

INSPECTION REPORT

Forest Oak School
Castle Bromwich

LEA area: Solihull

Unique Reference Number: 104132

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Sankey

Reporting inspector: Mrs Denise Fenn
10100

Dates of inspection: 1st to 5th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708299

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of special school	Moderate learning difficulties
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	4-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lanchester Way Castle Bromwich Birmingham B36 9LF
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Ann Hunt
Date of previous inspection:	5-9 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Denise Fenn, Registered Inspector	Design technology; Information technology; Modern foreign language; Non-national curriculum subjects at Key Stage 4.	Attainment and progress; Leadership and management; Efficiency.
Sarah McDermott, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Mary Henderson	English; Art; Religious education	Curriculum and assessment.
Paul Greenhalgh	Mathematics; Physical education; Special educational needs.	Teaching; Integration.
Mary Chamberlain	Science; Music; Equal opportunities	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
David Braybrook	Geography; History.	

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The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The majority of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good or better.
The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.
Pupils show good attitudes to learning.
The quality and use of assessment in Key Stage 1 is very good.
The school makes good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils.
There is good provision for extra curricular activities and for pupils' social development.
The school provides good opportunities for links with the community.
Support staff make a good contribution to the work of the school.
Attendance is good and the school has worked hard to improve this.
The school provides good opportunities for integration with mainstream schools.

Where the school has weaknesses

The quality of teaching and assessment in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory.
The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
There is an unsatisfactory partnership between parents and the school.
There is unsatisfactory monitoring of teaching.
There is insufficient direction by the senior management and the governing body of the school, for raising the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 4.

The strengths of the school are balanced by the weaknesses. The weaknesses identified will be used by the governing body to draw up an action plan. A copy of the action plan will be sent to all parents or carers.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress in the following areas which were weaknesses in the last inspection.
Planning for school improvement contains relevant targets. The cost of all improvements is planned and people responsible for meeting the targets are identified.
The school now complies fully with the Code of Practice.
Assessment systems for all subjects are now implemented, monitored and reviewed.
The roles of senior teachers are now clear and their responsibilities are defined fully in their job descriptions.
In Key Stages 3 and 4, specialist subject teaching is well established and all subject leaders now have satisfactory plans to improve the quality of education in their subjects.
Teachers now use a wider range of teaching approaches.
The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements in all subjects.
The new science laboratory and changing rooms for physical education have improved the accommodation for learning.
Statutory requirements for registration are now fully met.
The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Eighty five percent of lessons seen were satisfactory or better compared to 82% in 1996. Forty nine percent of teaching is good or better.
The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 11	By 14	By 16
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	C
English:			
listening and speaking	B	B	B
reading	B	C	D
writing	B	C	D
Mathematics	B	C	C
Science	B	C	C
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	B	C	D

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Quality of teaching:

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
4 – 11 years	Good	Art; English; ; science; mathematics; physical education	
11 – 14 years	Satisfactory	Humanities; physical education	Design technology; mathematics;
14 – 16 years	Unsatisfactory	Art; physical education;	Design technology; English; mathematics
English	Good	Key Stages 1 and 2	Key Stage 4
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Key Stages 1 and 2	Key Stages 3 and 4
Science	Satisfactory	Key Stages 1 and 2	
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Satisfactory	Key Stages 1 and 2	Key Stage 4

Teaching was satisfactory in 85% of all lessons seen. It was good in 49% of lessons seen. It was very good or excellent in 14% of lessons seen. Teaching in Key Stage 3 was generally satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, 36% of teaching was unsatisfactory.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now satisfactory.
Attendance	This has improved and is now good.
Ethos*	There is a satisfactory ethos for learning, except where teachers have expectations for pupils which are too low.
Leadership and management	There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, and overall there is satisfactory management. However, the educational direction for raising standards of education is unclear, and there is unsatisfactory monitoring of teaching.
Curriculum	It is satisfactory overall, and it is good in Key Stages 1 and 2.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils' social development; provision for their moral development is satisfactory. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	These are generally satisfactory. There are good arrangements for the professional development of all staff. There is good provision of support staff in lessons. Accommodation is satisfactory although classrooms are too small for the larger classes.
Value for money	Satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, attend regularly, and overall receive a satisfactory quality of education. The school resources are managed efficiently.

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- They appreciate and value their child's place at the school.
- The school is approachable when problems occur.
- Their children develop good attitudes and confidence to learn when they attend this school.

What some parents are not happy about

um, and what they are learning each week.

Inspectors' judgements support the views of parents. The school listens to parents' concerns; however it does not yet provide enough information about what their children are learning.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to continue to improve the school, the staff and governing body should:

- raise standards by increasing the range of GCSE examinations and other appropriate accredited courses for pupils in Key Stage 4 (see paragraph **6**);
- improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 by raising teachers' expectations, improving their planning and ensuring that they always match their methods to the needs of the pupils (see paragraph **29**);
- ensure that the good quality assessment used in Key Stages 1 and 2 is extended across the whole school to help teachers base their teaching more closely on the prior learning of all pupils (see paragraph **42**);
- develop the provision for spiritual and cultural development so that all subjects provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding (see paragraph **43**);
- improve information on progress in curriculum subjects in the annual reports to parents, and write individual education plans clearly so that parents can understand how they might share in supporting the targets set and support the work of the school (see paragraph **55**);
- improve the system for monitoring teaching so as to ensure that all pupils receive a consistent quality of education (see paragraph **59**);
- provide clear direction by the senior management and the governing body, for higher expectations in Key Stage 4 so that pupils leave school with higher attainments. This includes setting clear annual targets for attainment based securely on pupils' current levels of attainment (see paragraph **59**).

In addition to these key issues, the school and the governing body should consider the following:

- work with the local authority and health authority to increase the amount of speech therapy so that it matches what is in pupils' statement (see paragraph **49**);
- ensure that all schemes of work contain extended opportunities for learning for higher attaining pupils (see paragraphs **29, 93**).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Forest Oak School is a mixed special school for pupils aged from 4 to 16 years. They have statements of special educational need that define their moderate learning difficulties. The school is situated in Castle Bromwich, which is north east of Birmingham. It is close to a large estate of public housing, a short distance from a large comprehensive school, and a special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The single storey building dates from the 1970s. A mobile classroom was added a year ago, and a science laboratory was constructed in the main building. The site is attractive with large grassed areas, but has suffered from vandalism because of its secluded location. The school admits pupils from the north of the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull, which has a very high level of economic deprivation.

2. The local authority funds 100 planned places and there were 106 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. Two thirds of these are boys. There are no pupils under five at present. Two thirds of the pupils are in Key Stages 3 and 4. The size of the school is broadly average for this type of school. Almost half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is very much higher than the national average, and the local authority average. Although 3% of the pupils are from ethnic minority families, none is from a family which speaks English as an additional language. This is well below the national average. Most of the pupils who attend the school travel on local authority transport. A few pupils who have passes provided by the local authority travel independently.

3. The school's aims include:

- Providing a positive, caring, happy and secure environment
- Helping each pupil develop to their full potential
- Enabling each pupil to gain confidence and competence in numeracy and literacy
- Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- Enabling each pupil to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally
- Encouraging each pupil to respond enthusiastically and to develop self-esteem
- Encouraging independence and self-discipline

1. Recent priorities have been

- improving access to subject specialist teaching for Key Stages 3 and 4
- improving the quality of the curriculum through developing schemes of work
- implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy
- improving the accommodation and ethos for learning.

5. **Key indicators**

The number of pupils who qualified to take the national tests in each key stage is too small to be reported.

9 pupils achieved level 1 in Literacy AEB; 7 pupils achieved level 2 in Literacy AEB.

10 pupils achieved level 1 in Numeracy AEB; 5 pupils achieved level 2 in Numeracy AEB.

5. **Attendance**

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7
	National comparative data	8%
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.2%
	National comparative data	1%

5. **Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	40
Permanent	1

5. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	14
Satisfactory or better	85
Less than satisfactory	15

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age-related national expectations or averages. The report gives examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. Where attainment is in line with national expectations and standards, this is reported in the subject paragraphs.

2. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall during their time in school, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. They make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Their progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. They make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Most of them obtain national certificates in literacy and numeracy, some at level 2. However, only one pupil obtained a GCSE pass in 1998. They are unable to reach higher levels of attainment and demonstrate better progress because they have insufficient opportunities to obtain national qualifications. Progress is satisfactory or better in 86% of lessons. Pupils made good progress in four out of ten lessons. In one lesson out of ten, pupils made very good or excellent progress. Boys outnumber girls on the school roll, and in all classes. However, there is no difference in the progress of boys and girls throughout the school. The very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds show the same pattern of progress as other pupils. The pupils with additional special needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder, or cerebral palsy make good progress.

3. The overall progress made by pupils in English is good. In almost half of English lessons observed, pupils made good progress and they made very good progress in just under one third of these lessons. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory. In one third of lessons, pupils made good progress in mathematics. Pupils' progress in science is satisfactory. In just over one third of science lessons they make good or very good progress. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall in religious education, modern foreign languages and in information technology, however, they make satisfactory progress in information technology lessons. Pupils make good progress in art, humanities, and physical education. Their progress is satisfactory in design technology and in music.

4. Overall, pupils make good progress against their prior attainments in English across the school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is very good. At Key Stage 3 progress is good and at Key Stage 4, it is satisfactory in speaking and listening but unsatisfactory in reading and writing. In Key Stage 1, most pupils make very good progress in speaking or communicating and in listening to adults. They make very good progress in writing. Higher attaining pupils learn to copy over letters. Others make satisfactory progress in developing better motor control, and control their pencils and pastels better when making lines or colouring pictures. Higher attaining pupils develop word recognition skills, using picture and phonic clues, for example, in *The Enormous Water Melon*. Some put words in the correct order in a sentence, and they recognise their own and other pupils' names.

5. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made very good progress in English. A significant number of pupils have widened their key word vocabulary. The majority of pupils show good recognition of initial phonemes, many phonic clusters and common letter blends. Their improved language skills enable them to listen and respond well in role-play situations and to tell simple stories, following a sequence of events. They gain better control in writing, and increase the range of writing activities. They form their letters more clearly, although they are not always able to do so independently.

6. In Key Stage 1, pupils can match up to five objects and are beginning to understand sequences of events. Higher attaining pupils identify circles and squares, write numbers, count to 10 and identify coins. By the end of Key Stage 2, they know the symbols for addition and subtraction, and can add single figures with help. Higher attaining pupils count up in tens, continue number sequences and can explain how they calculate sums in their heads.

7. In Key Stage 3, pupils can add tens and units, and can take away single numbers from ten. Higher attaining pupils can work out sequences of numbers, answer multiplication facts, add hundreds, tens and units and calculate

simple divisions. By the time they leave school, pupils can understand and use different types of graph, tell the time using different clocks, and work out the areas of regular shapes. Higher attaining pupils can add fractions and decimals.

8. In science, pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 develop a growing awareness of themselves and the world around them. They develop an understanding of life processes in Key Stage 3, and begin to plan, carry out and record scientific investigations. This develops through Key Stage 4 as they are able to use a range of scientific equipment safely during their investigations. They understand from a moral as well as a scientific viewpoint the need to protect the environment.
9. Pupils in information technology at Key Stage 1 develop skills in using the mouse, and clicking on objects they see on the screen. In Key Stage 2, they can play simple games using the direction keys to move an object on the screen. In Key Stage 3 they use menus confidently, clicking and dragging what they require from a menu or from the desktop. They understand what effect the different commands have on what is appearing on screen, and make choices about what this should be. In Key Stage 4, they develop their practical computer skills further during a short module at college. However, by the time they leave school they do not have the level of skills they need to be able to take full advantage of college courses that prepare them for future employment possibilities.
10. In religious education, pupils learn about the values of loving and caring, and about right and wrong. In Key Stage 2, they learn a range of stories from the Bible and from other religions, such as Hinduism. In Key Stage 3, they understand the story of Creation, and about the aims of the Salvation Army. In Key Stage 4, they are able to discuss the different arguments about the existence of God. They are able to study more stories from religious texts, but their progress is not maintained in the last few years of school. By the time they leave school, their knowledge of the facts about different religions is below the level expected.
11. In art, pupils at Key Stage 1 practise painting, drawing and other techniques, while exploring the use of colour. In Key Stage 2 they learn how to mix primary colours to make different colours. Their skill in pencil sketches develops and they experiment with different styles to show feeling in their work. In Key Stage 3, they are able to use a wide range of techniques, using tone and selecting colours to match the mood of the work they are presenting. By the time they leave school, in Key Stage 4, they are able to use three-dimensional work to express themselves, and show by their sketches that they have learned from other artists. One pupil obtained grade C in GCSE art in July 1999, but most pupils do not have the opportunity to enter for GCSE in this or any subject.
12. In design technology, Key Stage 1 pupils cut out and stick, assembling objects to copy a model made by the teacher. In Key Stage 2 they make lively dolls from cloth which they stuff, and paint to their own designs. In Key Stage 3, they learn to use a range of tools with wood and metal, and to follow strict health and safety rules correctly. Their designs are based soundly on the drawing skills they have developed in their art lessons. In food technology, they do not extend their learning because they are presented with work that is too easy for them. By Key Stage 4, pupils are developing good skills in making objects with wood, metal and plastic.
13. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about the Greeks and Romans and know about the lifestyles of the Roman soldiers. In Key Stage 3, they understand how people lived in England in the last 200 years, and can compare the climate and geographical features of India with their own country. They know some facts about the Second World War, and understand how to make a propaganda speech. In Key Stage 4, they know some differences between democracy and dictatorship.
14. In French, pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 can use simple phrases to ask for something, to say what they like and to greet others. They can read single French words, if known to them. Pupils at Key Stage 1 in music learn to sing songs and develop these as they move into Key Stage 2. Their sense of rhythm and beat improves. By Key Stage 3, they can recognise and talk about different types of music and how these are constructed.
15. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to move through space safely and in different ways. They stretch, curl and repeat sequences of movements. In Key Stage 2, most learn to swim and all can move around in the water safely. In Key Stage 3, they refine their swimming style, and develop precision in ball skills. By Key Stage 4, pupils learn to sail, and many achieve national awards. They run for longer distances, and show a range of physical skills, some of which have won them awards in competitions.

20. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

16. Pupils have good attitudes to work. Most show genuine interest in their lessons and are keen to learn. The good working habits reported in the last inspection have been maintained. Many pupils are enthused by learning. In a Key Stage 1 lesson pupils really enjoyed progressing in language work through role-play of the teddy bears' picnic. Although a few of the older senior pupils are disillusioned with school life and lack a zest for learning, they follow instructions obediently. Most pupils concentrate well. During a literacy lesson in a Key Stage 2 class, pupils listened with rapt attention to the story of Cinderella. However some older and higher attaining pupils find it difficult to stay on task and easily resort to fidgeting or daydreaming. Many pupils rise well to the challenge of more difficult work. In a science lesson covering the uses of medicine, younger pupils worked hard to complete a task differentiating medicines from household products. Pupils work well together. In a Year 7 lesson on textiles, pupils worked very well in pairs to learn about sewing machines. In some classes pupils give up easily and too readily expect assistance from an adult. In lessons where teaching is stimulating and enthusiastic, pupils readily offer suggestions and are keen to contribute. In some senior classes, pupils are passive about generating ideas and solving problems. They rely on staff to select the resources and show them what to do. Many pupils show real delight in successful work. In design technology lessons pupils are very proud of their finished products, as they are in art when showing off their masks for the Indian totem pole.
17. The behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. The last inspection reported that behaviour was good. Since then the intake of pupils has changed so that more pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Last year there was a high level of exclusions. Most pupils behave well in lessons and ignore the disruption from pupils with behavioural difficulties. Pupils are orderly as they move about the school. Most pupils respond well to directions. At lunchtimes the majority of pupils have good manners and know the rules well. During the inspection several chatted politely to the visiting inspectors. Many pupils are courteous. Doors are opened for visitors and adults are allowed to pass. However some pupils have limited awareness of others around them. They either shout out or disrupt others. Most pupils show appropriate respect for property, but there are a few who lose their temper and damage property and possessions.
18. The relationships in the school are satisfactory. Most pupils get on well with each other. In class good examples were seen of pupils working well together to benefit their learning. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils collaborated well in learning the twenty-four hour clock. However, some pupils make unkind or provocative remarks, which inflames bad feeling. There are very few pupils in the school from ethnic minorities but there is racial harmony. With encouragement, the older pupils are sensitive to the needs of the younger pupils. Occasional incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection week, when some older pupils taunted younger pupils. The rapport between pupils and teaching and support staff is good. Most pupils respect their elders and look up to them for support and advice. Often there is a shared sense of humour in class.
19. Pupils have a satisfactory level of respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. They enjoy learning about the religions of the world. In class, most pupils listen well to the ideas and suggestions of their fellows. In a Year 10 lesson on citizenship, pupils demonstrated a good level of tolerance and understanding as they democratically agreed on their campaign for the school mock election. During assemblies, either in the hall or in class, pupils show appropriate respect in the quiet moments for reflection.
20. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 classes are making satisfactory progress in being independent learners and taking the initiative. In a Year 4 class a boy offered, without a prompt, to fetch the scissors for a cutting and sticking session. The senior pupils sensibly take on small jobs around the school, but do not demonstrate sufficiently increased independence as they move up the school and prepare to transfer to college and work. Some pupils make a positive contribution to groups of needy people, by helping regularly in a playgroup or at a residential home for the elderly. Pupils have also helped to raise money for Comic Relief and a cystic fibrosis charity.

Attendance

21. The attendance of pupils is good and has improved since the last inspection. The average rate of attendance compares well with similar schools. Some of the pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have high levels of unauthorised absence. Most authorised absence is due to illness or holidays taken in term time. A

significant amount of authorised absence relates to exclusions. The school is working well to reduce the incidences of absence. It has very good support from the educational welfare officer and has a well-written, thorough attendance policy. Targets set termly are proving useful in improving attendance rates.

22.Registers are completed in line with statutory requirements. They are marked regularly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The time set aside for registration is well used to reinforce language and literacy skills. Registers are returned promptly to the office for monitoring and safekeeping. Most teachers clearly identify whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. However a few teachers use inconsistent symbols for the different types of absence.

23.The punctuality of pupils is satisfactory. Most pupils are brought to school on local authority transport and arrive on time for the beginning of the day. Some of the older pupils, who travel independently, are frequently late. Punctuality is consistently noted in the register and effectively followed up as necessary. Pupils move about the school promptly. Of particular note is the sensible way they immediately get down to work at the start of the morning session. The good attendance and satisfactory time keeping of the great majority of pupils has a beneficial effect on their attainment and progress.

28. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

Teaching

24.The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 85% of lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. In half of all lessons the quality of teaching was good or better. There was very good or better teaching in 14% of lessons, in which some excellent teaching was observed. Teaching was good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Here, the quality of teaching in all lessons was satisfactory or better and nearly nine out of ten lessons were good or better. In these key stages teachers' methods and organisation contributed well to the quality of teaching. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. In this key stage, nine out of ten lessons were satisfactory or better and four out of ten were good or better. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It was satisfactory in fewer than seven lessons out of ten. In Key Stage 4, teachers' expectations, planning, methods, and day to day assessment are unsatisfactory overall.

25.Teaching is most often good in art, geography, history and physical education. It is mostly satisfactory, with almost half of all lessons good, in science and English. Teaching in all subjects was at least satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. It was good in English, design technology, mathematics science and personal and social education. Aspects of design and technology show the most marked weaknesses in teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4.

26.The overall quality of teaching satisfactorily promotes the learning of most pupils. This is most evident at Key Stages 1 and 2, where individual learning needs are taken into account in planning lessons. As in the last inspection, the school does not provide sufficiently challenging work for the higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 4.

27.Where teachers have very high expectations linked to good planning, pupils make good progress. This was evident in English and science. The progress of pupils is also aided by effective management, for example in science lessons. Teachers who provide good challenge to pupils, by taking them through the lesson at a good pace and asking probing questions, contribute positively to their progress. For example, in humanities, physical education and mathematics, humanities and science. Pupils' progress is also helped by good use of resources, for example suitable text books in Key Stage 3 and 4 humanities, the use of video in physical education and number squares in mathematics. The good use of daily assessment to inform planning, for example in English and in a range of subjects at Key Stage 1, has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Weaknesses in teaching have a negative impact on pupils' progress. Such weaknesses include whole class teaching that does not contain tasks suitable for different levels of learning. This occurred in some English and science lessons. Teachers who spent too long on their introduction to lessons failed to capture pupils' interest so they made less progress than expected.

28.Effective teaching is well supported by the school's development of a range of teaching and learning styles. In this aspect of teaching the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school's effective implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has made a positive contribution to pupils'

learning. The lesson structure recommended by these strategies is used successfully to teach English and mathematics at Key Stage 3, and in teaching some other subjects. Lessons are strengthened by the systematic display of learning objectives that are then used profitably in discussion at the end of each lesson. Assessment is sometimes used well to inform planning, for example in English and art. Learning support assistants support teachers well, for example by recording assessment information. The school's marking policy is implemented appropriately, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. Access to specialist facilities, for example in science and physical education, help improve the quality of teaching.

29. Ineffective teaching often occurs when teachers have insecure knowledge of the subject. For example, in teaching reading to older pupils, the teacher was not aware of the possible range of approaches so limited the progress they made. Teachers' planning in Key Stage 4, particularly in Year 11, is insufficiently based on schemes of work. The lack of a framework for teaching limits its effectiveness. Assessment systems are not used consistently, and the results are rarely used to set plan new learning objectives. The school's homework policy is not systematically implemented.

34. **The curriculum and assessment**

30. The curriculum satisfactorily promotes the intellectual, physical and personal development of pupils and prepares them adequately for the next stage of their education. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the curriculum since the last inspection. The National Curriculum is provided for all pupils. An early years curriculum based on the national desirable outcomes and early learning goals is used well at Key Stage 1. This gives pupils with additional learning difficulties relevant access to National Curriculum programmes of study at a later stage of development. There are good opportunities for integration with local mainstream schools enabling a number of pupils to make use of additional academic and sporting facilities.

31. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects. All pupils are taught religious education, and personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education. The curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is broad and meets the needs of the pupils. However, curriculum planning at Key Stage 4 for Year 11 is not satisfactory and does not cover all the programmes of study. Overall planning for English in Year 11 lacks long and medium term planning. Without this, the school cannot ensure that the balance of provision enables pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and reading and writing skills across a wide range of texts, as well as in communication and in reference to life skills. Throughout the school, pupils receive regular speech and language therapy. However, there is insufficient provision to meet all the requirements of the statements of special educational need of all pupils.

32. The planned curriculum takes sufficient account of targets in pupils' individual education plans. It provides satisfactory opportunities for all pupils to make progress. The amount of taught time now meets the recommended minimum and registration time is used well to reinforce key skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the taught time was below recommended levels. There are satisfactory policies for sex and drugs education within the programme for personal, social and health education. Careers education for older pupils is satisfactory and the school is well supported by the independent careers service.

33. The school has successfully introduced the national strategy for literacy. It has been well adapted for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2. It is appropriately extended to pupils at Key Stage 3. The national numeracy strategy is currently being developed and is having a positive effect on progress in mathematics.

34. The quality of curriculum planning, to ensure that it is matched to the prior attainment and stage of development of pupils, is satisfactory at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Planning systems are not uniform across Key Stage 4 and are generally unsatisfactory, although there is some good practice in one class.

35. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A good variety of voluntary lunchtime clubs, including music, sport and computers, enriches the curriculum. These are valuable experiences and widen the learning and social experiences of those pupils who take part. The residential trips, planned for all pupils, provide educational and personal challenges and enable pupils, in many cases for the first time, to experience living away from home. These experiences also develop pupils' independent living skills and initiative.

36.The school now has full regard to the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs which is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils' statements of special educational need are reviewed annually. Their literacy and numeracy targets are monitored effectively each term by the deputy headteacher. All pupils have access to programmes of study relevant to their needs. A few are formally disapplied from a modern foreign language, to receive extra support in speech and language, which is appropriate. Signing for communication is used well in Key Stages 1 and 2 to support pupils who are developing their spoken language. The new early years curriculum at Key Stage 1 is successfully linked to the relevant programmes of study.

37.The procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory. They are very good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory across the other key stages. The day to day assessment and recording of pupils' progress is very good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The development of self-evaluation in art at Key Stages 3 and 4 makes a good contribution to pupils' independence and motivation. The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4, although there is some good practice by individual teachers. The award of certificates at whole school assemblies celebrates pupils' achievements well although there is insufficient emphasis on rewarding attainment in core subjects. The school has not yet set annual targets to help raise attainment which is a statutory requirement for all schools.

42. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

38.The school makes unsatisfactory provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. As in the last inspection, there is still insufficient opportunity for spiritual reflection across the school. Many lessons lack a spiritual dimension and do not give the pupils an opportunity to appreciate the wonder of learning. In religious education, teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 provide a satisfactory insight into spiritual feelings. However, many other lessons merely cover the facts about religion. There is insufficient calmness in many lessons, to promote quiet reflection. There are too few visits to different places of worship, to allow pupils to gain knowledge and insight into other religions and beliefs. In some art and music lessons, there is a chance for pupils to appreciate beauty and creativity.

39.Since the last inspection, the religious education subject leader has worked effectively to develop a good policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that spans the whole curriculum. The policy has not yet been established as a systematic basis for all teaching and extra curricular activities.

40.Whole school assemblies take place most days. Pupils have class assemblies once a week. The quality of assemblies is satisfactory. There is no formal rota of themes, but the school effectively matches the content of collective worship with major Christian or other religious festivals as they occur. Some assemblies are enhanced by a good range of artefacts and role-play, while others are not sufficiently stimulating or appropriate for the wide age range of pupils in a whole school gathering. The Friday assembly is a good opportunity to reward good work and behaviour. However it is too long for the younger pupils and reduces the time for the first lesson of the day.

41.The provision for moral development is satisfactory. Opportunities to discuss moral issues are provided in some subjects. For example in a science lesson an effective, open discussion centred on the rights and wrongs of environmental decisions. The school has well established behaviour management procedures, that establish in pupils a clear understanding of right and wrong. Each key stage has its own rules for behaviour. The support unit area, to which pupils withdraw when misbehaving, gives the pupils a chance to reflect and say sorry for their wrongdoing. Sometimes pupils are over regimented and not given sufficient opportunity to develop their own independent moral decisions.

42.The school promotes social development well. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. The school is working well to develop the pupils' attitudes to co-operation, appropriate social behaviour and self-discipline. There are good opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons. For example, in physical education sessions teachers encourage the pupils to work effectively together for the good of the group or team. The pupils in Key Stage 4 attend college, experience the world of work and learn how to be independent when travelling. This all contributes well to their social development. However, there are limited opportunities within the school community for the older pupils to take on the rights and responsibilities related to their seniority. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities and residential trips to bolster social development. Older pupils effectively participate in vocational courses,

help in playgroups and homes for the elderly. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to raise money for charity, to help younger pupils in the school, and to learn to care for others in need of their help.

43.The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory and remains so since the last inspection. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to enrich their knowledge and experience of other cultural traditions. During the inspection week, all pupils shared in the celebrations of Divali, but the study of other religions is too limited. Display around the school is not sufficiently rich in images of other countries, religions or cultural celebrations. The school does not give sufficient opportunities to pupils, who come from a predominantly white locality, to understand and appreciate other cultural traditions. A positive contribution is made in music lessons to develop both cultural and aesthetic appreciation. A varied range of school trips concentrates well on the history of the locality and the pupils' own heritage and traditions. There is insufficient emphasis on outings to develop their interest in dance and other cultures.

48. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

44.The school has good procedures for supporting and guiding its pupils. These contribute well to the educational standards achieved. Educational and personal support has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given satisfactory academic support through an effective tracking system. Key Stage 1 pupils are given particularly good individual academic guidance, so that each one progresses at the best pace possible. Advice from visiting professionals, such as the speech and language therapist and educational psychologist, support the work of the school well. However, some pupils do not receive the level of speech therapy which their statements specify.

45.The provision for the personal support of pupils is satisfactory. All staff, whether teachers, learning support assistants or midday meals supervisors know the individual pupils well. Weekly staff meetings to discuss how best to support pupils with particular problems are a good way of making sure personal support is effective. All individual education plans include suitable targets for personal development. The school gives effective personal, social and health education. Most pupils are given an appropriate introduction to healthy living, health and safety issues and vital life skills. Pupils new to the school are settled in well. The younger pupils are introduced to their new class over several weeks to ensure that they are confident once they attend full time. They learn to cope well with school life very quickly. A wide range of clubs, trips and residential visits make a positive contribution to increasing the pupils' personal and social growth. The school provides a satisfactory programme of drugs and sex education to prepare pupils for life outside school. Older pupils are given a good introduction to citizenship, for example by participating in mock elections. Effective careers advice and appropriate work experience opportunities ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the world of work. However, pupils in Key Stage 4 are not given consistent guidance in preparation for independent living. Too much of the time, they are over-directed and given insufficient opportunities to develop in maturity and responsibility. At other times pupils receive insufficient preparation and training for independent travel before they are left to catch the bus to college or the venue for their work experience.

46.The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The use of assertive discipline methods has ensured that there is a good level of communication and consistency in managing unsatisfactory behaviour. Staff are vigilant as the pupils line up for lunch and assembly or prepare to come in from break-time or to go home. A central support unit, to which pupils are withdrawn when behaving inappropriately in class, gives a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on their actions. This is proving to be successful in improving levels of behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded carefully on incident sheets in pupils' personal files so improvement can be monitored. Pupils with persistently challenging behaviour are monitored well through individual behaviour management plans. There are clear reward systems throughout the school. The awarding of house points encourages pride in team achievement. Some classes devise their own effective strategies, such as stars on balloons or marbles in a jar. The majority of pupils appreciate the Friday assembly when their good work and behaviour results in the award of certificates and prizes.

47.The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance. Absences are closely checked and followed up by the class teachers and by the head teacher. For the past few years the school has set targets for improvement and as a result has gradually improved the attendance rates. There is very effective liaison with the educational welfare officer. She works well with the school to ensure that parents are fully informed about any absence problems and are encouraged to be supportive of regular school attendance.

48. The procedures for child protection are well established and effective. The head teacher is the person designated to liaise with the social services department. All staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow should they be suspicious of child abuse. The school has good strategies to deal with any incidents of bullying amongst the pupils. Staff act swiftly and effectively to support both victim and bully and to prevent any escalation of the problem. Health and safety is effectively promoted in the school. Staff and governors carry out regular risk assessments, aided by a clear health and safety policy. The temporary caretaker keeps a satisfactory eye on the security and upkeep of the premises. However cleaning cupboards are not always locked as they should be during the school day. The welfare and first aid requirements of the pupils are well covered by the knowledgeable school nurse and a team of dedicated first aiders. They ensure that all staff are properly kept up to date on the medical and welfare needs of each pupil.

Partnership with parents and the community

49. The school has an unsatisfactory partnership with parents. This is an aspect that has not improved since the last inspection. Many parents are not at ease with educational matters and find it difficult to communicate with the school. However, nearly half of parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaires and expressed solid support for the school. They appreciate all that is done for their children. Only six parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, and expressed some worries about a range of issues. Some of those attending were parent governors, who are not yet confident in their management role or ability to raise their concerns at governors' meetings.
50. The information provided to parents about their children's work and progress is unsatisfactory. Although parents feel the school is sufficiently responsive when they have problems, vital information is not provided by the school. The school provides an annual written report to parents before the annual review meeting. Nearly half of parents do not attend these reviews. Many reports give insufficient information on what children know, understand and can do and their progress. Some subject reports are well written, giving a real feel for the pupil in question. Educational objectives are not sufficiently specific or clearly written for parents to be able share in supporting their children's learning. A recent curriculum evening gave parents an effective insight into the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Parents do not receive timetables or topic sheets to let them talk with their children about what they are learning. The school is making a good start in establishing the homework policy and procedures, but these are not yet clear to parents. The weekly newsletters sent out to parents are a good feature, as are the phone calls made home to communicate good work or behaviour to parents.
51. The involvement of parents in the life of the school and their children's work at home is unsatisfactory. There is no parent teacher association despite efforts to establish one. Very few parents attend the annual meeting with governors. However, parents responded well to the questionnaires sent out last term to ask their views on the home school agreement. Many parents state that they cannot become more involved in the school, because they are too busy, live too far away or have problems with transport. Lack of clear homework procedures or straight forward learning targets and little information limits the amount parents can become involved in their children's learning. The good attendance at the recent curriculum evening shows hopeful signs of increasing parental interest in their children's life at school.
52. The school has good links with the local community to benefit learning and personal development. Twenty-one pupils have effective integration links with local mainstream schools. The older pupils make good use of local transport and shops to increase their life skills. Links with East Birmingham College and Solihull College are of positive benefit to pupils in Years 10 and 11 as they prepare to leave school. Work experience opportunities with local firms and shops are good preparation for life beyond school. The physical education curriculum makes good use of local facilities for swimming, indoor and outdoor sport. There is a good range of visits into the locality to support learning in the school, but still some scope for improving reciprocal links whereby the pupils help those less fortunate in the locality.

57. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

53. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The head teacher, senior management team and governing body have satisfactorily led the improvements since the last inspection. All the key issues have been addressed, although some are still not fully established. The aims, values and policies of the school are generally implemented satisfactorily. The improvements have mainly focussed on staffing and the accommodation. The head and deputy head provide clear guidance for all staff about expectations for their work. Teachers, including newly qualified staff, are provided with good support from management through the induction and staff development programmes. Staff meet twice weekly to consider the curriculum, and to share general information. This provides a satisfactory structure to the ongoing improvements led by the head teacher. Although some teaching, and the curriculum planning are monitored, with the support of local authority advisors, this is not yet consistent across the school. The monitoring of teaching is insufficiently rigorous to have a significant impact on its quality.

54.Planning has improved since the last inspection. The School Improvement Plan extends until 2002, with suitable outline plans for future years. Its priorities and the resources and people needed to complete them are clearly defined. Subject leaders have satisfactory curriculum development plans, and all job descriptions define staff duties clearly. However, they do not effectively monitor planning or teaching in their subjects across the school or key stages for which they are responsible. The co-ordinator for Key Stages 1 and 2 provides clear direction and an effective framework for teaching pupils under seven. This is a new aspect of the school's provision which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Senior management and the governing body do not set high enough expectations for all pupils, to enable them to leave school with the best preparation for the next stage of their education. The weaknesses that are identified in Key Stage 4 indicate that the school has not yet developed a satisfactory vision for pupils, particularly for those with higher levels of attainment. This is unsatisfactory.

55.The governing body works hard and supports the school well in its day to day work. It contains governors with good, relevant skills and expertise. The majority of its time since the last inspection has been spent on finance, building and staffing problems. Insufficient time has been spent on challenging the standards set by the school. Parent governors are critical of this aspect of the school's work. Their role as equal members of the governing body is not yet clear enough for their concerns to be developed into decisive action by the school. Governors do not meet the statutory requirement to provide parents with an annual report on their child's progress and has not established attainment targets for the school. Governors meet all other statutory requirements. They have a good structure of committees, with suitable terms of reference. Minutes of their meetings record decisions well, and provide a good overview of progress towards their targets. Arrangements for collective worship meet legal requirements.

56.The school creates a satisfactory ethos for learning overall. It is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in some subjects such as art, music, science and English. Good relationships and equality of opportunity for all within the provision further enhances the school's positive ethos.

61. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

57.The match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Primary teachers are appropriately qualified. There is no specialist secondary mathematics teacher. Other teachers do not teach the subject for which they have training, for example religious education. Subject and key stage leaders have job descriptions, but these do not include a requirement to monitor teaching in their subject. There are sufficient numbers of support staff for the size and type of the school. Many are highly skilled and experienced. They work well with teachers to support pupils with additional learning needs, as well as encouraging play during break times.

58.The arrangements for staff professional development are good, and have improved since the previous inspection. There is a staff development policy and training programme, for which individual training records are kept. A teacher appraisal scheme is in place although it is a little behind its timetable. All staff are trained in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and in assertive discipline. A number have also received training in autism and sign language. Their skills contribute well to the progress pupils make.

59.Subject teachers have attended relevant courses to update their skills. Appropriate arrangements are made to support newly qualified teachers. New teachers to the school follow an induction programme which builds on their experience. The school has plans to set up Staff Support Teams to help staff explore solutions to difficulties they may be experiencing. Learning support assistants join in staff training sessions and have access to training outside the school. Local authority staff such as the educational psychologist and subject advisors make a good contribution to staff development.

60.There is an adequate number of midday supervisors who work effectively as a team. They receive satisfactory informal support but have not received the training in assertive discipline which the rest of the school is using. This is a gap in the school's provision and affects the consistency with which pupils are managed throughout the school day.

61.The accommodation is satisfactory for the requirements of the curriculum. The school is a modern building which is accessible, clean, bright and adequately maintained. Attractive, good quality displays in classrooms and common areas enhance the school environment. There are spacious grounds with grassed areas and

some good adventurous play equipment for younger pupils. The site is well maintained, free from litter with no evidence of graffiti. The school has suffered from vandalism and break-ins because of its isolated location. Fire appliances are regularly checked and fire drills take place at suitable intervals. There are sufficient toilets for pupils, as well as girls' and boys' changing facilities and showers, which is an improvement on the last inspection. The number of toilets for staff is inadequate.

62. Classrooms provide generally adequate accommodation for teaching. However some are too cramped when used by the larger classes. The completion of the science laboratory marks an improvement in provision for older pupils. The information technology teaching area is not yet complete, is currently too noisy and is also a thoroughfare to the design technology area. Although the facilities for design technology are satisfactory they do not enable larger scale metal work to be taught. This limits the Key Stage 4 vocational curriculum. The science, design technology and food technology areas cannot accommodate all pupils from the larger classes. This creates inefficiencies in the use of school resources, because classes are split, which puts pressure on teacher time. The art and music rooms provide suitable teaching accommodation although the latter is inadequately soundproofed. The facilities of the food technology room are inadequate, but improvement work is planned. The newly furnished library is pleasant and comfortable and can accommodate class groups. The labelling and classification system does not promote pupils' ability to use books independently. The support unit is adequate in size but does not afford privacy to pupils who may be in distress. The hall can accommodate the whole school for assemblies and lunch. It is unsuitable for some physical education activities with older pupils, who therefore have to travel to off-site sports facilities.

63. The provision of resources to teach the curriculum effectively is satisfactory overall. The spending per pupil on learning resources has steadily increased over recent years. Resources are now adequate in core subjects, an improvement since the previous inspection. Classrooms have sufficient everyday materials such as stationery, and appropriate resources and sufficient books are available to implement the national literacy and numeracy strategies. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support topic work. The number of computers with up to date facilities such as CD Roms and the internet is unsatisfactory. The school's bid for computers will be funded from April 2000 as part of the National Grid for Learning. There are satisfactory plans to implement this. Resources for teaching music are good. Library resources have improved since the previous inspection. However, there are insufficient books and audio tapes for older pupils to encourage them to continue with their reading, even though they find this difficult.

64. Pupils in Key Stage 4 benefit from the courses at the local college to develop their independence skills. Good use is made of work experience opportunities with local businesses and other facilities to complement the resources available in school. A good range of local sports facilities adds to the limited resources for the older pupils in school. Residential trips enhance the resources of the school by providing challenging opportunities for outdoor adventurous pursuits and wider opportunities for developing their social and independence skills.

69. **The efficiency of the school**

65. The efficiency of the school is good overall. There is good medium and long term planning to use the delegated budget to support school improvements, and the school is run efficiently. The Finance Committee, which has suitable terms of reference, benefits from the financial expertise of governors. The school and governing body have used the school's reserves very efficiently to improve the building, and enhance the range of staff skills. They understand well how to get the best value for all areas of expenditure, and make good use of the skills of the Finance Clerk to maintain and report on progress within the allocated budget. Support staff are paid for preparation, training and meeting times with teachers. This is efficient, as it ensures the consistently good quality of their work.

66. Pupils and staff are generally organised well, to make best use of resources. Occasionally two teachers are used to cover classes, instead of support staff. This is inefficient but is partly a result of inadequacies in the accommodation. Teachers make good use of support staff skills, for example, getting them to record and assess pupils in lessons. Specialist teachers are now efficiently using their knowledge to teach their subjects across Key Stages 3 and 4, and sometimes in Key Stage 1 and 2. Specialist rooms for science, art, computers, design technology and music are used well. Lunchtime clubs such as computers, music and music technology make good use of staff and resources to enhance the educational opportunities for pupils. All available space in the small classrooms is used well. Whole classes cannot be taught all at once in safety, in the science and design technology areas. This leads to inefficiencies in staffing, as split classes increase

the amount of teacher time required. The grounds are used well to develop horticulture for older pupils, as well as for outdoor activities at play times. The minibus is used well to support integration and cultural outings.

67. The part-time Finance Clerk provides very efficient accounts using a computerised system which links with the local authority's system. She provides monthly reports and helps prepare the budget in outline. This enables senior managers and governors to concentrate on strategic planning. No other member of staff has training in the use of the computerised accounts system. There is a suitable contract with the local authority to provide financial services should the Finance Clerk be absent. A local authority audit of the school confirms that the financial controls are satisfactory. Subject leaders are not sufficiently required to monitor their own budgets and rely too heavily on the Finance Clerk to do so. All accounting requirements for management of cheques, petty cash and orders are efficiently carried out. The school office supports the work of the school efficiently.

68. The school has made satisfactory progress in overcoming the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. The standards of education achieved are generally satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and good attendance. The quality of education is satisfactory, and the school is managed efficiently by the senior management and governing body. Its capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

73. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

73. English

69. Since the last inspection there has been good progress in the development of a curriculum that supports pupils' communication and literacy. There are substantial programmes of study based on the National Curriculum and the national literacy strategy. In addition, new schemes of work for language and literacy taken from the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five are being used for pupils at Key Stage 1. These are designed to provide a basis for access to the National Curriculum. Clearly identified systems are used for assessing progress across all attainment targets. There are varied and appropriate programmes of study for pupils particularly at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

70. Overall, pupils make good progress against their prior attainments in English across the school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is very good. At Key Stage 3 progress is good and at Key Stage 4, it is satisfactory in speaking and listening but unsatisfactory in reading and writing.

71. During Key Stage 1, the use of the literacy strategy improves pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the reading process. The regular repetition of the routines of the literacy hour helps many pupils concentrate better and improve their communication skills. Most make very good progress in speaking or communicating and in listening to adults. Pupils develop their range of responses through better eye contact, vocalisation, responding well to instructions and asking questions in whole sentences such as "are we going to eat it?" By the end of a lesson with role-play on the 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', nearly all pupils expressed their thoughts and ideas and respond well to questions. Higher attaining pupils develop word recognition skills, using picture and phonic clues, for example, in The 'Enormous Water Melon'. Some put words in the correct order in a sentence, and they recognise their own and other pupils' names. One or two write their surname with the aid of a model. All are well helped by the use of Makaton signs and symbols. They make very good progress in writing. Higher attaining pupils learn to copy over letters. Others make satisfactory progress in improving their motor control, and control their pencils and pastels better when making lines or colouring pictures.

72. Pupils make very good progress during Key Stage 2. The literacy strategy is, again, very significant in enabling pupils to develop reading and writing skills further. Listening and speaking skills have developed well. Some pupils enhance their spoken communication by signing and pupils listen well to each other. They respond well in role-play situations and tell simple stories. By the age of eleven, many pupils have widened their key word vocabulary. The majority of pupils show good recognition of initial phonemes, many phonic clusters and common letter blends. In a lesson using a range of reading books, they were able to identify the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, identify photographs and drawings and understand how they are used in the books. Other pupils make very good progress in understanding and remembering the story of Cinderella. They use symbol-supported text to develop reading skills. Progress in writing is marked by an increasing range of writing activities and better colouring. They copy the patterns of letters with more clarity and confidence and write over or under letters, words and sentences.

73. Progress during Key Stage 3 is, for the majority of pupils, good. The literacy strategy, which has been extended to older pupils, provides a very good curriculum framework for planning. A class reading of the book 'The Cliffhanger' led pupils to develop spontaneous and creative ideas. Pupils become more aware of what constitutes good listening skills and take turns readily. As they mature, higher attaining pupils read simple texts fluently, improve intonation and expression and use a variety of strategies to deal with unfamiliar words. Pupils have made progress in handwriting and some produce accurate letter formation. They have an awareness of punctuation, know common letter blends and write good book reviews. They are familiar with different writing styles. In one lesson, Year 9 pupils very quickly adapted their writing to suit the need to give information for a newspaper article. Progress over time for a few lower attaining pupils has been unsatisfactory, particularly in reading. This is due to inadequate teaching of early reading skills to older pupils.

74.Overall, during Key Stage, 4 the majority of pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Progress in speaking and listening is good but progress in reading and writing is unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, particularly in writing more extensively and in greater depth. Pupils speak well for a range of different occasions such as answering the telephone, making appointments and other social skills that require good communication. Year 11 pupils also worked well in a dramatic presentation of a trial in a magistrate's court. They acted out their roles with feeling and understanding. In a lesson on 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' they showed skill in asking a variety of questions to solve a murder mystery. Lower attaining pupils are now successfully developing initial reading skills due to the development of new learning programmes and additional one to one support. In general, however, reading skills are not sufficiently developed during Key Stage 4 for the majority of pupils. Whilst reading in class, despite great efforts by pupils, they make insufficient progress in developing greater fluency because of insufficient guidance by the teacher. They enjoy reading their own descriptions of 'When the Whales Came'. Much of the written work at Key Stage 4 concentrates on functional writing skills, such as those needed to fill in application forms or write letters for employment. Some writing is based on their class reading book. This is too often limited to copying sections of text and filling in words in sentences and phrases and does not sufficiently extend their ability to write.

75.Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Many pupils are enthusiastic about their work. They develop an increasing ability to stay on task, in line with their age and stage of development. With support and repetition, they follow instructions sensibly and have very good relations with adults. Very young pupils, in a lesson based on the role play for the Teddy Bear's Picnic, waited with great enjoyment for their turn to role-play chasing the teddy. Older pupils show interest and enjoyment listening to others, and clap enthusiastically at fluent responses to questions. They help one another by suggesting right answers. Many respond well to the routines of the literacy hour. They move smoothly from whole group work to individual, paired or group work. In a literacy hour in Year 7, for example, their good ability to concentrate enabled them to build on basic words and phrases to develop more complex and effective language.

76.The quality of English teaching is good overall. Eighty-five per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory or better and of this, 46% were good, very good or excellent. The majority of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good. At Key Stage 3, the quality ranges from excellent to satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, in one-third of the lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. In the other two-thirds of lessons, teaching at Key Stage 4 was satisfactory and in one lesson was good. Overall, teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection when most teaching was described as sound. There has also been considerable progress in teaching lower attaining pupils. Very good use is made of signs and symbol vocabulary to aid communication at Key Stage 1 and 2. The range of work for higher attaining pupils is not consistently satisfactory at all key stages.

77.The best teaching occurs in lessons where the work is very carefully matched to pupils' levels of understanding. In these lessons, teaching is characterised by great force and flair by teachers who inject a sense of urgency into the lessons. They have high expectations for all their pupils. Teachers have made very good use of the National Literacy Strategy although occasionally insufficient use is made of the last part of the lesson. Teachers make clear to pupils what they will be doing at each stage of the lesson firstly, in the shared reading or writing, and then in the small group work. In a literacy hour for older pupils at Key Stage 2, very high expectations, good pace and the use of assessment enabled pupils to make very good progress when reading and listening to a tape of the story of Cinderella. All groups are guided and supported very well and learning support assistants are very effective in leading and supporting groups and individual pupils. The pace of lessons is frequently good. Teachers are sensitive to individual pupils who need more support. For example, older pupils make a breakthrough in learning to read. Where teaching is very good, learning outcomes are clearly identified and there are many opportunities for pupils to respond. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is insufficiently matched to the range of prior attainment in the group. Planning is poor and tasks undemanding for higher attaining pupils. When the planning for the literacy hour was not followed, there was a limited range of teaching strategies and pupils were very passive learners.

78.The use of information technology to support English is unsatisfactory. On the occasions that it was used, for example in a Year 7 lesson, pupils used a word processor to draft written work, taking pride in the presentation and skilfully altering the font.

79.The leadership for English is very good. The two subject leaders have worked hard to plan a curriculum that develops progressively within and across key stages. Their work does not yet fully include Key Stage 4, where the development of the subject seeks to take into account functional vocational literacy for school

leavers. Key Stage 4, planning does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

80. Assessment systems are good, particularly at Key Stages 1 to 3. The best examples of the use of assessment to inform future planning were seen at Key Stage 1. At other key stages, however, the use of assessment in curriculum planning is generally unsatisfactory. There is a wide range of ability in most classes. Individual education plans are used well to plan new targets at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stage 3, English targets in Year 7 are very good and identify individual programmes of study for each pupil. Targets in Years 8 and 9 are mainly the same for all pupils, with minor variations in phonic clusters. There are individual targets for pupils at Key Stage 4 but these are not always well enough reflected in lesson planning.

81. English makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The variety of resources available at each key stage is satisfactory. The library is a pleasant small room, which can accommodate a class. There has been an improvement in the number of books recently, although most age-appropriate books for older pupils are kept in classrooms. There is a need for more reference books to promote independent learning and an improved record system to encourage independent use of the library by pupils.

86. **Mathematics**

82. Progress by pupils is good at Key Stage 1, and is satisfactory at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Progress of pupils in Year 11 is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the curriculum and in teaching. By the end of Key Stage 1 all pupils are making progress towards level 1 of the National Curriculum. Lower attaining pupils understand and can match up to five objects, know that breakfast comes before lunch, can sequence a set of three cards, and can form a number 1 with a template. Higher attaining pupils have progressed to naming circles and squares, forming numbers freehand, counting to 10 and identifying coins. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have made sufficient progress to attain level 1 and aspects of level 2. The lowest attaining pupils know the symbols for addition and subtraction, form numbers with templates and can add single digits with support. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract single digit numbers, count up in tens, recognise patterns in number squares, continue number sequences and give simple reasons for their mental calculations.

83. During Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils have achieved aspects of level 2, and higher attaining pupils are working at level 3. Lower attaining pupils can add tens and units, subtract single digits from ten. Higher attaining pupils can work out sequences forwards and backwards, work out multiplication facts for eight, three and five times tables, add hundreds, tens and units and calculate simple divisions. At the end of Key Stage 4, as they are preparing to leave school, most pupils have progressed to working at levels 3 to 4. This is about the same level that most eleven year-old pupils would reach in mainstream schools. Pupils at this stage can interpret and construct bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts, estimate and calculate change, tell the time using traditional, digital and 24 hour clocks, work out areas and construct angles. Higher attaining pupils can calculate and add fractions and decimals, and work out the areas of irregular shapes such as rectangles minus internal circles. The majority of pupils obtain accreditation certificates in literacy and numeracy, some at level 2. There are no opportunities to enter for GCSE mathematics.

84. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They apply themselves well to independent work, concentrate and manage their use of resources well, persevere when tasks are difficult and show pride in receiving class rewards. At Key Stage 3, their attitudes are satisfactory overall. They can participate well in whole-class learning, help one another and show enjoyment and pride in achieving correct answers. On a minority of occasions pupils show limited interest and do not carry out the work set. At Key Stage 4, pupils' attitudes to learning mathematics are good. They concentrate well, are positively involved, persevere where tasks are difficult and work collaboratively. Their capacity to work in groups was too limited in the last inspection. They have made satisfactory progress in improving this.

85. The quality of teaching in mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 is consistently good or better. It is sometimes very good at Key Stage 2. Planning is good and supports the effective delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is largely appropriately adapted at Key Stage 2 by basing planning and expectations on an evaluation of pupils' attainments over the previous half term. In Key Stage 1, planning to achieve a match to pupils' individual needs is supported by weekly evaluations against their individual education plan targets and the use of information technology is well integrated. Across both key stages lesson plans follow that recommended by the national strategy. Teachers use mental mathematics and questioning effectively. Pupil

activities are well organised and teachers plan suitably different tasks. Lessons end appropriately with discussion and clarification of the main learning objectives.

86. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although it ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Strengths in the teaching relate to the implementation of the national numeracy strategy at Key Stage 3. Planning follows the same model as for primary aged pupils and is generally good. Teachers are clear about their lesson objectives, and appropriately use the agreed lesson structure. Observed weaknesses in teaching occur where the highest attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and where teachers do not manage pupils well.

87. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is overall unsatisfactory because only six out of ten lessons seen were satisfactory or better. The best teaching takes place in the course accredited through nationally organised tests. Where teaching is good, planning is closely based on the requirements of external accreditation. Teachers use good questioning to assess pupils' understanding. They challenge them to think hard, for example to use formulae. In these lessons, pupils are involved in practical ways and there are good relationships. Weaknesses in teaching occur where lesson planning is not sufficiently linked to a scheme of work and where expectations are too low for the highest attaining pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, there is too little mathematics content in the lessons, and pupils are not able to make progress in their mathematical skills.

88. The subject is being developed satisfactorily throughout the first three key stages in the school. The national numeracy strategy has been implemented effectively. In Key Stage 1 this is supplemented well by the inclusion of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for younger and lower attaining pupils. This enables teachers to match what is taught very closely to the levels of attainment of all pupils. All attainment targets of the National Curriculum are taught. In Key Stage 4, a commercial scheme provides an appropriate mechanism of accreditation for many pupils. However, the additional 'life-skills mathematics' is insufficiently linked to mathematical programmes of study for year 11 pupils. The limited accreditation in mathematics for pupils leaving school limits the progress that the highest attaining pupils can make.

89. The very thorough assessment systems in Key Stage 1, and their use in planning, make a significant contribution to the progress of the pupils. Activity sheets are very well annotated, helpful 'profile record' sheets are kept, and weekly evaluation sheets indicate progress against pupils' individual education plan targets. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 assessment systems are satisfactory. The use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 but is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils' individual mathematics targets are appropriate at Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1 these make a very good contribution to pupil progress through the weekly evaluation of progress against pupils' targets. In Years 8 to 11, the mathematics targets on pupils' individual education plans are too similar for them to make an effective contribution to learning. This issue was identified in the last inspection and has not improved. There is insufficient monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' work in mathematics to help improve standards and quality.

90. The school has used training well to improve quality and standards in mathematics. All teaching and support staff benefited from the two national numeracy strategy training days. Resources have been reorganised and improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Commercial resources have been supplemented well by resources produced in the school, such as a draft booklet to help parents of primary aged pupils support their pupils' learning. Learning support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' progress in mathematics in all key stages. At Key Stage 1 their contribution is very effective. The school's use of resources in mathematics is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in Year 10.

91. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' numeracy skills. For example there is appropriate use of charts, graphs, recording mechanisms in science at all key stages, and a use of appropriate recording mechanisms in physical education at Key Stage 4. In some subjects there is too little evidence of numeracy, for example in English and humanities.

96. Science

92. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in science. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in science targets within the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They develop a satisfactory awareness of themselves and the world around them, and many begin to develop the language to talk about simple

scientific ideas. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make generally satisfactory and sometimes good progress. They develop further scientific vocabulary and show increasing knowledge of scientific concepts. Most pupils gain a basic understanding of life processes and how these relate to the wider environment. They are increasingly able to plan, carry out and record scientific investigations, and to use safely a range of scientific equipment. Many pupils are developing an awareness of moral issues such as protecting the environment.

93. Pupils generally respond well in science lessons, and their behaviour is good. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils respond well, showing increasing awareness, concentration, and ability to work together. Most show interest and enthusiasm in lessons, though a minority occasionally present very challenging behaviour. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' responses to the subject are satisfactory, and often good. Most pupils enjoy and join in lessons and work with increasing independence. A few lack sustained concentration and on occasion behave inappropriately. In general, pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 show respect for adults and peers, take pride in their work and complete tasks set. They are aware of the need for safety in the new science laboratory. Pupils show particular enthusiasm when carrying out practical tasks.
94. The quality of science teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen, and all attainment targets are taught. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and relate to pupils' own experiences and need for concrete tasks, while following the school's science scheme. Teachers show satisfactory subject knowledge and awareness of the levels and needs of individuals. Signs and symbols are used well to support pupils' understanding. In Key Stages 3 and 4, teaching is satisfactory, and is sometimes good. Lessons are planned and taught to follow the school's science scheme. In Key Stage 3 and 4, lessons become increasingly challenging. There is sometimes too much talking by the teacher. Too often, worksheets are used rather than practical tasks. This was a weakness in the last inspection. Practical activities are managed well with regard to safety. Tasks are not always planned well enough to challenge the higher attaining pupils or clarify the understanding of the lower attaining. At all key stages, teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and encourage reasoning. Support staff are used well to support pupils' learning.
95. Overall the curriculum and assessment arrangements for science are satisfactory. The science policy does not currently reflect the time allocated to science, but there are suitable schemes of work for all key stages. These meet statutory requirements, are used consistently and are appropriate for the age and abilities of the pupils. The percentage of the school week allocated for science teaching is below the national average in Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are taught science by the subject specialist. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
96. Clear assessment and record keeping systems are used by teachers at all key stages, which have improved since the last inspection. However, it is not clear how frequently records are updated, or that they are used systematically to plan future learning. At the end of Key Stage 2 and 3, pupils' attainment in science is lower on national tests than on teacher assessment. Key Stage 4 pupils are unable to obtain national accreditation in science. Their opportunities for revising or taking structured tests or for developing study skills are too limited.
97. Science is led satisfactorily. The subject leader has succeeded in establishing a whole school science policy and scheme of work. Links between the key stages are not yet developed sufficiently to ensure continuous learning in science. The monitoring of planning and teaching in science remains inconsistent. Staffing levels are adequate for effective teaching of science. The subject leader is suitably qualified to teach the subject as a specialist teacher through his initial subject training, and subsequent short courses he has attended.
98. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources for science are satisfactory. In Key Stages 1 and 2, science lessons take place in classrooms that are adequate for science teaching. In Key Stages 3 and 4, science is taught in the newly completed laboratory. This is an improvement in accommodation since the previous inspection. The laboratory is however too small for the larger classes. The laboratory meets health and safety requirements, and suitable protective equipment is available.
99. The school's good investment in resources for science teaching throughout the school supports the curriculum well and has overcome the weakness identified in the last inspection. The new resources provide good opportunities for older pupils to learn to use standard scientific equipment. The school has yet to identify fully its needs for resources at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers of younger pupils also have access to these resources, which are efficiently used.

104.Information technology

100.The progress made by pupils in using computers is unsatisfactory overall, because there are too few opportunities for them. The subject has only been taught formally for a short time and resources were unsatisfactory until very recently. In the lessons observed, where information technology is taught systematically, according to a satisfactory scheme of work, progress was satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, computers are used to occupy time at the end of lessons but not enough for writing. Pupils therefore have insufficient planned opportunities to make progress in practising their skills. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are working at the levels expected of 9 year old pupils. They know which menu items are used to edit, and use appropriate language to describe what is being done, for example rotate the objects. Pupils in Year 7 use a French programme, with support, to design a menu in French, and to calculate how much the bill will cost. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have basic understanding of how to set out a worksheet to prepare a graph. They know where to find numbers and letters on the keyboard, and operate simple keyboard controls. They point, click and drag from the menu. The arrangements made by the school for Year 11 pupils to follow a computer course at college help improve their progress by the time they leave school.

101.Pupils enjoy working on computers. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 enjoy operating a simple counting game on the computer, for a brief period. Older pupils enjoy sharing the computers, and higher attaining pupils help those whose skills are more basic. They generally listen well to instructions, and follow them closely. They work well together and take turns. They accept adult help but try to do things by themselves first. When the pace of the lesson is slow, they become restless when they have to wait too long between instructions.

102.The quality of teaching in information technology lessons is satisfactory. Planning is good, and learning objectives are linked well to the scheme of work and programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The specialist teacher has a good relationship with pupils, and uses humour well to encourage them to try hard. He explains the processes well and checks that pupils understand what is required. He uses consistent vocabulary to support the development of pupils' understanding of the computing process. The step by step method of teaching is too slow for those pupils who have their own computers. There is insufficient use of visual aids to back up the verbal explanations. Good use is made of support assistants to provide support to pupils and to make notes on their progress.

103.The curriculum for information technology is satisfactory and meets requirements. There is good leadership of the subject to improve resources and the curriculum despite limited resources. The subject leader has good knowledge of the subject. He has made good use of his technical expertise to renovate and upgrade some second hand computers, donated by a local company, and has made sure that all software is suitable for the pupils' needs. This careful management of resources contributes well to the subject. A recent audit of staff skills has been used well to organise two training days next term to develop staff's confidence. Although computers are not yet well used across the curriculum, planning and progress so far have created a solid basis for this to occur.

104.There are too few modern computers with CD ROMs. The National Grid for Learning bid has been accepted, and there will be improved resources from April 2000. In the meantime, the school has made good use of its available resources within a designated classroom for information technology. The room is too noisy at present, and pupils have to share computers. More modern computers are shared between classes and their use is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of software programmes, and control toys, to enable all programmes of study to be taught. These include software to support other programmes, such as French, food technology and humanities.

109. Religious education

105.Progress in religious education, both in lessons and over time, is unsatisfactory overall. Progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and at Key Stage 2 is good but pupils fail to main this progress at Key Stages 3 and 4.

106.During Key Stage 1 pupils learn about values such as loving and caring for one another, and the difference between right and wrong which helps them to explore and express their feelings. Throughout Key Stage 2, they learn the stories of Holy Week and Easter. They know stories from the Bible such as Noah and the ark and Jonah and the whale. They learn about the Hindu religion. In a lesson on Divali, they understand the reason for the festival and take pleasure in making a diva, which they decorate with care. Through learning

about the need to say sorry they gradually improve their moral development, and are beginning to think about others. In a lesson on the meaning and symbolism of Remembrance Day, they developed an understanding of the sadness and sacrifices made, and explained the phrase 'not forgotten'.

107. After this good start to their religious education, pupils during Key Stages 3 and 4 are not able to build satisfactorily on their previous knowledge because of weaknesses in the teaching. Pupils in Year 7 cover more topics than in older classes. Key Stage 3 pupils study the story of Creation and the work of the Salvation Army. In a lesson on the causes of war, silly comments by pupils and their restless behaviour limited the progress that they made. During Key Stage 4, pupils have considered arguments for the existence of God. They have studied creation stories in Genesis and looked at philosophical beliefs, such as hedonism. It was not clear from the work scrutiny how their knowledge and understanding had been developed because teachers do not mark the work to indicate progress.

108. Younger pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They respond well to teaching that has strong tactile and visual activities, and enjoy looking at pictures and artefacts related to the Hindu religion. Some pupils work independently or in small groups without continuous adult support. They have good social skills and say thank you and please appropriately. Older pupils frequently display a negative attitude to religious education. For example, coming into class in an unruly way and not listening to the teacher's explanations.

109. The teaching of the subject is satisfactory overall. In the lessons observed, the learning objectives were clear and relevant for younger pupils and well matched to pupils' stage of development. Whilst teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure, there is a lack of emphasis in lessons for older pupils on the teaching of religious ideas. For example, in a lesson on the meaning of evil, no reference to the programmes of study limited the progress pupils could make. The lesson concentrated on the literal meaning of the word evil. Teaching is sometimes developed in line with assembly topics such as Divali. In an assembly on the Hindu religion, pupils were encouraged to dress in Indian clothing. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, planning is weak and not planned jointly by teachers and support staff.

110. The curriculum is based upon the local Agreed Syllabus and the subject has a secure place on the timetable. The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection in maintaining standards described in the previous report. The curriculum is enhanced by some visits to places of interest such as Coventry Cathedral. There is a satisfactory school scheme of work. In Key Stage 4, however, a new scheme is being piloted. Overall, there is insufficient coverage of the major world religions. There is a well-qualified subject leader who only teaches the subject to her own class. There are sufficient artefacts and reference books for teaching religion. The school makes good use of a local authority loan service and teachers have made many of their own resources. The subject promotes pupils' moral, and cultural development satisfactorily.

115. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

115. **Art**

111. Overall, progress in art is good. Pupils make good progress in art across the school against their prior attainment. The good standards described in the last inspection report have been maintained. A small number of pupils are entered for GCSE and achieve at age appropriate levels.

112. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils begin to explore the use of colours and how to paint and draw. Work in art is linked to other aspects of learning and they draw and paint shapes for the Humpty Dumpty frieze. They cover a range of work, for example collages, which helps to develop fine motor skills by cutting and gluing flower shapes. They are developing a good knowledge of primary colours. During Key Stage 2, pupils build on their knowledge of colours at Key Stage 1 and learn how to mix primary colours to make others. Art is linked to the story of Rama and Sita and other work shows satisfactory progress in making pencil sketches. Most can draw a face and are beginning to use colours to communicate feelings, such as a 'scary' painting.

113. During Key Stage 3 pupils show an ability to develop their work. They become more confident in using a wider range of techniques and objects of reference for inspiration. For example, in a unit of work based on Indian art, they worked through a number sketches and produced totem pole designs with effective use of colour. Pupils learn to use their sketchbooks to change and modify their designs where possible. Drawings

for a display in portraiture are beginning to be more accurate and imaginative, with a range of tonal techniques used and there is often an accompanying self-evaluation. For example, one pupil observed that an artist has painted a 'sad face', by using 'dark colours to make him look depressed.' Their sketchbooks also include evidence of where they have learnt from other artists such as Andy Warhol. Pupils in Key Stage 4 increase the range and complexity of their work throughout a range of media. For example, in a lesson to develop three-dimensional skills, they used clay to make a single figure or a group of figures. They respond well to teaching and use an increasing range of techniques to model figures.

114. Pupils' response and attitudes in art lessons are good. Younger pupils identify what they like and don't like in art. Older pupils work at a good pace without undue external pressure and follow instructions well. They begin to explain their ideas, are ready to show appreciation and comment respectfully on each other's work. They take pride in their work and are courteous to each other and to adults. Most pupils help clear up after lessons and are generally well-behaved in cramped conditions whether in their classroom or in the small art room.

115. Teaching is good overall. The range of teaching is from satisfactory to very good. Good teaching includes very high expectations of pupils. They are encouraged by detailed explanations of technique, to improve the quality, tone, shape and form of their work. The non-specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, and the specialist teacher has very good subject knowledge. Excellent use is made of assessment after each lesson for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. This includes pupil evaluation of their own and others' work.

116. The subject is well planned and led across the school by the newly appointed subject leader. It makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural aspects of the school. Resources are satisfactory to support a range of work in different media. The accommodation for art teaching is very cramped. It particularly restricts the space for older pupils to develop their work and curtails the extent to which good work can be displayed.

121. **Design technology**

117. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress during their time in the school. The progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 is good. All improve their skills in using generating ideas about how to carry out a task. They improve their accuracy in cutting out and assembling objects to a model, and begin to make realistic suggestions as to how their own plans can be achieved. They made spiders out of pipe cleaners to illustrate a nursery rhyme. In Key Stage 2, progress is good. Pupils cut out, sewed and stuffed cloth dolls that they coloured in using felt pens. In Key Stage 3, they continue to make good progress. They learn how to identify the correct tools for different materials, and to use them correctly and safely. Their progress in designing is satisfactory. The necessary link between designing and making is not yet secure at this stage. In Key Stage 4, progress in food technology is unsatisfactory, and no new learning took place in the lessons observed. Pupils in Year 11 who go to college make good progress in food technology. They make a range of food using recipes drawn up by the teacher.

118. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They concentrate very well, and work quietly with very good listening and concentration. They are very proud of their achievement. Pupils enjoy design technology lessons, particularly where they are using tools in a workshop atmosphere, as they are in Key Stage 3. They co-operate well with others, and help those who are having difficulty. They listen carefully to safety instructions, and remind one another to follow them during the lesson. All pupils show respect for the efforts of others, and take pride in their finished work. In the unsatisfactory or poor lessons at Key Stage 4, pupils' responses were satisfactory, and occasionally good. They listened well, co-operated with the undemanding tasks they are set, and follow instructions closely. In some lessons, pupils are lethargic and reluctant to take part. They show little initiative in preparing for lessons, for example expecting to be provided with pencils.

119. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because of the high level of poor and unsatisfactory teaching in food technology at Key Stage 4. There is very good and good teaching in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Lessons contain clear learning objectives, based well on the scheme of work. Pupils are systematically taught the skills they require to carry out later programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Their progress in these skills is carefully assessed and recorded. The teaching methods used encourage teamwork and good attention to safe tool use. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Non-specialist teachers make good use of the

scheme of work at Key Stages 1 and 2. All teaching by the specialist teacher for design technology is at least satisfactory. Teaching at Key Stage 4 was either unsatisfactory or poor in food technology. A positive atmosphere was established for learning, but the tasks set were undemanding and failed to build on the pupils' previous learning. Too much time was spent on revising basic hygiene rules, which pupils had learned several years before. Management of pupils was unsatisfactory, and they were not monitored sufficiently well when working independently. Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in designing and making objects using wood, metals and malleable materials. For example, key rings, enamelled objects and sensors to indicate when plants need watering.

120.The curriculum for design technology is satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements. It is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stages 3 and 4, although there is sufficient coverage of the programmes of study, the food technology curriculum does not provide the same degree of challenge as the main curriculum. Food technology appears on the timetable as 'euthenics', which is not part of the National Curriculum. There is good coverage of electronics design at Key Stages 3 and 4, and products designed by pupils are relevant and useful. For example, making light and water meters for use around the home or garden.

121.The subject leader is well qualified to teach the subject and provides satisfactory leadership. He creates a good atmosphere for learning. In the workshop, he encourages teamwork very well, giving less confident pupils appropriate support. The policy and scheme of work offer sufficient guidance to non-specialists in all areas except for food technology. This is planned separately, and provides insufficient challenge through Key Stages 3 and 4. The college course offers additional food technology which makes a positive contribution to the school's main curriculum for Year 11 pupils. Although the subject leader offers informal guidance to non-specialist teachers, teaching and subject planning is not systematically monitored. There is insufficient oversight of the curriculum for younger pupils. Links to the Key Stage 3 curriculum are not therefore assured. Good links are made with information technology, for example pupils have been taught basic computer programming, which they used to operate a light meter.

122.The specialist design technology room offers good accommodation for small-scale work for up to eight pupils. However, it is unsatisfactory overall because it limits larger scale metalwork which the school has identified as a need for vocational education at Key Stage 4. Tools for wood, metalwork and malleable materials are sufficient in quality and number, and are used well. There is good emphasis on health and safety and machine tools are kept separately from the main teaching area. The small budget for design technology has been spent well on up to date technology equipment, which enables pupils to design and make objects relevant to their daily needs. For example, a vacuum moulder and circuit boards, give pupils useful experiences which develop skills they are likely to need in future employment.

127. **Humanities**

123.The progress of pupils is good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn about where and how people live and explore different kinds of houses. They are aware of aspects of Greek and Roman history including the story of the Trojan Horse and the uniforms and life-style of Roman soldiers. At Key Stage 3, pupils explore life in England between 1750 and 1900 by identifying key features of home and work. They study other countries, such as India, identifying features such as location, temperature, rainfall, as well as a simple map work. At Key Stage 4, pupils learn about aspects of citizenship such as the differences between democracy and dictatorship. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 show good levels of awareness in undertaking and identifying source materials and evidence from pictures and text in books and from artefacts. Higher attaining pupils can undertake some independent writing expressing their thoughts and conclusions as seen in the work of a Year 7 pupil on the Black Death. A Year 9 pupil created a propaganda speech for Hitler which declared that "there will be more money, jobs and food and Germany will be rich again".

124.The pupils show a good attitude to their learning. They behave well in lessons and are attentive to their teachers. At Key Stages 3 and 4, they enjoy and are confident in using textbooks and listen to each others' contributions in discussions.

125.The quality of teaching is good. A strength of the teaching, especially in history at Key Stage 3, is the teacher's very good subject knowledge and high expectation for pupils' understanding of time lines, identifying source material and evaluating evidence. In a Key Stage 3 lesson, pupils focussed well on identifying pictorial evidence in an age-appropriate text to discover what conditions in towns were like in the 1800s. Lessons

have good pace and a clear sense of purpose. Lessons are satisfactorily planned with valuable repetition of key points and are characterised by challenging relevant questioning. However, plans do not always identify sufficient specific learning targets. This results in the assessing of the attainment and progress of individual pupils being less detailed than it might be.

126.The subject leader is confident in assessing the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and is able to identify and evidence good progress both by higher attaining and lower attaining pupils. There is a specialist base room for the subject with satisfactory resources and designated display areas around the school. The subject is well managed and the subject leader is clear how she wishes to further develop the subject and the resources for it.

127.The teaching and management of humanities has improved significantly since the last inspection. Detailed and comprehensive policies and schemes of work are now in place for history and geography and a subject leader has been appointed who has an appropriate specialist background.

132. **Modern foreign language**

128.French is taught to pupils in Key Stage 3. Pupils made satisfactory progress in the lessons observed, but their progress over time by the end of Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 7 are attaining similar levels as pupils in Year 9, because of weaknesses in teaching in the past. This is in line with the last inspection report, although the subject was then also taught to pupils at Key Stage 4. Pupils at both Key Stages are able to greet people in French, say which foods they like, select from a restaurant menu, and understand simple questions based on these skills.

129.On balance, attitudes to French are satisfactory. Pupils have very good attitudes to French in Year 7, but are less confident, and more reluctant to speak French in Year 9. However, all try hard with encouragement and support.

130.Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher is not a subject specialist, but has prepared sufficiently well to teach at the level required. Her style of teaching is imaginative and makes good use of conversation, and visual aids to maintain pupils' interest. The support assistant provides good support for individuals. The policy and scheme of work have been recently revised. They provide a satisfactory basis for gradually working through the programmes of study at a level relevant pupils' current needs. Teaching is not monitored, although support and monitoring of the curriculum is provided by the deputy head.

131.All teaching takes place in classrooms. These are adequate for written tasks, but role-play is difficult because they are cramped. There is a satisfactory, though small range of resources, including a computer programme designed to increase reading, understanding and spoken French. The teacher has made her own visual aids, and makes good use of these.

136. **Music**

132.Progress in music is satisfactory. Pupils learn to sing songs of increasing complexity and length. By the end of Key Stage 2, most children can sing a number of songs and rhymes and have an increasing awareness of rhythm and the qualities of sounds. They become familiar with using percussion instruments. As they move through Key Stage 3, pupils develop their abilities to recognise and talk about different forms and styles of music, including music from various cultures. They gain a simple understanding of how popular and traditional musical pieces are constructed and begin to read standard notation to play tunes collaboratively.

133.Pupils generally participate with enjoyment in music lessons. They are keen to use instruments, which they handle with due care although some pupils become restless and lack patience when performing in a group. Pupils enjoy performing and recording their work. While younger pupils sing with enthusiasm in whole school assembly, many older pupils need encouragement to do so.

134.The teaching of music is satisfactory overall. It is consistently good when taught by the visiting specialist teacher. He has good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 now teach music to their classes, but some lack confidence or recent experience in this subject. The teaching of music in the school contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development

135.The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and both attainment targets are covered. The school's policy and curriculum plan do not reflect current arrangements, although they are broadly satisfactory. Individual teachers who also have their own systems for assessment and this is not consistent across the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, music is used in other subjects, such as mathematics. Pupils practise songs and rhymes, as well singing in assemblies and special performances. The specialist teacher is beginning to extend the cultural diversity covered in music teaching to a satisfactory level. Year 11 pupils do not have access to a music curriculum., which limits their aesthetic experiences.

136.Leadership and management in the subject are unsatisfactory. The former music subject leader has left the school and the peripatetic secondary music teacher has no leadership role. The school has no responsibility for monitoring his work. The Key Stage 1 and 2 co-ordinator is responsible in principle for monitoring music provision in the primary years, but formal systems for this are not in place.

137.Staffing for music is good. The specialist teacher for Key Stages 3 and 4 is a trained musician. Key Stage 1 and 2 class teachers, as primary teachers, are qualified to teach music to their pupils. Pre-recorded music is used effectively in assembly, as there is no pianist on the school staff. Primary classrooms are adequate for music teaching, as is the music room. The music room is well stocked with tuned and untuned percussion instruments and music books, which are used at all key stages. The good quality keyboards are currently under-used. The satisfactory supply of recorded music is used to good effect in assemblies.

142. **Physical education**

138.Pupils make good progress in physical education in all key stages. During Key Stage 1, pupils move through space safely in a variety of ways, stretch and curl, recall actions which relate to particular sounds and are developing confidence in water play. Higher attaining pupils are able to use poolside bars to practice leg strokes. During Key Stage 2, pupils develop their swimming skills. Lower attaining pupils can jump into the swimming pool using various stretching positions and touch the bottom of the training pool. Higher attaining pupils develop the skills to swim 25 metres using a variety of strokes. During Key Stage 3, pupils make progress in refining swimming skills. The higher attaining pupils progress to being able to swim at least 50 metres, competently using a variety of strokes, and they use the 'push and glide' technique. The lowest-attaining pupils can hold the side and practice leg kicks, and some of the lowest attaining pupils can swim 15 metres, supported by floats. They develop precision with ball skills, for example throwing and turning and throwing through hoops.

139.In Key Stage 4, pupils' progress well in sailing, many achieving National School Sailing Association awards. They can sustain stamina runs, undertake different roles, regularly participate in health-promoting activity and spontaneously show an understanding of the principles of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have won local competitions, such as the Millennium Youth games at Warwick University, where they represented Solihull.

140.Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. They are very good at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 1, pupils show good attention and concentration and work together well. At Key Stage 2 they are involved and interested, enjoy the activities and collaborate well. At Key Stage 3 they show application and involvement, sustaining concentration and working well in pairs. At Key Stage 4 they travel independently to off-site venues, collaborate in teams, are supportive and collaborative and respectful of each other's differing attainments. They respond well to challenge.

141.Physical education is taught across all key stages by a specialist teacher. The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Very good teaching was observed in Key Stages 1 and 4. Subject knowledge is very secure. This makes a good contribution planning and encourages high expectations. The pace of lessons is good. The level of challenge increases during lessons, supporting the pupils to make progress within each lesson and over time. Resources are used well, for example using short video extracts to demonstrate high standard team performance in dance. Relationships are very good. The good assessment system is used well to plan future teaching. The use of external swimming and sailing instructors provides additional good specialist teaching.

142.The standards achieved in the subject are positively supported by a number of factors. The curriculum provides good breath and balance across all key stages. Planning helpfully identifies skills to be taught on year by year basis. Half-termly plans set out learning objectives that are systematically assessed. Assessment in physical education is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject makes a good

contribution to pupils' social development and to the school's integration programme. Support staff make a good contribution to the quality of physical education teaching. There are now appropriate expectations about changing and showering, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Good use is made of local resources to enhance the curriculum. For example, donkey riding, swimming, circuit training, the use of a secondary school gymnasium, sailing, badminton and basket ball. This strategy overcomes the limitations in the school's own accommodation and is an improvement since the last inspection. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, for example competitive games with other schools, an outward bound course for Year 10 and 11 pupils, a school sports day and road safety and cycling proficiency training.

143. Although equality of access is secure within the curriculum, access to appropriate extra-curricular activities is less favourable for girls than boys.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

148. Summary of inspection evidence

144. The school was inspected by a team of six inspectors over a total of 23.5 days. A total of 52 hours and 30 minutes was spent observing lessons. School documents, including the school improvement plan, staff handbook, prospectus, minutes of the governing body, curriculum and other policies were scrutinised, as well as a representative sample of the pupils' work and their individual education plans. All subject leaders were interviewed and their curriculum plans scrutinised. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, support staff, visiting professionals and many of the pupils.

145. Forty-three parents responded to the questionnaire which was sent to them, and six attended the pre-inspection meeting, chaired by the registered inspector to hear their views of the school.

151. Data and indicators

151. 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
Y1 – Y11	106	106	No register kept	48

151. Teachers and classes

151. Qualified teachers (Y1 – Y11)

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

13.18

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

8.1

151. Education support staff (Y7- Y14)

Total number of education support staff:

9

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

280

Key Stages 3 and 4

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

85%

Average teaching group size:

KS1

7

KS2

10

KS3

11.8

KS4

10.6

151. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	637,982
Total Expenditure	649,282
Expenditure per pupil	5,956.72
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,029
Balance carried forward to next year	53,729

151. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	109
Number of questionnaires returned:	43

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	35	58	2	2	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56	40	0	5	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	40	48	8	3	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	44	46	7	2	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	48	45	2	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	42	49	5	5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	37	53	7	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	40	25	8	3
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42	47	7	5	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	42	53	2	0	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	56	35	2	2	5