

INSPECTION REPORT

Flax Hill Junior School
Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124135

Headteacher: Mrs. Joan Brown

Reporting inspector: Miss Joyce Taylor

Dates of inspection: 22-25 November 1999

Under OfSTED contract number: 185801

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Trevor Soult
Date of previous inspection:	27 November – 1 December 1995

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Mr. David Dodds	Science Information technology Design technology Religious education	The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Learning resources
Mrs. Sylvia Oultram	Geography Art Music Special educational needs	The accommodation
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership and direction for the school. She is supported well by the deputy head and the subject co-ordinators. The governors show a strong commitment to the school.
- Financial planning is very good and the administration of the budget is good. The school development plan is very good.
- There is good teaching in all year groups and almost all subjects. Some of the teaching, particularly in Year 3 and Year 6, is very good indeed.
- The training received by the teachers is managed very well and has supported the curriculum effectively.
- The children reach good standards and make good progress in English, mathematics, information technology, history, geography, art, music and physical education.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and the children make good progress.
- The school manages the curriculum very effectively and builds successfully on the children's learning as they move through the school.
- The school provides well for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pupils show good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good.
- Relationships within the school community are very good; the staff are co-operative and caring and the children are confident and very polite.
- The children's personal development is a high priority in the school; this is managed well and is very helpful to the children.
- Attendance is good.
- The school is well liked by the parents and the children enjoy coming to school.

• Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The standards in design technology achieved by the children are below average.

The school has significant strengths in many areas. In particular, the leadership and management of the school are very good, the teaching is good, the children reach good standards and make good progress in most subjects and the children's personal development is very good. These strengths outweigh the weakness in design technology but this will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or carers of the children at the school.

• How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very significant improvements since the last inspection, including in several areas that were previously satisfactory and are now judged to be good. The last inspection reported a need to

ensure a broad and balanced curriculum and this has now been effectively achieved. Practice in the assessment and reporting of achievement needed to conform with school policy and this is now the case. A regular system for the monitoring and evaluation of standards and teaching needed establishing and this has now been achieved to a very effective level. The format and structure of the school development plan needed revision. This has been done and the plan is well written and very clear and guides developments well. A system for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of spending decisions was needed and this has been implemented well.

In addition to these improvements, the standards of the children's learning have risen significantly in English. Standards have also risen in mathematics, science, information technology, history, geography, art and physical education. The quality of teaching has improved overall and particularly in information technology where it was previously unsatisfactory. The pupils' spiritual development has improved and the arrangements for the professional development of the staff are much improved.

The school has expressed a clear commitment to raising standards and has already demonstrated success by improving performances in the national test results since 1996 and in the other subjects of the curriculum. This, together with the very good leadership and management, the sense of commitment demonstrated by the staff and governors and the good quality of support provided for the children, leads to the judgement that the school's capacity for continued improvement is excellent.

• **Standards in subjects**

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the national curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
			<i>Average</i>	<i>C</i>
			<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>
English	B	B		
Mathematics	B	B		
Science	C	C		

The table shows that the children leaving the school in 1999 reached levels of attainment that were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared with the results for similar schools the same picture emerges. The test results show a decline from the very high standards of the previous year in English and show an improvement in mathematics. The standards for science remain the same. In the autumn of 1998 the school increased the number of children in Year 6 by 18 so almost a quarter of the year group were new. This is likely to have contributed to the fall in overall attainment in English when the children took their tests in the summer of 1999. When compared with other schools the proportion of children reaching an average standard (Level 4) is higher than expected in all three subjects but in reading, mathematics and science there is a lower than average proportion of children exceeding that level by reaching Level 5. The difference was slight in mathematics but it was more significant for boys in reading and for all children in science. The school has identified pupils' performance at level 5 as a target for improvement and has already begun to purchase a wider range of books to ensure that the boys have interesting texts to read.

Inspectors judge the present pupils' attainment in Year 6 to be above average in writing, average in reading and above average in both mathematics and science. The children's attainment is above average in information technology, history, geography, music, art and physical education. It is average in religious education and below average in design technology. These judgements are based on a wider range of evidence than test results. The long-term picture is that standards are improving overall although they have become static for the more able children in science and reading and they fell in English from the very high standard achieved in 1998.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English			Good
Mathematics			Good
Science			Good
Information technology			Good
Religious education			Good
Other subjects			Good

The teaching in almost 66.5% of the lessons is good, very good or excellent. Just over 50% of the lessons show good quality and in about 15% the teaching is very good or excellent. 28.5% is satisfactory and 4.5% (only 3 lessons) is unsatisfactory. Overall, the children are supported very well by the teachers who understand the subjects and prepare the lessons well, are very good at managing the children during lessons and have introduced the new national initiatives linked to literacy and numeracy very effectively. The teaching of the children with special educational needs is good. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good in all lessons and around the school. The children show good self-discipline.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.
Ethos*	Good; very good relationships and the children show good attitudes to their work and each other. There is a clear and productive commitment to high standards of achievement.
Leadership and management	Very good; the headteacher gives strong and effective direction to the school. The school's aims are implemented well, especially in raising standards and in the quality of the children's personal development. The checks on the school's performance are very effective. The deputy head and curriculum leaders are very effective and the governors show a strong commitment to

	the school.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced. The planning is good. Beyond lessons, strong activities in sport and music promote some good achievement.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision results in good progress. There are good short-term strategies to boost attainment. All staff work together well to ensure very good provision.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good, especially spiritual, moral and social development. The children identify aspects of life they find moving and reflect on their own values and beliefs and those of others. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong, form very good relationships and are developing an appreciation of their home town and the wider environment
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The level of staffing is satisfactory. The accommodation is adequate to teach the curriculum and space is used well. The staff make the school look attractive with displays of children's work. Resources are good.
Value for money	Very good.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

• The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>II. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school.</p> <p>III. The school is approachable. Parents feel that any complaints or problems they have are handled well.</p> <p>IV. Parents have a clear understanding of what is taught.</p> <p>V. The school keeps parents well informed about the children's progress.</p> <p>VI. The school achieves good standards of work.</p> <p>VII. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on the children.</p> <p>VIII. There are high standards of behaviour.</p> <p>IX. The children like school.</p>	<p>X. Some parents want more detailed information about what their children have achieved.</p> <p>XI. Some parents are dissatisfied with the school's progress.</p> <p>XII. A few parents feel the school does not encourage them to become involved in more than just the school's activities.</p>

41 % of parents returned the questionnaire and 22 parents attended the meeting before the inspection. Inspection judgements support the parents' positive views and support the view that more detail should be included in the children's reports. The level of homework and the range and quality of after-school clubs

are judged to be satisfactory.

· **KEY ISSUE FOR ACTION**

In order to maintain and improve the good standards already achieved by the school the headteacher, staff and governors should raise the level of attainment in design technology by:

XIII. providing appropriate training to improve the subject knowledge of the staff to ensure that aspects of the design and make process are not over prescribed by the teachers;

XIV. improving the range of resources available and making the resources accessible to the children so they may select what is needed for their own designs.

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These development aspects have already been identified by the school and are present in the development plan for 2000:

XV. improving the reports to parents to provide them with more specific information (paragraph 57);

XVI. using the targets identified in assessments to plan specific teaching so that the rate of pupils' progress is increased (paragraph 38);

XVII. continuing to raise the attainment of the more able children in all subjects but particularly in mathematics, science and reading (paragraph 1, 81, 90, 98);

XVIII. ensuring that all teachers have a clear understanding of the subject content when the lesson planning is provided by their colleagues (paragraph 24).

· KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

· Characteristics of the school

Flax Hill Junior School is an average size school of 291 pupils aged between seven and eleven. The school serves a community of two housing estates on the northern edge of Tamworth. The area is one of average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils who take free school meals, 23%, is broadly average. This is generally the same as when the school was previously inspected.

The 13 children from minority ethnic groups speak English well. Most schools have more children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

About 14% of pupils are identified as having special educational needs which is about average and 3.2% have statements of special educational needs which is above the national picture for junior schools. On entry to the school, according to the national tests for seven year olds, an average proportion of the children attain securely at a level typical for their age and slightly more than average attained the nationally expected level in science in 1999.

In the autumn of 1998 a nearby junior school was closed and around 60 children transferred to Flax Hill, mostly into Years 3 and 6. These pupils have been integrated into the school very well.

The school's published aims are:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| XIX. | to strive for the highest |
| possible standards in both teaching and learning; | |
| XX. | to fulfil the requirements of the |
| national curriculum and the religious education syllabus; | |
| XXI. | to use assessments to aid |
| progression; | |
| XXII. | to foster the children's spiritual |
| development; | |
| XXIII. | to ensure that the children have |
| equal access to the curriculum; | |
| XXIV. | to provide a positive learning |
| environment; | |
| XXV. | to foster the children's sense of |
| responsibility and their appropriate adherence to a code of conduct. | |

Priorities in the school's plan for development are to continue the improvement of the quality of teaching, of assessment strategies and the improvement of the provision for information technology and to prepare for the new national curriculum in 2000.

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Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 2 ¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	46	34	80

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	34	35	37
	Girls	29	22	29
	Total	63	57	66
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	79 (75)	71 (60)	83 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (60)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	36	37	42
	Girls	27	24	30
	Total	63	61	72
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	79 (65)	76 (62)	90 (78)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

- **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

- **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	15
Satisfactory or better	95.4
Less than satisfactory	4.6

• **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

• **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

• **Attainment and progress**

- 1 In the 1999 national curriculum tests, the pupils reached above national average attainments in English and average attainments in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, the results were similarly above the average in English and average in mathematics and science. When the results for Level 4 (the expected level) and Level 5 (the higher level) are analysed separately, in all three subjects more children than the national average reached Level 4. The proportion of children reaching Level 5 was well above the national average in writing, slightly above average for the girls in reading and well below for the boys. The proportion of children who reached Level 5 in mathematics was just below average overall but well below average for the girls. In science the proportion of pupils who reached Level 5 was well below the national average for both boys and girls.
- 2 Since the 1998 national tests the school received additional pupils from a nearby closing school. This increased the numbers in the Year 6 classes by about 18 children. The newly amalgamated classes were unable to sustain the 1998 results in English, which had been very high when compared with the national average, but still maintained the above average level that has been a feature of the school since at least 1996. In mathematics the results dipped from above average in 1996 and 1997 to average in 1998. There has been a slight improvement in 1999, although the results are still average overall. In science the results have been steadily maintained at the national average for the past four years. The proportion of children reaching the higher level is not enough, apart from writing where there is a higher than average number. Inspection judgements of present attainment are based on a broader spread of evidence than test results and relate to a different group of children. These judgements show standards for the current Year 6 children to be above average in English, mathematics and science but the overall proportion of children reaching Level 5 in all three subjects continues to be not high enough.
- 3 In English, in Year 6, the children show skills in speaking and listening which are above the level expected for their ages. They listen very carefully and with understanding and their speaking is confident and clear. Their comments frequently show a deep understanding, for example, in personal and social development in Year 5 they considered the feelings of others sensitively. A wide and interesting vocabulary is used. These skills support the pupils' work across the curriculum very well. Standards of fluency and accuracy in reading are very slightly above average overall and support work in other subjects, for example, in science in Year 3 when the children read their instructions and complete tasks unaided while the teacher works with a selected group. In writing most of the children show a good level of accuracy in the grammatical construction of their sentences and have good skills in using punctuation and in choosing an interesting and varied vocabulary. The proportion of pupils producing writing of the quality expected at their age is higher than in the average school and an appropriate proportion of the children exceed this standard.
- 4 In mathematics the vast majority of the children develop a good grasp for their age of the basic number skills and the other aspects of mathematics. They use these to support learning successfully in other subjects. In geography, for example, the pupils are able to use graphs to talk about the climate and in science they design charts and grids to present their findings.
- 5 In English, mathematics and science most of the pupils start at the school with attainment that is

broadly average in relation to the national standards. The children come from two infant schools. An appropriate number reached Level 2 and an average proportion overall exceeded that level. In writing the children make good progress and an above average number of them leave the school having exceeded the typical level. In reading the vast majority of the children complete their time in the school with average attainment and their progress is steady. The national literacy strategy was implemented in the autumn term 1998 and this has strongly supported the children's attainment. In mathematics the children enter the school with attainment that is average overall and with a significant minority of the children exceeding the average level. The evidence from the lessons observed and from the examination of past work, supports the judgement that progress is good and a higher proportion of the children achieve the typical level expected of them. In science progress is good for the vast majority of the children and the proportion who reach an average level has increased. Progress in all three subjects is particularly good for the children who entered the school with slightly below average attainment as a higher proportion leave the school with average attainment. Progress is slower for the children who have the potential for higher attainment and who entered the school with average test results. The rate of their progress is slightly uneven but there is an increased rate in Year 3 and Year 6.

- 6 The progress made by the children in information technology is good and their attainments at the end of the key stage are above the national standard. The children use computers with confidence and they are increasing their knowledge, skills and understanding, although their experience in control is underdeveloped. The children's progress in design technology is unsatisfactory and they have insufficient opportunity to develop their learning to a level that is expected for their age.
- 7 In geography, history, art, physical education and music the pupils make good progress throughout the school and show a good range of skills and understanding. The children's work exceeds the level expected for their age. In religious education the children make satisfactory progress and their work matches the levels for each age expected in the agreed syllabus.
- 8 In 16% of the lessons observed the children's progress was very good or excellent. This often occurred when the subject co-ordinator was taking the lesson but other teachers also demonstrated strengths when teaching certain subjects.
- 9 The children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their past attainment. The range of good provision ensures that the children's work is carefully monitored and evaluated as a means of providing well-matched tasks and speeding progress. Those children who show slightly below average attainment are supported very effectively particularly in literacy and their progress is, in some cases, very good. There has been a significant difference in the attainment and progress of the potentially higher-attaining boys and girls. This is less apparent currently, although there are still some differences.
- 10 Comparing the present inspection judgements with those made at the previous inspection, it is apparent that standards have improved significantly across the curriculum. In particular, standards are now 30% higher in English and 9% higher in mathematics and science.

10 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 11 The school has successfully maintained its high standards in these areas since the time of the last inspection. These are strengths of the school.
- 12 The pupils have good attitudes to learning throughout the school. They are confident and motivated learners who settle quickly in class, listen attentively and are very eager to contribute

in lessons. They discuss issues in a mature and reasoned way and tackle their work with enthusiasm. Most have very good concentration and often become totally engrossed in what they are doing. In a class assembly, for example, all the pupils remained utterly focused on the day's theme for the whole of the session. They take a pride in what they are doing and persevere with it until it is completed to their satisfaction. When they are given the opportunity, the pupils are happy to use their initiative and show some independence in their learning.

13 The pupils' behaviour is very good, both in class and around the school. In lessons they know the standards of behaviour expected of them and have the self-discipline to live up to these standards without being reminded. As a result, the teachers have no need to waste time establishing order and can get on with their teaching. The pupils move around the school and the site in a sensible and orderly way and show courtesy and consideration for adults and for one another. When children hold the doors open for their class, for example, others will thank them as they pass through. The pupils demonstrate good manners and social skills at lunchtimes, queuing patiently for their food and chatting amiably to one another as they eat. Outside in the playground, the pupils play safely and have an awareness of others. They show respect for their surroundings and handle resources with care. There have been no exclusions since the current headteacher has been at the school.

14 Relationships in the school are also very good. The pupils get on very well with one another and with adults. Boys and girls work and play well together and pupils show interest in others' ideas and appreciation for what they have achieved. In several physical education lessons, for example, pupils spontaneously applauded demonstrations of work by others. Staff and pupils treat one another with mutual respect. The pupils are polite and helpful towards adults and are happy to seek guidance when they need it and to talk openly and maturely about their work. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are well integrated into the school. It is a friendly and harmonious community.

15 The pupils respond well to the good opportunities they are given to take responsibility for duties in class and around the school. They take lunch boxes to the hall, for example, or operate the overhead projector during assembly or represent their class on the school council. They take these responsibilities very seriously and carry them out willingly. Pupils on the school council expressed the views of their peers very earnestly and many were full of bright ideas on how to improve the daily running of the school.

10 **Attendance**

16 The level of the pupils' attendance at the school is good. It is above the national average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Most absence is caused by illness and there is virtually no absence for unacceptable reasons.

17 The pupils' punctuality is also good. They enjoy coming to school and most arrive promptly each day so that the morning session can begin on time. These good standards of attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on the children's attainment and progress.

10 **Teaching**

- 18 The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection almost all of the lessons were of at least satisfactory quality: less than 5% (only 3 lessons) proved to be unsatisfactory. Just over half of the lessons show good quality and about 15% show very good or excellent quality. Examples of good practice were seen in all year groups, although there was rather more in Years 3 and 6 than in the other years.
- 19 The most consistently positive feature of teaching in the school is the effective management of the pupils. Almost all lessons show the teachers managing the pupils' behaviour calmly and effectively to promote very good attitudes and conduct. As a result, the lessons progress in an extremely co-operative and purposeful atmosphere, providing a very good environment in which learning may proceed. This good start is developed in an effective and satisfactory manner in almost all lessons, particularly in the support of those children with special educational needs. While all the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and show good quality in some of their lessons, there is a range of particular strengths in the teaching which influences how much the children learn. The better teachers, who show very good or excellent quality, stimulate the children with exciting and challenging, open-ended tasks. They ask wide-ranging and probing questions to gain an understanding of how much all of the children have understood and to help the children judge how successful their work is.
- 20 In the important areas of literacy and numeracy the teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent teaching. This is seen in mathematics when, in all classes, time is given to challenging and enjoyable discussions of mental calculation strategies. In English the teachers use a range of good quality fiction and non-fiction very creatively to teach specific skills and develop understanding effectively. However, some targets for further development are not always identified as a means of speeding progress, particularly in relation to the potentially higher-attaining children. The pupils' progress in individual lessons is often good and in the long-term there is evidence of standards rising steadily for the vast majority of the children. Each year builds on the pupils' previous learning through careful use of the medium- and long-term planning strategies and national optional tests and this is strengthening the quality of the teaching.
- 21 The quality of the teachers' planning is good and reflects very clear and thorough knowledge of the subjects. The teachers identify exactly what the children are to learn and make this clear at the beginning of lessons. Not all of the teachers check to see which children have achieved the learning targets and some closing sessions of lessons are less effective when the children show what they have done rather than what they have learned. The teachers plan together in year teams. They are supported by the curriculum co-ordinators who prepare the medium-term plans for their own subjects for all year groups and who attend the planning meetings to discuss the individual lessons. This strategy works well in almost all cases. However, during the inspection there were occasions when the class teacher was unsure how to proceed effectively because the lessons had been planned by the co-ordinator and not fully understood by the teacher.
- 22 The best lessons seen during the inspection combined very good questioning of both individuals and the whole class, clearly identified and specific learning objectives, high expectations, good subject knowledge and very good quality management of the children. These lessons promoted very good progress by the pupils. For example, a stimulating English lesson in Year 3, which was taken by the subject co-ordinator, rapidly extended the children's use of punctuation and

vocabulary through the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and ability to match the tasks accurately with the children's needs.

- 23 The good teaching is supported by clear and thorough planning. This enables the teachers to build effectively on previous learning within and across year groups. The teachers have a good understanding of the subject and set a rapid pace for the lesson asking rigorous questions and choosing work that challenges the children but is achievable. An information technology lesson in Year 6 set high expectations of the children's thinking by introducing the scanning of pictures into a brochure the children were writing. A mathematics lesson in Year 4 extended the children's understanding by applying previous learning of calculations to doubling higher numbers. An art lesson in Year 5 set high expectations of the children's thinking and creative skills by using familiar still-life objects arranged in an unusual way for the children to draw in pastels and chalk and good questioning was used to ensure the task was successful. The pupils' good responses in these lessons reflect their concentration and perseverance with challenging tasks.
- 24 The few unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection showed a common characteristic weakness. In these cases, the teachers were working from planning designed by the subject co-ordinator and which was not thoroughly understood. In addition, a small proportion of lessons suffer from the weakness that teachers do not keep a close enough check on the progress individual pupils are making. The range of tasks provided sometimes provides insufficient challenge for the more capable children, for example, in science and in reading. Sometimes the marking gives no advice to the children on how to improve their work.
- 25 The teachers plan very well and give good support to the children with special educational needs. In literacy lessons, the teaching is very good where intensive small-group teaching by a support teacher or assistant promotes good progress.
- 26 The setting of homework is generally a sound feature of the teaching and the pupils are given encouragement and support in extending their ability to read at home. Other tasks include spellings and the completion of work. Most parents are content with homework arrangements.
- 27 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In-service training to develop the teachers' skills and understanding has led to an increased rate in the children's progress since the time of the previous inspection. The monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and the rigorous support for improvement by the headteacher, deputy head and subject co-ordinators have positively supported the teachers in implementing initiatives and raising attainment.

10 The curriculum and assessment

10

10 The curriculum

- 28 The curriculum is balanced and broadly based. It is well documented and provides a good range of interesting and worthwhile experiences. The planned curriculum provides good coverage of the national curriculum programmes of study in all subjects except for some aspects of design and technology. The school has successfully introduced the national literacy and numeracy strategies and these are having a positive effect on the planning in both areas. Provision for the pupils' social and personal development is very good. All pupils have access to the full range of subjects.
- 29 Curriculum planning is very good. There are detailed policies and schemes of work for all subjects of the national curriculum and religious education. Curriculum documents are thorough and detailed. They include helpful advice for the teachers and provide a long-term framework for each subject. Detailed medium-term plans are translated into effective short-term plans. The

curriculum planning ensures a broad and balanced coverage over a two-year period. All subjects are taught each term, except for geography and history which are taught in alternate terms to allow time for units of work to be taught in sufficient depth. Where it is relevant, subjects are well integrated which puts the pupils' learning into context and adds interest. There are particularly good links between aspects of history, geography, art and design and technology. Literacy and numeracy are frequently integrated into other curriculum areas. For example, Year 6 pupils use analysis of historical novels to investigate aspects of Victorian life. Year 4 pupils use graphs to record and interpret weather conditions in other parts of the world. Time allocations for the subjects are appropriate but the overall teaching time is 20 minutes a week short of the recommendation for Key Stage 2 pupils.

- 30 Literacy and numeracy are planned well and delivered effectively according to the national recommendations. The children work in groups set by attainment for both subjects. However, the potentially higher-achieving pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the curriculum. This has been recognised by the school and steps are being taken to improve standards for the more able children.
- 31 Each subject co-ordinator produces detailed termly plans which refer to the schemes of work for their area of the curriculum. This effective medium-term planning shows the main learning objectives, coverage and activities to be undertaken. Short-term planning takes place in consultation with co-ordinators and year group teams. This is an effective strategy as most planning groups include newly qualified or inexperienced staff who benefit from the support of their colleagues. It also provides an effective way for co-ordinators to influence and monitor the teaching of their subjects. Short-term plans are good. They include clear details of learning objectives, activities, teaching methods and organisation. The curriculum planning is implemented well and contributes to the attainment and quality of teaching in all subjects except for parts of the design and technology curriculum.
- 32 There is an effective equal opportunities policy and the staff are good role models for pupils. The school generally ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school provides good support to pupils who have English as an additional language. All extra curricular activities are open to both boys and girls. The school has identified a discrepancy between the attainment of more able boys and girls in English, mathematics and science and is taking action to deal with this.
- 33 Curriculum provision is adapted very effectively to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. The procedures for identifying the pupils are good and the children's attainment and progress are carefully monitored. Some pupils have been removed from the register because they have successfully overcome their learning difficulty. The children are integrated well into the learning programmes of the school with the help of precise and specific individual education plans. Great care is taken to ensure pupils with special educational needs receive access to the full curriculum. Effective use is made of support staff and specialists such as occupational therapists and the tutor from the Dyslexic Institute.
- 34 The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Activities include a good range of sports and competitive team games, drama, music tuition and residential outdoor pursuit activities. This provision enhances the curriculum.
- 35 The pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to learn about matters related to health, drugs and sex education. There is no formal homework policy but children regularly take home their reading books and weekly spellings as well as any work set by the teachers related to activities carried out in class.
- 36 The quality of the curriculum, including the provision for pupils with special educational needs, has improved since the previous inspection. The allocation of teaching time has been reviewed in

order to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. Curriculum provision is good and this contributes to the good rate of progress and the good quality of teaching.

10 **Assessment**

37 Arrangements for the assessment of the pupils' knowledge and skills are generally good. There is a policy document that identifies the range and purposes of assessment strategies used by the school. Indications of overall expectations for each cohort are analysed thoroughly and comprehensively, based on the Key Stage 1 and 2 national test results for English, mathematics and science and the results of optional tests taken by the children in Years 3, 4 and 5. This analysis has been undertaken rigorously and is clearly presented. It is used to provide targets for national test results for future Year 6 pupils. Information gained from these assessments is analysed to identify the national curriculum levels attained by individual children. The information is used to guide curriculum planning to target specific weaknesses and improve on the overall picture presented in the target setting data. For example the lower than average attainment in reading of the more able boys has prompted the purchase of a wider range of reading materials to interest them. Similarly the more able girls have been partnered with the boys in mathematics as a means of raising their attainment. The data is also used to compare year cohorts and analyse the differences in their overall attainment.

38 The teachers collect data three times each year on the national curriculum levels children have reached. They identify the children's personal strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement which are discussed with the parents during consultation evenings. These targets are not referred to sufficiently to make them effective and the staff have yet to develop intervention strategies based on the identified targets so that the rate of progress of individual children is increased.

1 General targets for literacy are clearly identified in all classes. Specific targets for lessons in all subjects are identified and are shared with the pupils at the start of each lesson. Marking is used to check understanding and completion of work. All work is marked. In many classes teachers write diagnostic comments designed to clarify what the children need to improve in order to move on. In some classes the teachers are less clear on this strategy.

2 The pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly and their targets are linked with their individual education plans. These documents are used to inform planning and are scrutinised carefully to identify progress and future targets.

40 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

41 Overall, the standards of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the school are good. The moral aspects are very good. The spiritual and social dimensions are good. The cultural aspect is good for the pupils' experience of their own culture but needs further development of their experience of other cultures. The previous inspection found that there were insufficient opportunities to promote spiritual development and that additional resources to enhance learning about other religions were required. Both areas have received effective attention. The spiritual dimension is now good and the school has a very good provision of artefacts and materials to support learning about the major world religions.

42 Good provision is made for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the school's strong links with the local community, links with the local church, environmental studies, aspects of the curriculum, out-of-school activities and through the daily

act of collective worship. Worship meets statutory requirements. Throughout the school, the staff work hard to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through sound relationships, specific class work and individual support. Their work is guided and supported by effective policies and schemes, which are consistently implemented.

- 43 The pupils' spiritual development is very effectively promoted through the daily act of collective worship. The majority of assemblies are Christian in character and emphasise values such as caring, sharing and respect. Visitors contribute to assemblies to share experiences of their faith. The children are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own values and beliefs and to apply them to their daily lives. These opportunities are also given in class assemblies and religious education lessons. The adoption of a local chapel as part of an area scheme has provided the pupils with rich opportunities to develop their awareness of spiritual matters from historical and artistic perspectives. The teachers' understanding in developing the spiritual dimension has been raised through effective documentation, such as the vision statement on awe and wonder, and through staff training. The staff use the curriculum well to develop the spiritual dimension and examples were seen in literacy lessons, in poetry readings and in art periods.
- 44 The fostering of a moral code is well developed throughout the school by an effective behaviour policy that is promoted and reinforced consistently by all staff, including during lunch-time supervision. At the outset of each year every class reviews its behaviour code. The religious education and the personal and social education programmes are well structured to teach the children about moral issues, fairness and justice. Within the context of religious education lessons the children are given many opportunities to reflect upon good behaviour and to apply Christian principles to their daily lives.
- 45 The pupils' behaviour and their relationships with each other and adults are an undoubted strength of the school. Through their behaviour in class and about the school, as well as in discussion of moral issues, the children show that they understand the differences between right and wrong. They treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. They co-operate well together and they show respect for the school grounds and building. The staff foster this caring ethos through carefully created displays in classrooms and in the public areas around school. The school is a community where all children are valued and the staff work hard to build positive self-images and to give pupils high self-esteem. The very high standards of behaviour are supported by effective school documents that strongly reinforce the development of good behaviour and anti-bullying strategies. The parents have acknowledged this strength of the school in their response to the inspection questionnaire.
- 46 The pupils' social development is well promoted and developed through a broad range of school activities. The children are given many opportunities to take responsibilities, such as helping in assembly and doing jobs around the school, organising playground activities and through membership of the school council. The pupils have the opportunity to participate in residential visits. There is a wide range of after-school clubs that are popular and well supported and the school runs various seasonal sports teams. The broad range of groupings employed by teachers in the classroom is used successfully to promote social and co-operative skills. The school has developed strong links with the local community, with the local environmental group and with local senior citizen organisations. It makes effective use of visitors to enhance the curriculum, such as a theatre group to give a performance about electricity and people to reminisce about the past in history. The children also participate in educational activities with other local schools, such as a design and technology challenge. Each year the children are actively involved in supporting charitable organisations through activities and functions to raise money.
- 47 The school has made good provision for pupils to develop their cultural experience. The curriculum is used effectively to introduce pupils to music and art from other times and other societies. Visitors come to school to perform. A local secondary school's orchestra and

musicians play in assembly. Theatre groups perform at school to support various curriculum areas. The pupils perform for the local community at festive and social occasions, such as carol singing in the locality at Christmas. The local area and beyond are used for educational visits for art, science, history and geography. A local monument has been adopted and is used to support learning in many subjects.

- 48 The school is developing the provision to teach the children about other cultural traditions. Already the celebration of some of the festivals from other world religions and cultures is included in the assemblies. An Afro-Caribbean group of dancers was invited to perform as part of a study of the West Indies and the pupils were introduced to Caribbean food through a food-technology activity. The school's resources for multicultural studies and other world religions are currently being extended with some excellent artefacts and good books but the children's awareness of the range of cultures represented in our society is under-developed.

40

40 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 49 The school has maintained its good provision in these aspects of its work since the last inspection. It is a caring community where the pupils' well-being is of paramount importance. A range of good policies relating to all areas of the children's welfare underpins the good practice in the school. The quality of support for the pupils makes a good contribution to their standards of attainment.

- 50 Personal support for the pupils is good. The teachers and other staff know the children well and make every effort to ensure that they are happy at school. Relationships between the staff and the pupils are very positive and all staff treat the pupils consistently well. Lunchtimes are organised well and run smoothly. The well-planned programme of personal, social and moral education gives good opportunities for the children to explore pastoral issues and to consider wider concerns relating to their lives. This includes health and sex education, which were not covered at the time of the last inspection.

- 51 Educational guidance for the pupils is also good. The teachers are attentive to the pupils' needs in class and aware of how they are doing with their work. They have high expectations of the pupils and constantly try to move them forward to attain higher standards. The school has identified the need to challenge the more able pupils appropriately and is setting up strategies to do this. At present the work set for them is not always sufficiently demanding. There are good, thorough procedures for identifying the children with special educational needs and they are well supported in class and in their withdrawal groups.

- 52 The school has good systems for recording attendance and monitoring absence. Registers are well kept and up to date and absences are chased up regularly. The school now complies fully with the requirement for reporting absence rates in the governors' annual report to parents.

- 53 Discipline is well maintained in the school. Provision for moral education is very good and all staff have consistently high expectations for standards of behaviour. Rewards are effective in motivating the pupils and sanctions are suitable and fairly applied. Any instances of bullying are taken seriously and handled very firmly.

- 54 There are good procedures for child protection which are made clear to the staff in their handbook. Local authority guidelines are also readily accessible and training for all of the teachers has been planned for next term. The children are taught appropriately about keeping safe in their personal, social and moral education lessons.

- 55 Health and safety issues are well managed in the school. The school's health and safety policies comprehensively cover all aspects of school life and are well implemented in practice. The

teachers and the pupils show a good awareness of safety in lessons and around the site. The school is cleaned and maintained well. Arrangements for administering first aid are very good. There is a purpose built medical room which is well stocked. The first aiders are trained well and the children are tended with kindness and attention. Incidents are recorded in detail and the parents are fully informed when appropriate. Those pupils with particular medical conditions are well looked after.

40 **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 56 The school has successfully sustained and built upon its good relationship with its parent community since the last inspection. The parents are still kept well informed about the school's daily life and events through the prospectus, the governors' annual report and regular newsletters. The school is especially good at advising the parents about any changes in organisation, such as their child changing sets in mathematics, and at consulting them about matters which directly affect them, such as the prospective homework policy. Curriculum information is now good. The school has introduced topic letters which are sent out each term and holds curriculum meetings, for example on national testing and on special needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 57 Reports to the parents on their children's progress are satisfactory overall. There has been some improvement since the last inspection. Most focus appropriately on pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in the core subjects, but do not give parents an indication of how well their children are doing compared with national standards. The concerns of some parents in this respect are justified. The quality of comments in the foundation subjects is not always consistent. While some paint a clear picture of the skills the children have acquired in each subject, others limit themselves narrowly to recording the work covered and the pupils' attitudes and effort. The school is currently reviewing its reporting process and has made a good start with the target setting introduced in parents' evenings.
- 58 The parents' involvement with the school is good. They find the school approachable and uphold the values it promotes. They are satisfied with the standards it achieves, both in attainment and behaviour. Most of the parents support their children's learning by ensuring that any homework is completed and by attending parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress. Some parents are able to help in class or at school events and the school appreciates their efforts. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in their children's annual reviews, where appropriate, and with their individual education plans. The teachers quickly alert parents to their children's difficulties and encourage them to work with their children towards their targets.
- 59 The school has a good range of links with the local community, which helps to enhance the curriculum and enrich the children's personal development. Physical education, for example, is enlivened by coaching from members of the community and from national football clubs and by participation in local sporting events. Work in the humanities is imaginatively extended through input from visitors to the school, such as members of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service talking about Britain since the 1930s or an environmental group developing the grounds with the children. There is a good, mutually supportive relationship with the local secondary school, which helps the pupils to settle easily when they transfer. The children regularly attend events and performances at the secondary school and the secondary school's students undertake work experience placements at the junior school. The good links with the community make a positive contribution to the pupils' attainment and personal development.

MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**40 Leadership and management**

- 60 The quality of leadership and management in the school is one of its strengths. This has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. As a result, the school's capacity for further improvement is excellent. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership for the school and has achieved much since she took up this post. She has a clear strategic vision for the development of the school and a carefully planned and structured approach to school improvement and raising standards. The headteacher is ably supported in her role by the deputy headteacher and the curriculum co-ordinators. The members of the governing body are hard-working and committed to the good of the school. They have efficiently managed recent major changes to their organisation and are now very well placed to move forward in their new committee structure.
- 61 The school has very good systems for monitoring and supporting teaching and the curriculum. The need for such systems was a key issue at the time of the last inspection and it has been very successfully dealt with. The headteacher has established step-by-step procedures for classroom observations, designed to boost the confidence of staff and to help them in their professional development, as well as improving the quality of their teaching. This has worked very well. The quality of teaching in the school is good and the staff are motivated and keen to develop. Curriculum co-ordinators are now also involved in this process. They manage their subjects enthusiastically and very effectively and are eager to improve them further when the school development plan gives them the opportunity to do so.
- 62 The school's aims, values and policies are all very well embodied in its daily life and work. The aims and values focus on a commitment to excellence and high expectations of attainment and behaviour. They are fully supported by parents. The school's curriculum and pastoral policies are all consistently applied to give a unity and coherence to the school's practice.
- 63 The school development plan is very good. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has refined and streamlined the planning process, focusing on a manageable number of realistic and appropriate targets and linking development to the possibilities afforded by the school budget. Clearly defined success and evaluation criteria are prominent for each target. The plan is an accessible, working document that has an impact on the quality and standards in the school. Last year's focus on information technology, for example, has contributed to good standards of attainment in this subject.
- 64 There is a very positive ethos in the school, characterised by the staff's commitment to high standards and the pupils' commitment to hard work. Relationships in the school are very good. The staff and pupils demonstrate mutual respect for one another and the staff have a strong sense of team spirit. They work very hard and all pull in the same direction for the good of the pupils. Communications are good. The head keeps staff and parents well informed and involved through regular meetings and notices.
- 65 The school is very concerned to offer equal opportunities to all and largely achieves this for both the children and adults. Appropriate legislation is complied with and the school's management promotes achievement for all. However some minor anomalies remain. For example, a few pupils are withdrawn from lessons for instrumental tuition and these children miss the same subject each week. Additionally the more capable pupils sometimes lack the challenge they need to make sufficient progress.
- 66 There is strong leadership for special educational needs and an effective policy that positively

supports the very good provision. The headteacher is also the special needs co-ordinator and she supports the class teachers effectively in implementing the policy. The school is very successful in promoting the learning of the children with special educational needs.

67 The governing body meets all its statutory requirements apart from some minor omissions from the prospectus and from its annual report to parents.

40 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

68 The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers are satisfactory to meet the demands of the national curriculum. The number of support staff employed at the school is higher than average. They are well qualified and effectively briefed and deployed well to offer good support to pupils and teachers. The administrators, cleaners and other non-teaching staff make an important contribution to the work of the school. The school receives good special needs support from other agencies.

69 The arrangements for the professional development of the staff are very good. This provision has improved since the previous inspection. The appraisal process meets statutory requirements. The teachers attend regular interviews with the headteacher which produce individual professional development plans linked to the school development plan. These are effective in supporting staff development. Arrangements for the induction of newly-qualified teachers are very good. The new teachers are well mentored, supported and guided by trained colleagues. The headteacher helps to improve standards of teaching by strategically placing teachers throughout the school to support each other. Opportunities are provided for the staff to receive training and support both internally and by attending external courses. The professional development of all staff is seen as important and attendance on courses is good. The teachers have received training on raising the quality of teaching, which has been effective. Training on implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies has improved the teachers' understanding and increased their confidence in these areas. This is having a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Due to school and national priorities, design and technology has received less attention and teachers have not had the opportunity to extend their expertise in this subject.

40 **Accommodation.**

- 1 The accommodation is satisfactory for the curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation for teaching physical education is good.
- 2 Inside and outside, the school is well maintained, very clean and in good decorative order. Attractive displays help to make the inside of the building a stimulating environment for the pupils. All classrooms are sufficient in size and the school makes good use of additional space for small-group work. Every available space is used. The accommodation for small groups of pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from classes for short periods is satisfactory. The school does not yet have a functional library. Non-fiction books are kept in the resources room which is used as a classroom each morning. However, the school plans to change this room into an information retrieval room which will include a non-fiction library in the near future.
- 72 The outside environment of the school is a stimulating place for pupils. There are interesting games painted on the playground and brightly painted seating is available. There are attractive flower-borders and trees. There is sufficient space for the pupils to play and a range of small apparatus is available at playtimes. No litter or graffiti was seen during the period of the inspection. There is a small garden that the school plans to improve during this academic year to incorporate a wild area. When this is complete it will increase the possibilities of using the school site as a resource for teaching and learning.

71 **Resources**

- 73 Overall, the resources for learning are good in terms of sufficiency, quality, accessibility and usage. They are good for English, science, history, art, music, physical education, special needs and information technology. They are satisfactory for mathematics and geography and unsatisfactory for design technology.
- 74 The English, mathematics, and information technology provision has been extended through recent spending, in line with the school's development plan. The range of fiction books is good and the sets of books for group reading are well organised and sufficient in quantity. The provision of resources for religious education has been extended by the acquisition of artefacts and books in response to the requirements of the last inspection. The information technology resources are to be extended further through funding from the National Grid for Learning. The school has created an effective information technology development plan that will lead to the creation of a computer suite in 2000. The design technology curriculum is under-resourced for food technology and for textiles and there is an insufficient range of materials for construction. The resources are not housed suitably for pupils to make independent choices.
- 75 Currently the school does not have a central library because of pressure for classroom space. The quality of learning is affected by this lack of provision as pupils have not learned to retrieve books through a library indexing or cataloguing system. The other information retrieval skills are taught well. The school development plan acknowledges this deficit. Arrangements are planned for the information books to be sited alongside the computer suite in an information retrieval centre that is currently under development. The range of non-fiction books is satisfactory. Many of them are distributed throughout the classrooms and are available for the children to pursue studies relating to a range of curriculum subjects.
- 76 The resources are appropriately located and organised for convenience of access. The subject co-ordinators audit the learning resources for quality and for ease of access. This attention has

contributed to the good overall provision. The school's development planning includes an annual review of each subject's resource needs and funds are allocated to co-ordinators for acquisition. The school augments its resources through effective use of visits to the adopted chapel, the local church, local resources for learning, distant locations (including a residential visit) and visitors to school.

71 **The efficiency of the school**

- 77 The school has very good procedures for financial planning which are closely linked to its aim of continuously raising standards and improving the quality of education for the pupils. There are systematic processes for setting and monitoring the budget which is driven by the priorities set out in the school development plan. Success and evaluation criteria are clearly laid out in the development plan and the senior staff and governors regularly consider the cost effectiveness of the spending decisions made. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school spends its money wisely, targeting funds at the necessary priorities. Recently, for example, the school has benefited from additional funding due to its amalgamation with another local junior school. Rather than building up reserves, the school has spent this money purposefully to carry out much needed refurbishment of the building, improve resources and provide supply cover to allow monitoring and evaluation of literacy and numeracy lessons. The standards fund is appropriately used for staff training and money allocated to support the pupils with special educational needs is spent well as they make good progress.
- 78 The staff are deployed well across the school. The school makes the most of the teachers' specialist skills in particular subjects, for example in teaching literacy and numeracy, and brings in additional staff where necessary to teach music and to release time for senior staff. The support assistants are used well to help the pupils with special needs. The school makes good use of all its available accommodation. The conversion of a corner of the foyer into a medical room, for example, illustrates the fact that no space is wasted. Resources are employed well to support learning across the curriculum.
- 79 Financial control and school administration are good. Procedures for ordering and paying for goods are orderly and systematic and money is dealt with in a proper and correct fashion. The recommendations of the recent local authority audit report are currently being implemented. School administration is efficient and unobtrusive and makes a valuable contribution to the smooth daily running of the school.
- 80 The pupils' attainment when they start at the school is in line with the national average but it is above average by the time they leave in almost all subjects of the national curriculum. They make good progress through the school and their behaviour is very good. The quality of education, particularly the teaching, provided by the school is good. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the capacity for further improvement is excellent. Costs per pupil are about average. Taking these factors into consideration, the school offers very good value for money.

71 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

71 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

71 **English**

81 In the 1999 national curriculum tests in English the results were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The results had been better in 1998 but the arrival of pupils with lower attainments from a nearby closing school in the autumn of 1998 for their final year in primary education affected the 1999 results. In 1999 the proportion of pupils reaching the level of reading expected for their age (Level 4) was average overall. The proportion of girls who reached the higher level (Level 5) was about average and the proportion of boys was lower than average. In writing, the proportion of children, both girls and boys, who reached Level 5, was well above average. In both reading and writing, the girls reached considerably higher standards than the boys. Inspection judgements of the present Year 6 children, based on a wider range of evidence, indicate that overall the pupils are of above average attainment in writing and speaking and listening and average overall in reading. Except for the drop in 1999, the results have risen steadily since 1995 when the previous inspection took place and the overall standards in the long-term are judged to be improving. Since the last inspection the standards achieved in national tests have risen by 30%. The standards for the potentially higher-attaining pupils in reading are static but they are improving in writing. The standards for the potentially higher-attaining boys are less satisfactory and the school has rightly identified this as a target for improvement.

82 The children are entering the school with above average skills in reading and average skills in writing. During their time in the school their progress in literacy is good overall, being sound in reading and good in all aspects of writing and in speaking and listening. These skills support their progress in other subjects.

71 **Speaking and Listening**

83 In this aspect of the subject good progress is made. The children extend their ability to listen closely and with understanding and then to explain or discuss what they have heard. Most of the children contribute their own perceptions confidently and question their teachers and each other to extend their understanding. In many instances comments include a wide and interesting vocabulary. For example, in Year 6, the children commented sensitively and accurately on the quality of sound in the musical compositions of others and, in Year 4, the children discussed the difficulties of maintaining a comfortable living temperature in hot countries using their own knowledge and vocabulary learned in the lesson to support their opinions. Throughout the school the vast majority of the pupils listen very attentively and speak with a level of skill exceeding the national standard for their age. This skill is extended during the lessons for personal and social development when the children are able to express their ideas well.

71 **Reading**

84 The pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory. There is steady improvement in fluency and accuracy and in the ability to tackle more difficult words and sentences. Their understanding of what is read is generally sound. The children make good progress in their appreciation of text

and they talk with enthusiasm about the books they read for pleasure and for the acquisition of information. In Year 6 the children read with an appropriate level of accuracy for their age and talk with interest about the books they have read and their favourite authors. The range of books they read is wide and includes fiction and non-fiction. The provision of more non-fiction texts has been part of the school's strategy to raise the boys' attainment in reading. The school library is in the process of being converted to an information retrieval room. This will provide opportunities for use of information technology and non-fiction books for class lessons on finding and using information. As yet there is no library and some of the children's library skills are under-developed. Most of the pupils rely on adults to locate the information books they require. All the children asked were able to use a contents page and an index effectively to locate information in books and are familiar with using sub-headings to find appropriate sections of text.

71 Writing

- 85 The children make good progress in writing in all year groups and their progress is very good in the lessons in Years 3 and 6 taken by the English co-ordinator. In Year 3 the children's work in literacy lessons is at the nationally expected levels, with some work at a higher level, and they make good progress. For example, they are beginning to identify and record key features of text from information books and are using punctuation such as speech and question marks to clarify the meaning of their work. Previously completed work shows that the pupils have made good progress during the term and they are extending their range of vocabulary and writing longer pieces of text. In Year 4 the children's spelling is sound and they are developing their story writing well, using a good range of vocabulary to record their ideas. They are able to recognise the tenses of verbs and change them to suit different circumstances. In Year 5 the children are beginning to create atmosphere in their stories and play with words to create impact, for example, by using alliteration. Some children in the year group are still showing weaknesses in handwriting and punctuation. In Year 6 the children's progress is good and it is evident that the work of earlier years is supporting the good standards the children achieve. Most of the children use written language expressively and select vocabulary confidently to grip the reader's attention in their story writing. They write well for a range of purposes and are able to select significant information to convey strong impressions of places they have visited and events they have witnessed. This was particularly evident in the work recounting a residential visit. The pupils' writing skills strongly support other subjects, for example, in Year 4 in science the children record their findings quickly and in history in Year 6 note taking is used well. Throughout the school there are too many children who do not use joined writing confidently. The programme for teaching this is inadequately paced and some of the older children in the school are still printing.
- 86 The children's response in lessons is good and they show a high level of interest in the subject. They listen very attentively to their teachers and concentrate well on their tasks. In Year 3 the children persevered with their work of extracting the key features from a text even though this was difficult and challenging. In some classes the pupils are very keen to contribute and volunteer information. They talk eagerly about their work and describe the purposes of their tasks. When reading, the children express ideas freely and speculate effectively about the plot and characters in stories. When other pupils are talking they listen well and show an appreciation of different views. Behaviour is very good in literacy lessons and the children show an enjoyment and appreciation of their work.
- 87 The good response of the children to the lessons and the good progress are reflections of teaching that has many very good features. During the inspection three quarters of the lessons

were better than average and one fifth were very good or excellent. The strongest feature of the teaching is the good management of the children which promotes very positive attitudes and a readiness to work. The very good and excellent teaching includes well-designed tasks that interest the children and also stimulate and challenge them. The tasks build effectively on earlier learning for the children in a range of attainment groups including, on most occasions, the more capable children. The methods of teaching writing are very effective. The teaching of reading is secure, although this is less strong than the teaching of writing where the teachers' own knowledge of the subject is good. All the teachers follow the national literacy strategy. This has been adapted to ensure coherence throughout the lesson with the initial text used to support detailed work on grammar and vocabulary. All of the teachers give additional time to the teaching of extended writing and this time is used very effectively to show the children how to build up a longer piece of text. In some of these lessons the discussions last too long and the children do not always have enough opportunity to write. All of the lessons identify targets and these are taught well. The teachers have identified individual literacy targets for the children based on national curriculum levels but too long periods of time are allocated before the targets are reviewed. As yet teachers do not check closely enough the progress individual pupils are making. As a result, specific weaknesses in the children's development are not improved rapidly enough. The identification of targets for reading is less secure than targets for writing and the teachers have less understanding of the stages children move through to become more competent readers. As a result of a detailed and thorough analysis of test results, attention is being given to raising the attainment of boys in both reading and writing. Sound homework is set, including the learning of spellings, and the children are encouraged to extend their progress in reading by taking their books home. Information technology is used well to support the English curriculum.

88 The children with below average attainment are supported very effectively. There are short programmes that focus on specific skills and these are proving to be extremely successful in raising attainment in literacy. Additionally, small groups of children from parallel classes work together at appropriate tasks that challenge them at the correct level and ensure that good progress is made. Classroom assistants strongly support the teaching of literacy. They are trained and guide the children effectively. This work is carried out well and is improving the attainment of the children.

89 The co-ordinator for the subject is very supportive of colleagues and has led the introduction of the literacy strategy most effectively. She has undertaken monitoring of work in the other classes and has, with the headteacher, evaluated strengths and development points for individual teachers. She has demonstrated successful strategies in other classrooms and has helped the teachers change their teaching methods in order to raise the pupils' attainment and increase their rate of progress. For the first year that the school implemented the literacy strategy the co-ordinator planned the lessons for all year groups. This has proved very successful as now all the teachers plan their own work to a good standard using the previous documents as guidance. The co-ordinator has been very influential in extending the subject knowledge of all the staff to a good level.

71 **Mathematics**

90 The results of the 1999 national curriculum tests for eleven year olds showed that the pupils' attainment in mathematics was slightly above average both in relation to the nationally expected standard and the average for similar schools; but the overall percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was slightly below average. This is because the proportion of girls

achieving the higher level was considerably lower than the national picture. The 1999 results are well above those of the previous year, which dipped, and the trend is of overall improvement over time. This improvement has accelerated since the school started to focus on improving pupils' numeracy skills in line with the approach outlined in the national numeracy strategy. Since the previous inspection in 1995 there has been a significant improvement in the proportions of pupils attaining both the expected and the higher level in their national tests.

- 91 The scrutiny of the pupils' work, observations in the classroom and discussions with the children indicate that the pupils' overall attainment in mathematics is good by the end of the key stage. The pupils' attainments in using and applying mathematics, shape, space and measures and numeracy are good. Their mental calculation skills are very good. By the end of the key stage many of the pupils calculate with increasing accuracy and have a good understanding of the four rules of number and the multiplication tables. They can use a range of mental and written methods to solve problems accurately and are able to use approximation to check their results to see if they are reasonable. They have a good knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages. All of the Year 6 children can calculate the area of a rectangle by counting squares and three quarters can do it by applying the appropriate formula. Their attainment in the data handling aspect of mathematics is satisfactory. The pupils are provided with experience of the required range of graphs and tables through mathematics lessons and other subjects but insufficient attention is given to the correct application of their skills. For example, most Year 6 pupils are unable to explain why it is more useful to record temperature using a line graph rather than a bar chart.
- 92 The pupils' progress is good overall throughout the key stage. Strong emphasis is given to the development of numeracy and by the end of Year 6 the pupils' skills have developed well. There is a good quantity of work and the work for the higher-attaining children is often more demanding. The progress that the pupils are making in extending their mental calculations is very good and this has increased the pace of progress in the other areas of mathematics. The children's progress in data handling is weaker because they make too little progress in skills of more complex graph making. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In the best examples, their needs are appropriately considered in the teacher's planning, extra help is offered in lessons and the children are supported well by classroom assistants. The potentially higher-attaining pupils are often not provided with this attention and this restricts their progress. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to provide greater challenge for the more able children in general, and for girls in particular, by careful planning and organisation of groupings within ability sets. The national numeracy strategy is also providing clear expectations of higher-attaining pupils, which is aiding the planning process.
- 93 The children enjoy mathematics and generally behave very well in lessons. During the inspection the pupils' response in the lessons was good or very good on almost every occasion. They settle quickly at the beginning of the lesson and listen carefully to their teachers. They concentrate well on the task set and work very well in pairs and groups when sharing tasks and equipment. The response is very good in Years 3 and 4 where children respond well to the clear instructions, challenging tasks and the brisk pace of the lessons.
- 94 Pupils are taught mathematics in classes that are grouped according to mathematical ability. This is generally effective. The teaching is good or very good in over eight out of ten lessons. The training for the national numeracy strategy has been very effective. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good but suitable mathematical vocabulary is not used consistently by all of them. The teachers explain clearly the objectives of the lessons and the tasks to be completed and all lessons follow the same format. They introduce lessons by extending the pupils' ability to calculate mentally although there is not always sufficient rigor in the demand for speed of recall and fluency of mental calculation. Lessons continue with a class

teaching session and then the pupils work individually, in pairs or small groups. The most successful lessons end with a useful plenary session to assess the pupils' progress and understanding. The best lessons are characterised by detailed planning based on careful assessments of pupil's abilities, a brisk pace and a good subject knowledge which enables the pupils to build on skills acquired earlier. Additionally, there is a good use of the white board or overhead projector to illustrate teaching points, high expectations and good questioning to identify what pupils have achieved and how to move them on. An example of a very good lesson was seen in Year 4 when pupils extended their knowledge of alternative strategies, including doubling and halving, mentally to solve problems involving the multiplication of two numbers. The only unsatisfactory mathematics lesson seen during the inspection was when the pupils were unable to carry out the task and made unsatisfactory progress in the development of their mathematical knowledge.

- 95 The mathematics curriculum meets national curriculum requirements and there is equal access for all pupils. Those who have special educational needs are working on areas within the programmes of study that are appropriate to their levels of attainment. The scheme of work for the subject has been recently updated by the co-ordinator to take into account the national numeracy strategy and to expand the use of mental calculation strategies. This provides a clear, comprehensive structure for the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. Detailed medium-term plans are provided by the co-ordinator and these are used by the teachers to produce effective short-term plans which identify clear learning objectives and activities. There are good assessment procedures in place. The pupils are tested regularly and detailed records are kept of their achievements. These records are used to set targets for each year group. Each term individual targets are set for pupils but these are not referred to sufficiently to make them effective. Scrutiny of the work shows that marking is regular and forms the basis for the assessment and evaluation of pupils' progress but the quality of marking varies from class to class.
- 96 Information technology is used effectively in mathematics lessons to support the development of mental calculations and is beginning to be used to develop data handling skills. There are good examples of spread-sheets, graphs, tables and charts being used in science to record results from experiments and in geography to record the results of traffic surveys and weather information. Overall, there is a satisfactory application of numeracy skills in other subjects.
- 97 The mathematics co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has had a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and raising the standards in mathematics. She supports the teachers well in the planning process and has led effective training sessions to introduce successfully the national numeracy strategy, in particular the focus on developing the skills of mental calculation. She has taught demonstration lessons for all the teachers and monitors lessons and progress regularly. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory overall with good provision of the resources needed to promote mental calculations.

71 **Science**

- 98 The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds showed that the children's attainments in science are in line overall both with the nationally expected standards and with the average for similar schools. The proportion of children reaching the average standard (Level 4) was well above the typical picture but the proportion of children exceeding the average by reaching Level 5 was well below. Since 1995 the children's attainments in science have improved slightly and remained very slightly above the national average. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of lessons and discussions with the children indicate that the attainment of the

current Year 6 pupils is above average and that their test results in 2000 are likely to improve on the 1999 figures. The children entering the school in Year 3 have above average attainment in science and this is maintained through Key Stage 2. Their progress is, therefore, satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively supported in class by well-targeted planning and good teaching and they make good progress. The school has employed a variety of assessment tests and tasks to monitor progress. This has been most effective in raising standards from Level 3 to Level 4 but more attention needs to be focused on raising attainment from Level 4 to Level 5 for the potentially higher-attaining children.

- 99 By the end of the key stage the children are able to measure with precision and use apparatus and equipment correctly. They are able to use appropriate scientific terminology and have developed appropriate methods of setting down investigations and findings. They have gained good knowledge and understanding of the science they have been taught.
- 100 The pupils enjoy science. They like the practical approach and they concentrate well. The children work with an appropriate pace and their application is good. During practical tasks they collaborate effectively and they take care to write up their findings and present illustrations and charts well.
- 101 The lesson structure for science teaching is based upon the literacy hour's format and is proving to be effective. The knowledge and skills to be taught are clearly identified and the work usually focuses on practical activities. The pupils know the purpose of the session, the activity is clearly defined with a time-target and the plenary session clarifies learning and consolidates understanding. This approach is contributing successfully to the raising of standards. The teachers' subject knowledge is good. Assessment data is being used effectively to inform planning and evaluation. The average and below average pupils are supported very well but the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged and the tasks are not matched well enough with their ability to enable enough pupils to reach the higher attainment level. Experimental and investigative science is taught well through illustrative activities where the teacher determines the task, the method and the presentation of findings but investigations where the children assume these responsibilities occur less frequently. The co-ordinator has identified the need for the pupils to design and conduct investigations and there is evidence that the school is improving its approach. The curriculum planning is detailed and ensures that coverage of all the attainment targets is good.
- 102 The subject is well led. The school has a clear and helpful science policy and the school's detailed medium-term planning for science is effective and followed by all staff which ensures continuity and progression. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the next stage of development for science when the subject becomes a major focus in the school development plan for the year 2000-2001.
- 103 The science resources are good. Equipment is shared between central storage and the classrooms to promote effective use and appropriate access. The detailed inventory is very helpful for staff and will prove beneficial for pupils to set up their own investigations.

71 OTHER SUBJECTS

71 Art

- 104 The pupils make good progress in art and the standards they reach are higher than in most schools. They use a range of media effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 show a good level of competence in their observational pastel drawings of fish. There is a keen awareness of colour in their landscape paintings. When working with clay the pupils successfully build up layers to make low relief landscapes. They discuss texture and are able to make visual representations of earlier ideas. They create interesting weavings using cut and ripped paper, thread, wool, sequin waste and cellophane. The careful placing of each strip shows a good understanding of the visual effect of their work. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils show a good understanding of line, tone and colour in their abstract work on still life. Drawing with pastels, they blend colours to recreate pattern and texture. The pupils have produced good quality portraits of classmates or themselves, using pencil and crayon. They show a good understanding of the different techniques and styles used by other artists such as Picasso and Paul Klee. They create fabric collages showing the changing seasons and paintings using wax resist and colour washes. Throughout the school, the pupils make use of sketchbooks to develop their ideas and techniques.
- 105 The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. They increase their knowledge of the range of media and gain greater awareness of the visual impact of their work. In one lesson observed, the pupils in Year 6 made excellent progress in learning to evaluate the quality of work. This was a direct result of the excellent teaching they received in their lesson on still life. They increased their awareness of colour and gained an understanding of its importance in communicating mood.
- 106 The pupils' attitudes to art are good and they enjoy their work. They concentrate well and take great care with their work. Resources are shared amicably. They listen well to their teachers. They are enthusiastic and proud when talking about their work. Behaviour in art lessons is good and the pupils respond sensitively when evaluating the work of others. They become totally engrossed in their work.
- 107 A scrutiny of artwork indicates that the teachers' expectations are usually good. The teaching in the three lessons observed during the inspection was good overall and one lesson was excellent. In that lesson the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject were transmitted to the pupils. They were constantly encouraged to evaluate and develop their work further. Support was skilfully combined with challenge so that the children were successfully encouraged to achieve their very best. In all three lessons there was a sense of purpose and enjoyment. The lessons were well organised, with resources prepared in advance. Activities were well selected for their purpose and the learning objectives were clear in the planning.
- 108 The co-ordinator has had responsibility for art since October 1999 and is approaching the role with enthusiasm. There are good curriculum links with other subjects such as history, geography, design technology and music. These links provide a good context for pupils' art work. Collections of the pupils' art work are kept as well as a photographic record. These show the work covered. The resources for art are good. There are attractive displays of art throughout the school which make a positive statement about the importance the school places on the art curriculum.
- ### 71 Design and Technology

- 109 Few lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and interviews with the teachers and the pupils indicate that the progress the children make in design technology is too slow. The standards they achieve are lower than average.
- 110 In Years 5 and 6 they are able to create well drawn sketches as a prelude to detailed planning for a model of a Tudor frame house. There is evidence of the making of accurate measurements and precision cutting. The pupils have created carefully constructed models with appropriate joints. Year 3 and 4 pupils have used textiles and designed and made quilted pictures of landscapes in a range of fabrics. Some of the designs and many of the products have reached a good standard. The children are much less secure in demonstrating their own ideas of how to design and make artefacts and to evaluate and then modify the product based upon testing. They find it difficult to describe how a construction might be improved.
- 111 The pupils have a good attitude to design and technology. They enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. They work with care and precision and often make artefacts to a high standard. They enjoy discussing the things they have made and are often knowledgeable about the purpose of the task and the link to the subject from which the task was derived. In this way design and technology supports learning in other subjects.
- 112 The teachers have a good understanding of the making skills to be taught and they have a clearly established view of teaching focused practical tasks. However, their overall knowledge of the processes of design technology is not secure and too many aspects of the design and make process are over-prescribed by the teachers. This often results in well-drawn plans and well-made models but prevents the pupils from participating appropriately in the process. This step-by-step approach also leads to a slower pace than is necessary.
- 113 There is a co-ordinator for the subject who has arranged collaborative design technology activities that link the school with pupils from Key Stage 1 on technology days. Also there is a design technology challenge that is undertaken very successfully with Key Stage 3 pupils. The scheme of work ensures coverage of the programmes of study but the policy lacks guidance on how design and technology should be taught. The subject has not been a focus area in the school development plan and has lacked monitoring or evaluation. It is intended that the subject will receive scrutiny as part of the process of implementing the revised national curriculum for 2000. As yet, the staff have not received in-service training in this subject.
- 114 The resources for design and technology are generally unsatisfactory. In textiles the range of materials is satisfactory though limited and the range of threads and fastenings is unsatisfactory. The range of construction kits is satisfactory, as are the tools for construction. The range of construction materials is limited and is over dependent on pupils finding materials from elsewhere. Food technology is under represented. The resources are not well stored for access and choice by pupils.

71 **Geography**

- 115 During the inspection it was only possible to observe geography lessons in Years 3 and 4. Evidence from the scrutiny of work, together with the teachers' planning and discussions with the pupils, indicates that the standards in geography have improved since the last inspection and are better than in most schools. Overall, the progress made by the children is good.
- 116 In Year 3, the pupils show a good understanding of the climate in polar regions and lands near to the equator. They use maps well and know the purpose of a key. They can locate Baffin Island on a world map and know that it has a cold climate. Most pupils know the four points of a compass and the more capable are beginning to identify NW and SW. The pupils show a

developing understanding of the water cycle. Pupils in Year 4 can describe in detail the effects on people's lives of weather conditions such as the monsoon season in India. Their knowledge of the problems of flooding is good. Most know where the great deserts are and why an oasis occurs. They have developed their field study skills well through comparisons of Tamworth, the local village of Wiggington and Keswick in the Lake District. Through their work on wind speed they know that if the wind is at force two on the Beaufort Scale, there will be a light breeze, but if the wind is force ten, then it is likely that trees will be uprooted and buildings will have structural damage. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a firm understanding of the effects of climate. They know about hurricanes and the effects of weather on farming, tourism, housing and transport. Through their work on the Caribbean, the pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the differences between the various islands of the West Indies. They make personal recommendations based on their research, giving clear reasons for their choices. They can compare and contrast different locations in detail, for example, Tamworth and Jamaica. The pupils use information technology well to conduct further research, for example, on polar and desert regions in Years 3 and 4 and the West Indies in Years 5 and 6.

- 117 The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They increase their understanding of the locality in which they live and of contrasting localities. They improve their ability to identify and describe features of these different localities. They gain confidence in using more complex maps. They become more aware of environmental issues such as recycling and pollution. Good use is made of information technology to support the pupils' progress in geography. A residential visit to Standon Bowers also contributes to the good progress that pupils make.
- 118 The pupils enjoy geography. They are confident when asking and answering questions. In the lessons seen in Years 3 and 4 the pupils showed very high levels of concentration. They worked effectively together when required, relating well to one another and to adults. When required to make notes while watching a video, Year 4 pupils showed high levels of maturity and skill as they approached the task. Work in the pupils' books show that the majority take a pride in it.
- 119 The quality and quantity of work in books show that the teachers have high expectations of pupils. The quality of teaching in three of the four lessons observed was very good and in the fourth lesson it was good. The teachers are confident and knowledgeable. Well-prepared, high quality resources are used well to interest and motivate the pupils. The teachers' enthusiasm is conveyed well to the pupils. Very good relationships provide a positive atmosphere in which the pupils make very good progress. Good links are made with other subjects such as history, music, art and information technology.
- 120 Throughout the school, geography is planned well to support the pupils' progress. The policy and scheme of work are helpful to teachers in ensuring that each year's work builds on that covered in the previous year. The co-ordinator leads the subject well.

71 **History**

- 121 Standards in history have improved since the previous inspection and are well above those found in the majority of schools. Overall, the pupils' progress is good but it ranges from very good to poor. Most lessons offer exciting learning opportunities and the pupils have opportunities to observe, be involved and evaluate evidence for themselves. For example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a very good knowledge about the Tudors. One class of Year 6 pupils is able to explain the effects of technological developments since 1930 and debate the effect this continuing process may have on our lives in the future. Other pupils are able to consider and discuss the reasons for alternative interpretations of fashions in the 1960s. The pupils have well-developed skills of historical enquiry and a good sense of chronology. Year 4 pupils are able to use census information to compare today's occupations with those in Victorian Tamworth. The Year 3 pupils are able to consider reasons why the Romans invaded Britain and produce a checklist of items Claudius would have needed to be successful. The pupils make poor progress when the historical focus of the lesson is not clear.
- 122 The pupils' attitude to history is always good or very good. They behave well, enjoy lessons and are interested to find out more. They respond particularly well to the use of video evidence, artefacts or debate. Most of the children are keen to answer the teacher's questions and through this extend their thinking. The quality of presentation in work previously completed is usually good. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. For example, the support assistants act as scribes to enable the pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons where the other pupils are taking notes from a video.
- 123 The quality of teaching is good overall but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Most of the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan exciting lessons with several different activities. In the good lessons, the teachers' planning clearly specifies the historical skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered. The very good teaching is characterised by a good pace, effective use of interesting resources and high expectations of the pupils. In one Year 6 lesson, following video evidence, the teacher used personal experience of 1960s fashions to illustrate how and why fashions change over time. Challenging questions were then asked that required groups of children to analyse, make deductions or evaluate the evidence. When unsatisfactory teaching and poor progress were seen, the lesson objective lacked a clear historical focus and insufficient attention was given to the historical content of the lesson. Marking is inconsistent. Where it is good, the teacher's comments relate to the learning objective and promote the development of historical knowledge and understanding.
- 124 History is taught in alternate terms with the pupils completing six units across the key stage. The scheme of work supports detailed medium-term plans drawn up by the co-ordinator, who leads the subject well. The policy outlines the importance of key elements such as the evaluation of historical evidence and a range of teaching approaches. Effective links are made with other areas of the curriculum, which helps to put the work into context. There are effective links with literacy through creative writing, note taking and listening to stories and with numeracy through the use of time lines and estimating and handling data. There is a good range of appropriate artefacts and resources and the school has strong links with local institutions such as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, who talk to the Year 5 and 6 children about the role of women during the Second World War and life in the 1930s.

71 **Information technology**

- 125 The pupils' attainment in information technology is good and they make good progress. Word

processing is being effectively developed throughout the school and is being extended into desktop publishing. By Year 6, pupils are learning to scan an image and embed it into a text document. Pupils are being introduced to paint and graphics programs and by Year 4 can successfully use the tools and menus associated with the application. The Year 3 pupils use a floor turtle and Logo is being introduced well. Some examples of good practice were observed in data handling through the use of graphs, tables and spreadsheets to present findings in science and mathematics. The use of information technology to monitor events is at present underdeveloped but the subject co-ordinator is aware of this and training for this aspect is in the information technology development plan.

126 The pupils have a positive attitude to information technology. Many of the children are highly motivated and absorbed by their tasks and work with sustained interest, both independently and collaboratively. They share their expertise readily to support their peers. The learning is most effective in the school when children are set open-ended tasks through which they can demonstrate their skills and competencies. Their basic skills are being well developed and, in consequence, they can work independently with good pace. Most pupils are confident and they can explain the processes and procedures well.

1 The previous inspection reported that the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, teacher intervention was irregular and uneven and the teachers' subject knowledge was uneven. The school has attended to these criticisms through its action plan and has raised teacher expertise and teaching standards. The subject is now being well taught. All classes use computers regularly. The teachers have a secure knowledge of most applications and select programs to support subjects well. The work is planned well and effectively monitored for skill development or subject reinforcement. The school has recently introduced a specific information technology lesson into the timetable for each class. This lesson focuses upon the teaching of skills and all pupils are given tuition on a rota basis. This strategy has led to a raising of the pupils' competence in information technology and to skills being taught progressively through the key stage.

2 The school is developing the uses of CD-ROM for information retrieval and encyclopaedic work. The teachers are using information technology effectively to support learning across the curriculum. There are pupils undertaking an information technology task in most lessons. Programs are well chosen to support learning in the subject through the consolidation of skills or the development of concepts. Evidence of effective use was observed in English, mathematics, science, religious education and history lessons.

3 The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. There is a helpful policy and the scheme of work is effective in providing for continuity, progression and subject breadth. The school has an information technology action plan for the National Grid for Learning which includes a clear view of the next steps in the development of the subject. Assessment and record keeping are currently under-developed. The pupils maintain a record of applications and frequency of use and a skill-monitoring system is being prepared to support the skill-teaching programme.

130 The school is well resourced for information technology with relatively new computers in each classroom and appropriate software. The information technology areas in each classroom are well organised and effectively used. National Grid for Learning funding will be used to create a teaching suite of machines, which should further enhance the opportunities for raising standards in information technology.

129 **Music**

131 The pupils make good progress in music and the standards they reach are better than in most

schools. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of timbre. For example, they can identify individual instruments when listening to a recording of Thunder and Lightning Polka by Johann Strauss. They are able to compose pieces of music, stating preference in terms of the moods they create. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can choose instruments which create the sound they wish to achieve. In small groups they create layers of sound through skilful choice of both tuned and untuned instruments. They compose musical stories and perform their compositions. They show a high level of maturity when evaluating their own work and the work of other pupils. During assembly the pupils sing tunefully, are confident and show a good awareness of rhythm. The pupils joined in spontaneously when a taped song was played at the end of assembly. Their enthusiasm was obvious. The pupils who are learning to play instruments reach a high level of attainment. This was evident during the practice session of the school orchestra where pupils responded well to the conductor, showed a good sense of performance and awareness of audience.

- 132 The majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress when lessons are taught by the newly-appointed music specialist. The pupils in Year 6 make good progress when the lessons are taught by the music co-ordinator and very good progress in their instrumental work where lessons are taught by the peripatetic music teacher. The pupils increase their repertoire of songs and gain a wider knowledge of musical terminology. They make good progress in composition and they are given regular opportunities to do so. Good progress is also made in listening to, and appraising, the work of composers from other times and places. The variations in progress within individual lessons are directly linked to the quality of teaching.
- 133 The children have positive attitudes to music and respond enthusiastically to practical group work. Most listen attentively to their teachers and to the suggestions of other pupils. They organise themselves efficiently into groups and handle musical instruments with care. The majority behave well and there are good relationships between the pupils and their teachers.
- 134 From all the available evidence, including the teachers' planning, the overall quality of teaching is good. In the four lessons observed, two were satisfactory, one was good and the teaching of violin was very good. Where teaching is most effective, the teachers are very knowledgeable, activities are clearly explained and questioning is used to focus and develop the pupils' thinking. The management of the pupils is very good and the lesson is paced and structured well. In all four lessons observed, the teachers show that the pupils' responses are valued and this has a positive impact on their progress.
- 135 The co-ordinator leads the subject well. There is a good scheme of work and well-planned cross-curricular links are made, for example, Tudor music in history or as a stimulus for art work. Resources for music are good and the availability of a wide range of instruments supports the pupils' good progress. The school makes good provision for pupils to learn to play instruments. Currently pupils are learning to play recorders, violin, viola, cello, trombone, horn and trumpet. The school choir performs at a local residential home for senior citizens and sings carols in the community. The recorder groups attend the local music festival and the orchestra performs annually at the leavers' concert. The subject contributes well to the school's links with the community and provides good opportunities for personal development.

129 **Physical Education**

- 136 Standards in physical education have improved since the previous inspection and are better than those found in the majority of schools. In the aspects seen during inspection the pupils make good progress. In gymnastics most Year 6 pupils are able to improve their performances by

making activities clearer and more precise, achieving good levels of control, accuracy and variety in their work and they have a good understanding of health-related fitness. Most children are able to swim at least 25 metres before they leave school. The children's progress is best in those lessons where the teacher provides opportunities to repeat, practise and consolidate skills. Less progress is made when the pupils are not given sufficient time to make judgements about their own and others' performances and use this information effectively to improve the accuracy, quality and variety of their own performance.

1 The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They change quickly and efficiently into appropriate dress for the activity and take part enthusiastically during the lesson. If they become noisy, they usually respond quickly to the teacher's instructions and listen politely. In lessons where they are required to work with a partner or in a larger group they are very supportive of each other and co-operate very effectively. Most of the pupils are able to sustain energetic activity for an extended period.

2 The teaching is good in three-quarters of lessons and never less than satisfactory. Swimming is taught well by qualified swimming instructors from the local swimming baths, supported by the teachers. In gymnastics most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, supported by detailed lesson plans provided by the co-ordinator. In Years 4 and 5 teachers do not always adapt this planning to the needs of their class and this slows the children's progress. Effective use is made of demonstrations to improve performance in gymnastics. In the best lessons a brisk pace and careful use of assessment leads to improved standards. The teachers provide challenging activities and make appropriate physical demands of the children.

139 The subject is led very effectively by a well-qualified and committed co-ordinator who has made useful links with local sports clubs and Aston Villa Football Club. The comprehensive policy, scheme of work and curriculum plans ensure that appropriate allocations of time are spent on different aspects of physical education, including outdoor and adventurous activities. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. The accommodation and resources for physical education are good and they are used efficiently. The range and quality of extra curricular activities are good and provide opportunities for boys and girls to participate and develop skills further in several sports and to compete against other local schools.

138 **Swimming**

140 The inspection of this school included a closer study of the provision of swimming instruction.

141 A very high percentage of the pupils in Year 6 will reach the required standard of being able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Figures for the past two years show similarly high levels of success. Many pupils exceed this standard and demonstrate sound and developing skills in more than one stroke and in water safety.

142 Lessons for two classes (one from Year 6 and one from Year 4) were observed at the local leisure centre, taught by two well-qualified instructors who are based at the centre and supported by two members of the school's teaching staff who are also qualified to undertake the work. Further assistance was given by a governor who volunteered to help supervise the changing and by two lifeguards who were on duty at the pool-side. These staffing arrangements are good and excellent use is made of the time available in the two pools. One pool is suitable for beginners and improvers. The main pool offers more challenging opportunities for the more experienced swimmers.

143 The quality of the teaching is good. The pupils are expected to work hard and behave well and they respond to these expectations with enthusiasm and energy. Their behaviour is excellent.

The teachers and instructors share tasks in a very effective way, ensuring a range of activities that are well matched with the pupils' developing skills. The teaching gives confidence to the beginners, develops the skills of the improvers and is extending the expertise of the more advanced swimmers. Coaching in greater finesse in the strokes of the more advanced swimmers would further enhance their performance and their endurance.

144 The session included aspects of water safety for some pupils and practising for an advanced certificate for some of the stronger swimmers. Other pupils were practising strokes, some across the learner pool and some along the length of the main pool. No time is wasted and the pupils are kept very busy and active. As a result, the session ensures that good progress is made by the pupils.

1 The provision for the teaching of swimming is sound, allowing all of the pupils in Years 4 and 6 to have sessions for a term. This blocking of time is an effective way to promote progress in the subject as well as making good use of the budget. By transporting two classes to the pool and teaching them simultaneously, costs are minimised.

2 In addition to the term's programme of swimming lessons, the pupils also have an opportunity each year to participate in a local schools' swimming gala.

146 **Religious Education**

147 Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus at the end of the key stage and pupils make satisfactory progress. The children can recount stories they have been told and restate information that they have been given. Their work is carefully presented. They can relate learning in religious education to their daily lives. When given the opportunity, they express their own beliefs and values readily and they respond with reflection and sensitivity to the opinions of others.

148 The pupils have a good attitude to the subject. They contribute readily to discussion. They enjoy the religious education lesson, especially when artefacts, symbols and illustrations are employed or dramatic role-play is used to bring the lesson to life.

149 The school uses the Local Agreed Syllabus and there is an effective scheme of work to support continuity and coverage. The teaching is sound and sometimes good. Knowledge and understanding are taught securely and the best lessons are supported well by appropriate illustrations and artefacts. Knowledge of the Christian religion and the major world faiths is taught soundly and the teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the Christian faith. Knowledge of the Hindu and Muslim faiths is less secure but the co-ordinator has developed some teaching notes to support these areas. Planning is thorough and the less able pupils are supported well. In a lesson observed in Year 4 the teacher developed an element of spirituality well, through the telling of the story of the menorah lamp and how it stayed alight for eight days. In some lessons there is a tendency to impart the facts with insufficient time for pupils to reflect upon the content. The teachers' response to pupils' work is varied. In the best instances the marking is developmental, but in many cases the work is only corrected.

150 The previous inspection reported that insufficient time was allocated to the subject and that the specific content of religious education was often lost through being taught in generalised topics. It was also reported that resources for learning about other religions should be enhanced. These matters have been attended to. Each class now has a weekly religious education lesson of an appropriate duration. There is a clear focus, which is indicated in the detailed planning that all teachers follow. The clear lesson objectives are shared with the pupils at the outset of the lesson. The school has obtained some excellent resources to illustrate aspects of the major world faiths

and is still in the process of extending them. The attention the school has paid to developing the spiritual content of the curriculum has successfully supported the religious education curriculum.

The content of the syllabus is supported and supplemented well through work in assemblies, in other subjects and through using the local environment as a resource for learning, in particular the work derived from the adoption of a nearby chapel by Years 3 and 4.

- 1 The resources for religious education are being effectively developed with artefacts, photographs and posters of a very good quality and with sound supportive notes prepared by the co-ordinator. The range is in the process of being further extended. The resources are carefully stored. Visitors and visits to Christian places of worship are used to support learning in religious education. The co-ordinator is aware that the children's first-hand knowledge of places of worship is limited to the Christian religion and has obtained videos as an alternative but has yet to arrange visits to other places of worship. The use of information technology is being developed to support the religious education curriculum.
- 2 The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is making a sound contribution to the development of the religious education curriculum. She has a clear action plan for the development of the subject when religious education is a priority in the school's development plan. She has participated in the revision of the agreed syllabus and will employ the knowledge gained to develop the school's religious education curriculum. She supports the staff in their planning for religious education.

152 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

152 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The school was inspected by a team of five inspectors who completed a total of 19 inspection days.

Inspectors made 88 observations of lessons, talked with individuals and groups of children and evaluated the work they had done. A total of 56.5 hours was spent on these activities. In addition, interviews and discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers with additional responsibilities, support staff and members of the governing body.

A group of about 10% of the pupils, selected by the school, was heard reading.

The school's curriculum planning and other documentation, pupils' records, attendance registers, financial information and documents from governors' meetings were studied.

Before the inspection, a meeting was held at the school to hear the views of the parents and all parents were provided with a questionnaire which related to the work of the school.

152 DATA AND INDICATORS

152 Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y3 – Y6	291	11	48	68

152 Teachers and classes

152 Qualified teachers (Y3 - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

10

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

29.1

152 Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:

8

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

118

152 Financial data

Financial year:

1998

£

Total Income	380301
Total Expenditure	366892
Expenditure per pupil	1222.97
Balance brought forward from previous year	7847
Balance carried forward to next year	13409

Number of questionnaires sent out:

292

Number of questionnaires returned:

119

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	26	68	5	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37	53	2	8	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	23	50	19	7	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23	62	10	4	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	35	54	4	7	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	59	5	3	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	49	14	10	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	16	50	16	14	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	54	9	4	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31	55	8	4	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	46	46	4	3	1