

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124029

Headteacher: Mr G R Lawrence

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 15th to 17th November 2004

Inspection number: 267466

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	405
School address:	Carberry Way Weston Coyney Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 5QU
Telephone number:	01782 312384
Fax number:	01782 312384
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Foster
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Park Hall Primary is much bigger than most schools with 405 pupils on roll. It is located three miles to the south east of the city centre of Stoke-on-Trent. The school caters for 43 full-time three year olds in its nursery. Most of these children transfer into one of two reception classes. The nursery and reception years have run as an integrated Foundation Unit for the last fifteen months following a major reorganisation. The profile of children's attainment when they transfer to Year 1 is broadly average but covers a wide span of ability. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnic origin, and all speak English as their main language. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties; two pupils have a statement. Around ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is less than usually found in primary schools and the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times is very low. During the week of inspection the school was undergoing major building work which was very disruptive to its normal organisation. The deputy headteacher was absent on the grounds of ill health.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
22856	K Campbell	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and design and music.
23866	S Hall	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education.
22474	J Taylor	Team Inspector	English as an additional language, special educational needs, English, history, geography and religious education.

The inspection contractor was:

TRIO INSPECTIONS LIMITED

University of Warwick Science Park
Unit 2, Barclays Venture Centre
Sir William Lyons Road
Coventry
CV4 7EZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
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	35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **effective** in providing a good quality education for its pupils and is successful in enabling them to achieve well. The ethos is happy and caring and very good relationships underpin pupils' good learning in all years. The headteacher provides good leadership and for the last two years has moved the school forward at a good pace. The school has good capacity to continue to improve and gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Current standards are above average in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 6, although not as good as they should be for the higher attaining pupils.
- Good teaching is enabling pupils' good progress and achievement overall. However, the progress made by higher attaining pupils is inconsistent.
- Assessment, the tracking of achievement including marking and pupils' self-review, and targeting of their next steps in learning are not rigorous enough.
- The very good, all round provision in the Foundation Unit ensures that the youngest children in school receive a flying start to their education.
- The school sets high standards for pupils' conduct and this supports positively their very good personal and social development.
- Leadership is good with key strengths reflected in the very strong team spirit, the very supportive induction processes, the highly effective professional development programme and the very good role models provided by the senior team.
- Management is satisfactory but not enough time is made available for the senior team and subject leaders to gain a full overview of standards, teaching and learning and to share best practice and support school improvement.

The school has sustained the strengths reported on last time it was inspected in 1999 and has made positive improvement to identified key weaknesses. Some of the lesser shortcomings flagged then are still areas for attention. For example, the management role of subject leaders, the development of assessment and more effective recording systems to fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs all require improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. The children in the Foundation Unit receive a very well rounded education and achieve very well. The effective team of early years staff help the children to make very good progress, with most meeting the goals expected by the time they transfer to Year 1. Good achievement continues in the infant stage because of good teaching and learning. There is good consistency in the quality of experiences provided in reading and mathematics that results in above average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards are broadly average in most other subjects that pupils of this age study but are below average in writing. Good achievement continues in the junior phase with a similar picture in standards to that seen in the infants in all but two areas. Writing standards are average and the standards in speaking and listening rise to an above average level by the end of Year 6 due to the school's effective improvement strategies. However, pupils' past work and lesson observations show that not enough is consistently expected of higher attaining pupils, especially in writing.

The following table shows that standards were above average in English and science and average in mathematics in the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils made good progress in English from Year 2 to Year 6, satisfactory progress in mathematics and very good progress in science. According to the most recent test data, the school's rate of improvement is above that found nationally at the end of Year 6.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	B	A	C	C
Science	A	C	B	A

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Pupils enjoy school, they try hard with their work and behave well. Relationships are very good. All staff are very focused on giving the pupils confidence to *have a go* at new experiences and this is very beneficial to helping foster a good self image and personal esteem. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good** overall, though, multicultural aspects are not well represented across the curriculum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and very good in the Foundation Unit. The work set enables pupils to be challenged at the right level across the subjects they study, though in many lessons more could be expected of high attaining pupils. A useful start has been made in assessing and targeting pupils' learning in English and mathematics but this has yet to be extended to other subjects. The good curriculum offers interesting learning experiences for the pupils, with tangible enrichment. Pupils are developing competent ICT skills because of the good drive to improve ICT provision, including the installation of a small but useful ICT suite. The Foundation Unit curriculum is very good. The accommodation, though adequate, has some shortcomings. The layout of the school is poor and restricts good communication. The staff work hard and effectively to make sure that this does not impede pupil's education. The positive care and support that pupils receive helps them to learn with success. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are well supported, by the very small but effective team of support staff. The provision for pupils' personal and social development ensures that they move with very good levels of confidence to the next stage of their education. The school has worked hard to build a good partnership with parents and has forged effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher has established an effective team which he leads well. The senior team are very good role models for others and are upbeat about the potential for widening their involvement in monitoring and evaluation activities, as are subject leaders. Governors are committed to the school, give effective support through their committee system and seek to apply the principles of best value securely to all decisions. However, they do not always have the information they require to enable close monitoring of some areas of responsibility. The budget is very tight and is an acknowledged barrier to many of the school's ideas for innovation, including its plans for workforce reform.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are positive about the school and very pleased with what is provided.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise writing standards, particularly in the infants.

- Inject more challenge into the work planned and set for higher attaining pupils so that they achieve to the best level of which they are capable in all years.
- Sharpen up teachers' assessment of learning, including marking, the tracking of achievement, pupils' self-review, and targeting of their next steps in learning.
- Further develop the management role of subject leaders in rigorously monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and standards to gain better subject overviews and to ensure that the features of best practice are identified and shared.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Current standards overall are above average in English and mathematics and average in all other subjects by the end of school. Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. Boys and girls are doing equally well in school, those with special educational needs achieve well to reach their personal targets.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good overall.
- Current standards are above average in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in writing although average by the end of Year 6, are not as good as they should be, especially for the highest attaining pupils.
- The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well so that most reach the goals expected for their age.
- Realistic targets have been set for pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests and the school is on track to reach these.

Commentary

1. The picture in standards reported by this inspection is broadly similar to that seen when the school was previously inspected. Pupils' performance in national tests has been more positive at the end of Year 6 than Year 2 for some years, particularly in writing. The inspection team's scrutiny of pupils' books and their findings from lesson observations identify clearly the areas for improvement in writing and show that too little attention is being given to presentation, spellings, and punctuation in particular. The work set for higher attaining pupils is often the same as for others with extension tasks planned that the pupils do not have time to complete. A new subject leader for English is very alert to these shortcomings and has devised a good action plan to lead improvement. The school has good capacity to lift standards in writing, not least because of the strong corporate determination of all staff to do so. The introduction of individual pupil writing assessments is a positive feature.
2. The children in the Foundation Unit receive a very well rounded education and achieve very well. The effective team of early years staff help the children to make very good progress, with most meeting the goals expected by the time they transfer to Year 1. Good achievement continues in the infant stage because of good teaching and learning. There is good consistency in the quality of experiences provided in reading and mathematics that results in above average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards are broadly average in most other subjects that these pupils study but are below average in writing. Good achievement continues in the junior phase with a similar picture in standards to that seen in the infants in all but two respects. Firstly, writing standards are average. Secondly, the standards in speaking and listening rise to an above average level by the end of Year 6 due to the school's effective improvement strategies. This year, a good focus has been given to supporting pupils' oracy skills. For example, very good use is made of *talking partners* that enables the pupils to share their ideas with one another before starting to write about them. The use of role-play is also having a beneficial impact on pupils' speaking skills as well as their confidence and good self-esteem. In some classes, teachers are using visual aids to help stimulate better vocabulary and help pupils rehearse their ideas before committing them to writing. A good example of this was a lesson observed in Year 1 that was successful in enabling pupils to write independently, and accomplish the objectives set for them, because of the good use of visual resources that fired the pupils' imagination, well-matched group tasks and high expectations. The small, but significant group, of higher attainers did well in this lesson and wrote at length about a toy of their choice because of the effective methods used.

3. The table below shows that in the 2004 national tests, standards were well below average in writing at the end of Year 2, in reading they were average and in mathematics well above average. The standards here are above those found in similar schools in reading and well above average in mathematics but were well below average in writing. The school's rate of making improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 is below that found nationally. However, the most recent results do show that improvement has been made in all tested subjects on those for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.4 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.4 (16.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The table that follows shows that Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in English and science and average standards in mathematics in the 2004 national tests. Standards were above average in English and science but just below average in mathematics when compared to those found in similar schools. The school's rate of improvement is above that found nationally at the end of Year 6.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.9 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.6 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. From their start in Year 2, these Year 6 pupils made good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics by the end of school. The boys make up good ground during the junior phase, though their results, like those of the girls, fall well below those found in similar schools at the higher level 5 in writing. Overall, pupils made good progress according to the test data. The findings of inspection reflect this.
6. Pupils' basic skills are well honed in numeracy and reading, and are satisfactory in other respects except writing. There are missed opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length in subjects such as history and geography. Additionally, in these subjects an over use of worksheets that consolidate knowledge, is capping the opportunity for pupils to demonstrate independence and initiative in finding out information for themselves. Pupils are developing competent ICT skills because of the good drive to improve ICT provision, including the installation of a small but useful ICT suite. One class has the use of an interactive whiteboard and plans are in hand for more of these to be put into other classes to supplement other ICT resources.
7. The school uses a range of testing and data to help predict pupils' likely future performance in the national tests. All pupils benefit from booster classes organised in Year 6 to support their preparations. In Years 1, 3 and 5 additional strategies are used successfully to help a chosen group of pupils advance their skills in literacy and numeracy. This is working well for those in danger of underachieving. Managers are making useful checks to assess the amount of value

the school adds to pupils' education over time. The next step is for them to focus more sharply on whether these targets are being met via their monitoring activities so that they can be revised upwards as necessary and to assist pupils in self-assessing their next steps in learning. Realistic targets have been set for pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests and the school is on track to reach these.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Pupils have good attitudes to school, their behaviour is good and they demonstrate good personal development. Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is higher than average although improving. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good** overall. However, multicultural aspects are not well represented across the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and all members of the school community are very good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- They are very interested in their work and try hard to succeed.
- Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for their personal, including spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Attendance is satisfactory and unauthorised absence is improving.

Commentary

8. The school has every right to be proud of its pupils, whose attitudes and behaviour are a real strength. Pupils say that one of the things they like most about the school is the friendliness of children and adults. Indeed, relationships throughout are very good and form the bedrock of the teaching and learning environment. Parents say their children like to come to school, are keen to learn, and enjoy taking part in the many extra-curricular opportunities like sports teams, clubs and visits. Pupils show good levels of concentration in lessons and try hard with their tasks. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson, Year 2 pupils quickly got to grips with a device for adding or subtracting 9, 19, 11 or 21 by really applying themselves to the task.
9. Behaviour is good throughout the school, and pupils feel that the revised behaviour code has had a beneficial effect. Pupils are self-controlled and considerate in their actions and classrooms are calm and orderly. Although the playgrounds are rather crowded, particularly at lunchtime, play is harmonious and sensible. The self-regulation of football games is noteworthy and a testimony of pupils' consideration for others. The school uses short exclusion only in very rare circumstances, when it is necessary to demonstrate its refusal to accept abusive behaviour.
10. The personal development of pupils begins with a very good start in the Foundation Unit and is good throughout the school. The key strengths are in areas of moral and social development, in which pupils display a keen sense of right and wrong, justice and fair play. From their early years, pupils show that they are capable of making good, independent choices, of taking responsibility, and of considering the needs of others. As they grow older, they become increasingly confident and have good self-esteem. Pupils encourage one another when they step forward to take part in role-play, or demonstrate their talents in assemblies. They can empathise with other people, and show compassion in their support of charities like the hospice movement and the poppy appeal. When selected to be special helpers they carry out their tasks reliably and the Year 6 play leaders are an asset, in the infant playground.
11. There is no evidence of any racial harassment and the school is appropriately increasing its commitment to multicultural education. Opportunities to increase pupils' awareness of non-European cultures were under-developed at the last inspection and there is still room for improvement here, but through studying other world faiths pupils are beginning to learn respect and tolerance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/4(%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.4	School data :	0.8
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

12. Attendance is satisfactory when compared with that found nationally, but there has been a problem with the level of unauthorised absence. Parents are now sent a reminder if they have failed to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence, and this is having a positive impact. Punctuality is good, and lessons begin on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The curriculum offers **good** learning experiences for the pupils and those who need it are given good levels of support, especially those with special educational needs. The provision made for the higher attainers is not consistent enough and this affects their rate of achievement. The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged **effective** links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is enabling pupils to learn well.
- The progress made by higher attaining pupils is inconsistent.
- Very good relationships underpin pupils' good learning in all years.
- Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Unit and enable very good achievement.
- The most consistent and effective teaching and learning was observed in mathematics.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in reviewing the progress they make in different subjects and this is a missed opportunity to enable them to gain better self-knowledge.
- Teachers are assessing pupils' progress using a tried and trusted system but better use could be made of it to support the setting of challenging targets in all years.

Commentary

13. The strengths in teaching have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and the weaknesses identified in the junior stage have been eradicated. Staff work together as a committed team who show strong unity in striving to do their best for the pupils in their care. Classrooms are busy and purposeful places in which very good relationships underpin pupils' good achievement as they get older. The school's inclusive and nurturing ethos ensures that personal achievements are recognised and celebrated. Homework is very well supported by parents. A useful start has been made in assessing and targeting pupils' learning in English and mathematics but this has yet to be extended to other subjects. There is room for improvement in the sharpening of learning objectives and to ensure that assessments feed forward into the planning of lessons that enable all pupils to learn at the best possible rate, particularly the high attainers.
14. The table below shows the quality and effectiveness of the teaching observed by inspectors. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and the majority were of good quality or better. The very best teaching that enabled the best learning was seen in the Foundation Unit and in mathematics. Learning in the Foundation Unit is productive and purposeful because of the very

effective team teaching and high level of expertise. A good amount of work of very good quality is accomplished by the children and great enjoyment and personal satisfaction are the results. There are strengths in the teaching of mathematics, especially numeracy in most years. The pupils enjoy *hands-on* experiences that not only enable their knowledge to be built systematically but also extend their investigative, research and problem-solving skills. Very good teaching was observed in nearly all years. This is a very positive picture and shows the good platform on which the school can build for improvement and enable the exchange of best practice. The sample of pupils' past work that inspectors evaluated confirms the quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (20%)	27 (44%)	22 (36%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons, figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. The very small group of support staff are effective in the part they play in assisting both teaching and learning. Their work adds good value to the learning experiences of those pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Good attention is being paid to supporting pupils' special needs. In contrast, higher attaining pupils do not always get the input they need to achieve standards in line with their ability. Personal and social targets are in place to help some pupils manage their behaviour more positively and these are working well. Classrooms are happy and settled places in which very good relationships underpin the positive climate for learning. Learning conditions are not ideal in some classes because of the very tight accommodation that restricts movement and narrows the range of learning styles that can be promoted. For example, in Year 4, limited space reduces the opportunities for floor and carpet work. The layout of the building on four levels makes access rather difficult, especially for those with physical disabilities. The new building will in time relieve some of the pressures, but the dust and dirt being carried into school is currently adding to the teachers' frustrations. Good teaching is enabling good learning despite these barriers.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good** and is well matched to the needs and aptitudes of the pupils and provides good enrichment. The youngest children in school work from a very good curriculum. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is very good. Many of the health and safety issues raised by the previous inspection have been addressed but some still remain as concerns that have been raised with senior managers by the inspection team.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and behavioural needs to achieve well.
- The group who are not consistently well served are the higher attainers.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- Accommodation inadequacies are a barrier to be acknowledged; however the teachers' careful organisation alleviates any negative impact on pupils' curricular experiences.

Commentary

16. The curriculum offers a wide range of experiences that broaden pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Boys and girls from different backgrounds are provided with good equality of opportunity. Planning is a collaborative process with medium term planning identifying worthwhile experiences across all subjects. Lesson planning is adequate overall but variable. It often lacks specific focus on what pupils of different capabilities need to learn to achieve at good pace. This is limiting the achievement of higher attaining pupils, especially in

writing. Careful thought has gone into timetabling rolling programmes of study in subjects such as history and geography to avoid pupils duplicating earlier learning, though more work remains to be done in respect of innovation and to ensure that pupils' skills as well as knowledge are promoted to the full. Nevertheless, some good cross-curricular links are being built, for example those between literacy, art and design and ICT via the history topic on Ancient Greece. The key skills of numeracy, speaking, listening and reading are well promoted across subjects. More emphasis could be given to enabling cross-curricular use of writing to give pupils' wider experiences of writing and to help raise achievement. Teachers place strong emphasis on enabling pupils to answer questions, discussing what they think and in putting forward their views and ideas. This approach very much helps build pupils' self confidence and good self-esteem and is a very positive feature.

17. Good curricular provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. However, more effective recording systems are required to fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Most individual education plans are well written with clear targets to aid pupils' learning but some do not show how pupils and their parents will be involved in supporting the targets. Additional strategies in literacy and numeracy are assisting those pupils who are just behind class-mates of the same age, to catch up in their skills.
18. The school seeks to enrich pupils' experiences and is successful. For example an Awards Evening, with Year 6 pupils presented with their awards by the Lord Mayor, is held annually. The local Fire Brigade have worked with Year 6 children on a project entitled *fire safety*. Some pupils in Year 5 have attended a *Robotics Science Technology Day* at the Staffordshire Showground, whilst pupils in Years 3 and 4 have completed the *pedestrian test* with the Road Safety Officer assisted by staff and parents. The school hosted the British Telecom Theatre Company, which put on a show for the whole school called *Enhancing Communication Skills*. Educational visits to places in the locality and further afield are made by all classes every year.
19. The school has worked hard to improve accommodation and the high quality Foundation Unit is testament to the hard work and effort involved in making such worthwhile improvements. Governors are trying to make improvements to the accommodation but do not have the funds available to tackle everything. The small size of some classrooms and absence of a school library are two of the most pressing needs. A before and after school club that will be in buildings within the school grounds, but run privately, is in the final stages of planning. The school hopes to have use of that accommodation during the day.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care provided for pupils is **good** and the support and guidance given to them is good and contributes very well to their learning. There are very good arrangements for the induction of children into the Foundation Unit and throughout the rest of the school support, and guidance based on individual needs are good. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils in decisions about the daily life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them.
- There is very good care for pupils in the Foundation Unit.
- Pupils' personal development is monitored and supported well.
- Health and safety is carefully monitored but there are still some areas for improvement.
- The work of the school council has a beneficial impact on daily life.

Commentary

20. The school has maintained the caring and supportive environment found at the previous inspection.
21. The care and welfare of pupils are central to the work of the school, and are ensured by the way pupils and their needs are well known to teaching and non-teaching staff. In an environment where grounds and buildings have been subject to considerable upheavals and redevelopment, health and safety awareness has been, and continues to be, critical. Although most of the areas of concern highlighted in the last inspection report have been dealt with, there remain a few issues of which the school is aware. The procedures for child protection are sound and are in keeping with local guidelines.
22. Induction arrangements are very good, and pupils new to the school settle in quickly and soon feel at home. Their individual needs are assessed and monitored well, both for personal and academic development. Those with special educational needs receive good levels of care and support.
23. The school has worked hard at devising a new behaviour policy after full consultation with parents, teaching and non-teaching staff and the pupils. The promotion of positive role models based on praise and reward is working well, and the sanctions of yellow and red cards in the junior classes act as an effective deterrent to unacceptable behaviour. Pupils very much value the rewards for good effort or achievement and the merit system is very successful in promoting positive role models and including all pupils in pursuit of individual and class goals.
24. Academic progress is monitored adequately, and most pupils are aware of their individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics. However the best practice in marking and guidance is not shared by all staff and some pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to reach higher standards.
25. The school council has representation from junior classes and makes a regular contribution to discussions about charitable support and the tidying of the grounds. This fledgling democracy is ready for greater independence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils. These links provide valuable support for pupils' education and bring variety and richness to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents think highly of the school and support it well.
- There is good communication between school and home.
- The school makes good use of the community in extending learning experiences for its pupils.
- There are good links with local schools and colleges which provide for family learning as well as supplementing the staffing levels.
- There is room for improvement in the quality of written annual reports about pupils' progress.

Commentary

26. Parents are happy with the good links forged by the school and value the 'open door' approach. The home-school partnership gets off to a very good start in the Foundation Unit, where parents are welcomed and given good guidance about how they can help their child to learn. This is continued in other year groups, and a recently launched family numeracy course has been so popular it will be run for two groups of parents with older or younger children.
27. Parents' views are sought over issues like behaviour and the frequency of newsletters; and the parents support school policies well. They are co-operating in the school's drive to reduce unauthorised absence.
28. Overall information provided by the school is good, with strengths in the quality of the prospectus and the half-termly newsletter. The administration staff produce a colourful publication, with its good contributions from pupils, and parents have said they would rather receive it than a more frequent news-sheet. The annual written progress report for pupils is still an area for improvement however, as it fails to show pupil achievement in the context of what would be expected nationally, and does not clearly describe the whole areas of English and mathematics. For some lower achieving pupils the report is not at all clear about the difficulties. Last year, ICT was not reported on in Year 3. The pupils' reports had identified shortcomings last time the school was inspected.
29. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of links with specialists in the community. In this way history lessons *come to life* for example, as visitors from a local museum demonstrate the artefacts of yesteryear, and members of the emergency services develop pupils' understanding of how to keep safe. Dance, art and design and design technology also benefit from outside expertise, and the pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate their choral skills effectively when the choir sing to community groups. The local *Primary Enterprise* initiative has involved pupils in different projects, which introduce them to the ways of the marketplace and bring a real-life sense of purpose to their studies.
30. Good links with local schools underpin the strong culture of team sports, and there is a learning network, which is making a growing contribution to extension and support activities for pupils. As a recognised trainer for the graduate teaching programme, the school enjoys mutually supportive links with teacher training establishments, and also hosts courses run by the local college. Pupils say they enjoy the contact with the local church, which invites them to its Christingle service.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has established an effective team which he leads well.
- Senior staff provide very good role models for others.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring or evaluating teaching, learning and standards.
- Financial management is very good. However, the very tight budget is a stumbling block to innovation and reform.
- On-going building work and staff absence have slowed down the rate of the school's improvement in some respects.
- The chair of governors shows a high level of commitment and wants to move the school forward.
- Governors do not always have enough information to monitor some areas of their responsibility.
- Commitment to staff development is very strong and its management very effective.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has been very successful in gaining the confidence and support of parents and staff. He has created a school that is more tightly knit than in the past; one in which

everyone is moving in the same direction. He has established good working partnerships and effectively channelled everyone's energies into improving the quality of provision. The headteacher's strength of leadership, his determination and clarity of vision have been instrumental in facilitating the development of high quality Foundation Stage provision, now working very successfully as an integrated Unit. The senior management team is dedicated and hard working. There is a strong commitment towards joint decision-making and senior leaders meet regularly to discuss issues prior to whole staff discussion. They review provision well and recognise the importance of self-evaluation in school improvement. As a result, the school functions well as a community, despite the relative isolation of some classrooms and the difficult layout of the building. The headteacher has ensured good improvement overall since the previous inspection by displaying a strong commitment towards raising standards, involving staff more through open dialogue and valuing their work. The school received its *Investors in People* award in 2002.

32. Strategic planning is sound. Priorities are detailed and well-defined. Subject leaders and senior managers devise and revise key areas for development. Subject action plans, drawn up by the subject leaders, include clear targets, training implications and costing. Sometimes further areas for development are identified after the initial plan has been devised. For example, this year, writing became a priority after test results were analysed, and this had to be added to existing plans that had a focus for speaking and listening. Longer term planning, however, does not provide a clear sense of direction after the current academic year. The last year has been a difficult time, with the three-month absence of the headteacher due to a road traffic accident, intermittent absence of the deputy headteacher and on-going building work problems. All staff have managed the difficulties well and successfully ensured the minimum disruption to pupils' education. The senior management team came to the fore during these uncertain times and continued the school's performance management programme, with a good level of success. Targets stemming from discussion are effectively linked to whole school and personal development needs. Induction arrangements for staff new to the school are very secure, enabling them to settle quickly. There are also good links with training institutions. The school's very strong commitment towards professional development, despite budget restrictions, has paid dividends by improving the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
33. However, the problems of the past year have taken their toll on issues such as the monitoring of teaching and learning. Although the headteacher and senior staff have maintained a strong, focused monitoring commitment, some other members of staff have not been given sufficient time to monitor provision. Subject leaders, particularly those that are skilled classroom practitioners, are keen to extend their expertise and take on greater responsibility. Although they have a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses and their action plans for future development give an accurate picture of what needs to be done, they do not always have a secure grasp of standards overall. The deputy headteacher is heavily involved in analysing data and identifying strengths and weaknesses and leading on assessment. Progress in this aspect of management, however, although satisfactory, has been hampered by his absence.
34. The headteacher is getting to grips with returning from absence and recognises that some aspects of provision are not far enough advanced. Workforce reform and remodelling is one such example. Although a priority for development, the school does not have the financial resources to move forward with confidence on this issue and has yet to find a way to resolve the situation.
35. The chair of governors has a long standing commitment to and a deep sense of care for the school. Governors have effective links with subject leaders and have an adequate understanding of strengths and weaknesses. They make a purposeful contribution to the work of the school and give effective support through their committee work but are not yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring process, because they do not always receive enough information. They are not yet fully part of the drive to move the school forward. Consequently, they do not assess the work of the school with sufficient rigour. They find it difficult to challenge or act as a *critical friend*.

36. An extremely tight budget is a major barrier to future development. The number of support staff is below that typically found in large primary schools. The lack of support staff in many classrooms has a detrimental effect on the quality of provision. Although teaching and support staff provide well for pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils do not always receive the input they need to achieve standards in line with their ability.
37. Finances are very well managed and controlled. There is very good support from the local education authority to support the school's bursarial work. The governing body receive regular financial position statements and seek to apply the principles of best value securely to all financial decisions. Day-to-day administration is very efficient. The tight budget, with high staffing costs, leaves little room for manoeuvre. The amount spent per pupil is well down on that typically found but educational quality is good, and the school therefore gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	881,812	Balance from previous year	22,743
Total expenditure	869,155	Balance carried forward to the next	35,400
Expenditure per pupil	2,157		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a very good start to their education in both the nursery and reception classes.
- Teaching is consistently very good throughout the Foundation Stage, enabling children to learn very successfully.
- Assessment procedures are very good and outcomes of regular *Assessment Days* are used very effectively to plan the next stages of learning for each child.
- The development of personal, social and emotional skills is of paramount importance and there is a strong emphasis on the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.

Commentary

38. Provision has been totally restructured over the past two years, resulting in a very good curriculum that is exciting and challenging, providing a very good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Organisation of the Foundation Unit is excellent and every child participates in a very effective daily review of their work. This has a very positive impact on their very good achievement.
39. Children enter the nursery full-time in the autumn term after their third birthday and enter the reception classes the following September. At the time of the inspection, there were 43 nursery and 51 reception children. Induction procedures are very good, enabling children to settle happily into both year groups. There is an easy transition into the reception year, because Foundation Unit children of all ages know each other well. Parents value the strong links and are very complimentary about the quality of education their children receive. Attainment on entry is close to the average but covers a wide span of ability. There are strengths in children's personal and social skills and weaknesses in early language, literacy and numeracy skills. All children are very well provided for and there is excellent attention to inclusion. The Foundation Unit caters very well for the needs of children with specific learning difficulties and offers a very good level of challenge for those children capable of high levels of attainment.
40. Teaching is consistently very good throughout the Foundation Stage, enabling children to learn very successfully. Teamwork between teaching and support staff is outstanding and is key to the high standard of provision in all of the six areas of learning. The focus on personalised learning is very good and supports children of all abilities in achieving very well. The vast majority of current children will achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning and a good proportion will exceed these by the end of the reception year. This group of children will reach average standards overall and enter Year 1 with secure foundations for their future academic and social development.
41. The leadership and management of the Foundation Unit are very good. Provision has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection and there has been very good improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average because personal, social and emotional development is given priority.
- Teamwork among adults and children is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good throughout the Foundation Unit and children achieve very well.
- Classroom routines are very well established and children display a high level of independence.

Commentary

42. Children enter the nursery at various stages of development, but most display high levels of trust as they arrive each day, confidently leaving parents and helpers. All staff provide excellent role models and value children as individuals. Behaviour is very good and children are kind and courteous to each other. Most children rapidly acquire a very secure range of personal and social skills through very well planned activities and very good teaching. All children, but particularly those who lack confidence, benefit greatly from the care and attention shown to them. Children quickly learn classroom routines and know, for example, that the ringing bell means they have to clear away immediately for *Good Morning Time*. Reception staff build very successfully on secure foundations. Children listen carefully to instructions and participate with great enthusiasm in all class activities. Those who are selected as *Special Helpers* take their responsibilities very seriously. Children work with impressive co-operation and with a mature level of independence and confidence. They know they are part of a closely-knit, very caring community. Most are on track to reach the early learning goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in both nursery and reception are consistently very good and children achieve very well.
- Exciting and purposeful activities promote language development very effectively.
- Assessment of the progress of individual children is very good.

Commentary

43. Overall, attainment is close to average when children enter the nursery class. Most are on track to reach the early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. Although some children are shy and reticent, most are confident speakers and good listeners. There is, however, an increasing number of children who enter with speech problems and limited vocabulary. Their needs are met very effectively. Teaching time is extremely well organised, thus ensuring children receive activities to suit their ability. All adults have responsibility for teaching a group of children and provide very purposeful activities that focus sharply on the personal needs of the individual, enabling rich language development on a one-to-one basis. Children's excellent relationships with adults promote confidence, independence and self-esteem. The many opportunities for speaking aloud, questioning and discussion ensure that early language and literacy skills are developed very well. Children in the reception classes develop a love of books and have established favourites. They are interested and inquisitive about the characters in stories such as *Spot*. The majority write their names independently and make recognisable attempts at simple spellings. They write for a range of purposes, identify speech bubbles, and send messages on birthday cards. Assessment is a very important part of provision. Every eighth day is *Assessment Day* for all Foundation Unit children. Information gained is used very

effectively to move learning on very well. Very good links are made to other areas of learning as children retell stories or write labels for their presents. Every minute of the day is used productively and children make very good progress because adult input is of consistently high quality.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are of a consistently high standard, enabling all Foundation Stage children to achieve very well.
- Basic number skills are reinforced very well.
- A very good variety of practical activities develops understanding very effectively.

Commentary

44. Children enter the nursery at various stages of development, but most are close to average in their mathematical skills and in line to reach the goals expected. They achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. They learn through a range of activities, clearly matched to their stages of development. Number rhymes and songs reinforce basic number skills very well. Adults make very effective use of *Good Morning Time* to extend counting skills. Reception staff build on very secure nursery foundations. Number games, such as *Moving the Bunny On*, excite and challenge, promoting very good learning. Child initiated activities, such as counting birthday cake candles, support learning very well. Most children count ten candles, with higher attainers recognising numbers to 20. All staff make very effective use of mathematical language and children develop a good understanding of the language of shape and time. Most recognise two-dimensional shapes and higher attainers describe two and three-dimensional shapes using correct mathematical language. These children are constantly questioned and challenged to think. Mathematics is made exciting through a very good range of practical activities, such as making birthday cakes or measuring ingredients. Every task is purposeful and very well linked to other areas of learning. Very thorough assessment ensures children understand and move forward in their learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well through a rich variety of learning experiences.
- Teaching and learning are of a consistently high standard.
- ICT skills are developed very well.

Commentary

45. Children enter the nursery with average knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Most will reach the goals set for them. Throughout the Foundation Unit, very good teaching provides an exciting and stimulating range of experiences. Children make very good gains in their knowledge about the world. Lessons are very well planned and very effectively linked to other areas of learning. Children develop an awareness of the passage of time through, for example, remembering the date of *Bobbie Bear's* birthday. They carry out simple scientific investigations, such as filling a balloon with air and celebrate numerous festivals, the most recent being the Hindu festival of Diwali. They learn about Christianity and other religions through a rich variety of experiences. Children use discussion time well to express thoughts and feelings. On one occasion, children were observed guessing what might be inside the wrapped

present they were holding. Their responses were thoughtful, mature and knowledgeable. Children have numerous opportunities to develop a high level of independence and collaboration in their computer work. They demonstrate good mouse skills as they play counting games and develop confidence and skill when programming robotic toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well-structured outdoor play programme has contributed to rising standards and very good achievement.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the Foundation Unit.

Commentary

46. The children's physical development is similar to that of other children of this age on entry to the nursery. Children achieve very well because adults provide an exciting programme of indoor and outdoor activities. They have very good access to a range of outdoor equipment, enabling them to use wheeled toys, for example tricycles, which they pedal and steer with confidence. There has been a significant improvement in outdoor learning provision since the previous inspection and, although Foundation Unit staff want to extend provision even further, the introduction of a separate play area and soft landing surface has started to impact very positively on standards. Children have regular access to the school hall. They develop good control and co-ordination and move around with a growing awareness of space. Those with physical disabilities are very well supported during physical education lessons, enabling them to participate fully in every aspect of provision. Children demonstrate good pencil and paintbrush control as they write their names unaided and paint during their *free choice* activities. Many children will exceed the goals set for them in this area of their learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures good skills development and enables children to achieve very well.
- Children receive a rich variety of very good quality learning experiences.

Commentary

47. Children have average creative skills when they enter the nursery. They achieve very well and most will at least reach the goals expected with many exceeding them. Nursery staff use the generous teaching space very effectively and successfully provide an exciting range of experiences. Children could be seen experimenting with shaving cream, play dough, rice and jelly during the week of the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and all activities are linked very effectively to other areas of learning. Staff pay careful attention to skills development as they teach children to control a pencil and paintbrush, stick and paste very effectively. All adults have high expectations of children as they explore colour, texture and shape, producing work of a good standard. For example, self-portraits, *Happy Diwali* cards and celebrations with fireworks provide high quality displays. Good use is made of music to support learning. Children sing number rhymes and songs confidently; they listen to music and have access to a good range of un-tuned instruments. They use rhythm sticks with great enthusiasm as they sing *Stamp and Stop*. Role-play areas provide good opportunities for imaginative play and contribute very effectively to literacy and mathematical skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good overall.
- Standards in writing are below average at the end of Year 2 and, although average should be better at the end of Year 6. Writing has been a weakness for some years.
- Standards are above average in speaking and listening with increased opportunities for developing skills having a good impact on pupils' achievement in all years.
- Standards in reading are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but there is limited sharing of the very best practice to help bring improvement.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress with the literacy targets. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough in the writing tasks set for them.
- Insufficient opportunities are promoted for extended writing activities particularly through other subjects.
- Good leadership is driving forward improvement, however assessment, monitoring and target setting need to be more rigorous.

Commentary

48. In 2004, standards in the national tests were average in reading and well below average in writing at the end of Year 2. The standards in reading are above those found in similar schools but are well below in writing. However, the most recent results do show that improvement has been made in all tested subjects on those for the previous year. In the 2004 national tests Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in English. Standards were above those found in similar schools. The school's rate of improvement is above that found nationally at the end of Year 6. These national test results for Year 6 show that the pupils have made good progress in English.
49. Standards for the current Year 2 are above average in reading, average in speaking and listening and below average in writing. Standards in Year 6 are above average in reading, speaking and listening and average in writing.
50. Achievement is satisfactory to the end of Year 2. Achievement is equally good for boys and girls by the end of Year 6. However, in all years, higher attainers could potentially achieve more if the work set for them was consistently challenging. Too often these pupils are set similar tasks to others and although most teachers have planned additional work, few of the higher attaining pupils work quickly enough to make more than a start on the extension activity. Consequently, these pupils settle for less than they are capable of, and do not sustain their ideas to produce pieces of writing with substantial content or length. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including statements, is good as a result of the good provision and well organised support in literacy sessions.
51. In the infants the range of writing includes some story writing as well as non-fiction writing, instructional text and poetry; younger pupils are beginning to use basic punctuation accurately and their writing is increasingly extended. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write their own stories, accounts and reviews. Across Years 3 to 6 significantly more writing opportunities take place, average pupils begin to develop their ideas logically and by Years 5 and 6 pupils' writing covers a good range of styles with opportunities for writing plays, stories, instructions and poems. Pupils are encouraged to expand their skills by writing in the style of particular authors. This was used to good effect in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were provided with an excellent model on which to develop their own narrative piece based on *The Hand*.

These pupils show good understanding of personification and write short pieces using metaphors and similes with growing confidence.

52. Although practice in handwriting and spelling skills is undertaken this is not sufficiently established in pupils' independent work. Heavy use of the rubber often spoils pupils' presentation and some poor quality pencils detract from the impact of finished products. Teachers value the contributions which pupils make but do not always take the opportunity to model good writing for them.
53. The school is focusing on speaking and listening as a key target in its improvement plan. A good range of opportunities are provided for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills across all subjects in Years 1 and 2, with role-play and discussions being regular features of lessons. Teachers are using good visual resources to engage pupils' early interest and to help them put forward their ideas with good use of adjectives. The approach is working well and is enhanced by teachers' good use of questioning and the reinforcement of key vocabulary on whiteboards and in display. This good practice is built on effectively in Years 3 to 6 through the use of *talking partners*, *hot seating* and drama. A good example of this was observed in a Year 6 religious education lesson where pupils were thinking about parables. They performed plays for each other, *freezing* in role and explaining how their character was feeling at that moment and why. By Years 5 and 6 pupils pay good attention to the views of others, they ask questions and use an increasingly complex vocabulary with good levels of understanding.
54. The school is successful in supporting good reading skills in all years. Parents give good support to this too. By the end of Years 2 and 6 average and higher attaining pupils read with good levels of fluency and expression. They enjoy reading silently and sharing texts aloud in class. Good reading habits have been promoted well. Pupils explain preferences for particular authors and read regularly at home. During a Year 5 lesson higher attaining pupils were able to empathise very well with characters in the text *Friend or Foe*, accurately locating characters and how they were feeling at crucial points in the story. Lower attaining readers use their decoding skills, apply their knowledge of sounds, use picture clues and some self-correct with confidence when the text does not make sense to them. The use of additional strategies by teachers is effective in supporting better reading.
55. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a good quality range of experiences. English lessons are well organised and the pupils concentrate well and respond positively to their teachers. Expectation and challenge for Year 2 pupils' writing is not as high as it could be. This is a shortcoming that the school has identified and which has yet to be addressed. Some good use is made of pupil self-assessment strategies but more rigorous systems of assessment and moderation activities, along with more effective target setting are required to support the drive to further raise standards. Some very good examples of constructive marking were seen in Year 6 and this could be usefully built on to ensure greater consistency across the school. So far, there have been limited opportunities for sharing the very best practice through direct observation of teaching and learning, to help bring improvement.
56. The recently appointed subject leader has a very good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. She is a leading teacher in literacy and as such a very good role model for others. Having conducted a thorough audit she is leading the subject well and implementing her action plan which is fully focused to bring about further improvements. She is maintaining and analysing data to ensure that effective interventions are taken and that additional programmes have good impact. However she has yet to have the opportunity to monitor lessons in order to further support and guide her colleagues. Learning resources are adequate and used effectively although some book corners are rather dismal and the lack of a central library highlighted in the previous inspection continues to be a barrier to the development of key research skills. However, the school is hard pressed for space for a library.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Overall pupils use their speaking, listening and reading skills well to assist their work in other subjects. Question and answer sessions feature strongly and pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss, review and reflect on what they know and are finding out. The opportunity to use these lessons as the platform for developing writing is not yet sufficiently cohesive to have made a significant impact and valuable opportunities are being missed to enable pupils to write creatively and at length, especially in history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good.
- Higher attaining pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge.
- The school's strategies to raise standards are proving effective.
- Good quality teaching results in good learning.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good.
- Assessment procedures are improving but target setting is not yet firmly established.

Commentary

58. Results of the 2004 national tests indicate that standards in Year 2 were well above average when compared to both similar schools and those found nationally. These results represented a significant improvement on the previous year. The picture was not quite so positive in Year 6. Standards were average when compared to schools nationally and just below those of similar schools. The number of pupils reaching average standards was high, but too few pupils achieved higher levels. These results represented a dip in an otherwise improving profile. Following an analysis of the test papers, the school accurately identified a number of aspects for improvement, including providing more balanced coverage across the whole mathematics curriculum, with greater emphasis on problem solving and interpreting data. Good input from a local education authority numeracy consultant pointed the school in the right direction and there is evidence that the strategies that were put in place to raise standards are starting to show positive results.
59. Overall, pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and reach above average standards. Numeracy skills are secure and aid learning. There remains, however, an issue surrounding the achievement of higher attaining pupils. In some lessons, work does not challenge sufficiently and these pupils do not always reach standards in line with their ability. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress. Attainment groupings have gone some way towards remedying the problem but are not totally successful when all pupils complete the same work at the same level. Some find it too easy, whilst others struggle and need one-to-one support. Although there was no discernible difference between the achievement of boys and girls in lessons observed, occasionally teachers allowed boys to dominate in the oral part of lessons, whilst some girls sat passively and were not fully involved.
60. The overall quality of teaching is good, resulting in good learning. In Year 2, it is consistently very good. In one Year 2 class, pupils were highly motivated by the very good range of practical activities that helped them make rapid progress in their work on time. In the other Year 2 class, pupils could hardly contain their excitement, at the prospect of working in the computer suite. Pupils develop ICT and numeracy skills very effectively. The programs chosen are of good quality and provide fun learning experiences. Teaching and learning have many strengths, including teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour, good development of speaking and listening skills in paired work and good consolidation of basic numeracy skills. There is, however, some variation in the quality of marking. The most informative developmental marking

can be found in one Year 6 class. Assessment and the use of data are starting to be used as important tools in the school's quest for higher standards. Many teachers involve pupils well in good self-evaluation systems and some use targets very effectively to move pupils on to the next stage of learning. However, further work remains to be done to ensure a totally consistent approach towards tracking pupils' progress and target setting.

61. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The subject leader is a very skilled practitioner who leads by example, someone with a clear sense of direction for the subject, a person who wants to move the subject forward. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and is well placed for future improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Pupils have good numeracy and data handling skills. They develop them very effectively through ICT work and through other subjects, such as design and technology and science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an improving trend in national test results.
- Current standards are average throughout the school.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall but the highest attaining pupils are not always challenged to the full.
- Assessment procedures, including marking and target setting, are not sufficiently developed to make a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The subject leader has made a good start with analysing data but has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate fully teaching, learning and standards in science.

Commentary

63. Teachers' assessment of the standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2004 showed them to be well above average. The 2004 national test results show that standards were above average at the end of Year 6. Current standards are broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall with good achievement observed as a result of good teaching in a few lessons observed during inspection. However, the sample of past work saved by the school shows inconsistency in improvement year-on-year. The sample of work evaluated by inspectors shows adequate coverage of the science curriculum but with limited investigative work being recorded independently.
64. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good teaching observed in Years 2 and 3 where learning has been linked effectively with other subjects such as literacy, and design and technology. A very good lesson observed in Year 5 enabled the pupils to make great strides forward in their knowledge and understanding of how sound travels due to the very good expertise of the teacher in using a range of musical instruments to demonstrate this. Where teaching is most effective, levels of challenge are closely matched to pupils' ability and their learning is moved forward by probing questions. Where teaching is less effective, opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate are underused and the achievement of higher attaining pupils is limited by the practice of partnering them with lower attaining pupils. Although teachers' planning is based on appropriate learning objectives, insufficient thought is given to matching the work to pupils' capabilities and using assessment data to set clear targets to identify the next steps in learning. Teachers manage their classes well and pupils concentrate on their tasks, form good relationships and work well together. Sound use is made of ICT to present data and organise scientific findings.

65. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily and there has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the last inspection. Analysis of test results in Years 2 and 6 and the adjustment of learning activities is gradually being embedded into the school assessment practice and is beginning to have a beneficial effect on school performance in science tests. The next step is to widen the opportunities for the subject leader to monitor the quality of science throughout the school and to draw on the evidence gained to set more challenging targets for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, but the picture is one of continuing improvement.
- Assessment procedures are being developed, including pupils' self-assessment but these still have to be consistently applied throughout the school.
- Good leadership from an enthusiastic subject leader is bringing improvements in both resources and pupils' learning experiences.
- There is a need for wider monitoring of teaching and learning.

Commentary

66. Pupils are attaining average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Resources are much improved since the previous inspection and the school has a well equipped, if rather small, computer suite that now has the capacity to accommodate a whole class. Teachers have all undergone effective ICT training and their command of the subject is secure. An ICT strategic plan covering 2004-2007 has just been written and will be a useful guide to future improvement.
67. Younger pupils are able to use keyboard and mouse skills effectively to respond to auditory instructions when using applications, although lower attaining pupils often rely on more ICT competent classmates to interpret onscreen instructions. Older pupils are able to log on, start and run programs, which support their learning across the curriculum. As yet the range of programs and the reliability of the system, especially the on-line link to both the Internet and to the local education authority intranet to access applications and management systems limits pupils' learning opportunities and present staff with major difficulties. Although pupils' ICT skills are beginning to be developed on a more consistent basis, further progress is likely to be limited by restricted access to the school's computer suite, the overall availability of ICT equipment to support pupils' learning and the reliability of the hardware and infrastructure currently available.
68. Achievement is satisfactory overall with some good achievement by some pupils, particularly those who either have access to a computer to follow up their learning at home, or those who attend the school's extra-curricular computer club. Where pupils are achieving well the fact should be given greater recognition and celebrated more widely as a means of demonstrating good practice to teachers, pupils and parents.
69. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good teaching observed during the inspection in Years 1, 3 and 5. In these lessons pupils' ICT skills were being extended and utilised to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, a Year 5 class extended their understanding of direct and reported speech through the skilful planning and preparation of materials pre-loaded onto computers by their teacher. Teachers' planning shows thought for both the development of pupils' ICT skills and the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum and staff are beginning to use appropriate applications. However teachers have yet to ensure that pupils of all capabilities are being sufficiently challenged by the activities that have been planned. Similarly the practice of partnering higher attaining pupils with those of lower attainment in ICT should be monitored to ensure that all pupils are being sufficiently stretched given the limited time and resources available.

70. The school has sufficient assessment procedures in ICT which are beginning to paint a picture of overall attainment and progress. In some classes pupils are also involved in self-assessment and there are plans to introduce an on-line assessment tool although these practices are not fully developed throughout the school.
71. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic subject leader who has driven recent improvements with the support of the headteacher. As a result of her leadership other staff are gaining confidence and competence in the use of ICT and she has numerous plans for further improvement identified in the action plan. All requirements of the National Curriculum are now in place. The subject leader carries out a number of monitoring activities, but now needs to extend these to allow her to carry out more direct observations of teaching and learning in order to gain a more accurate view of standards. A portfolio of pupils' completed work is being developed to provide staff with clear exemplification of standards. Recently, new assessment procedures have been introduced, but they are not yet having an impact on standards. Further improvements to the quality and quantity of the resources and infrastructure would also enable the significant improvement in provision since the last inspection to continue, thereby matching the aspirations of the subject's leadership.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. ICT skills are being promoted through the weekly opportunities that pupils have to work in the ICT suite. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in classrooms is less developed. Only two classrooms have an interactive whiteboard and the use of computers is variable. In some subjects, for example art and design and science, ICT skills and knowledge are used well. However, this is not consistent in subjects such as English, mathematics, geography and history where more limited use is in evidence.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is being well led.
- Religious education contributes well to pupils' growing cultural development.
- Assessment, including marking, is not sharp enough to help pupils' next steps in learning.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are barely adequate.

Commentary

73. Standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed and recently revised, syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6. The work in pupils' books from last year shows satisfactory teaching and learning with pupils making steady progress in what they learn *about* religious education but less assured progress in what they draw *from* these experiences. In the lessons observed by inspectors, teaching and learning were good overall and reflect well the drive for improvement in both aspects of religious education given by the effective subject leader.
74. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore religious themes, linking them to festivals and celebrations. They know about key stories from different faiths. In a Year 1 lesson about the Jewish festival of *Hannukah* the teacher lit a menorah and pupils responded very sensitively when invited to dedicate a candle to someone special. They were able to make thoughtful suggestions including, *To all my family because they love me. To Mrsbecause she has been kind to me.* During their time at school pupils build effectively on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths including Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They are encouraged to recognise similarities and differences between religions. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to make links between the importance of light in the story of *Rama* and *Sita* as they learned about the festival of *Diwali* and the light of the star in the Christian Christmas story. One pupil said that *the light shows you the way to go.* Making representative candles then allowed these pupils to develop a growing awareness of light as a symbol of goodness through drawing their own candle and writing connecting words. Good speaking and listening skills allow junior pupils to question, debate and explore feelings. This was seen to good effect in a Year 4 lesson where pupils discussed the impact of fasting during the Muslim festival of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid. They asked challenging questions about the Koran and what it would be like to fast for a month, showing empathetic responses.
75. Religious education is well supported through the ethos of the school with a sense of caring and community, respect for others and tolerance of the views of others being well promoted.
76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The strengths of the teaching and learning lie in the effective questioning techniques of the teachers, their subject knowledge and the good development of pupils speaking and listening skills. However opportunities to develop skills through writing are frequently missed and a lack of pride is evidenced in the often untidy presentation of pupils' limited written work. Teachers' marking is not sufficiently focused on the pupils' next steps in learning.
77. The subject leader has a clear view of what needs to be done to further raise standards in the subject and has highlighted the development of a moderated portfolio, expansion of resources and increased opportunities for visits and visitors as part of her action plan. She has undertaken monitoring of pupils' books and displays but has not yet had the opportunity to support colleagues through classroom monitoring. Assessment procedures are not in place and this is a weakness.

Geography and history

78. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Only two lessons were observed in each subject. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' past work in history took place but the sample provided in geography was insufficient to enable the same level of evaluation. From the evidence seen standards are average in history and broadly average in geography at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school is not making the best use of either of these subjects to further promote pupils' writing skills.
79. In **geography**, infant topics cover mapping skills and familiarisation with the school environment and local neighbourhood. Year 2 pupils' experiences include looking at the differences and similarities between Weston Coyney and Blackpool. A study of the Mexican village of Tocuara

usefully enables them to find out about a country and culture very different to their own. The photographs taken by *Aunty Pat* on her holiday help to widen the pupils' geographic understanding and appreciation of the lives of others. Topics covered in Years 3 to 6 include weather around the world, the water cycle, rivers, care of the environment and mapping skills. Planning conforms to national guidance but also shows that in some years coverage is rather sketchy. In Year 5, this was due to a history field trip being planned that resulted in geography being moved to the following term. There is very limited assessment of pupils' achievements in geography.

80. The new subject leader has made a useful start to getting to grips with provision by auditing resources in communal areas, but not yet classrooms, and by asking colleagues for their planning and evaluations of topics. The action plan in place to drive improvement is well conceived and time has been earmarked for the subject leader to support its implementation and to widen monitoring activities later this year.
81. The scrutiny of pupils' work in **history** shows good coverage of the agreed programme of studies and an appropriate allocation of time for pupils to build their knowledge at a steady rate. Good use is made of visitors and visits to extend and enrich pupils' experience in history. For example, during the inspection a visitor from Gladstone Pottery Museum talked to Year 1 about Victorian toys and gained their full attention throughout. Photographic evidence shows just how much Year 2 pupils enjoyed their Victorian Day at Shugborough Hall. A very good lesson observed in Year 3 involved pupils' learning very successfully about Ancient Egypt and developing their historical research skills at a good pace. The teacher's very effective approach of promoting practical learning opportunities, resulted in the pupils seeing themselves as archaeologists and understanding how important it is to use reliable, first hand evidence on which to help build clear information about the past. Some research is undertaken in other years, but much work consists of simply copying from provided text or completing work sheets, with all pupils completing exactly the same work most of the time. The marking of pupils' work commends effort but seldom indicates how improvement could be made. There are missed opportunities for setting higher expectations for the presentation of work.
82. The history subject leader has established a very comprehensive management file to support her work. The action plan in place to support improvement is realistic and shows good insights into strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is flagged as ripe for improvement. The history policy is due for review in 2005/6 and it is likely to be during this period that opportunities for more in depth monitoring, including the observation of teaching and learning, will take place.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

83. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Only one lesson was seen in art and design. Evidence taken from displays, subject leader's documentation, planning and examples of previous work, including portfolios, indicates that standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
84. Pupils have access to an appropriate range of media and receive a worthwhile experience in art and design. There is sufficient breadth and depth of curriculum coverage. Topics chosen capture pupils' interest, for example Year 5 pupils demonstrate careful attention to detail in their good quality oriental fans. Still life artists inspire their drawings on display in the hall. The school makes good use of artefacts, such as masks and statues from different cultures to develop art skills and extend pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Year 2 pupils have made Sun God masks that are currently on display. The school has good links with institutions, such as the Hanley Museum and Staffordshire University, and makes effective use of artists in residence to enhance provision further. Pupils' ICT skills are developed well. In Year 2, pupils successfully incorporated computer generated drawings of owls into their topic work on *mini-beasts* and

complemented their work with models made out of clay. Pupils' creativity is effectively developed through opportunities such as *Arts Week* and *Spanish Day*. The subject leader takes an overview of the subject largely from looking at the quality of work on display. She has sampled colleague's planning and routinely finds out if topics have gone to plan in discussion with staff and pupils. She manages a reasonable budget with confidence. Enhancing art experiences is a current priority for development as part of the school's work on the *Excellence and Enjoyment* initiative.

Design and technology

85. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Two lessons were observed in design and technology. From the evidence seen from a scrutiny of pupils' past work, standards are average in design and technology at the end of Years 2 and 6.
86. Pupils have access to a broad range of worthwhile experiences within the subject including food technology and control technology and have opportunities to model with construction sets and to fabricate using resistant materials. Learning opportunities for pupils are enhanced by links with outside agencies such as *Setpoint* and *Young Enterprise* and by a periodic whole school focus on design and technology. For example Year 2 pupils commented on how they could improve the non-alcoholic sangria they had produced as part of a whole school technology week based on Spain. Photographic evidence indicates that this technology week was well received by pupils, staff and parents.
87. The subject leader is enthusiastic about the subject but so far has had limited opportunities for monitoring and evaluation activities. She does however talk to pupils about their work and keeps on file photographic evidence of design technology activities.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for music has been adversely affected by on-going building work.
- Pupils have good opportunities to participate in high quality performances.
- Pupils who receive instrumental tuition achieve well.
- Music makes a good contribution towards pupils' personal development.

Commentary

88. Standards are average throughout the school and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Many of the positive features found at the time of the previous inspection have been retained and the subject has moved forward at a steady pace. However, music teaching has been adversely affected while building work has been taking place. The music room has been out of action and the subject leader has coped very well with using every nook and cranny in order to deliver a balanced curriculum successfully. Inevitably, however, provision has suffered. Pupils do not have access to the school's good range of instruments and some lessons take place in rooms not wholly conducive to learning.
89. Nevertheless, the school makes good use of its expertise. The subject leader takes all junior music lessons and infant class teachers take their own lessons. In the small number of lessons observed, teaching and learning was always at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. In a good Year 4 lesson, the teacher used musical terminology well and pupils responded by confidently using terms, such as *tempo*, in their answers. The lesson was successful, mainly because everyone had access to an instrument and the teacher set exactly the right atmosphere for an enjoyable learning session. Even when the learning experience was good, the effects of

not using the music room are much in evidence. Pupils find it difficult to remain focused because of noise from other rooms and higher attaining pupils do not have access to instruments, which would provide greater challenge. All teachers pay good attention to developing listening skills and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills through collaborative work.

90. Pupils participate in high quality productions, such as *Mary Poppins* or *Oliver*. Instrumental tuition in brass, strings, woodwind and recorders is of good quality and enables a small number of older pupils to achieve well and reach above average standards. The choir remains a strong feature of provision. Members participate in school concerts and community performances, such as singing in the local shopping centre at Christmas. The school orchestra also gives pupils the opportunity to develop musical skills well, or example in assembly and increase self-esteem through group music making. The music leader creates a sense of fun at rehearsals and has very good relationships with his pupils, promoting positive attitudes towards learning.
91. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader feels valued and gives good informal support. He does not, however, have the opportunity to monitor or evaluate provision and there is no formal assessment structure to judge whether standards are high enough.

Physical education

92. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Only one games lesson was observed in physical education in Year 6 and this was of good quality. However, it is evident from planning, the subject leader's evaluation of provision, a portfolio of photographs and school records that the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils have access to a full range of physical education activities. Resources are adequate and are stored in the school hall. The school benefits from having extensive playing fields including an all-weather pitch in addition to a netball court and a school hall that is available for physical education. The school also has links with local sports clubs and runs after school clubs for a variety of sporting activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically of their work in the subject and particularly enjoy the extra-curricular activities. In particular they rate the football master-class run by the subject leader very highly. Pupils go swimming for a series of lessons and over a three-year period whilst in the junior stage. The vast majority of pupils achieve at least the desirable 25-metre length in swimming before the end of Year 6. In this aspect, standards are above average.
93. The subject leader, in his first year of teaching, has personal expertise in the subject and shows a high level of motivation and enthusiasm for taking the subject forward. The main priority is to introduce effective target setting and tracking procedures of skills and to use them consistently to plan pupils' next steps in learning and to ensure that achievement is good. This is well understood in school as the logical next step for the improvement of provision in physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well planned programme of PSHCE supports pupils' personal development very well.
- The school has just appointed a co-ordinator to take forward multicultural education and prepare to introduce a modern foreign language and this is a good step forward.

Commentary

94. The school places the personal development of its pupils at the heart of its work and makes very good provision for this area of their education. The programme is comprehensive and cross-curricular, with all teaching and non-teaching staff maintaining a consistent approach within the school's policy of promoting and rewarding positive effort and emphasising the need to consider others. A whole school behaviour audit led to the development of the current policy, which staff and pupils have found to be very successful in maintaining high standards of behaviour. Social awareness begins with the very young, who are encouraged to take turns, to share, and to develop social table manners at lunchtime. Responsibilities increase as pupils are asked to be special helpers, or school councillors, or play leaders. Consideration of the needs of those outside school is encouraged through assemblies and charitable fund-raising, and pupils gain first-hand experience of other life-styles when they visit old peoples' homes.
95. In areas of health and safety pupils learn about keeping safe, and how to assess risks. This was well demonstrated in PSHCE lessons when a Year 2 class discussed how certain choices would lead to danger, and in a Year 5 class when pupils acted out a very convincing role-play arguing against peer pressure to play on a railway line. The school has made a start on considering healthy eating, and is pro-active in its promotion of physical activity. The school has just appointed a co-ordinator to take forward multicultural education and prepare to introduce a modern foreign language and this is a good step forward. The co-ordinator plans to raise the profile of race awareness as part of her action plan and to tackle issues such as racism and prejudice to the same level as the well embedded work on anti-bullying.
96. The *Primary Enterprise* initiative provides a useful introduction to the world of commerce, and other aspects of citizenship are woven into the syllabus in religious education, English and the humanities. Through a good programme of visits and visitors, pupils increase their understanding of how society functions, and how they might best fit in.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3);

satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).