

INSPECTION REPORT

ASTON-ON-TRENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aston-on-Trent

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112502

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Tunley

Lead inspector: Mr George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th October 2004

Inspection number: 266339

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	203
School address:	Long Croft Aston-on-Trent Derbyshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sally Archer
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 22 nd April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Aston-on-Trent is an average-sized primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 203 pupils organised in seven classes. The school is situated in the village of Aston-on-Trent and draws about half of its pupils from the village, the rest travelling from surrounding villages and the outskirts of Derby. It serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are more favourable than the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is better than expected for their age. Twenty-four pupils, a below-average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. These needs are largely moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Two pupils have a statement to outline particular special needs. The great majority of the pupils come from white British backgrounds. The school has Investors in People status, which recognises that it has good systems to support and train its staff. In 2002, it gained a Schools Achievement Award for good results in national tests. Other awards include the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools, and Activemark Gold. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher, who is also the reception class teacher, was absent from school, owing to illness.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, music
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector	
16492	Robert Lever	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Aston-on-Trent is a good, effective school with some very strong features. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard because the school provides a very positive environment for learning. They achieve well because the quality of teaching is good, often very good. The school nurtures pupils' personal and social skills particularly well, so they develop a mature and confident approach to their life at school. Very good leadership by the headteacher, well supported by an enthusiastic staff team, has improved standards significantly over the past few years. Everyone at the school wants the pupils to do as well as they can. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach well above average standards in mathematics, science and most aspects of English, but standards in writing are not as high
- The good quality of teaching helps pupils to learn quickly and confidently in most lessons
- Pupils behave very well and are very keen to learn, which supports their progress very strongly
- The curriculum is good for English, mathematics and science, but lacks depth and challenge in some other subjects
- Good leadership is ensuring that the school sustains and improves the quality of pupils' work, but some measures to raise standards are not focused sharply enough on the desired outcomes

Since the school was inspected in 1999, improvement has been good. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved at a rate better than the national trend. High standards have been sustained over the past few years. The school has dealt with all the key issues from the previous inspection, with particular improvement in provision for children in the reception class and the use of teaching assistants in lessons.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievement is good. When children start school, overall attainment is better than expected for their ages. In the Foundation Stage (reception class) children achieve well. A good range of interesting activities stimulates their learning and staff support and enrich children's experience effectively. Almost all children are on track to reach the goals expected nationally by the time they join Year 1, and many will exceed them. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils

achieve well in English and mathematics, owing to good teaching, but in other subjects achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are well above average. In writing, whilst standards are above average, they are not as high as would be expected because too few of the more able pupils reach the higher level. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 builds effectively on this solid foundation and enables the pupils to achieve well and reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The results of national tests, given in the table above, show that the pupils are successful. Although comparative data for 2004 are not yet available, results were at least as good as in 2003. In the current Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics, science and most aspects of English. The school has identified that standards in writing are not as high as would be expected. Standards in other subjects are not as high as in English, mathematics and science because pupils do not study them in sufficient depth. Pupils who have special educational needs do as well as other pupils.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered very well. The school is particularly effective in developing pupils' self-confidence and promoting a mature approach to school. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to work and are very well behaved. Very good relationships are evident in lessons and when pupils are playing together. Pupils feel valued and learn to value others through initiatives such as the peer mediators and buddies. Attendance is in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching is good with some very good features. In the reception class, activities are well planned to meet the needs of young children and enable them to become confident learners. Staff provide considerable encouragement and support, which helps the children to make good progress. Throughout the rest of the school, most lessons are very well planned and lively teaching captures the pupils' interest and motivates them. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage learning very effectively. As a result, pupils learn confidently and quickly in most lessons. Where teaching is very good, the tasks are particularly well matched to pupils' needs, challenging, and taught at a very good pace, which ensures that the pupils learn a lot. In a few lessons, although teaching was satisfactory, the pace of work was too slow or the activities were not challenging enough for some of the pupils.

The curriculum is carefully planned and provides a good range of work in English, mathematics and science. In some other subjects, such as art, the range of the curriculum helps pupils to produce good quality work. In other subjects, however, the work is not challenging enough and pupils' work lacks depth, particularly in Year 6. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are good, but the information is not used well enough in some lessons to ensure that work is appropriately challenging. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has created a very good partnership with its parents, the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, with a strong focus on raising standards, which has been very successful since the last inspection. She is keen that the school should not rest on its laurels and looks constantly for ways to raise standards still further. The leadership of subjects is generally good. Teachers who are responsible for subjects have a good grasp of what is done well and what needs to improve. Governors fulfil their role effectively and meet statutory requirements. They have considerable expertise, a good knowledge of the school, and provide the right balance of support and challenge. Management has a clear overview of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. Plans for improvement are appropriate, but are not precise

enough about the main priorities for improvement or what the desired outcomes should be. Staff are well supported in developing their skills. The day-to-day management of the school is handled efficiently by the team of adults.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and the great majority feel that their children are doing well. Many have chosen the school because of its good reputation. Pupils like the school, enjoy being here, find lessons interesting and fun, and know they are expected to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to build upon its current success are

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing, as planned
- Improve the curriculum by developing more depth and challenge in subjects other than English, mathematics and science
- Ensure that plans to raise standards have clear, measurable outcomes

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall. In the reception class, children make good progress and, by the time they join Year 1, most reach the expected standards, and many exceed them. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are well above average, and standards in writing are above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics, science and most aspects of English, but standards in writing are not as high. In most other subjects standards are not as high as in the core subjects because the work lacks depth. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve just as well as others.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a good start to school in the reception class
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and, by Year 6, reach well above average standards, because the quality of teaching is good in these subjects
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as in other aspects of English
- Standards in some subjects are not as high as expected because the school gives too little emphasis to them and so pupils' work lacks depth
- In some aspects of ICT, standards in Year 6 are below expectations, partly owing to weak resources

Commentary

National test results

1. The results of the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 are better than those reported at the last inspection, particularly in reading and mathematics. Over the past three years, the results have improved at a faster rate than for most schools. The mathematics results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally, the reading results were well above average and the writing results, though not as strong as reading, were above average. Overall, the results were better than those gained by pupils in *similar schools*. * Although comparative data for the 2004 results are not yet available, they were just as good as in 2003.

* 'Similar schools' are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.5 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.9 (18.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In Year 6, the 2003 results are much better than those reported at the last inspection. Over the past three years, they have improved at a faster rate than for most schools. They were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science and pupils did better than those in other schools who gained the same scores in the Year 2 tests. The 2004 results are just as good for mathematics and science, but the English results are lower. About a third of the pupils reached the higher Level 5 in reading, but very few gained the higher level in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (30.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.2 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.5 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

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

3. Given that children start school with attainment that is above average overall, the test results, and the standard of work seen in pupils' books, represent good achievement in English, mathematics and science. Good teaching in these subjects throughout the school, with a significant proportion of very good teaching, means that pupils make good progress at each stage, building their knowledge, skills and understanding well. The very positive environment for learning, with high expectations of what pupils can achieve, plays a significant part in giving each child the confidence to be successful.

4. In writing, the picture of achievement is not quite as positive. Although pupils reach above average standards, fewer than expected gain the higher levels in national tests. The school has identified this weakness and is ensuring that the more able pupils, in particular, are given challenging tasks to extend their writing skills.

Foundation Stage (reception class)

5. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Staff catch the children's interest by providing a good range of activities, which helps the children to build their skills well in all areas of the curriculum, but not quite so well in physical development, which is limited by the small outdoor area. Staff support the children's learning effectively, which gives them the confidence to do well. Relationships are very good. Good quality teaching helps the children to make good progress. As a result, they are well prepared to join Year 1.

Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2

6. Pupils' achievement is good overall. They achieve well in reading because teachers convey an enthusiasm for stories through the books they read. Pupils learn the skills needed to tackle unknown words through good teaching of basic skills such as letter sounds. Parents play a significant part in sharing books with their children and ensuring the frequent practice that breeds success. In writing, pupils make satisfactory progress, but some of the older, more able pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their skills by writing at length for a range of purposes. In mathematics, pupils make good progress because the teaching is challenging and lively, and so pupils enjoy their lessons. In science, whilst achievement is satisfactory, most of the work is at the level expected for pupils' ages and, for most pieces, pupils tackle the same work regardless of their ability. In most other subjects, pupils produce work of the expected standard.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6

7. Pupils achieve well overall. Progress in reading continues to be good, with many pupils reaching high standards by Year 6. In writing, whilst most pupils make steady progress, there

are too few opportunities for them to write at length for a range of purposes, particularly for the more able. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science because lessons are challenging and teachers use an imaginative range of methods. In ICT, standards in communicating and handling information are in line with expectations, but standards are lower in controlling and monitoring because pupils have had too little experience in these areas and the school is only just acquiring the resources to teach the required curriculum. In other subjects, the standard of pupils' work varies. In art, pupils experience a broad curriculum, which helps them to produce good quality work. In some other subjects, such as design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education, the work in some classes is not challenging enough and pupils do not study topics in sufficient depth to produce the good quality work seen in the core subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs

8. These pupils achieve as well as others. The school welcomes all pupils, whatever their special educational needs, and makes sure that they are involved fully in all aspects of school life. During the inspection, pupils with special needs made good progress in most of the lessons seen because the work was well matched to their needs. These pupils make good progress towards attaining the targets in their individual educational plans as the result of good assessment and well-focused support by teachers and teaching assistants. Some attain standards in line with the national average by the time they leave school. All groups of pupils – boys and girls, those from different backgrounds, the more able and the less able – achieve equally well.

9. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall, with weaknesses in the progress made by the youngest children. Pupils' achievement is now good across the whole school, particularly in English, mathematics and science, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. The school is not complacent and recognises that there are some aspects of pupils' work and some subjects where it can strive for even higher standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Levels of attendance are very high indeed and pupils generally behave very well and have very positive attitudes to school, all of which make a significant contribution to their learning. Their personal development, particularly their moral and social development, is very well cultivated so that pupils become exceptionally mature for their age, showing excellent responsibility.

Main strengths

- The school has a very positive ethos which enables pupils to develop very mature attitudes to their work and very good relationships with others
- High expectations of the level of responsibility pupils will undertake lead to high standards of behaviour and work
- Pupils develop very good levels of social and moral understanding because of the strong emphasis placed on their personal development
- Levels of attendance are in the top five per cent nationally and punctuality is excellent

Commentary

10. The school works hard to create a very positive climate for learning where pupils grow in self-confidence. Everyone in the school consistently uses praise and positive behaviour management to encourage and support pupils, with the result that the children usually behave very well, feel valued and have high levels of self-confidence. The level of maturity shown, particularly among the older pupils, is remarkable. 'Buddies' willingly take responsibility for

ensuring that everyone is happy in the playground, while well-trained mediators deal effectively and constructively with problems between their peers. A very good personal, social and health education (PSHE) course, which includes regular circle time (when pupils gather in a circle with their teacher to discuss their feelings and views), also contributes to pupils' personal development and to the very low levels of bullying. Every pupil is expected to take a turn at helping and being a 'golden child'. Older pupils are trusted with running a school bank.

11. This maturity was also demonstrated in lessons, where pupils worked together very effectively in pairs and small groups. They are very keen to volunteer answers, knowing that their ideas will be valued. They concentrate well and quickly settle to the tasks they are given to do, bringing their own enthusiasm to the lesson even when teaching is not particularly exciting. Sometimes, for example in one of the assemblies seen, expectations of good behaviour are not so high and pupils too readily begin talking among themselves.

12. No-one has been permanently excluded recently. The school has some pupils who find it very difficult to behave appropriately, but they are very well managed and supported, especially by their teaching assistants.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
185	3	
1		
2		
5		
2		
2		
3		
3		

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. In this case, each exclusion was for one half day.

13. The PSHE programme also contributes very well to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are asked to think about others' feelings and to consider the right and wrong way of approaching problems. Pupils in Year 3 have been thinking about what they are good at and what they need to improve. This has provided some personal targets which will be reviewed at the end of the year. Assemblies are used to raise awareness of moral and social issues, currently relating to 'My World'. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the issue being discussed and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual development. They have experience of a good range of Western art, music, history and literature and are particularly involved in their local cultural tradition of well-dressing. They also have a satisfactory range of experiences about non-Western cultures.

14. Good systems for checking attendance and discouraging parents from taking holidays in term time support the very high levels of attendance. Pupils are keen to come to school and parents ensure that they arrive punctually.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

15. The high quality provision for pupils' personal development found by the previous inspection has been maintained and built upon with the recent developments in the PSHE programme and the introduction of peer mentoring and buddy schemes.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils, with some very strong aspects. Teaching is good overall, often very good. The curriculum is good for children in the reception class. It is satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum for English and mathematics, and for science in Years 3 to 6, is good and enables pupils to reach high standards. Some other subjects, however, are not taught in sufficient depth to enable the pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable, and so the curriculum as whole lacks balance. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Information about what pupils already know and can do, however, is not always used well enough to plan the next steps in their learning. Pupils are cared for and supported very well. The school has a very good partnership with parents, and very good links with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Good teaching for children in the reception class gives them a good start to learning at school. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is good for all subjects where a judgement could be made. Any weaknesses are relatively minor and were only observed in a few lessons. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons very carefully so they know exactly what pupils will learn and how the work will be organised
- Teachers make lessons interesting and fun, and so pupils are well motivated to learn
- The pupils achieve well because they work hard and try their best with the tasks they are given
- The pupils' ability to work well together in pairs and groups is a strong feature of many lessons
- The very good rapport staff have with the pupils helps them to manage learning and pupils' behaviour very effectively
- Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is generally good, but teachers do not always make best use of this information to plan appropriately challenging work

Commentary**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	6 (19%)	18 (56%)	8 (25%)			

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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

16. At the heart of much of the good and very good teaching seen is the time teachers spend planning their lessons. Plans are not necessarily extensive, but they are clear about the main learning objectives for the lesson and how these will be achieved. Clear plans give teachers the confidence to teach at a good pace, and in an interesting and methodical way. For example, meticulous planning supported very good teaching in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. The teacher checked the pupils' learning from the previous day, used a series of clever games to extend their understanding of two-dimensional shapes and to introduce the idea of bisecting, and then used carefully-matched group tasks to challenge pupils of varying abilities. Immaculate planning helped the learning to move at a good pace, and all of the pupils made very good progress in the lesson. Although lessons are very well planned, teachers also have the skills to take incidental opportunities for learning when they arise. There were also good examples of teachers adapting their planning because pupils had been more or less successful in the previous lesson.

17. Teachers make most lessons interesting and enjoyable. They know the pupils are likely to learn more when the lesson is exciting, and so they find lots of ways to capture the pupils' attention and involve them practically in their learning. For example, in a good mathematics lesson for Year 3, the teacher used a very good range of activities at the beginning of the lesson, which really made the pupils think about shapes, and the shapes they could find within shapes. The teacher's searching questions extended the pupils' thinking very effectively. Then the teacher took on the role of Miss X, who knows very little about shapes, and the pupils took great delight in putting her right! This type of clever teaching technique enthuses the pupils and gets the best out of them. Across the school, the pupils particularly enjoy using computers and, in a number of lessons seen, this added to their motivation. For example, in a good lesson for Year 2, the pupils worked very well in pairs on the laptops, learning how to click and drag images onto the screen before adding text. Teachers use a good range of resources in many of their lessons in order to make the work more appealing. For example, in a good geography lesson for Year 4, it was the wealth of photographs about a village in India that caught the pupils' imagination and helped them to learn a lot about a very different place. Similarly interesting work in many lessons ensures a fast pace to learning.

18. The good quality of teaching is matched by the pupils' very positive approach to their learning. In the great majority of lessons, the pupils are very keen to learn, they want to be involved, and they make a good effort with the tasks they are given. For example, Year 6 pupils were learning to write autobiographies using *Boy* by Roald Dahl as an example. The pupils enjoyed the teacher's lively introduction, particularly when he gave some examples of what his autobiography might say. When asked to start planning their autobiographies, they worked very hard, many motivated by using the laptops. By the end of the lesson the pupils had made considerable progress, far more than is usually seen. When asked, the pupils said, "We have a good laugh in this class, but we also have to work hard." Throughout the school, the teachers' high expectations of pupils learning quickly are well matched by the pupils' enthusiasm and motivation. The high quality presentation of most pupils' work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is also a good indication of the effort they put into their lessons.

19. Another important quality pupils bring to their learning is the ability to work well in pairs and groups. Teachers encourage this through the school's programme of personal and social education, and the way in which they provide opportunities for co-operative working in lessons. For example, in a good science lesson, Year 1 pupils worked well in groups investigating the use of their senses. One of these groups worked independently, thinking about words for the way materials feel, and they shared the resources and their ideas with a maturity far beyond that normally seen for their age. Many lessons have times for paired discussion, or pairs of pupils thinking about a problem, or pairs helping each other with a task. In all these lessons, inspectors were struck by the way in which pupils listen to each other's ideas and work out joint solutions. For example, in a good science lesson for Year 3, pairs of pupils were asked to find the various combinations of sandwiches they could make with a range of ingredients. By working together, the pupils generated a lot of ideas about how they might tackle the problem and what the solution might be. Throughout the school, the pupils'

mature approach to their learning, in a range of situations, is a significant factor in their good achievement.

20. Teachers manage and organise pupils' learning very effectively. They have a good range of positive strategies to ensure that pupils pay attention, get on with their work and, therefore, make as much progress as possible. Individual teachers have a very good rapport with their children, and so there is a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Discipline is almost always positive, highlighting pupils who are doing the right thing so that others fall in line. As a result of all this, pupils know what is expected of them, which helps them to get the most from their lessons. Learning support assistants also work well with individuals and groups of pupils, making a significant contribution to their learning.

21. Teachers use a good range of strategies to help pupils learn effectively. Lively, whole-class sessions were a good feature of many lessons. For example, a very good Year 3 English lesson began with quick-fire questions to find out what the pupils had remembered about their work on fiction and non-fiction texts. The teacher then used text from the book *Walking the Goldfish* to challenge the pupils' knowledge of verbs. The pupils were all on task and working hard because the teaching held their interest well. A very good history lesson for Year 5 had an excellent balance of activities. The teacher introduced the learning objective of finding out what it was like to live in ancient Greece using well-prepared resources, astute questioning and clear explanation. Pupils then worked in groups to gather information from a range of sources. All their ideas were drawn together skillfully in a session at the end of the lesson. Stimulating and challenging teaching led to all the pupils achieving very well.

22. Within a picture of good teaching, which has improved since the last inspection, there were weaknesses in the few satisfactory lessons. On occasion, the pace of learning slowed, either because the teacher talked for too long or did not make clear enough the expectation that pupils should get on quickly with their independent work. In most lessons, the work is well matched to help the pupils take the next step in their learning. In a few lessons, however, and evident in some of the pupils' past work, tasks are too easy for the more able pupils, and so they do not reach the standard of which they are capable. Group work was most effective when the tasks were practical. In some lessons, when the teacher used worksheets to follow up whole-class teaching, these did not always challenge pupils sufficiently, particularly the more able. Teachers generally have good expertise in most subjects, but many are still strengthening their skills in ICT, which means that they lack confidence when teaching the subject. Training is imminent.

23. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are of a similar quality to the last inspection, but are now very good in the reception class. In Years 1 to 6, a good range of testing ensures that teachers have clear information about pupils' attainment at a given point in time, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Day-to-day assessment, and its use to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, is not as good. In some classes, teachers use targets to make clear to pupils what they need to learn next. At present, however, such measures are not consistent across the school and, as a result, work seen in a few lessons was not matched well enough to pupils' needs. Marking is generally thorough, and offers lots of praise and encouragement. Only the best, however, identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, but lacks depth in some subjects. Good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside lesson time enrich the curriculum. Resources for learning are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the curriculum for English, mathematics and science is good
- Very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education helps them grow in confidence and become mature members of the school community

- There is too little emphasis on pupils producing high quality work in subjects other than English, mathematics and science
- The curriculum for the youngest children is good and gives them a good start to school
- Good provision for pupils who have special educational needs ensures that they achieve just as well as the rest of the pupils

Commentary

24. The good curriculum for English, mathematics and science, translated into detailed planning for lessons, is one of the reasons why pupils' achievement in these subjects has improved since the last inspection. Where the skills gained in these lessons are used and developed in other subjects it successfully consolidates pupils' learning. For example, in their learning about the Victorians, Year 6 pupils wrote their own stories about Sherlock Holmes, which extended their writing skills. Much of the work in other subjects, however, is not challenging enough and there is an over-reliance on worksheets. The picture varies from class to class, with some good quality work seen in Year 5. In most classes, however, and in the humanities subjects in particular, there was little evidence of recorded work, and pupils' folders showed long gaps between pieces of work, especially in Year 6. The recording of all humanities work in the same folder does little to encourage the development of pupils' individual subject skills and understanding. An exception is art, where the broad range of the curriculum helps the pupils to produce good quality work.

25. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. It is promoted strongly throughout the school and is effective in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Part of the provision is through specific lessons, such as circle times when pupils can discuss their feelings and views. A large part of the provision, however, is in the day-to-day work of the school, in the way that adults relate to the pupils and the high expectations adults have of pupils behaving sensibly, taking on responsibilities, and respecting each other. Teachers deal effectively with health issues, particularly in science where pupils learn how to live healthily and about the need to avoid misuse of drugs and alcohol. The school is part of the Health Promoting Schools initiative, which means that it works hard to educate pupils about a healthy lifestyle, including diet and exercise. The excellent school meals, enjoyed by a high proportion of the pupils, are a good example of this in action.

26. The youngest children get a good start to their education. Since the last inspection, the curriculum for the children in the reception class has improved significantly. The children's learning is based on a good balance of times when they can choose activities, with adults supporting their learning, and times when staff take individuals or small groups to focus on particular skills. The children are given a wide range of well-planned and challenging things to do and make good progress. Provision for pupils' physical development has improved with the creation of an outdoor learning area, but it is not spacious enough to promote running, jumping and climbing that would develop the children's large muscles effectively.

27. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs has also improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is well organised and effective. Pupils' targets are well thought out and reviewed regularly. Individual education plans, which give details of these targets and the support the school will provide, are reviewed with parents, teachers and teaching assistants. Towards the end of Year 6, the special educational needs co-ordinator from the secondary school also attends the reviews so there is a smooth change-over for the pupils. Teaching assistants are used effectively and are very knowledgeable about the needs of individual children. The good provision results in confident pupils who make good progress throughout their time in the school.

28. There are good opportunities for the pupils to take part in activities outside lessons, such as French and music clubs. The particularly wide range of sports played throughout the year has led to the school gaining the Activemark Gold Award. The school provides a range of visits and visitors to make the curriculum more interesting, such as music workshops so pupils experience music from other cultures, and art workshops that enrich history work.

29. The accommodation is satisfactory and, despite the cramped conditions in some classes and other classes being thoroughfares, pupils' good attitudes do not let this interfere with their learning. The lack of space, however, does restrict some practical activities, such as in design and technology. The grounds are extensive and have been developed well to provide both active and quiet areas at playtime and good facilities for physical education and science activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, including child protection. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are good, though pupils are not always given enough guidance on how to improve their work further. The school values highly the views of pupils and acts on their suggestions.

Main strengths

- The school provides a safe, very caring and supportive environment in which all pupils flourish
- Pupils have ready access to adult and peer support, for personal problems, whenever it is needed
- The school council provides a very good forum for pupils to express their views

Commentary

30. All adults in the school know pupils well and demonstrate a very high level of care and support. Child protection procedures are clear. Both staff and pupils are aware of health and safety issues. The school is maintained to a high standard and is kept very clean. Older pupils have first aid training, as do all members of staff. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award, and the quality of school meals is exceptional. It is the only school in Derbyshire to have been awarded an Activemark Gold Award, which reflects the very good provision for pupils' physical health. The very good PSHE programme covers topics such as sex and drugs education. The school makes very good use of outside specialists when pupils need specific help.

31. Teachers and fellow pupils are alert to, and quickly aware of, any problems a pupil may be having. Very good induction programmes, both for those joining the reception class and those joining part way through the school, ensure that pupils settle very happily and soon make friends. At lunchtimes, those who need a friend or some ideas of games to play are helped by the buddy scheme. Pupils who have had a disagreement go to a peer mediator and problems are usually quickly resolved, with adult help if this is necessary. Mid-day supervisors are readily on hand to give practical help and support.

32. Pupils who need extra support are quickly identified. Those who have special educational needs are well supported, both in class and in small groups that have lessons outside the classroom to teach specific skills. Some are withdrawn from lessons for this supported learning. Although the school tries to ensure that pupils do not miss out on what the rest of the class is learning, in some cases they do miss parts of other lessons or assemblies. For all

pupils, much assessment information is collected to tell teachers how well each one is doing, but it is not always used effectively to move children on to the next stage of learning.

33. The school council is having a strong impact in ensuring that pupils' views are listened to and acted upon. Each class discusses things it would like to raise and sends its representatives to the meetings well briefed. Pupils have made very constructive comments, for example about the toilets and lunch menus, which have been acted upon. Those who are 'buddies' have made very sensible and helpful suggestions about how the lunchtime toys and games can be shared out and taken care of.

34. High standards in this aspect of the school's work have been well maintained since the last inspection. The buddy scheme, peer mentoring and school council have all been introduced since the last inspection and are making a significant impact on pupils' care and well-being.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, with other schools and with the local community. This supports pupils' learning and enriches their experience.

Main strengths

- The school maintains very positive relations with parents
- It works very closely with other schools to ensure smooth transition and to develop teachers' expertise
- Pupils are very actively involved in the local community

Commentary

35. The school provides parents with a very good range of information, encourages their involvement and values the contribution they make to the school. The quality and range of information for parents have improved since the last inspection. Reports on pupils' progress are comprehensive and clear, but do not indicate what pupils should do to improve.

36. Parents have many and varied opportunities to come into school. For example, they are invited for lunch, which is always over-subscribed, and those visiting during the inspection said this was a very valuable experience. Parents attend weekly assemblies, meet their child's teacher to discuss progress, and are invited to meetings on various topics. They are told each term what their child will be learning, with suggestions about how they might help at home. It is easy for parents to speak to their child's teacher, and parents of the youngest children appreciate being able to stay with their child for the first ten minutes each morning, to look at their work and share activities. Many parents and grandparents offer to help in school and this is welcomed and used to good effect to support pupils' learning. The innovative parent teacher association (PTA) raises large sums of money to help the school buy some basic equipment, as well as funding trips.

37. Parents are very supportive of the school in ensuring that their children attend and arrive on time, that they read regularly and that homework is completed. At their meeting before the inspection, parents said the arrangements for homework are good. Parents' support for their children's learning makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Through the questionnaire and meeting linked with this inspection, and through the school's own questionnaire, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with and confidence in the school, an improvement since the last inspection.

38. Links with other schools and playgroups ensure that pupils move happily from one stage to the next. Particularly close ties with the local secondary school and other nearby primary schools mean that staff can train together and develop the curriculum. French is taught during the latter part of Year 6 by a teacher from the secondary school, and ICT and physical education have particularly benefited from secondary school expertise. The peer mediators recently performed a play, 'An Alternative Red-Riding Hood', at a county anti-bullying conference, to much acclaim.

39. Pupils enjoy taking an active part in the traditional well-dressing festivities in the village and, for example, they visit the local church regularly and sing to elderly residents. The PTA organises many events, which are very well supported by the local residents, such as bonfire night and the summer fair. Pupils' achievements in activities outside school are celebrated and encouraged.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school, which are shared by the staff and have been translated into steadily improving standards
- Good systems have been set up for leading and managing the school's work, which contribute to the high standards pupils reach
- School improvement planning is thorough, but is not always specific in terms of measurable outcomes
- The Foundation Stage is very well managed, which ensures children make a good start to their learning at school
- Governors are successful in carrying out their role and they support the school well

Commentary

40. The headteacher leads the school very well. She provides a strong sense of the values the school should promote, the impetus for improving aspects of the school's work, and a very clear vision of what the school should be trying to achieve. The headteacher's strong leadership promotes three very significant features of the school's work:

- A very positive environment for learning and high quality care for pupils
- Academic standards that have improved significantly since the last inspection
- A staff who work well as a team and share a strong commitment to further improvement

41. Management roles are appropriately shared between staff. Core subject leaders provide good leadership and management in their areas, with several other subjects being managed well. The provision for special educational needs is managed well. Management of the Foundation Stage is very good and, since the last inspection, has led to significant improvements in this aspect of the school's work. The administration is effective. An efficient team ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school and enables teachers to get on with their teaching and pupils' learning. It also ensures the headteacher and governors have adequate information to help them keep the finances in good order and make informed decisions about spending.

42. The headteacher has identified accurately the school's major strengths and areas for development, and has successfully led improvements to pupils' learning. As a result, the school's effectiveness has improved since the previous inspection. The school improvement

plan indicates clearly what needs to be done and who is responsible. It is not, however, set in the context of what has already been achieved, so there is little sense of ongoing improvement. The most important priorities for improvement tend to be lost amongst the wide range of tasks identified in each subject action plan. Some outcomes are measurable, but others are not precise enough to make sure they have been achieved. There are strong and clear connections between performance management and whole-school development. Teachers have good opportunities to develop their expertise, which leads to more effective teaching and better learning opportunities for pupils. The school has Investors in People status and takes the development of all its staff very seriously.

43. The governing body has a strong, well-informed influence on the work of the school and its policies, through a good balance of challenge and support. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its legal duties and that appropriate policies are in place in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex education. Good relationships between governors and staff promote a good flow of information which supports the development of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and are very supportive of its development. They have a strong focus on keeping standards high and a vision for a broader curriculum. They meet regularly and receive good information on which to base their decisions. The governing body supports the school well, particularly in the way it relates to parents and the community.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	366,669
Total expenditure	365,877
Expenditure per pupil	1794

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	1688
Balance carried forward to the next	792

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (reception class)

44. The previous inspection identified significant weaknesses in the provision for the youngest children. Since then, a new classroom and outdoor area have been built, and the school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, provision for children in the reception class is now good. At the time of this inspection, the reception teacher was absent from school, owing to illness.

45. The inspection took place early in the school year, and so the children had only been in the class for a few weeks. As a result, there is limited evidence on which to judge these children's achievement in all areas of learning. Work from the previous year, however, and evidence from lessons in Year 1, indicate that almost all the children are likely to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year, and many will exceed it. The children achieve well, particularly in developing their social, language and mathematical skills. Teaching and learning are good for all aspects of children's development, and the children are very keen to experience the wealth of activities available to them. The staff work very well together to plan interesting and relevant activities for the children. They have very high expectations for children behaving well and settling quickly to work so that all spend their time productively. The very good relationships between staff and children support learning well. Staff are always ready to listen and quick to praise children's efforts, which gives children the motivation to have a go and the confidence to succeed. Staff assess the children's attainment very carefully and these assessments are used effectively to plan the work and activities that the children will experience next. Because provision for children in the reception class is very well led and managed, there has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Although the accommodation for children in the reception class has improved, the outdoor area is small with no covered space to allow outside activities when the weather is wet.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths

- Very good induction procedures help the children to settle quickly into school
- Staff build very good relationships, which ensure that the children feel safe and secure
- Staff encourage children to form very good relationships with each other

Commentary

46. Achievement is good in this area of learning because teachers have high expectations of children behaving well and becoming increasingly independent. The very good induction procedures, whereby children visit the school on several occasions so that they become used to the surroundings, help them to settle quickly and happily into school. Staff quickly build very good relationships with the children, and encourage them to play and learn together well. Although the children are just beginning school, they are well behaved and choose their own activities confidently. Good organisation of classroom routines teaches children how to take out and put away their resources independently. Children are learning to take turns to speak through short but effective circle times. 'Fruit time' provides another regular occasion when language and social skills are developed well. Teachers carry out good assessments on what the children are able to do, especially in their personal development, and these assessments are used to plan effectively. Almost all of the children are on course to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year, and many already have mature personal and social skills for their age.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths

- Teaching is good and results in children making good progress and achieving well in reading
- Speaking and listening skills are developed in all activities so children are beginning to speak with confidence
- Children learn early writing skills effectively through well-planned activities

Commentary

47. Learning is planned around activities to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing so that the children make a good start in developing these important skills. The sessions are organised so that while some children are engaged in self-chosen activities, others work in groups with either the teacher or teaching assistant on more specific learning. Children are beginning to learn the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet and this helps them begin to write simple words correctly. They are encouraged to write in a range of activities. For example, the teacher took groups of children on a 'sign hunt', armed with clip boards, and they found and 'wrote' lots of words used in the attractive displays around the classroom. The more able children write simple words independently while others are able to copy words. The youngest attempt to copy simple sentences, which the teacher writes for them. Most children can write their own name. Children begin to learn to read confidently because of the good individual teaching they receive. They have access to a wide range of books, and talk about the stories they have heard. The teacher helps them find out information from books, such as facts about different animal habitats. There are many opportunities for children to speak in large and small groups, and to listen to others in the classroom. Children become increasingly confident, listen attentively and speak clearly. They respond well during group discussions and talk sensibly to each other during play activities. Standards are better than those expected for children of this age.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths

- Children learn to count confidently and record numbers correctly
- They use a wide variety of mathematical language
- Activities are well planned so that all children have work that is matched to their level of ability

Commentary

48. Mathematical sessions are well planned so children have many opportunities to count and talk about numbers, such as at registration when they count the number of boys and girls present. They learn to count up to 10 everyday objects confidently and accurately, and read the appropriate numbers. More able children count up to 20 objects and write numbers correctly. The children begin to learn to add and subtract small sets of objects and record their findings. The use of mathematical language is promoted well. Children discuss numbers that are more and less, and can order objects according to their size. Sessions are interesting and fun because they are well planned, use a variety of relevant resources and are based on play activities that interest all of the children. As a result of the good provision in this area, standards are better than normally seen for children of this age.

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development have not been judged as not all aspects of these areas of learning were seen during the inspection.

49. Work seen during the inspection indicates that teaching and learning of **knowledge and understanding of the world** are good and the children achieve well. They enjoy learning about the world around them and show a keen interest in all activities. In a lesson seen, they were learning about different animals that live in hot and cold climates. This was followed up by a visitor who brought in a selection of small animals for the children to observe, and in some cases to hold. This was a very positive experience and the children showed great interest and care. Activities are well planned and many extend the stories children have listened to, such as designing and making birds with jointed wings and making animal homes out of cardboard boxes. Children have regular access to a good range of construction toys and this helps them design and build their own models. Computers are used well to support children's learning in ICT. Children use the mouse and the keyboard with increasing skill.

50. Children make satisfactory progress in their **physical development**, and standards are close to those expected of similar-aged children. They learn to use a variety of tools safely and with increasing control. In creative activities they use paintbrushes and scissors, and develop small muscle skills appropriately. When playing in the outdoor area, the children use a variety of wheeled toys. The outdoor area, however, is small and provides limited scope for children to develop their skills in running, jumping and climbing. Although children make steady progress in this area of learning, progress is hindered because of the lack space and of good quality climbing apparatus. Children move carefully around the available space and become increasingly confident when using the resources. Because this area is limited, children are given the opportunity to use the main school playground to develop their skills in running and using their wheeled toys confidently.

51. Children's good achievement in their **creative development** results in most of them reaching the standard expected for their ages. They enjoy the wide range of creative activities offered to them. Painting and printing activities are well planned and give the children many opportunities to experiment and produce their own pieces of work. They are learning to colour their pictures carefully. Skills are taught well so that children learn to use scissors and brushes safely and with control. Children are encouraged to act out their own experiences in the role

play area and to use their imagination in their play. These activities develop speaking and social skills well. Children learn to clap the rhythm of their names and they enjoy singing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average, but stronger in reading than writing
- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good
- Teachers manage lessons very well and pupils show very good attitudes to learning
- The subject is well led and managed
- Assessment is thorough, but not always well used to set specific targets for pupils' learning
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the school

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection and the likely results of the 2004 national tests, when a high percentage of pupils reached the expected level in writing, but a below average number exceeded it. Standards in the current Year 6 are well above average for English overall, and better than at the last inspection. They are higher than the results of the 2004 national tests, which are likely to be average. As in Year 2, standards in writing are not as high as for reading. Pupils of all abilities make good progress across the school and achievement is good, both by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Judged against their attainment in Year 2, when test results were average in reading and well below average in writing, the pupils who left the school last year had achieved well.

53. Across the school, standards in speaking and listening are high. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when speaking skills were judged satisfactory. Pupils listen well and are confident speakers in a range of settings across all subjects. Teachers give good opportunities for speaking and use a range of strategies. Paired discussion is encouraged in all classes. In a successful Year 5 lesson, pupils extended their understanding of the conventions of play scripts through good discussion. Working together, listening to each others' views, and making positive contributions are all part of the school's overall ethos that supports pupils' learning.

54. Reading standards are well above average, with a high proportion of pupils exceeding the national expectation by the time they leave the school. Regular group reading sessions support pupils' developing skills effectively, and all pupils are expected to read at home. Regular practice leads to good progress and good achievement. Reading records show that pupils change their books regularly, and success is conscientiously noted by teachers and parents. The average reader heard in Year 6 has skills that are much better than expected for his age. He retrieved information from a variety of sources, including the Internet, and read with fluency and confidence. Typical of the high standards found was the Year 3 pupil who talked easily about her favourite authors and what she liked about them. "C. S. Lewis invents wonderful characters and Roald Dahl has a wonderful imagination." Pupils' mature reading skills support learning in other subjects very effectively.

55. Although standards in writing are not as good as those in reading, they are better than found in many schools. In Year 2, almost all pupils reach the expected level, but fewer pupils exceed it than found nationally because the work given to them does not challenge them

sufficiently. The picture is similar at the end of Year 6. In the 2004 national tests, about a third of the pupils reached the higher level in reading, but only two did so in writing. An over-emphasis on the use of worksheets, in English and in other subjects, restricts opportunities for writing. These sheets are often at the same level for all. There are, however, good examples of pupils using increasingly expressive language as they move through the school. In Year 5, for example, a pupil begins a poem with:

*Silhouetted against the darkness,
Is a thin cloud,
That an orange harvest moon
peeps round.*

In Year 6, pupils use good descriptive language to extend their writing:

*The cold gnaws at your skin,
Miserable grey clouds invade the sky*

As pupils' writing skills are a relative weakness, the school is currently focusing on raising standards as part of its school improvement plan.

56. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall, as it was at the previous inspection. It remains particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to order events in his autobiography. He used good humour, which interested and motivated pupils, and caused great hilarity when he wrote "Mr. X wins Nobel Peace Prize for stopping a playground fight". The teaching was stimulating, enthusiastic and challenging. Pupils were motivated to write their own autobiography and produced some good work. In a Year 5 lesson, the teaching was also imaginative and led to pupils understanding the use of dramatic conventions in a story about Odysseus. The teacher set clear targets for watching the video clip and pupils responded well. In all lessons, teachers manage pupils' learning very well and insist on good behaviour. Children are attentive and concentrate well on their tasks. They enjoy their work and behave well. Marking of work is variable. At its best it encourages children, tells them what they need to do to improve and relates well to clear learning objectives. In Year 6, the marking schedule is shared with the pupils so they are quite clear what they need to do to move up a level. Marking is less effective when it only offers praise without explaining what makes it praiseworthy or what to do to improve. Teaching assistants provide effective support, often helping pupils experiencing difficulties to achieve in line with their peers. Assessment clearly shows the standard pupils have reached, but does not always lead to specific targets in lessons, which would move pupils on. For example, in Year 2, pupils identified as capable of higher attainment are not challenged to work at higher levels.

57. The subject is well led and managed because teachers are supported effectively in planning their lessons and there is a clear view about aspects of provision that are successful and what needs to improve. Plans to bring about improvements, however, are not specific enough, and it is not clear exactly what needs to be done to secure raised standards. The use of computers is developing well and the laptops are used as an integral part of English lessons. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good because, despite a continuing weakness in pupils' writing, standards are higher overall by the time pupils leave the school and their achievement is better, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. There are satisfactory opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than English. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are evident in most subjects. For example, in physical education pupils listen carefully and follow instructions sensibly and safely. Children extend their technical vocabulary in subjects such as science and ICT. Teachers give time for talking to partners and group discussions. In science, the older pupils describe their experiments and record their findings clearly, which supports the development of writing skills

effectively. There are, however, missed opportunities for pupils to use and extend their writing in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach well above average standards
- Good quality teaching in all classes helps pupils to enjoy their work and learn quickly
- Pupils work very well individually, in pairs or in groups, which supports their learning effectively
- Whilst pupils cover a good range of work, they are given too few tasks that encourage them to use and apply their skills
- Good management has correctly identified aspects of pupils' work that need to improve, but plans to raise standards are not specific enough

Commentary

59. Standards are higher than at the last inspection and results in national tests are particularly strong, having improved over the past few years at a better rate than the national trend. In 2003, the Year 2 results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally and the Year 6 results were well above average. In both cases, the results were much better than those gained by similar schools. Although comparative data for 2004 are not yet available, results were at least as good as in 2003.

60. Year 2 pupils' work from last year confirms this picture of high standards. Almost all of these pupils have a good grasp of calculations with numbers to 100, adding and subtracting accurately and beginning simple multiplication and division. About half are confident with higher numbers and simple fractions. Almost all pupils have a good understanding of a wide range of work about shapes and measuring. In a lesson seen, the current Year 6 pupils were working on fractions, decimals and percentages. Almost all the pupils showed a good understanding of these relationships, for example knowing that $\frac{1}{4} = 0.25 = 25\%$ and using this knowledge to solve problems. The most able tackled complicated three-stage problems involving fractions and percentages. Most of these pupils are working at a level normally expected at the end of Year 6 and many have already exceeded that standard. Throughout the school, teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in developing their skills in number, shape and measures, but there are too few activities that encourage pupils to develop their skills in using and applying mathematics, which would provide additional challenge, particularly for the more able. The school has identified this area for improvement.

61. When pupils join Year 1, standards are above average. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities make good progress and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' past work in Year 5 shows very good achievement. Teachers ensure that pupils achieve well in most lessons by giving appropriate tasks to pupils of different abilities and providing good support for the less able, including those who have special educational needs. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, a less able group worked successfully with a teaching assistant identifying the properties of two-dimensional shapes, whilst a more able group worked independently investigating the statement, "Do the diagonals of all rectangles bisect each other?" In both cases, the pupils achieved very well, at their own level of challenge. Pupils' past work in Year 2, however, shows that all pupils often complete the same worksheet, with varying degrees of success. Where work is not matched well enough to extend pupils' existing skills, the more able complete it too easily and the less able struggle to finish.

62. The quality of teaching is good, with some very strong features. It was very good in one of the six lessons seen and good in the rest. Teachers' planning of lessons is clear and detailed, which means that learning can move quickly. Whole-class sessions are lively and interesting, usually have a very good pace, and so they capture and hold the pupils' attention. For example, a good Year 3 lesson began with an exciting range of activities about shapes, which kept the pupils fully involved and gave the teacher an opportunity to assess their understanding. When the teacher assumed the role of Miss X, who was unsure of the properties of shapes, the pupils took great delight in putting her right! Such interesting teaching strategies help the pupils to enjoy their learning. When working with the whole class, teachers ask probing questions that really make the pupils think. Teachers organise and manage pupils learning very well. All teachers have a good rapport with their children and high expectations of work and behaviour, which result in pupils listening carefully, responding enthusiastically and getting on with their tasks. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson, the pupils maintained their concentration very well during a range of counting activities because the teaching was varied and interesting. They worked well in pairs splitting strips of cubes into two and recording the addition calculation they could make with the two parts. Throughout the school, the pupils are good learners. They are very keen to learn, take part enthusiastically in activities, and have very good skills in working co-operatively. Minor weaknesses in a few lessons were when the pace was a little slow and the speed of pupils' learning slackened, or when work was not challenging enough for the more able pupils, and so they did not make the progress of which they were capable. Marking of pupils' work is thorough, but only the best indicates what pupils can do to improve.

63. Management of the subject is good, with a clear understanding of what is done well and what needs to improve, based on analysis of pupils' work and the quality of teaching. For example, the school has identified the need for more activities that require pupils to explore patterns in numbers and shapes, particularly to challenge more able pupils. Plans to pursue improvements, however, are not specific enough, and do not identify outcomes in terms of a rise in standards that would show success. In some lessons, ICT was used to support and extend pupils' work, but it is not yet an integral part of the mathematics curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen steadily and the quality of teaching is better. Despite this success, management is not complacent and continues to seek ways of improving pupils' achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Pupils' use and development of mathematics in other subjects are good. Throughout pupils' science work there are good examples of recording in graphs and tables and interpreting the results. For example, Year 5 pupils graphed the surface area of a parachute against the time it took to fall and used the graph to reach their conclusions. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils read the scale on a thermometer and recorded the falling temperature of water. In other subjects, teachers take opportunities for pupils to count and measure.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, pupils reach well above average standards
- A good emphasis on experiments and investigation helps pupils to learn the skills of being a scientist
- Good teaching ensures that pupils learn a wide range of knowledge and skills

- In Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities generally do the same work, and so individuals are not always challenged appropriately
- In the lessons seen, the pupils enjoyed their learning, particularly the practical tasks
- Very good leadership supports teaching and learning very effectively

Commentary

65. Standards are higher than at the last inspection and pupils' achievement has improved. In 2003, teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment showed that all pupils reached the expected Level 2, and just over a third reached the higher Level 3. In the Year 6 tests, results were well above the national average, and better than those gained by similar schools. Almost two-thirds of the pupils reached the higher Level 5, which exemplifies pupils' good achievement in Years 3 to 6. Although comparative data for 2004 are not yet available, results were almost identical to 2003.

66. Year 2 pupils' work from last year shows above average attainment, but the standard is not as high as the teachers' assessments suggest. Most of the work is at the level expected for Year 2 pupils and, for most pieces, pupils tackle the same work regardless of their ability. For example, pupils observed an experiment to find out what happens over time when various materials are placed in water. The pupils' work shows good observation and clear recording of results, but there is no indication that the more able pupils are putting forward their own ideas about how to find the answer to a question or carrying out experiments for themselves, with support. The more able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently by work they are given. A good range of work in all the factual aspects of science, particularly about living things, shows that pupils have good knowledge in the subject. Taken together, pupils' past work and the lessons observed indicate that, by Year 2, achievement is satisfactory.

67. The work the current Year 6 pupils completed when they were in Year 5 is outstanding in quality and quantity. It confirms the high standards in national tests. There is a strong emphasis on the pupils finding out things for themselves through experiments. For example, pupils investigated air resistance using parachutes of varying surface area. Thoughtful predictions, meticulous control of variables, re-testing where appropriate and careful recording of results led to sensible conclusions based on the evidence. Although most of the pupils still conclude by saying what happened rather than using a scientific explanation, about half are already reaching the standard expected at the end of Year 6 and are on track to exceed that standard significantly. The range of work is exemplary and, in discussion, Year 6 pupils showed a mature understanding of scientific method and of scientific concepts such as what happens when solids dissolve in water. By Year 6, pupils' achievement is good, owing to the rich and diverse set of experience they have had.

68. The quality of teaching is good overall, and best in Years 3 to 6. Teachers present science lessons in an interesting way, which makes the most of the pupils' natural curiosity. For example, Year 2 pupils thought about the preferred habitat of woodlice, which involved looking carefully at live specimens and then carrying out some simple tests, such as, "Do woodlice like to live in the dark or in the light?" Year 3 pupils were finding out about food groups and nutrients, and the teacher devised interesting games to reinforce the ideas. In both these lessons, the pupils responded very well to interesting teaching by being keen to offer their ideas. Teachers have good factual knowledge and explain new concepts clearly. The pupils work very well in pairs and groups, sharing equipment and ideas; teachers and teaching assistants support this type of work well because they have good relationships with the pupils. The pupils' presentation of their written work is very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6, which shows pupils' very good attitudes to the subject. Where teaching was satisfactory but had

weaknesses, pupils' learning was too slow in parts of the lesson because the teacher allowed the pace to flag. In one lesson, the teacher organised too much of the experiment for the pupils when they were quite capable of doing it for themselves. Occasionally, teachers do not review clearly enough what has been learned in a lesson.

69. The curriculum is well planned and comprehensive, which helps the pupils to make good progress across the school. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well by their recording in science, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The use of ICT is growing, but it is not yet a consistent feature of pupils' work. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are in place, with useful assessments at the end of units of work to find out what the pupils have learnt. This information is not yet used consistently to plan appropriately challenging work. Leadership of the subject is very good and provides considerable expertise to support the planning and teaching of a good breadth and balance of work. Management is good and, through constant checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' work, has identified the aspects of learning that need to improve. Plans to bring about improvements, however, are not sufficiently clear about outcomes in terms of better standards. Resources are good, but the smaller classrooms restrict possibilities for practical work. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in improving pupils' achievement in science, and the school has the capacity to drive standards still higher.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

70. Only three lessons were seen, along with a reasonable amount of pupils' past work. As a result, it is not possible to make a judgement about overall provision in the subject or the quality of teaching and learning. The available evidence indicates that standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. In Year 6, standards in communicating and handling information are in line with expectations, but standards are below expectations in controlling and monitoring because pupils have had little experience in these areas and the school is only just acquiring the resources to teach the required curriculum. Although the previous inspection judged standards to be in line with expectations, and the same areas were found to be weak, a direct comparison does not do justice to the improvements the school has made since then.

71. The lessons seen indicate that teachers have varying skills. Some have limited skills and knowledge whilst others are highly skilled because all have not yet benefited equally from current training. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher used his expertise in multimedia skilfully to teach pupils to link pages by creating buttons. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils learnt to select pictures and drag and drop them into a page, before adding text. In only four weeks, they have gained in independence to set up the laptops and have made good progress in developing their skills.

72. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has successfully managed the introduction of new laptops to improve resources, which were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection. This has led to improved opportunities for pupils to use computers across the curriculum and to learn new skills in handling text. Some other aspects of the curriculum have yet to be addressed but, overall, there has been a good start to improving standards.

HUMANITIES

73. Only two lessons were observed in each of geography and history, and no lessons were seen in religious education. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall

provision in any of these subjects. Examples of pupils' past work were available, however, from which to make judgements about standards and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils. The overall picture is that, whilst some good work is produced in some classes, the emphasis on these subjects is less than is normally found, particularly in the Year 6 work from last year. As a result, the quality and quantity of work in these subjects do not match the high standards seen in English, mathematics and science. This has a negative impact on the balance of the curriculum, particularly for the oldest pupils.

74. In **geography**, pupils' past work shows that standards are largely as expected for their ages, but the work lacks depth, particularly for the oldest pupils. They do not carry out studies of the local environment or studies of contrasting localities with the rigour expected towards the end of primary school. In a good Year 4 lesson seen, the pupils were studying a village in India. Good teaching drew the pupils' attention to features of their local environment before they looked closely at photographs of the Indian village to spot similarities and differences. The pupils worked very well in pairs gathering evidence from the good resources provided by the teacher, who skilfully drew together pupils' findings at the end of the lesson. Other work makes good links with the culture and religious beliefs of people in India. Across the school, however, pupils' past work in most classes is sparse and does not reflect the high standards they reach in other subjects. In particular, the work does not make a strong enough contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills.

75. In **history**, standards in one of the lessons seen were better than expected for pupils' ages, and better than shown by most examples of pupils' past work. Very well planned and stimulating teaching in a Year 5 lesson helped pupils to explore what it would have been like to live in ancient Greece. Pupils used a good range of evidence to form their views, and the teacher's skilful prompting and questioning really made them think. The recording tasks were carefully matched to the ability of the pupils. The teacher ensured that learning moved at a good pace, and a buzz of discussion showed the pupils' high level of interest in the work. A Year 6 lesson in which pupils drew a time line about ancient Greece had a rather slow pace, with the pupils allowed too little independence in completing the work. The content was largely factual, explained by the teacher, and did not provide pupils with opportunities to develop their historical skills. These two lessons reflect the variation seen in the quality of pupils' past work across the school. There are examples of good quality work but, overall, it does not have the depth often seen, particularly in Year 6. Once again, the lack of written work, partly owing to an over-dependence on worksheets, reduces the contribution the subject makes to developing pupils' literacy skills. A range of visits and visitors enriches the history curriculum and provides good links with other subjects. For example, during the inspection, Year 5 pupils made masks, based on ancient Greek characters, in a workshop led by a visitor.

76. In **religious education**, the curriculum follows the locally Agreed Syllabus and standards in the work seen are close to those expected for pupils' ages. Past work shows that pupils are learning about stories from the life of Jesus and can relate the issues raised to their own lives. They are helped to gain an understanding that religion has a practical application in people's everyday lives. Visits from members of local churches enrich the curriculum and displays around the school show that pupils are developing an understanding of the important festivals of different faiths. As in history and geography, although the curriculum is suitably broad, the depth and quality of pupils' work is patchy, with a particular weakness in Year 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Only one lesson was seen in each of design and technology, music and physical education. No art and design lessons were observed. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. In art and design, a reasonable selection of pupils' work was available from which to make judgements about standards. Teachers' planning and the views of subject leaders were also taken into account. The overall picture is that the school does not place as much emphasis on design and technology and music as is normally seen.

78. Standards in **art and design** are better than expected for pupils' ages, and they experience a good range of work, which helps them to build their skills effectively. For example, Year 1 pupils' lively drawings of bears, linked to their work in history about toys in the past, show that they are being encouraged to observe carefully and use varying thicknesses of lines and types of shading. Their well-crafted models of bears, in clay and play dough, extend their experience into three dimensions using another medium. Striking paintings of sunflowers were inspired by looking closely at those grown in the school garden, as well as the work of Van Gogh. Years 2 pupils' drawing of plant life, in pencil and crayon, linked to their work in science, show a good level of skill in capturing the shape and texture of flowers and leaves. Again, the work is extended thoughtfully by stippling leaf outlines to make a printed effect. Almost all the pupils produce good work, which is why standards are better than normally found.

79. Year 3 pupils completed an exciting project using images from the natural environment on fabric work. After observing a range of flowers, they designed their own flower motif to make border patterns. This was extended by embellishing fabric with an existing flower design, developing various appliqué techniques, for example using beads and sequins. These high-quality pieces were used for the Aston-on-Trent well-dressing festival. Work in Year 4 is a good example of pupils developing a visual idea through a variety of stages. Closely-observed drawings of wheels and cogs from bikes and scooters, in pencil and then charcoal, show good skills in a challenging medium. Pupils then used the shapes to make an attractive collage in a variety of materials. Whilst studying the ancient Greeks, Year 5 pupils learnt how designs on pots give clues to what life was like then. They painted their own pots, telling a story or illustrating an aspect of ancient Greek life, and these are of good quality. During the inspection, a visiting artist helped them to make masks depicting ancient Greek gods or famous characters in literature. Year 6 pupils' pencil sketches of Victorian figures are skilful and detailed. They have also explored the work of William Morris, drawing and painting their own designs in his style. Their Victorian skyline silhouettes, painted on baking paper and framed, are very attractive. Pupils' visual diaries (sketch books) contain a good amount of work, which shows how they experiment with ideas. Management of the subject is good, with a clear view of the strengths gained by linking art with other subjects, whilst recognising the need to develop art skills in their own right.

80. In **design and technology**, there was too little of pupils' past work to make a judgement about standards. This was also the case at the previous inspection. The lack of work indicates that the subject is not given as much emphasis as in many schools. The one lesson seen was a combination of art and design and technology. Year 5 pupils made masks, linked to their history work about ancient Greece. A visitor led the lesson and the pupils enjoyed the experience, but they had too little opportunity to influence the designing and making of the masks, and so the activity did not make a strong contribution to their development in the subject. The masks were made using templates and the finished products were very much the same, regardless of who had made them. Work seen in Year 6, where pupils had made wooden frames using card joints, is typical of that expected of younger pupils.

81. The subject is planned in line with national guidelines. Planning covers all required aspects and should ensure skills are systematically developed. The school recognises that resources in terms of tools and materials are inadequate, and says that cramped classrooms restrict some practical activities, which affects pupils' achievement in the subject. The time allocated to the subject is less than normally found and this means topics lack depth.

82. In **music**, very little evidence was gathered because the subject was not a focus for the inspection. There are clear, detailed plans for class music lessons. Teaching and learning were good in the lesson observed. Year 3 and 4 pupils listened attentively to *Carnival of the Animals* and discussed the music using terms such as tempo and pitch. Groups of pupils worked well together to plan and practise their own composition telling a story about two animals, and they used a very good range of instruments. When groups performed their music for the class, the teacher skilfully encouraged others to pick out ideas to enhance their own work. Good management of a very active lesson resulted in all the pupils making good progress in composing their music, and developed pupils' ability to evaluate the work of others.

83. Pupils' singing in a music assembly for the whole school was satisfactory when they all joined in, but the older pupils, in particular, were not keen on some of the songs. They came to life for the song *Live as one*, and so the singing was of a far better standard. Using a CD as accompaniment made it difficult for the teacher to focus on improving the quality of singing. Twenty-six pupils are learning to play an instrument, taught by visiting specialists. One of these organises a music club, which the pupils enjoy very much. During the inspection, they were composing a harvest song, using their own lyrics and music, to perform at the school's harvest festival. Management of the subject is satisfactory, and keen to provide more opportunities for music making. The school recognises, however, that it is difficult to raise standards without a teacher who has particular expertise and teaching skills in music. Pupils' social skills are developed well through concerts and performances in school, which are much enjoyed by parents.

84. In **physical education**, the curriculum is good and improving. In the one lesson seen, for pupils in Year 3, teaching and learning were very good and pupils achieved very well in developing their gymnastic skills, reaching above average standards. The teacher managed the lesson very well and pupils moved sensibly and safely in a quite limited space. The teacher had high expectations and showed very good coaching skills. Her teaching was stimulating, enthusiastic and constantly challenging, which led to pupils developing good sequences of balances and movements. Good use of digital photographs gave pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others.

85. Management of the subject is very good. The school is taking a leading role in the School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership, which has provided courses and training to increase teachers' expertise and raise standards. Extra-curricular activities have included football, netball, gymnastics, basketball, rounders, cricket, rugby, athletics and maypole and folk dancing. Opportunities for competition take place within the local cluster of primary schools, and through links with the secondary school. Good links have been made with outside clubs, where pupils can go on to develop their interests and skills. The school has gained the Activemark Gold and the Healthy Schools Awards, which indicate a strong commitment to the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. No lessons were seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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	1
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	4
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	3
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	3
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).

