there is a clear commitment to improving the situation. However, despite the barriers imposed by the absence of key staff and staff changes, the school has not been successful in raising standards and strengthening teaching in Year 2.

34 Day-to-day management is very good and the school runs smoothly. Financial management is very good and spending decisions are considered prudently and linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. The recruitment, retention and workload of staff are well managed and support staff are deployed effectively to assist teaching and improve achievement, particularly for the less able and SEN pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	530,534
Total expenditure	522,036
Expenditure per pupil	2,383

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,248
Balance carried forward to the next financial year	7,720

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35 The provision in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (FS) is good. Provision is made in two part time pre-reception groups of 17 children and the full time Reception class of 28 children. Nearly all of the children have had some previous playgroup experience before they join the pre-reception group. There has been a change in the children's attainment on entry since the last inspection. The local education authority testing procedures confirm that the majority of children enter the school with below average levels of attainment overall. There is, however, a significant minority of children who have higher levels of attainment on entry to the school.

36 Teaching is good with some very good features. Children quickly settle into the routines of the pre-reception group. In turn this supports them well when they move into the Reception class. They are able to work in the same classroom area, which gives children a good working environment in which to develop their learning. This good impact upon the children's learning is built upon a well-organised induction programme. This supports the good partnership that quickly develops between parents and the school. Parents accompany their children in the first phase of their induction. Gradually the children become more independent and stay on their own. This becomes a precursor for the way that the FS programme of learning develops the children as independent learners.

37 The team approach was the outcome of the re-organisation of the provision in the FS. The re-organisation successfully went alongside the introduction of the FS curriculum which effectively ensures that the children are being prepared well for their National Curriculum work in Year1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good routines are established in the pre-reception class
- Teaching is very good and pupils make rapid progress
- Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area

Commentary

38 The children come into the pre-reception class well prepared because of the good induction programme that gradually builds their understanding and confidence. Parents are closely involved in giving initial support to their children before withdrawing so that the children's independence is fostered effectively. This ensures routines are already clear to the children before they transfer into the full time Reception class. In the Reception class the children agree with their teacher that they need to consider one another when working on group tasks. They pay good levels of attention to carrying out tasks in a calm, mature way. The children regularly work successfully with partners; for example, when they are manipulating numbers in their mathematics they learn to help one another to become accurate in their decisions. When they are exploring outside for mini-beasts they work as a team and share findings with pleasure. At snack time they all take turns at developing their responsibilities as snack time helpers. They distribute fruit and expect, and get, "please" and "thank you" from one another. Children sit in friendship groups. Adults foster discussion while very good levels of social interaction are developed in a short, well-targeted period of time. The children patiently queue to wash their own plates and mugs and initiate discussions with new groups whilst doing so. This is a good example of the way that staff organise opportunities very effectively to maximise learning for large groups of children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good
- Children develop good early speaking and listening and reading and writing skills
- Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1

Commentary

39 In the pre-reception class every opportunity is taken to encourage the children to contribute to whole group discussions. There is continual verbal interaction between the children and the teaching assistant. The opportunities to work in the writing area are fostered enthusiastically. When the children move into the Reception class they join in a well-organised range of activities that suitably develop their learning. Regular opportunities are given to individually use the listening corner. Children take up the opportunities with pleasure and enthusiasm. Staff ensure that taped stories are accompanied by the books so that love of reading is being carefully supported at the same time as listening skills. Children take up role-play opportunities with enjoyment. Currently the classroom has a rainforest area where staff have given detailed attention to providing stimulating resources that generate discussion points for the children. Children have made some of the creatures that inhabit the area in their creative development time. This makes the area more interesting to them because they have made their own contribution to making it an attractive place for developing their learning. The children work in a focused way with the teacher as they explore the way that letters can be combined together. This helps the children to become proficient early readers and writers. The teacher gives them good support by preparing lovely illustrations of words that immediately captures their interest. The children concentrate well as a result and re-enforce their knowledge and understanding.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and helps pupils progress well
- Children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area
- A good range of practical activities develops learning well

Commentary

40 Children in the pre-reception groups gather on the carpet to share their understanding of patterns and ordering with the teaching assistant. The time spent in doing this is systematically developed and feeds into the children learning about colours as well. The correct use of mathematical language is being carefully fostered. This prepares the children well for their work in the Reception class. In the Reception class the children are being equally well prepared for their National Curriculum work in Year 1. At the start of a lesson the children are very adeptly counting in numbers. The teacher is extending their understanding as they move from counting in fives to ten and then to twenty. They are able to do this with confidence. In the group work the children are given a range of opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The diversity of the activities is stimulating the children's learning in a thoughtful, well-structured way. Some children work independently on a carefully chosen mathematics computer program forming patterns in numbers. Others learn about time as well as addition as objects are picked out of a tray whilst an

egg timer indicates the passage of time to them. A third group are accurately recording their understanding of numbers up to six. Yet another group work with the teacher to share numbers into different amounts by placing them in hoops. This develops the children's understanding of place value meaningfully in a visual way. The opportunities for learning visually are a regular effective feature of the teacher's planning of support for the children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good
- Pupils have good opportunities to work on the computer
- The outdoor environment supports learning well
- Children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area

Commentary

41 In the pre-reception groups the children are encouraged to be enquiring as they engage in exploring their immediate environment. This is ably extended in the Reception class when their immediate environment is used as a starting point for exploring other environments. This is done imaginatively through creating a number of different places in the classroom during the school year. The area outside the classroom is also used effectively to support the imaginative indoor area. Currently the indoor area is a rainforest inhabited by creatures. The outside area is a rich source of discovery for the children. They use magnifying glasses and microscopes with care and skill as they identify the mini-beasts that they find. They make accurate, well informed comparisons with the creatures in the indoor rainforest area. The activities are well organised with appropriate resources. The teaching assistant focuses the children's attention very carefully and learning is maximised because the children are so interested in their findings. This enables them to record their findings with care and accuracy. They use the computer with independent confidence. They build successful models with constructional toys and junk materials, often in close partnerships with one another.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area
- Activities are creative and spark the children's imagination
- There is no covered outside area when the weather is unsuitable

Commentary

42 The pre-reception groups are given confidence to develop their larger physical skills with regular opportunities to move in the school hall. They also use the outdoor play equipment where the teaching assistant carefully nurtures their ability to develop their skills. The children are given a chance to explore all of the equipment freely but under close supervision. The smaller physical skills of tearing and cutting are also started in the pre-reception group with varying amounts of success. The skills of tearing and cutting are embellished in the Reception class in the children's creative development. They make good levels of progress in their physical skills because they are very well stimulated by the imaginative creative activities. The larger physical skills are also capably developed in the Reception class. They also use the outdoor equipment when the weather makes it possible to do so. There is no outside covered area when the weather is not good. The children use the large space of the school hall with safety and care for one another. They demonstrate good levels of

control as they move in different ways. The teacher uses music thoughtfully to support the children in crawling and climbing. Adults join in with the children as good role models as they all move around the hall. Children listen carefully to instructions. They change the pace of their movements after observing one another's good efforts.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and helps children achieve very well
- There are good opportunities for children to work with a variety of materials
- They sing confidently with the older pupils

Commentary

43 In the pre-reception setting the children often record their understanding pictorially. They paint in a carefree, unstructured way but are supported in developing their understanding of form through the discussions with the teaching assistant. The chance to experiment and explore the use of colour is built on, for example, when they are ordering patterns of shapes. The colours of shapes are alternated to help them to order effectively. In the reception class the knowledge and understanding of the use of colour is quickly added to. The children use papers and materials as well as paint to express their creative ideas. The teacher gives them a wide range of resources. Focused discussions are held between the teacher and the children. The children then respond imaginatively because they have been well prepared to complete tasks independently. This helps them to produce mature symmetrical butterflies for their rainforest area. The butterflies are made with different papers and carefully coloured with crayons and pencils. Other children are combining different materials with skill as they create very effective texture tubes. Their efforts confirm the very good levels of skill that are being nurtured so that they are already achieving the early learning goals. The children join in singing with maturity with other pupils in assembly times. They also have other suitable opportunities to develop their musical abilities as a class.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

Provision in English is **good overall**. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6
- Standards are not high enough by the end of Year 2 and teaching in Year 2 is not strong enough
- Reading and speaking and listening skills lend good support to pupils' work in other subjects but writing skills are not used enough

Commentary

44 Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are below average by the end of Year 2. They have not improved enough since the previous inspection and are not high enough. Very effective progress is made in Years 3 to 6 and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. These very high standards have been maintained over the past few years and are significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

45 Most pupils enter the Reception class with below average communication language and literacy skills, although a significant minority is above average. There has been some disruption in staffing and organisation in the FS, Year 1 and particularly in Year 2. In addition, there are higher numbers of pupils who have SEN and EAL in Year 2 and this has had some effect on the standards achieved. However, teaching in Year 2 is not strong enough to bring about any significant improvement. The lessons seen in Year 2 were generally satisfactory, and most pupils made steady progress but the teaching lacked imaginative and stimulating delivery. There was also some variation in the quality of work between the two classes. Some good pieces of writing were observed in one class, while in the other, writing activities were more mundane. In both classes work was untidily presented and there were not enough opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles, both in the subject itself and across other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, reading is not taught in a rigorous and systematic enough way and some pupils in Year 2 have quite negative attitudes to reading. Some are kept on the same book or level for too long and begin to lose interest. While standards are below average in speaking and listening, promising initiatives, for example, in paired discussion work and drama are beginning to have a good effect on standards.

46 Largely as a result of consistently good and sometimes very good teaching, pupils of all abilities achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 with particularly rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils speak with confidence and clarity and listen well to what others have to say. They are articulate and confident speakers in a variety of situations, for example when feeding back to the class at the end of an activity or speaking on more formal occasions such as assemblies. The pride they take in their work is reflected in the good standards of handwriting and presentation. In most year groups, the teachers' marking shows pupils how they might improve and this helps raise standards. Reading skills are taught well and pupils have good attitudes towards reading. Pupils in Year 6 talk knowledgeably about favourite authors and novels they have read and show impressive understanding of the skills of research using non-fiction books.

47 By the end of Year 6 most pupils write very well in a range of styles, including poetry, creative story writing, factual accounts and letters. Much of the writing is imaginative and produced for a range of purposes. For example, some impressive poetry entries from pupils in a local young writers poetry competition were selected for inclusion in an anthology of good work. Most pupils have a good grasp of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

48 The teaching of English is carefully planned throughout the school and all lessons have a consistent and appropriate structure. Resources, including Interactive whiteboards, are used successfully to capture pupils' interest. Introductions to the whole class are clear and the lesson intentions are shared with pupils as well as assessments of how well they have done at the end of the lesson. Good assessment systems are used successfully to track pupils' progress in the subject and identify any areas for development. Homework is a regular feature of the teaching and helps raise standards in reading and writing. Some good links are made with ICT to help pupils enhance learning. In one activity, for example, SEN pupils in Year 5 produced well-presented pieces of written work using a word processing program. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils' reading and writing and make a good contribution to the high standards. In the most effective lessons teachers questioned pupils vigorously and fostered a lively interchange of ideas. Group tasks were challenging at all levels and pupils remained focused and interested for the entire lesson. In some lessons across all year groups the closing whole class activity was rushed and opportunities for critical and constructive debate about the work produced were lost.

49 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and has some good ideas as to how standards can be improved by the end of Year 2. Helpful guidance has been produced to help her colleagues across the school. Although an extended absence by the co-ordinator has affected continuity of developments, there has been regular monitoring of work and the use of data to pinpoint difficulties in pupils' learning. However, this has not been rigorous or consistent enough to bring significant change in standards at the end of Year 2.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their very good reading and speaking and listening skills to support learning in all subjects. The weaker literacy skills of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 place more limitations on how effective they are in supporting subjects where there is a higher reading and writing content needed. Older pupils are very competent at extracting information from a variety of sources and searching for evidence. Their very good speaking and listening skills lead to lively debate in subjects such as religious education, and some good factual writing was seen in other subjects. In general, however, pupils' writing skills are not used enough to present ideas and information in subjects such as religious education, history and geography.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain high standards by the end of Year 6
- Results by the end of Year 6 have improved well since 2001
- Pupils achievements and standards are not yet high enough by the end of Year 2
- Teaching and learning are consistently good at Year 1 and in Years 3 to 6
- The subject is well coordinated and assessment systems are good

Commentary

51 In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 standards were similar in comparison to all schools nationally but below those for similar schools. There has been a steady downward trend in results over the past two years. Standards for pupils who are now in Year 2 indicate below average standards since there are now more pupils in the year group with SEN. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that average and below average pupils find most difficulty with using and applying their mathematics skills and in understanding the concept of shape, space and measure. Teaching in the three lessons seen in Year 2 was satisfactory but was not rigorous or strong enough to raise standards sufficiently.

52 Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 as a result of consistently good teaching and challenge across Years 3 to 6. Standards have improved well since 2001. Standards are in line with similar schools nationally but achievement is very good when compared to pupils' prior attainment. This reflects performance data from the 2003 national tests.

53 The National Numeracy Strategy is understood well and applied consistently across the school. There is strong emphasis on mental calculation, especially of basic number calculations and this impacts well on pupils' skills. Basic number skills are generally taught well and this is a stronger element identified at the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well in this area of their work across the school.

54 By the end of Year 2, most pupils count accurately in fives up to 100, recognise simple shapes and rotate these by experimenting with repeating patterns. They sort objects into rolling or sliding categories and record these on diagrams. Pupils in Year 2 investigate two-dimensional shapes and sort them into regular and irregular groups. Higher attaining pupils identify right angles and most recognise some simple attributes. Most pupils understand simple fractions and use a variety of resources to improve their understanding.

55 Some good examples of investigative work were seen across Years 3 to 6 and the weekly programme of work is well planned, using information well from previous lessons. This enables pupils to make good progress in all areas of their mathematics work. Pupils in Year 3 have a good

understanding of money and use their knowledge to give correct coins in change when 'shopping'. Year 5 solve real life money problems and higher attaining pupils are challenged well when dividing decimals to two places and checking their solutions by using inverse operations on calculators. Pupils in Year 6 interpret and create Venn and Carroll diagrams correctly and are challenged very well by a series of number problems focused on overlapping sectors.

56 The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and the pace of lessons is good. Lesson objectives are shared well with pupils and in the best lessons revisited again in whole class end of lesson sessions. Good opportunities are given for pupils to investigate problems, draw their own conclusions, and good use is made of a range of resources, including computers to further pupils' understanding. Work is monitored regularly and older pupils know what they have to do to improve. Marking is conscientious and often developmental. Teachers in Year 3 to 6 have high expectations of the presentation of work but some work in Year 2 is poorly presented and some basic errors like reversal of numbers are not remedied sufficiently over time. Classroom assistants are well used in most lessons, suitably prepared, and use their initiative to help all pupils, especially those with SEN. This enables them to make good progress with their learning targets.

57 The subject is well coordinated by a knowledgeable coordinator. She carefully assesses past results to focus more rigorously on specific areas in teaching and learning to track the progress of individual pupils and to identify areas for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58 Overall, pupils use their mathematical skills satisfactorily in support of work across the curriculum. Measuring skills support work in design and technology, and pupils construct time lines in their history work. In science, they use a variety of measuring devices to support their experimental work, for example when measuring the friction of various surfaces and when timing dissolving rates of sugar. Pupils record their results using a variety of graphs and older pupils use their number and data handling skills well to support work in science.

SCIENCE

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall
- Pupils achieve well and attain very high standards by the end of Year 6
- Pupils achievement and standards are not yet high enough by the end of Year 2
- Results by the end of Year 6 have improved significantly since 2001

Commentary

59 In the 2003 National Curriculum assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, teachers judged standards to be below average for pupils reaching the average level 2 and similar to the national levels at the higher level 3. In comparison to similar schools however, results overall were below average. The current group of pupils in Year 2 has a higher proportion of pupils with SEN. Standards have not improved and remain below average with fewer pupils at the higher level 3. The main weaknesses in pupils' learning are in investigative science and knowledge and understanding of physical processes.

60 By the end of Year 6 standards are well above the national average and well above those in similar schools. Pupils achieved very well in relation to their Year 2 results and two-thirds achieved the higher level 5. This has resulted from consistently good teaching.

61 By the end of Year 2 most pupils identify a range of common materials and know some of their properties. They sort them into hard, shiny and soft and know that their state changes when heat is applied. Work on foods is well recorded and pupils identify correctly which are healthy and which have high levels of fat. They are aware of the dangers of electricity and are able to list household appliances. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 increase their knowledge of physical processes and the properties of materials well, for example by using fair test principles to set up experiments and evaluate results. Pupils in Year 5 know the difference between solids, liquids and gases and identify them by particle type. When testing the solubility of different sugar types they use terms like 'constants' and 'variables' and cooperate very well in group experiments to analyse results. Pupils in Year 6 write good quality explanations to describe their science experiments and improve these by sharing evaluations using more scientific vocabulary and clearer explanation as to the experimental process. Work is well recorded and presented and pupils make very good progress across the range of the science curriculum.

62 Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 5 and 6. Pupil's achievements are satisfactory by the end of Year 2, although there are elements of underachievement in investigative work. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for this aspect of pupils' learning. Achievement is very good by the end of Year 6 where pupils have benefited from consistently good teaching across Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school, teachers plan and prepare well and resources are good and easily accessible to pupils. Classroom management and relationships are very good overall, teachers have high expectations of pupils' concentration and expect them to listen carefully to instructions. In the best lessons clear explanations are given to pupils as to their tasks during the lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and expect pupils to use the correct technical vocabulary. Teachers consistently use question and answer techniques skilfully to enable pupils to think and make decisions about their own experiments. Good opportunities are made for cooperative work in pairs and groups which contribute well to pupils' social development.

63 The assessment systems are good and marking is accurate and constructive. Good analysis of past results, particularly in Years 3 to 6, has led to increased emphasis on those areas identified for improvement. For example, a greater emphasis on investigative science has led to a subsequent improvement in standards, particularly of the higher level 5. Teachers and teaching assistants give good support during lessons to pupils with SEN and those with EAL. This helps them access tasks successfully and make good progress.

64 The subject coordinator has worked successfully to develop the science curriculum, support colleagues and develop further her subject expertise by attending a variety of relevant courses.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection
- Standards have improved and are now similar to national expectations
- Teachers have improved their confidence and expertise effectively
- The subject is well led and managed
- ICT supports learning effectively across the curriculum

Commentary

65 Standards have improved well since the previous inspection and are now securely in line with national expectations in all year groups. This has come about because in-service training has been effective in boosting the confidence and expertise of the teachers, resources have improved and

include a computer suite and interactive whiteboards in Years 2 to 6, the subject is well led and managed and it has a high profile in the school.

66 Key skills are now developed well across the school. Pupils are encouraged to draft and refine their work on screen rather than just copy text. They become increasingly adept at cutting, pasting, editing and formatting their work using a good variety of the computers' tools. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils used line and fill-in tools to produce some good black and white pictures in the style of the artist Escher. Teachers encourage the pupils to experiment with different forms of presentation and pupils in Year 6 have produced multi-media presentations including text, pictures and sound. Spreadsheet programs are used across Years 3 to 6. In Year 4, pupils successfully entered data into a branching database program and wrote their own questions to sort and classify objects.

67 Although not as strong as other aspects of their work, pupils are now being given experiences of using ICT systems to control events in a predetermined manner and to sense physical data. In a lesson for Year 5 pupils, for example, light sensors were used to monitor external conditions. Pupils were encouraged to calibrate their sensors correctly and record their investigations accurately. A good system of 'buddy' support with less able pupils working with more able pupils enabled the SEN pupils to access the activity successfully.

68 Teaching is generally satisfactory and sometimes good and pupils have high levels of interest and enthusiasm for the work. Planning is good and is based securely on national guidelines. This gives good continuity to learning experiences and has been successful in beginning to build stronger foundations for each year group to build upon. There is a useful assessment system to track pupils' progress. This is used to assess pupils' progress after each unit of work and identifies whether all aspects have been covered and expectations for the pupils have been met. This provides a secure base from which to plan the next steps for learning.

69 The subject leader has a clear picture of what needs to be done and has successfully evaluated all the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. This has led to good improvement in all the aspects covered. Good financial support from the governing body and the parents has led to marked improvements in the provision of resources for the pupils and the teachers and has been a factor in the improving standards. The subject leader has monitored teaching and suggested relevant improvements. A well-constructed action plan points a clear way forward. The school has recently launched its own website.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70 ICT in a range of forms, including computers, interactive whiteboards, tape recorders and video and digital cameras are used well to support learning across other subjects. It is taught largely as a cross-curricular subject across the school. ICT lends valuable support to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to investigative work in science. CD-ROMS and the Internet are used to research work in subjects such as history and geography and relevant programs support learning in art and design and music.

HUMANITIES

71 Owing to the school's timetable no lessons were seen in history and geography during the inspection. It is not therefore possible to make a secure judgement on provision in these two subjects. However, following discussion with pupils and teachers, examination of samples of work and review of planning, much of the work seen in the two subjects is similar to that expected for pupil's ages. In Years 3 to 6 there were some good examples of well presented and detailed work in both subjects.

72 In **history** in Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge of how things change over time when studying toys and children's lives in Victorian times. They compare 'the seaside' then and now and accurately place household items and forms of transport into past and

present categories. They write in limited form about famous people such as Samuel Pepys and place the events of the Great Fire of London in order. Whilst the work seen reflected historical accuracy much was poorly presented and opportunities are missed for extending pupils writing skills. The work seen in Years 3 to 6 was well presented and pupils have good opportunities to study in detail different historical topics. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good empathy in their writing about World War 2 as when creating their own letters home from the viewpoint of an evacuee. While in these year groups there are some examples of extended writing, often recording is in note form and opportunities to extend writing skills are missed.

73 In **geography** pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have a good awareness of road safety and recognise a range of warning and information signs. They create recognisable maps of classrooms, houses and routes to school and know the points of the compass. They compare and contrast the island of Struay with Lichfield and Year 2 pupils are beginning to be aware of the main features on maps in an atlas. By the end of Year 6 pupils recognise geographical patterns through their work on the environment. When studying rivers they investigate rivers of their choice such as the Nile and the Mississippi and case studies include river features such as 'tributary, delta and meander'. Work on weather patterns and the water cycle is very well presented and pupils enhance their work in art by detailed sketches and diagrams. As in history there are missed opportunities for pupils to write at length in support of their work.

74 Work in both history and geography is supported well by a good range of visits and visitors to school. These include museums, themed weeks based on the geography of the countries or origin of some pupils such as Japan and Italy, and actors and visitors from the community who enliven work in history and stimulate pupil's interest. Support for a pupil in Kenya enhances work in geography and links well to their personal, social and health education work. Planning is well based on national guidelines and appropriate assessments are made on pupil's progress at the end of each unit of work. Good use is made of computers to seek information.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with local churches are good
- Pupils are acquiring a sound knowledge of Christianity and other religions
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their writing skills

Commentary

75 Standards are similar to those expected in the local agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 1 are aware of the main Christian festivals and their significance in the life of Jesus. They know of some religious symbols from their work on the local church such as the chalice, cross, and font. They are aware of festivals from other faiths such as Divali and Hannaka. Pupils in Year 2 write their own prayers and link these to work on peace, their own lives and people and places special to themselves. They are beginning to develop a sense of personal reflection and have a sound knowledge of stories from the life of Jesus. Work on the life of Noah gives pupils opportunities to extend their writing skills but this is not a regular feature of the work seen.

76 Pupils in Year 3 and 4 consider ways of helping others and develop understanding of fairness, kindness, giving and caring in a variety of contexts. They are aware of the significance of religious symbols and festivals to Christians and study the five pillars of Islam in their work on the Muslim faith. Pupils in Year 5 write interesting and accurate 'eye witness' accounts of the Easter events in Jerusalem leading to the crucifixion (as if for the local paper). They linked work on the Walls of Jericho to their science work on sound and are aware of the different sections of the Bible. When studying Judaism Year 6 pupils write accounts of special ceremonies such as a Bar Mitzvah and list their personal ten commandments using ideas well from their own experiences. These

extended writing examples are not prevalent in the scrutiny of work over the past year. Pupils are aware of famous religious and political figures from the past and consider injustice in the world in work related to Martin Luther King and the Oxfam Organisation. They show empathy with people suffering poverty, deprivation and lack of opportunity and consider ways of changing situations through forms of protest.

77 Teaching in the two lessons seen in Year 3 and Year 5 was good and teachers prepare lessons well using the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers' skilful use of the interactive whiteboard enhances learning and interest, and motivates pupils. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge as in the Year 3 lesson on the creation and the Year 5 lesson on the life of Father Damien. Relationships are very good and pupils listen carefully to their teachers. When working in pairs and groups, pupils cooperate very well and show appreciation for the work of others when sharing ideas at the end of the lessons. A good range of resources is available within school and used well in lessons.

78 Leadership and management are satisfactory and the new coordinator has worked hard to ensure the new requirements of the recently revised local syllabus have been adopted across the school. There is a recognised need to develop assessment procedures in order to monitor pupils' progress.

79 There are good links with local churches and religious groups in the community. Visitors to school from these groups, assemblies and festivals within school and at the local church contribute well to pupils' religious knowledge and understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80 One lesson was observed in art and design, one in design and technology and one in music. It is not therefore possible to make a secure judgement on provision in these three subjects.

81 In **art and design**, there is a good portfolio collection of work from classes throughout the school. These portfolios, together with evidence from displays throughout the school and discussions with pupils, confirm the high profile being given to the subject currently. Discussion with the subject leader further confirms this high profile. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory. Although the good portfolio collection shows work with a wide range of media, none of the work is annotated. There is no indication of comparative comments on the progressive nature of the skills and techniques of making art being considered. Nevertheless, together with the displays around the school, it is clear that pupils are given an effective range of art making experiences, including work in three-dimensions.

82 In **design and technology** there was only a small amount of work on display. A small sample of work confirmed that standards are in line with those expected. Discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator confirm that work in the subject continues throughout the school. It is clear from the sample of work, photographic evidence and teachers' planning that the skills of designing, making and evaluating are being systematically covered in the pupils' tasks.

83 In **music** pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their music making instrumental skills effectively. A number of peripatetic teachers teach strings, brass, woodwind, percussion, recorders, keyboard and guitar. The talents of the pupils are combined in forming a school band. A group of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 played a whole range of different recorders well during assemblies. Other pupils join together to play in the school band led by the peripatetic guitar teacher. A school choir, formed from classes from Year 3 onwards, sing together on a weekly basis.

84 The choir is led by the school's music co-ordinator. The singing in assemblies and the lesson was well controlled with good levels of attention being paid to the skills of duration, rhythm, beat and pitch. Groups of pupils show their musical skills in the community when they take part in events in the city and beyond. In discussion with the co-ordinator and a group of Year 6 pupils, it is clear that

the school has a high level of commitment to developing the skills and enjoyment of making music. From the evidence available standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6.

Physical education

The provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In games and athletics, standards meet national expectations and pupils achieved well in the lessons observed
- The programme of work throughout the school year is well organised
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school

Commentary

85 Standards in games and athletics are in line with what could be expected for pupils' ages at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This maintains the standards found at the end of Year 6 at the last inspection. Teaching was mostly good in the lessons observed during the inspection. These were in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. Pupils achieved well as a result of the well-organised programme of work in these lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their physical skills in different aspects of physical education at appropriate times in the school year. Currently the focus is on games and athletics. These aspects were developed well in the lessons seen during the inspection. However, some aspects, such as swimming, are on-going during the year for pupils in the junior classes. All pupils are able to swim the minimum distance of 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

86 In Years 1 and 2 pupils build successfully on the skills that have already been initiated in the Foundation Stage class. There is a continuing emphasis in games and athletics lessons on good body control and care and safety in movement. There is mature consideration of affects of physical development on health. In an athletics lesson in Year 1 that had to be transferred from the field to the hall because of rain pupils successfully built up their skills. They were enabled to learn the techniques of a relay by walking, jogging and finally running. This extension of skills was a regular feature of the way pupils understanding was fostered. In a Year 2 games lesson in the hall appropriate attention was paid to the careful use of space. The large group of pupils from the combined Year 2 classes moved with control and safety. Ball skills were developed satisfactorily as the pupils formed partnerships with one another. The skills were effectively extended as the groups of partners grew from two to four.

87 In the Year 4 and 6 lessons, skills were developed appropriately. In Year 4 pupils' energy levels were expended as they jumped, landed safely and completed a sequence successfully. The pupils considered the effects upon their breathing and heartbeat and then made their own decisions on how to cool down effectively. In the Year 6 lesson in the playground the skills of successfully attacking and defending in an invasive game were well developed. The skills were gradually built up so that the pupils were continually being asked to consider what they needed to do to improve their techniques. They were able to respond positively to the task.

88 Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has taken those opportunities given to monitor the progress being made by the pupils through direct observation of lessons. However, there has not been a systematic approach by the school to allow the co-ordinator to fully develop this role.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal and social development permeates all learning
- Leadership and management of the subject are good
- The school promotes a caring, Christian ethos with a strong moral ethic
- Pupils have good opportunities to participate in the school's decision making process

Commentary

89 Other than in circle times, there is no discrete teaching of the subject. Nonetheless, pupils achieve very well in their personal and social development and become very mature and confident learners. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities and experiences across and outside the formal curriculum and to contribute fully to the life of the school and the community. These include residential visits as far afield as France. These encourage the development of independence as well as corporate responsibility. Pupils take part in sporting events and competitions in the local community and travel further to support the school on special days; for example, pupils in Year 6 represented the school at the British Legion Remembrance Day Service at the National Memorial Arboretum. Pupils show great care and concern for the elderly and invite them in regularly for refreshments and a chat.

90 Early ideas of citizenship are developed through decision making about school and class rules and pupils vote for their class representatives on the school council. The council meets with the headteacher and when possible with the chair of governors. They discuss issues such as which charities to support and how the school might be better run. Pupils in Year 6 put themselves forward for team leaders and have to speak to the other pupils about why they would be a good leader. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 then vote for the boys or girls who have impressed them most.

91 Circle times (when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss issues and help resolve conflicts) are well established and make a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills as well as their personal development. There are appropriate sex education programmes for the older pupils and a drugs awareness programme for Years 5 and 6. Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy life style through relevant science topics and the provision of fruit in the morning break for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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