

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Stoke Prior First School**  
Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique Reference Number: 116735

Inspection Number: 187254

Headteacher: Mrs J Evans

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Reporting inspector: Mr P Bennett

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707405

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ryefields Road Stoke Prior Bromsgrove Worcs B60 4ND
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev D Wight
Date of previous inspection:	18-22 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Rosalie Watkins, Lay Inspector		
Marie McKenna	Under fives English Art Music Religious education Special educational needs Science Design and technology Information technology	Leadership and management Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are very good. They behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and are able to work with sustained concentration.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage behaviour well. Pupils are encouraged to be independent.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff are highly committed to the school and its pupils. The leadership and management of the headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors have had a positive impact on improving the quality of education and raising standards of attainment over the last two years.
- Attainment is now above average in science in both key stages and in mathematics in Year 4.
- The provision for pupils under five years old in the Reception class is good.
- The school has done much to improve communications with parents and the wider community. Parents are pleased with the information they receive and the part they play in the life of the school.
- The school is clean and well cared for by staff and pupils. Classrooms and corridors are bright and attractive. Much time and effort is put into mounting colourful and interesting displays.
- Systems for financial control and administration are very good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The quality of spelling, the development of writing skills and the presentation of pupils' work across the school are not as good as they should be.
- II. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes not challenged sufficiently and do not always achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- III. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Marking does not always indicate how well pupils are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
- IV. The school has made insufficient progress in improving spiritual and cultural awareness in the last three years. This was a key issue from the last inspection report.

**The school has many strengths. It also has some weaknesses which will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school. Overall, the school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made important improvements since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching has improved particularly in relation to the proportion of good teaching. The school has maintained standards of attainment in most subjects of the curriculum and has made significant improvements in mathematics and science across the school and in physical education in Key Stage 1. It has maintained its ethos as a 'caring and ordered community' and has improved links and communications with parents and the wider community. Curriculum policies have been reviewed, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented and schemes of work have been adopted. The school provides a broad, balanced and consistent curriculum for its pupils. The headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors have implemented a wide-ranging programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and standards of attainment. The information from this monitoring is not yet evaluated systematically in order to inform decision-making or to make judgements about cost-effectiveness. The school has made insufficient progress in developing further the spiritual and cultural awareness of the pupils. Child protection procedures have been adopted successfully. The commitment and work of the headteacher, staff and governors indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further.

## Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

These results show that in statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, standards of attainment were well above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics when compared with schools nationally. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and with English as an additional language, attainment was above average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicate that attainment was above average when compared with schools nationally and average in comparison with similar schools. These results represent a significant improvement over the 1997 and 1998 results in writing, mathematics and science.

Evidence from the inspection indicates that in Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations in English. Standards of speaking and listening are above average but the high achievement in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 has not yet been carried through into Key Stage 2. Standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectations across the school. Attainment in science is above national expectations as is the attainment in mathematics of pupils currently in Year 4. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Progress in science and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is often good. Across the school high attaining pupils sometimes do not make as much progress as could be expected of them.

Standards in information technology, religious education, design and technology, geography, history and physical education are in line with national expectations. There was insufficient evidence of music upon which to make judgements about attainment.

The results of baseline assessment in the Reception class indicate that pupils' attainment on entry to school is broadly average though the proportion of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs fluctuates from year to year. By the time they reach statutory school age most pupils have achieved the expected levels described in the national desirable learning outcomes.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 9 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Good

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94% of the 36 lessons observed. It was unsatisfactory in only 2 lessons (6%). It was good in half the lessons and occasionally very good. Since the last inspection the overall quality of teaching has improved particularly in relation to the proportion of good teaching. This is having a positive impact on standards of attainment across the school.

Teaching for the under fives in the Reception class was consistently good with the occasional very good lesson. Teaching in Key Stage 1 was always at least satisfactory and was good in half the lessons. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and four out of ten lessons were good. Teaching was more variable with occasional very good and unsatisfactory lessons.

Across both key stages teachers plan lessons conscientiously and the best lessons contain explicit references to the National Curriculum programmes of study and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally at least satisfactory and often good. However, teachers' understanding of some aspects of the National Literacy Strategy is not yet secure across the school.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. The school is an orderly community.
Attendance	Attendance is good and contributes to the progress that pupils make.
Ethos*	Pupils' relationships with teachers and other pupils are very good. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to work are positive. Parents support the aims and values promoted by the school.
Leadership and management	Overall leadership of the school is good. The headteacher provides the school with a clear educational direction. The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators have led to significant improvements in the last two years. Strategies for reviewing progress against development priorities and for judging the cost-effectiveness of decision making are not yet fully established.

Aspect	Comment
Curriculum	The curriculum meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, religious education and health and sex education. The school is implementing successfully the National Numeracy Strategy but some aspects of the National Literacy Strategy are not yet securely established. The curriculum for the under fives is based securely on the national desirable learning outcomes.
Pupils with special educational needs	The school conforms with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make sound progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Pupils' social and moral development is good. Spiritual and cultural development is generally satisfactory but has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Teaching and non-teaching staff are committed to the school. Overall, the qualifications and experience of the staff are appropriate. The accommodation is good and well cleaned and maintained. The school has adequate resources to deliver the range of the curriculum.
Value for money	The school gives value for money.

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

• **The parents' views of the school**

**What most parents like about the school**

- V. The part they play in the life of the school.
- VI. The easy access they have to the school in order to discuss problems and ask questions.
- VII. The information they receive from the school about what is taught and the progress made by pupils.
- VIII. The standards achieved by pupils.
- IX. The aims and values promoted by the school and its caring ethos.
- X. The high standards of behaviour. Pupils like being at school.
- XI. The opportunities for out-of-school activities and the work pupils do at home.

**What some parents are not happy about**

- XII. Five parents feel that they do not receive

The inspection team supports the positive view of the school shared by the great majority of parents. Parents describe the school as 'caring, friendly and approachable'. In the last two years much has been done to improve the communications between the school and parents. The school makes appropriate arrangements to inform parents about their children's progress and is open and accessible to those who would like more information.

## · KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further the quality of education and standards of attainment the headteacher, staff and governors should:

### XIII. Continue to raise pupils' attainment by:

- raising expectations and improving opportunities for high quality extended writing across the school; \* [13, 40, 50, 84, 112, 119, 120, 122, 178]
  - ensuring that the National Literacy Strategy is implemented fully and consistently in all classes; [35, 40, 42, 53, 84, 128, 133]
  - identifying high attaining pupils and planning appropriately challenging programmes of work for them from their earliest days in school through to Year 4; \* [14, 17, 38, 46, 49, 52, 66, 95, 101, 102, 122, 131, 137, 145]
  - improving the quality of presentation of pupils' work and adopting consistent approaches to storing work. [22, 45, 120, 140]
- Develop consistent approaches to marking pupils' work to ensure that:
    - teachers record constructive comments relating to the specific knowledge, skills and understanding of particular subjects, which clearly identify achievement and indicate ways in which work can be improved; \* [47, 59, 130, 151, 181, 189]
    - assessment is used consistently and systematically in planning the next stages of learning for pupils of different abilities. \* [38, 47, 57, 58, 143, 151, 181, 189]
  - Ensure that opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness are planned explicitly across the curriculum. [61, 64, 158, 159]

*\* Denotes that these issues are already identified in the school's development plan.*

*The numbers in brackets relate to the main paragraphs of this report where these issues are mentioned.*

## · INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

- 1 The school is located in a small village close to the Worcestershire town of Bromsgrove. It serves a largely rural area made up of the five Stokes – Works, Wharf, Pound, Prior and Heath. In recent years the school has attracted an increasing number of pupils from outside the immediate catchment area. Local housing comprises a mix of council and privately owned houses. Property developments in the Stoke Heath area in the early and mid 1990s saw the school roll increase from 80 to 140 before settling back slightly. Currently there are 124 pupils on roll aged from four years to nine years. This is below average for first schools nationally. Twenty four-year-olds were admitted to the Reception class in September 1999.
- 2 Since the last inspection in March 1996 a new classroom has been built enabling the school to be organised in five single-year-group classes. The governors wish to maintain and possibly increase the number of pupils in school in order to secure this organisation without compromising the headteacher's management time.
- 3 The school serves families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Currently no pupils are registered for free school meals but this is not an accurate indicator of entitlement because the local education authority does not provide cooked meals. Nevertheless, other socio-economic data relating to the locality indicates that this is a relatively advantaged area and the school matches the broad characteristics of schools with 0 – 8% entitlement to free school meals.
- 4 Information from baseline assessment indicates that pupils enter school with a wide range of abilities including high attaining pupils as well as those with a range of special educational needs. Overall attainment on entry is broadly average although records suggest that there is some fluctuation between year groups and the relative proportions of high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs vary from year to year.
- 5 Twenty pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This represents 16% of the school population and is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- 6 Only eight pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is low by national comparisons.
- 7 In the last two years a new headteacher has been appointed and there have been significant changes in the teaching staff. Only one teacher remains from the time of the last inspection. There have also been substantial changes to the composition and role of the governing body.
- 8 The school's aims are:
  - *To provide a warm, secure and happy environment in which every child will feel confident that genuine effort, regardless of ability, is valued.*
  - *To develop each child's numeracy, language and literacy skills to a level appropriate to the best of his or her ability.*
  - *To develop a positive attitude towards work and to establish good working habits.*
  - *To develop in every child a set of moral values which will make him/her an honest and caring member of the school and of the wider community.*
  - *To develop in the children an awareness of the world around them and to encourage in them enquiring minds.*
  - *To encourage the development of physical agility and co-ordination through an*

*appropriate variety of activities.*

- *To foster enjoyment of music and art and to provide opportunities for the children's own development in these areas.*
- *To meet the needs of all children whatever their physical, cultural, linguistic or religious backgrounds.*
- *To develop the children's skills in the use and application of information technology across the curriculum.*
- *To develop a partnership between home, school and community.*

1 The main areas identified for improvement by the school are to:

- *develop the curriculum particularly in relation to writing in English, mathematics (implementation of National Numeracy Strategy), geography and information and communications technology;*
- *improve aspects of early years provision and induction arrangements;*
- *improve provision for high attaining pupils as well as those with special educational needs;*
- *update and implement the policy for assessment, recording and reporting;*
- *achieve greater consistency in curriculum planning across the school.*

• 10 **Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	15	31

National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Test/Task Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	27	29	28
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87 (86)	94 (73)	90 (77)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

  

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (67)	94 (83)	94 (66)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

.....  
1

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

- **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete	Authorised	School	4.25
Reporting year:	Absence	National comparative data	5.9
	Unauthorised	School	0.06
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

- 

- **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

- **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which was:		%
	Very good or better	6
	Satisfactory or better	94
	Less than satisfactory	6



- **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**
  - **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**
  - **Attainment and progress**
- 11 Four-year-old pupils entering the Reception class in September each year are assessed using the local education authority's baseline assessment programme. While the proportions of high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs varies from year to year, assessments indicate that attainment on entry to school is broadly average.
  - 12 Children under five years old in the Reception class make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and by the time they are five attain standards that are in line with national expectations in all areas of learning.
  - 13 In English standards of attainment across the school are generally in line with national expectations but vary between aspects of the subject. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 1999 indicate that attainment in reading was average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Attainment in writing was well above average in relation to all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. These test results represent a trend of continuing improvement since 1996. However, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work in both key stages do not provide evidence of sustained high attainment in writing. In Year 4 standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average and higher-attaining pupils achieve above average standards.
  - 14 In mathematics, the results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that pupils' attainment was average in comparison with all schools and below average when compared with similar schools. Fewer pupils than average achieved the higher levels of attainment in mathematics. This represents a significant improvement from the previous years' results. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of work indicate that progress is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 4 class is above national expectations. Throughout the school much greater emphasis has been placed on mathematical investigations and practical number work. This has had a positive impact on attainment in both key stages. There is less evidence of sustained high quality work in data handling.
  - 15 Pupils are making good progress in science and attainment is above national expectations in both key stages. Teacher assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicate that pupils' attainment was above average in relation to all schools and average in comparison with similar schools. This represents a significant improvement since 1998. The school has analysed the results of previous years' assessments and has targeted particular aspects of science for improvement. This strategy has been successful in raising attainment in work relating to materials and physical processes in both key stages. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of work confirm that this improvement is being sustained.
  - 16 Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make satisfactory progress.
  - 17 High attaining pupils are generally not being extended sufficiently in writing across the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 1. There is evidence that these pupils are being provided with challenging activities in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and are attaining standards above national expectations.
  - 18 In recent years girls have tended to reach higher levels of attainment in reading and writing in

statutory tests. The difference was particularly marked in 1999 and the school is seeking to address this. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics.

- 19 There is no evidence of significant differences in the performance of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 20 Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in information technology and religious education. Attainment across the school is in line with national expectations in information technology and in line with the expectations of the local authority's agreed syllabus in religious education.
- 21 Lesson observations, the scrutiny of work, subject portfolios and conversations with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress and attainment is in line with national expectations in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. There was insufficient evidence upon which to make judgements about attainment and progress in music.
- 22 Throughout the school the presentation of pupils' work is not as good as it should be. Handwriting is often irregularly formed and untidy. There are few consistent conventions for setting out work and expectations for presentation are too low. Worksheets are often stored untidily without a clear sense of order. This makes it difficult for pupils and their parents to see how skills have developed over time.
- 23 Overall, pupils under-five and in Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and in Years 3 and 4 progress in mathematics has been good. Since the last report the school has maintained standards in most subjects of the curriculum and has made significant improvements in mathematics across the school and in physical education in Key Stage 1. Challenging targets for year groups have been set in respect of improved attainment in statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 1.

• **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 24 The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and make a positive contribution to their learning and the improving standards of attainment. Relationships between pupils and adults, and between pupils and pupils, are very good and are a strength of the school. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and are very happy with the standards of behaviour achieved.
- 25 Pupils under the age of five settle quickly and are very happy and secure in the routines of the school and the classroom. They are willing and eager to learn. They develop very good relationships with their teacher, other adults and each other and their behaviour is good.
- 26 Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. They are well motivated, confident, enthusiastic and keen to learn. They listen attentively to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and offer willingly their own ideas and suggestions. Pupils of all ages settle quickly to their work and are capable of maintaining sustained periods of concentration while working on task. Many bring to school evidence of personal study at home. They co-operate well together, share resources, take turns and listen to each other's opinions. Older pupils work together particularly well during investigations in mathematics. During traditional British dancing in physical education, girls and boys dance together willingly.
- 27 Overall, behaviour is good. The headteacher, teachers, parents and pupils have appropriately high expectations for standards of behaviour. Parents support the school's behaviour policy

which is applied consistently in lessons. Pupils move around school in a quiet and orderly manner. A very small number of pupils are identified on the school's special educational needs register as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their immature behaviour contrasts sharply with the mature behaviour of the vast majority of pupils. They are generally well-managed in classrooms and teachers make appropriate use of rewards and sanctions.

- 28 Behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is satisfactory. Pupils use the quiet areas sensibly but have few opportunities for more organised, energetic activities. Few resources are available to them other than skipping ropes and this sometimes leads to an excess of chasing games. There is no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour. Parents are generally confident that any such instances would be dealt with effectively in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. There have been no pupil exclusions in the last three years.
- 29 Relationships in the school are very good and the high standards indicated in the previous inspection report have been maintained. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They are kind and helpful to each other and share resources willingly. They show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. There is no deliberate damage to school property or resources, no graffiti and almost no litter.
- 30 Pupils' personal development is good. Since the last inspection the school has increased the opportunities for independent work, particularly in mathematics, where pupils can exercise initiative and make choices. At the start of the school day pupils enter classrooms, select activities and settle quickly to their tasks. Pupils are also given classroom responsibilities and as a rite of passage Year 4 pupils have whole-school responsibilities as, for example, milk monitors and bench monitors.
- 31 Since the last inspection the school has increased its links with the local community and pupils have had the chance to sing and perform at a local Millennium Concert. The school supports a range of local and national charities and pupils have been enthusiastic supporters of associated fund-raising activities.

• **Attendance**

- 32 Attendance is good, as it was when the school was previously inspected. It is consistently higher than the average seen in primary schools, and contributes to the progress that pupils make. Parents respond well to the school's encouragement and bring their children to school regularly, seldom keeping them away without good reason. Most pupils arrive in time to join in early work in their classrooms during the ten minutes before the official start to the school day. This helps to bring about a calm and orderly start to the day's activities.

• **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

• **Teaching**

- 33 The school is organised into five single-year-group classes each taken by one class teacher. Additionally, the headteacher takes lessons to provide subject co-ordinators with some management time. She also takes regular timetable lessons in both key stages to support high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Other lessons are supported by classroom assistants or special educational needs assistants. Some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn into groups for additional support.
- 34 The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94% of the 36 lessons observed. It was good in half the lessons and occasionally very good. Since the last inspection the overall quality

of teaching has improved particularly in relation to the proportion of good teaching. This is having a positive impact on standards of attainment across the school.

- 35 Teachers have made a successful start to implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and the teaching of mathematics is good across the school with an occasional very good or unsatisfactory lesson. The teaching of English is satisfactory in both key stages with an occasional unsatisfactory lesson. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy is not yet securely embedded in class teaching. In the small number of lessons observed the quality of teaching was good in science and satisfactory in religious education. There was insufficient evidence upon which to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in information technology.
- 36 Teaching for the under fives in the Reception class is consistently good with the occasional very good lesson. Lessons are planned thoroughly and in detail with good knowledge and understanding of the national desirable learning outcomes. Activities are well prepared and resources are well organised and accessible. The teacher has created a very bright, attractive and stimulating classroom with many displays and labels that support children's acquisition of reading, writing and number skills. Pupils are clearly happy and secure within the classroom environment.
- 37 Lessons for the under fives are conducted at good pace with energy and enthusiasm. Through her modelling of activities, the teacher inspires a positive response from pupils as was seen in a lesson where pupils were developing successfully their skills in bouncing and catching balls. A variety of strategies are used to encourage children to be independent including a system for recording their arrival in school each morning. Pupils have responded well to these strategies and behave with often remarkable maturity and self-discipline. Relationships within the class are very good.
- 38 Good, well-planned use is made of classroom assistants and additional adults to support children's learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support. However, in general, insufficient use is made of baseline assessment and other assessments to identify precisely pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, high attaining pupils are sometimes not given tasks that challenge them and extend their learning.
- 39 Teaching observed in Key Stage 1 was always at least satisfactory and was good in half the lessons. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and four out of ten lessons were good. Teaching is more variable with occasional very good and unsatisfactory lessons.
- 40 Across both key stages teachers plan lessons conscientiously and the best lessons contain explicit references to the National Curriculum programmes and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally at least satisfactory and often good. However, understanding of some aspects of the National Literacy Strategy is not yet secure across the school and skills in writing are not being developed systematically through the literacy hour.
- 41 In most lessons teachers identify clear objectives for what pupils are expected to learn. In the best lessons these are shared explicitly with pupils as in a mathematics lesson where the focus was on identifying and explaining patterns in sequences of numbers. This resulted in high quality learning with pupils attaining standards above national expectations. In some lessons teachers explain activities without ensuring that pupils understand their purpose. This occasionally results in limited progress in learning.
- 42 In general lessons in most subjects are organised with a clear structure of introduction, group or individual work and a concluding plenary. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is

being implemented successfully with some brisk mental mathematics activities and well-focused whole-class teaching. In two or three classes the structure of the literacy hour is not yet secure and shared text, word and sentence level work, and guided reading and writing are not given appropriate, distinct emphasis.

- 43 Relationships in all classes are very good and teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond positively and this creates effective conditions for teaching and learning. The very small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed well, using consistent rewards and sanctions. Their immature behaviour does not disrupt the learning of other children.
- 44 Most lessons are conducted with satisfactory pace and effective use is made of the time available. In the best lessons the enthusiasm and energy of the teacher and the eager response of the pupils drives the activities along at a brisk pace and good use is made of time. In one or two lessons pupils spend too long on low level tasks, such as colouring in patterns, the pace of learning is slow and too little progress is made. Resources are generally well used and pupils are given many opportunities for first-hand, investigative work.
- 45 In most classes teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are too low. There are few consistent conventions for the setting-out of work and handwriting is often untidy and formed irregularly. Worksheets are sometimes stored untidily and in no particular sequence. This makes it difficult for pupils to develop a sense of progression in their learning.
- 46 Pupils with special educational needs generally receive effective support and are sometimes withdrawn for specific group teaching. Occasionally the withdrawal and return of these pupils disrupts the flow of lessons. In a small number of lessons, high attaining pupils are challenged and extended by the tasks set for them. However, in general, the learning needs of these pupils are not identified with sufficient clarity and they are not challenged sufficiently. Consequently, they are not always making as much progress as they should.
- 47 In some classes, and in mathematics in particular, there is evidence of teachers assessing pupils' attainment during lessons; making appropriate written notes about individuals or groups on short-term plans; and using these when writing future lesson plans. This practice is not implemented consistently across the school. The quality of marking is also variable. Although there is evidence of good quality, constructive marking at the beginning of Key Stage 2, there are examples in classes in both key stages of minimal marking and, indeed, unmarked children's work.
- 48 The school is implementing a homework policy that is supported and welcomed by parents. Homework is set weekly and relates well to on-going class work. Pupils take reading books home and many parents hear their children read frequently and regularly. Homework makes an effective contribution to children's learning.

• **The curriculum and assessment**

- 49 The curriculum provided for pupils is sound. The school has developed and is implementing consistently appropriate policies and schemes of work throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for transfer from first school to their next stage of education in local middle schools. There is a coherent overview of what is taught. However, whilst meeting the needs of most pupils effectively, the expectations for higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenging. This was identified in the previous inspection and remains the case particularly in writing and presentation throughout the school and in mathematics in Key Stage1.

- 50 The development of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has led to an appropriate review of the amount of time given to subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education. There remains a broad and balanced curriculum at both key stages, with additional time given to extended writing. Although this time is appropriately allocated, the activities undertaken do not, at present, have the focus and challenge they need if they are to have a significant impact on standards. The school is reviewing this and has appropriate plans to make revisions when necessary.
- 51 The time allocation to the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education is sufficient. The governing body is becoming increasingly involved in the development of the curriculum and there are now specific governors allocated to areas of the curriculum. The school meets statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education, the National Curriculum, health and sex education.
- 52 The curriculum for children under five is planned effectively to meet the national desirable learning outcomes. Overall, the planning of the curriculum for the children under five is good and provides a broad and balanced programme of learning experiences. However, the planned curriculum sometimes does not take sufficient account of the needs of the highest attaining pupils in relation to the development of skills in language, literacy and mathematics.
- 53 At both key stages the overall curriculum policy, subject policies and schemes of work provide sound guidance for teachers on what is to be taught and how equality of opportunity might be achieved for all pupils. The school follows the local authority's Agreed Syllabus for religious education and guidance for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The numeracy framework is providing a good structure to the planning and delivery of mathematics in most classes. The literacy planning and delivery are less secure and there are inconsistencies between classes and within lessons.
- 54 The overall provision for children of all ages who have special educational needs is sound. Procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs are clearly outlined and understood by all staff and implemented effectively. These pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and they are well integrated into the life and work of the school community. The school conforms fully to statutory requirements of the Code of Practice. Sound emphasis is given to the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills so that pupils can gain full benefit from the whole curriculum. Targets set for pupils are appropriate and their progress is monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 55 There is no discrimination against pupils from different ethnic, religious or social backgrounds. Through analysis of national and local data, the school is aware that there are gender differences in the achievements of boys and girls in English and mathematics. In order to alleviate these differences, individual pupil 'target setting for improvement' sheets have been introduced. Appropriate targets are negotiated between the pupil and his/her teacher, relevant actions to achieve them are identified and the outcomes are recorded. These targets are shared with parents. Although in the early stages of development, the indications are that these are providing a sound focus for learning. The school has plans to review and make further developments to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school. Girls and boys participate equally in all sporting activities in the physical education curriculum.
- 56 There are sound opportunities for pupils to join in extra-curricular activities including sport. Activities after school and at lunchtimes include craft, drama, French classes, games clubs and tuition in keyboard. There is collaboration with other local schools that enables them as a group to support pupils' cultural development through the visits of theatre groups, a useful extension of pupils' experiences in this small school. The school choir has recently taken part in a local festival as well as taking part in the Bromsgrove Festival.

- 57 There is a detailed assessment policy and the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory. This demonstrates improvement since the last inspection although there remain some shortcomings. There are sound procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils through performance indicators as they move through the school. There are appropriate baseline assessments for children starting school. Parents are involved at the earliest opportunity. At both key stages, there is a sound reading development record that identifies the skills to be consolidated. Annual reading progress tests are set for all pupils from Years 1 to 4 and an ongoing assessment folder portfolio of each pupil's work is kept and regularly updated. These provide opportunities for teachers to monitor pupils' progress over time but they are not yet moderated consistently. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
- 58 The school meets the requirements of statutory assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 and also makes effective use of optional tests in Years 3 and 4 to monitor pupils' progress. Testing in science and mathematics has been used effectively to identify exactly the areas of learning that require targeting through teachers' planning and teaching. The use of assessment is less secure in English. Although it enables the school to identify the broad area for targeting, as in the case of writing, teachers' planning does not always contain sufficiently focused learning objectives, matched to the needs of the pupils, to enable significant progress to be made.
- 59 Marking is inconsistent across the school, with examples of unmarked work and worksheets, and there are insufficient examples of formative comments being made that enable the pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve. This is especially true of some of the marking in English and in some of the foundation subjects. Marking fails to impact positively on the standard and quality of some pieces of work and on presentation generally throughout the school. Marking was identified in the last inspection as being an area that needed greater consistency and this still needs attention.

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

- 60 For the children who are under five teachers use personal and social education very effectively to promote understanding of moral values and the need to care for one another. Children respond to this very positively. Staff have a consistent approach which provides a firm basis for training in social and moral values and responsibilities. Pupils are developing a sense of spirituality in their work on knowledge and understanding of the world. Children begin to acquire independence through the strategies employed in the early years organisation. All staff act as excellent rôle models and children under five learn very well from the example before them.
- 61 Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils gain an adequate understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and feelings through religious education. However, spirituality is not developed sufficiently across the curriculum. This was identified within the last inspection. At Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to reflect, for example, upon the birthday of the world whilst at Key Stage 2, there are sound examples of work on the Earth and space that help to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness. Acts of collective worship follow appropriate themes and comply with statutory requirements. However, generally, there are insufficient planned opportunities for reflection and spiritual development.
- 62 Provision for moral development is good. The school provides a secure framework of expectations for pupils which is much appreciated by parents. Rewards and sanctions are known to all and are applied consistently by all teaching and non-teaching staff. The difference between right and wrong is taught effectively. Pupils are encouraged to talk over issues of concern in a way that ensures their opinions are valued. Teachers make constructive use of praise and there are effective structures for the rewarding and celebration of good behaviour.

The school's supportive approach is successful in ensuring that most pupils are conscientious and self-disciplined.

- 63 There is good provision for pupils' social development. The school provides a very caring environment and relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good. There are many examples of pupils spontaneously helping and caring for others. This is the case regardless of age, ability or whether pupils are in different classes. The school has a clear policy of developing skills of independence and of encouraging pupils to take responsibilities as they progress through the school. This is most effective. All pupils are confident with adults and make visitors feel particularly welcome. The sound range of extra curricular provision makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development.
- 64 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. They are given an adequate experience of their own and other cultures through religious education, French and literacy lessons, art and music. In addition, good use is made of outside visitors, such as the visiting theatre, the local vicar taking collective worship and visits to the local church for the Harvest Festival. The school has identified the need to develop the multi-cultural elements of the curriculum and has worked hard to increase the range of religious artefacts from other faiths. However, opportunities for pupils to appreciate and understand the richness and diversity of other cultures remain limited. This was identified in the last inspection as an area needing development.

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

- 65 Parents agree that this is a 'friendly, caring and approachable' school. Pupils come happily to school and are ready to learn. Good attention continues to be given to the welfare, health and safety of pupils, as at the time of the previous inspection. A good induction programme, including initial part time attendance, helps children to settle happily when they first join the Reception class. Similarly liaison with the middle school provides for a smooth move to the next stage in their education.
- 66 Personal and academic support is generally good. Hard work and good attitudes are recognised and encouraged, for instance by selecting pupils each week for mention in the 'Rainbow Book'. Pupils are helped to consider their own strengths and identify targets for improvement, by completing a separate section of their annual reports. Teachers also work with pupils to set individual literacy and numeracy targets. However, targets for the highest attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenging.
- 67 Management of behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the site. Expectations about behaviour are made clear to pupils and suitable systems of rewards and sanctions are used. Occasional minor lapses in behaviour are corrected appropriately, and good individual programmes are in place to support the few who have particular difficulty in behaving. Bullying is regarded as unacceptable and good strategies are in place to respond to any cases that may arise.
- 68 Good procedures are followed for monitoring and promoting attendance. Registration routines are managed efficiently, but in a friendly way, so there is, for example, a word of welcome for children returning after an illness. Parents are encouraged to bring their children promptly and regularly to school.
- 69 A suitable child protection policy was introduced in response to recommendations contained in the last inspection report. This policy still underpins the good arrangements in place for

responding to any such issues that arise. The school plans to review and update this policy in the near future.

- 70 Good arrangements are made to ensure a safe learning environment and the safe conduct of school activities. Effective routines are followed with regard to health and safety checks, and remedial action is taken promptly to address any concerns, such as the uneven slabs on the path around the front of the school.

• **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 71 Parents' involvement in pupils' learning is encouraged successfully, and this contributes to the progress pupils make with their learning. Children take books home to share with their parents. This involvement of parents has a noticeable impact on their children's learning from an early age. Good links with the local community also support the work of the school.
- 72 Parents appreciate the way that the flow of information, including information about the curriculum, has improved since the previous inspection, so that it is now good. The prospectus and governors' annual report both contain a range of useful information. Newsletters are attractive and informative, and are appropriately supplemented by other information such as leaflets about expectations in mathematics and of ways for parents to support their children's learning. The school organises successful curriculum evenings relating to new initiatives such as the numeracy strategy. Parents are consulted about such matters as the revised behaviour policy and the home-school agreement that most have now signed. Teachers are readily available to discuss matters with parents when any queries or problems arise.
- 73 Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress, though a few would like to know more. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the school makes appropriate arrangements to inform parents about their children's progress and is open and accessible to those who would like more information. The vast majority of parents come to the regular consultation evenings, while others accept appointments to meet with teachers at other times. Annual reports give a satisfactory picture of the progress a pupil has made, and in addition tell parents of targets for their child's future learning. Parents of children with special educational needs are told about their individual education plans and are appropriately involved in aiding their progress.
- 74 Pupils' progress with reading is helped by the way most of them read frequently to adults at home. Learning is further aided by the way several parents help regularly in lessons and with other activities. For instance, a group of Reception pupils were well involved with a parent in an activity to promote their counting skills. The parents' association contributes by raising considerable funds to purchase extra resources such as additional books and computer goods.
- 75 Links with the community and with local industry have been extended since the previous inspection. These now have a good impact on pupils' academic progress and on their personal development. For example, they are provided with free transport to a well-presented annual science fair arranged by a local firm, and they made a much-appreciated contribution to a recent village concert.
- 75 Co-operation with other local first schools also adds to pupils' breadth of experience, enhancing their personal development. Orienteering activities have been arranged for the older age groups in conjunction with other schools. Some limited opportunities are also available for competitive sports with other schools through a kwik cricket tournament.

## • THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### • Leadership and management

- 76 Overall, the leadership of the school is good. The headteacher provides the school with a clear educational direction. The governing body is very supportive and good relationships have developed between the headteacher and the governors. Over the last two years effective leadership by the headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators has had a clear impact on improvements in the school. The headteacher has worked hard to enhance the relationships with parents and the community which were judged to be good at the time of the last inspection.
- 77 Subject co-ordinators have established systems to monitor what is being taught in their subjects and how it is taught to ensure that curriculum requirements are fully met. In some instances, notably in English, mathematics and science, they have developed these procedures to monitor the standards attained by pupils. They use this information to guide the development of the subject. The recently improved standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 result from effective monitoring and analysis of pupils' performance.
- 78 There is a good ethos in the school which is based upon very good relationships and clearly understood expectations of good behaviour and caring attitudes towards each other. The staff, including the non-teaching staff, are working well as a team and present a consistent range of values and attitudes for pupils.
- 79 All staff have detailed and regularly revised job descriptions, which clearly identify their roles and responsibilities. Staff are working closely to these descriptions and this is enhancing the continued development of the school.
- 80 The governing body, after some recent changes in personnel, is developing its role in supporting the school. There are a number of committees but these do not have a clear remit for their roles and responsibilities. Although some of these meetings have formal agenda and minutes, their reports are not being fully ratified by the whole governing body. This is reducing the impact of the high commitment and hard work of governors in supporting the development of the school. Recently introduced subject links for governors, and a series of classroom visits by some of these governors, have been effective in enabling governors to learn how the school works. This process should develop further to cover all aspects of the curriculum and to become more closely linked with budget planning and evaluating cost-effectiveness.
- 81 The headteacher ensures that the governors are well informed about curriculum developments and pupil performance. The governors discuss the school's development plan and the budget in depth before ratifying them. Governors recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the school but they do not as yet have established procedures for addressing weaknesses systematically and keeping them under critical review. The detailed and costed school development plan provides a sound basis for the continued development of the school. It has provided a good focus for the school during recent staff changes.
- 82 The school has a range of very good administrative systems, which ensure that the day-to-day management of the school is smooth and efficient. The school has good clerical support, which ensures that financial control is very effective. Financial matters are reconciled accurately and regularly, and information is presented to the headteacher and governors for their consideration.
- 83 There have been improvements in the routine administration and organisational systems in the school since the last inspection.

· **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 84 The school benefits from a highly committed and hardworking staff. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers match the demands of the taught curriculum; however, there is more limited specialist expertise relating to the teaching and management of English and music. All teaching and non-teaching staff are deployed effectively. All staff have detailed and up to date job descriptions which define clearly their roles and responsibilities. Appraisal procedures are established and a good range of in-service training for staff is planned in conjunction with the school development plan. However, training relating to the National Literacy Strategy, has not yet impacted fully on teaching strategies in respect of the structure of the literacy hour and the implementation of guided writing activities. The non-teaching support staff make a significant contribution to the learning of all pupils and in particular those with special educational needs. Additionally, parents provide good support for pupils and teachers in many classroom activities.
- 85 The accommodation is in good structural and decorative order and is well cared for by staff and pupils. It is a clean and welcoming learning environment for pupils, which is enhanced by good, well-presented displays of pupils' work. There is a good-sized hall, which accommodates the whole school comfortably for assembly, and has a range of fitted physical education equipment. The caretaker and cleaning staff take pride in their work. The floor is well maintained to enable bare-foot dance and physical education activities. The recent carpeting of most of the floors has added to the warm atmosphere provided within the school as well as making cleaning easier and more effective.
- 86 There is a hard surface playground of reasonable size, which is marked out for play activity. Within the school grounds there is a small playing field, wild area and a garden area with a pond. All are well maintained providing a safe and secure environment for pupils, which is used to support learning in geography, science and physical education.
- 87 The school has adequate resources to enable teachers to teach all subjects effectively. Inadequacies identified in the previous inspection have been remedied. The resources are stored effectively and are accessible to pupils and teachers. The recently refurbished library and craft areas are well used. They are enhancing pupils' opportunities for independent learning as well as accommodating some small group withdrawal sessions for higher and lower attaining pupils. The range and quality of the computers available are satisfactory and there is a satisfactory range of software to support learning in the subjects of the curriculum.

· **The efficiency of the school**

- 88 There is good financial planning and management, which support the implementation of the school's development plan. The governors discuss the development plan and the budget in detail. Overall, they are making effective use of the currently available funds. Although all aspects of the school's development are accurately costed, governors are not yet fully evaluating the impact of their decisions on the quality of education and the standards achieved by pupils.
- 89 The financial administration and the day-to-day regulation of the school's resources are well planned and conscientiously carried out. The school has secure systems and procedures for controlling and tracking expenditure. Financial control and accounting are very good. The most recent audit of the school found only minor matters for attention, and action has been taken on all of them.
- 90 Good use is made of the skills and expertise of teachers and non-teaching staff to support pupils' learning. The staff are working as a team and have a shared view for the continued

development of the school.

- 91 The resources available in the school are stored effectively and are accessible to pupils and staff as appropriate. There are no major deficiencies in resources although the general level of resourcing is only adequate. Good use is made of the available accommodation and outside facilities, which particularly enhances pupils' learning in physical education, science and geography.
- 92 The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average and covers the full range of abilities. The quality of teaching is sound with many positive features. Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are generally in line with those expected. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and attain the targets set for them. However, high attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and there is some weakness in the development of writing skills. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound and pupils' behaviour is good. There are very good relationships between pupils and staff and pupils. Pupils' attendance levels are above average. The school has a higher than average income but higher than average standing costs. The school gives value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

- 93 Baseline assessment and the findings of the inspection indicate that children enter the nursery with skills which are average for their age. They make sound and sometimes good progress and their attainment is in line with the expectation for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the early years. No specific issues were raised in the previous inspection concerning children under five.
- 94 Children's response to their learning is never less than good and is sometimes very good. They work with sustained concentration and are able to co-operate with their peers on all tasks. There is genuine caring for each other and a willingness to work with others, regardless of ability. Children are mutually supportive.
- 95 Teaching of the under fives is good. It was good in almost all of the lessons observed, with some very good teaching also observed. The teaching demonstrates a good knowledge of the needs of the under fives. Lessons are planned to the national desirable learning outcomes. These match the needs of most of the pupils, but in some activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils who have reached the age of five. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives. The pace of lessons is good with just the right amount of time spent upon each activity. There is a good promotion of independent skills but the teacher also has a great awareness of exactly what is going on around the room and there are a number of examples of good intervention at the right time to promote and support learning. Dialogue between the teacher and the class shows mutual respect and caring. Questioning is very skilful and discussions are well controlled and purposeful. Children's contributions are valued, praised sincerely and the teacher always demonstrates a very positive approach.

#### ***Personal and social development***

- 96 Most children enter the school with sound social skills. They make steady progress in this area of learning, developing self-confidence as they learn to understand and comply with the routines of the school. They choose activities for themselves, select their own materials in artwork, and they are encouraged to take turns and to share toys and equipment. Children take responsibility for their aprons in creative activities and help one another with zips and fasteners when they put on their own coats for outside play sessions. The children co-operate well in rôle play and computer activities. At the end of a session they tidy up the equipment, materials and toys efficiently. Their independent skills are well developed. They take responsibility and make decisions for themselves and show a sense of responsibility for the feelings of others. They respond positively to their experiences at school, forming caring relationships with their peers and other adults. This reflects the comments by parents who feel that this is a caring community where children settle down readily and are happy to come to school.
- 97 Teaching of personal and social skills is good with a consistent approach that enables children to understand the behaviour that is expected in school. The management and organisation of opportunities for personal and social development are very good. The teaching is developmental and planned clearly and is a strength of the provision. All staff act as excellent rôle models and children under five learn very well from the example before them. The teaching uses personal and social education very effectively to promote understanding of moral values and the need to care for one another and children respond to this very positively.

• ***Language and literacy***

- 98 Most children demonstrate an average range of language skills when they enter the school. A significant number have well-developed linguistic skills and express themselves very clearly and with confidence. A small number of children have below average language skills but they are supported well and integrate with their peers effectively. Most children are good listeners both to adults and to their peers. Overall, children continue to make sound progress and at the age of five their achievements are similar to children of their age in other schools, with a small number of children attaining higher than would be expected. The Early Years staff place a great emphasis on the development of the skills of speaking and listening and, within some individual activities, good progress is made in the use of language. Rôle play has a regular place in the development of language skills. Along with whole class discussion, and small group work, with teacher support, each child is assured of quality time for speaking and listening every day.
- 99 The children have access to a range of good quality books in the reading area and the comfortable seating encourages them to sit quietly and enjoy books for themselves. Children handle books appropriately and with confidence and all are able to differentiate between pictures and text. By the time they are five years old most children are able to recognise letters of the alphabet by sound and shape and several children are beginning to read a few words for themselves. A few higher attaining children are well on the way to be good readers and their progress in writing is above that expected for their age.
- 100 Children take books home to share with their parents. There is a noticeable impact on attainment from this involvement of parents in their children's learning from an early age. Special graded reading packs have been developed by the school with support from parents. They contain books alongside suggested activities that a parent can do with their child. The books range from those without words through to books containing simple words and sentences. A small number of children are already attaining at this high level. The activities include flash cards of high frequency words, games and puzzles to make learning interesting and fun. Children's emergent writing demonstrates an increasing awareness of the conventions of print. They are learning to form letters of the alphabet correctly and some are starting to write words and even recognisable short sentences with minimal support showing an awareness of capital letters.
- 101 The teaching of language and literacy for children under five has many strengths, particularly in spoken language and reading. Staff create a calm and purposeful climate for learning which is maintained by consistent good quality questioning and interaction. However, for high attaining pupils who are already five, planning and teaching do not yet take sufficient account of the higher order literacy skills that these pupils should be learning. The school has plans to address this next term.

• ***Mathematics***

- 102 Most children attain levels in mathematics which are similar to those of children of a similar age in other schools. Skills and understanding are developed effectively through sorting and matching activities, activities using shape, position, size and quantity, through rôle play, sequencing and pattern making activities, and through songs and rhymes. There is a good development of specific mathematical language such as first, second, before, after, larger than and smaller than. There is a purposeful use of investigation to develop skills of hypothesis. For example, pupils use different sized containers to experiment with water to find cups that of a suitable size for Daddy, Mummy and Baby Bear. Children are learning to record their investigations themselves. One activity involved throwing first five, and then ten, bean bags into a box and tallying the results on a large score sheet. Most children count to ten confidently

and most are able to count one more and one less within numbers to ten. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, the curriculum is not yet linked to the National Numeracy Strategy and some higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

- 103 The teaching of mathematics is lively and enthusiastic. The teacher provides a range of activities for children to practise and consolidate their learning, all matched to the learning objective of the lesson. There is good consolidation of specific vocabulary and activities are well paced. There is good support by non-teaching staff and parent helpers who are well briefed as to their role within a lesson. There are clear systems for communicating information, between the class teacher and other adults, about individual children's performance during an activity.

• ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

- 104 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are sound and they make satisfactory progress. The 'imagination table' invites pupils to experiment with mirrors, magnets and musical instruments. Children experience the making of porridge and observe with fascination the changes as they add liquid to the dry oats. They explore water and sand. There is a confident use of information technology with most pupils demonstrating skills in the use of a mouse and space bar. They explore and make decisions about, for example, the correct materials for utensils and furniture for the 'Three Bears'.

- 105 Children are able to sequence pictures of a baby getting dressed applying logic and experience. They demonstrate concentration in the completion of a task and understand the importance of finishing it properly before going on to something else. They are beginning to self-evaluate their enjoyment of an activity by recording a smiley or sad face against their names on a recording sheet. They are able to cut and join materials with increasing skill. A range of construction toys is used to develop fine motor and collaborative skills. Photographs show evidence of trips to the woods to explore nature with children using their senses to compare the aromas of different leaves.

- 106 The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is sound. There are a suitable range of opportunities provided to enable pupils to develop appropriate skills and knowledge. Good questioning enables the learning to progress during an activity whilst maintaining a balance with the need to foster independent enquiry.

• ***Physical development***

- 107 The children's physical development is appropriate for their age with high achievement within some activities. Children show good co-ordination during both unstructured and structured activities. They can create the tiniest models out of plasticine, use scissors, pencils, crayons and paintbrushes efficiently. In physical education and other activities involving movement, most children have a good awareness of space and they can catch and throw with reasonable control and accuracy. They co-operate well, taking turns and sharing as a matter of course. They listen to instructions and follow them appropriately. Children who have special educational needs are well supported to ensure that they have full access to the physical curriculum.

- 108 The teaching is generally sound although there is also very good practice. The planning ensures that a range of skills is systematically taught and consolidated. Non-teaching staff are clear about the learning objectives and the skills that are to be developed in this area of learning.

• ***Creative development***

- 109 Children's creative and artistic skills are developing appropriately for their age and are evident in the bright displays of work and in the confidence with which the children select materials. They engage in collage work, and enjoy creating their own individual effects with a range of textures, tones, and shades. Children recognise all of the primary colours and many can name mixes of colour, such as grey, orange and purple. There has been a good use of paint in a number of ways. For example, they have made their own hand and footprints in paint, and they have painted pictures of themselves. All of their pictures show a confident use of the paintbrush, with a careful use of paint to create a good quality end product. In some instances, children demonstrate an awareness of body shape, facial features and the symmetrical representation of clothing.
- 110 The children use paints, crayons, and pencils to good effect, creating splatter paintings, prints, and observational drawings. Creativity and free choice are also encouraged. Plasticine is used regularly and children enjoy squeezing, rolling, shaping, cutting and forming their own models. Children attain levels in most areas of creative work which are typical for their age and make sound progress.
- 111 Limited musical expertise was observed but children sing together, recite rhymes, and use appropriate actions to the words. Singing is an every day part of the teaching and often marks the transition from one activity to another. The teacher provides suitable opportunities for children to experiment independently with percussion instruments available in the classroom.

• **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

• **English**

- 112 In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 standards in reading were in line with the national average and were well above average in writing. In comparison with similar schools the level of attainment is broadly average in reading and above average in writing. The results of tests since 1996 indicate that standards in English have been around the national average until the significant improvement in writing in 1999. This was mainly due to the targeting of writing as a priority during that year. The attainment of pupils now at the end of Key Stage 1 is similar to the national average in both reading and writing and they are making satisfactory progress. However, there are some specific weaknesses in writing and spelling and the 1999 results showed that the attainment of boys in reading and writing was significantly lower than that for girls.
- 113 Evidence from the scrutiny of work and lesson observations in Year 4 indicates that levels of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations and that progress is satisfactory overall. However, there are some weaknesses in the development of writing skills and the accuracy of written work.

• ***Speaking and listening***

- 114 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is generally above the national average which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Standards benefit from the early emphasis on speaking and listening in Reception, and good progress is maintained as pupils move through Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They make relevant responses, with confidence and good use of vocabulary. By the time they are seven most pupils are articulate, speak clearly and with a good sense of audience, particularly in whole class discussion.

- 115 Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and by the time they are in Year 4 the speaking and listening skills of most pupils is above the expectation for their age. They profit from the attention that all teachers give to promoting this aspect of English and their confidence grows. The higher attaining pupils and a good proportion of the average pupils use quite complex sentence construction and can express themselves very well. They understand the need to adjust their style of speech to suit the occasion. For example, when selected to undertake an impromptu part in collective worship pupils demonstrated the ability to react quickly to an acting rôle.

• ***Reading***

- 116 At the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectations although the more able pupils show a higher level of attainment. A higher proportion of boys read at the lower levels but they are given the same opportunities and levels of support as the girls and this reflects the national picture. At both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress.
- 117 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have acquired a sound range of strategies to tackle new and unfamiliar words. They can describe a story they have read and talk about the characters in their books. Most reading is accurate and fluent although some lacks expression. There is some self-correction of errors. They identify the title and author of the book they are reading and understand how to use a contents list. Overall, at Key Stage 1 pupils make sound progress in reading. Younger pupils learn to recognise the most common words and the sound and shapes of letters and they develop a real enjoyment of books.
- 118 By the time they are nine, pupils read across a reasonable range of children's literature and poetry. They discuss the books they are reading and explain how authors use language to set a particular a mood or develop a character. Pupils understand how to use reference books to support their work in other subjects such as history and geography and they are adept at locating books in the library. They learn to select books from the class collections and keep careful records of their reading. Most use dictionaries skilfully and there is some effective use of the thesaurus.

• ***Writing***

- 119 At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in writing indicates that most pupils are broadly in line with the national average, with a minority of higher attaining pupils moving towards the higher levels. This does not altogether reflect the above-average results in 1999 end of key stage test.
- 120 At Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils develop their emergent writing, through copy writing to writing simple sentences unaided, gaining confidence through their use of high frequency words. By Year 2, most pupils are able to order their work appropriately, write a story using appropriate structure, sentence construction and developing vocabulary. There is evidence of appropriate factual accounts linked to their learning in other subjects. However, whereas the spelling, phonic awareness and punctuation of the higher attaining pupils is mainly accurate, that of other groups of pupils can be very inaccurate with little evidence of self-correction. With these pupils, handwriting can be irregularly formed and untidy. Some pupils are writing regularly in cursive script and are developing a reasonable style. The phonic awareness of the lower attaining pupils is not yet secure and their spelling is generally inaccurate.
- 121 At Key Stage 2, by Year 4, overall standards are in line with national expectations. The attainment in writing of the pupils in Year 3 does not yet reflect the high standards indicated in their 1999 results.

- 122 Most older pupils write consistently in cursive script although the presentation and accuracy can be inconsistent. The majority of pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to write narrative, factual pieces and poetry including 'Haiku'. There is sound use of dictionaries and pupils have lively and interested minds and work with enthusiasm. Pupils have a clear understanding of the processes required in the production of lengthier pieces of work and there are good examples of older pupils researching the reading preferences of younger pupils who are to be the main audience for their completed stories. However, throughout the key stage, work is not always sufficiently focused on the skills individual pupils need to develop within this process and pupils do not have a clear framework for extended writing. Many pupils are not yet producing sustained pieces of quality of writing with the variety of language and accuracy expected at this age.
- 123 Overall, at both key stages most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in writing. They benefit from receiving additional literacy support in small groups. Written work becomes more complex in structure as pupils move through the school and handwriting develops from early emergent writing into cursive for most pupils. Progress in spelling, extended writing and presentation is less secure and too many pupils do not apply their understanding of spelling rules and common letter patterns to their writing with sufficient consistency. Generally, accuracy of spelling improves as pupils move through the key stage but standards of spelling are not as high as they should be.
- 124 The response of pupils to English is good at both key stages. Pupils are usually keen to work hard, listen carefully and respond well to challenging teaching. They usually settle quickly to their written work, work co-operatively in groups when required to do so, and allow their teacher to give attention to other pupils. Most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and read at home regularly.
- 125 Pupils who have special educational needs are supported soundly by experienced and effective support staff. Teachers adapt some lessons appropriately to ensure that targets set out in pupils' individual education plans are addressed, and work is adjusted to ensure they have full access to the curriculum.
- 126 The quality of teaching across both key stages is sound although there was an occasional instance during the inspection of unsatisfactory teaching. Most planning is matched appropriately to the needs of the pupils with suitable learning objectives, although as many activities are identical, there is not always sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Information technology is appropriately used to support and consolidate pupils' learning through writing and spelling programs.
- 127 Teachers build good relationships with their pupils and there are many examples of good questioning. Time targets are used effectively, to set a brisk pace and inject a sense of urgency to a lesson, although not in all classes. Time is usually used productively and there are many instances of timely intervention to support pupils' learning. Teachers have a strong commitment to the development of reading skills and work well in partnership with parents. Pupils are heard reading regularly and their progress is effectively monitored. Teachers ensure that homework is consistently set and monitored throughout the school. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' attainment in reading.
- 128 Teachers have sound subject knowledge but there are some inconsistencies in the implementation of the literacy hour across the school. Some teachers have effectively embraced the proposed structure for the hour, and are delivering the whole class reading, writing and word level introduction with pace and challenge. Others are not sufficiently focusing on the skills to be developed. Too often, there is some confusion in their planning as to what is a learning objective and what is the activity that will deliver it.

- 129 Teachers, generally, do not make the learning objectives explicit to the pupils at the start of the lesson, they do not re-inforce them during the activities and do not sufficiently review them at the end. Plenary sessions tend to be used to review the activities undertaken rather than focus on what pupils have learned.
- 130 In marking, not all books and worksheets are marked fully in accordance with the school's marking policy. However, there are some sound examples of formative comments recorded on pupils' work that give pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve and individual target sheets supplement this process.
- 131 The results of national tests, teacher assessments and other tests used by the school are analysed to identify any patterns in progress and have been used effectively to target the school's priorities. This has enabled the school to increase the amount of time for extended writing at Key Stage 2 and identify pupils who would benefit from additional literacy support. The process has not yet been applied successfully to identifying the learning needs of high attaining pupils.
- 132 The policy and scheme of work provide sound advice and support for teachers in their planning. There has been a large input of funding to purchase big books and group readers to support the literacy hour. Pupils have easy access to a good range of children's literature. The reference library is well-organised and stocked with a good supply of books. These are well used for independent research and for the development of library skills.
- 133 There has been a sound rate of improvement in some aspects of provision and teaching since the last inspection. Areas for improvement have been identified and groups of pupils have been targeted successfully in order to raise attainment around national average expectations. Early years provision is strong and the effective partnership with parents is aiding pupils' progress in reading. The subject is well led and monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced. The school now needs to ensure a consistent approach to the implementation of the literacy hour, identify specific learning objectives within lessons and ensure that more able pupils are well challenged.

• **Mathematics**

- 134 The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that pupils' attainment in mathematics was average in comparison with all schools and below average when compared with similar schools. This represents a significant improvement from the previous year's results. However, while the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average, fewer pupils than average, in comparison with similar schools, achieved the higher levels of attainment (Level 2B and above and Level 3). Trends in attainment over a period of time indicate that average levels of attainment dipped from 1996 to 1997 but have improved steadily since then.
- 135 Lesson observations and the scrutiny of work show that progress is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and that pupils are continuing to work at around the expected levels for their age. In Year 1 pupils are confident in counting on and back in numbers up to 20 and can identify missing numbers on an hundred square. They are developing confidence in measuring length in non-standard units and in centimetres. In Year 2 they are able to count on in tens from different starting points. They recognise similarities and differences between a range of regular two and three-dimensional shapes. They can discuss the properties of these shapes using appropriate mathematical language. Pupils can construct three-dimensional shapes from a range of materials and understand the concept of a net from which a shape can be constructed.

- 136 Inspection evidence shows that most pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and the current Year 4 class is attaining standards above national expectations. In Year 3 pupils have a sound understanding of halves and quarters and are beginning to handle eighths and sixteenths with confidence. Year 4 pupils investigate number patterns and relationships and high attaining pupils are able to hypothesise and explore the relationship between the numbers on the corners of a nine-square grid and the middle number. The improved standards of attainment in Key Stage 2 are confirmed by the results of national optional tests administered to pupils at the end of Years 3 and 4.
- 137 Lower attaining pupils are usually presented with tasks that are well matched to their abilities. Some pupils with special education needs have specific targets relating to mathematical knowledge and understanding recorded within their individual education plans. These pupils make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1 high attaining pupils are sometimes given insufficiently challenging tasks to extend their knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 2 high attaining pupils are often presented with difficult tasks that challenge and extend them. Here they make good progress.
- 138 Pupils enjoy their work in mathematics and their attitude to the subject is positive. They are able to sustain concentration during computation exercises and practical investigations. They behave well, listen attentively and are eager to contribute answers and ideas. They work co-operatively when required and share resources sensibly.
- 139 In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was consistently good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 it varied from very good to unsatisfactory but was good overall. Teachers have made a conscientious start to implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and plan lessons in considerable detail. Their subject knowledge is secure and they are confident in encouraging pupils to explore number relationships, patterns and sequences. Appropriate mathematical vocabulary is used in all classrooms and mental arithmetic activities are generally conducted at good pace. Whole-class teaching is well focused as in the exploration of number patterns in Year 4. In the only unsatisfactory lesson observed, teaching had too little impact on pupils' learning. Too much time was spent on a relatively low-level activity which involved colouring in halves and quarters which most pupils could already identify.
- 140 In Key Stage 1 the presentation and storage of pupils' work, especially worksheets, inhibits a sense of progress in learning. Work is often undated and stored in no logical sequence. Some pieces show few signs of marking by teachers. In Key Stage 2 a greater quantity of work is recorded in exercise books and is often well presented. There are good examples of constructive and supportive marking, particularly in Year 3, and this gives evidence of sustained and effective teaching over time.
- 141 The mathematics curriculum is well planned in the long, medium and short-term. Appropriate reference is made both to the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Curriculum. There is evidence of work in all attainment targets with an appropriate focus on numeracy including using, applying and investigating number. A good range of work is undertaken in relation to shape, space and measures but there is less evidence of systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding in handling data. Work is no longer based on a commercial mathematics scheme and the school has ensured that there are planned opportunities for investigative work that encourages pupils' independence. This represents a significant area of improvement since the last inspection.
- 142 Some work in data handling is undertaken in geography and science including recording and presenting data relating to climate and weather observations. Recording findings in an 'archaeological dig' exercise in a history lesson provided a practical context for developing work on co-ordinates. In Year 2 pupils used information technology (the Paint program) to draw the net of a cube on screen and then print it in order to construct the shape. However, in

general, the links between numeracy and other subjects are not explored and developed consistently or systematically.

- 143 The school has analysed the results of statutory and non-statutory assessments in order to target areas for improvement. Challenging but realistic targets for improvement for 2002 have been set. Individual numeracy targets are set for pupils and attainment is recorded against National Curriculum level descriptions. In some classes teachers' planning shows good evidence that on-going assessment is used to inform future planning. However, this effective use of assessment is not implemented consistently across the school in terms of identifying the individual learning needs of pupils.
- 144 The subject co-ordinator, although appointed to the post only fifteen months ago, is leading the subject well. She is not a mathematics specialist but has attended a range of local education authority courses and local advisers have visited the school and provided good advice and support. She has undertaken an audit of resources and produced an action plan for developing the subject further. She is aware that the current mathematics policy needs updating and this is incorporated within the action plan for the next year. The co-ordinator has also been given non-contact time to observe teaching, undertake a scrutiny of work, monitor plans, analyse test results and compile a portfolio of work. Teachers have had opportunities to observe her teaching and this has all contributed to raising expectations of standards of attainment.
- 145 The school has invested £1,000 in resources for mathematics, particularly to support the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Overall, resources are adequate and well used. The co-ordinator recognises the need to acquire further resources to support the teaching of both high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

#### **Science**

- 146 Overall standards in science are above those typical for pupils of this age. In the 1999 national assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were above average for the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3. This is a significant improvement over the 1998 results. In comparison with similar schools attainment in science is broadly average. There has been a significant improvement in the standards attained by pupils in the National Curriculum elements of materials and physical processes. In the 1999 assessments girls attained higher standards than boys; all girls achieved at least the expected standard of Level 2.
- 147 By the end of Year 4 pupils attain standards at least in line with, and often better than, those found nationally. Girls continue to attain higher standards than boys.
- 148 Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' books and discussions with pupils suggests that the standards indicated by more formal assessments in 1999 are being sustained and that pupils in Year 2 are on target to achieve at least the standards expected. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 could explain why the shadows from the sun vary in length during the day and in Year 4, pupils are able to explain the movement of the moon and its phases. Work in pupils' books and teachers' planning records indicate that the full range of the national science programme of work will be covered. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills are more limited than their work on scientific facts and ideas. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that pupils are often making good progress in the various aspects of the science programme. They show a developing understanding of materials and electricity. For example, in a lesson on electrical circuits pupils in Year 3 had a clear understanding of the need for a complete circuit and could identify how a switch worked. They then went on to make their own switches from a range of simple materials and incorporate them into a circuit with a battery and bulb. Pupils with special educational needs make at least sound progress, often

being well supported by support staff.

- 149 During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons of science teaching, one in each key stage. In the lessons observed teaching was judged to be good. Teachers have a secure knowledge base and plan lessons which challenge pupils. Teachers manage the class and the lessons well so that pupils are able to make good progress. They are developing an investigative approach to their science teaching and expect pupils to work hard, co-operate when completing their practical work. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 on materials, an investigation on the production of a gas using vinegar and baking soda required groups of three pupils to work co-operatively in handling the equipment and carrying out the experiment.
- 150 Pupils respond very positively to their science lessons. They co-operate well together, sharing equipment and taking turns appropriately. They are interested and concentrate well, sustaining their concentration for whole lessons. Behaviour is consistently good and often very good. They are able to use their initiative, for example, when Year 3 pupils devised their own electrical switches.
- 151 The science curriculum is being well managed and the recent improvements in the standards attained by pupils, particularly in the aspects of materials and physical processes, can be related to an effective review of the delivery of the science programme and active measures to redress the shortcomings found. Optional tests and statutory teacher assessments have been used effectively to identify areas for particular development. However, ongoing assessment procedures are under-developed and do not guide teachers' planning sufficiently. Although teachers regularly mark pupils' work they do not sufficiently identify what pupils know and can do or what they need to do to improve. There are sufficient resources for the delivery of the science curriculum; however, the use of information technology to record data directly and indirectly is under-developed.

• **Information technology**

- 152 Overall, pupils are attaining standards that are at least typical for their ages by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
- 153 From a scrutiny of pupils' work and direct observation of pupils using information technology, inspectors judge that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are attaining standards at least typical for their age. In Year 2 pupils are able to access and use a range of appropriate software and have, for example, used drawing software to produce pictures and patterns associated with their work on Joseph in religious education. They use word processing to present some of their written work.
- 154 An examination of pupils' work together with direct observation of pupils using information technology indicates that by the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils are at least attaining the expected standards in information technology. They are able to use standard word processing programs to present written material. A number of older pupils in Year 4 used drawing software to produce pictures representing their feelings and understanding of the planets and stars. There was evidence within teachers' planning records showing that pupils have the opportunity to cover the full range of appropriate activity.
- 155 Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their use of information technology. They are developing their skills in using the mouse and the keyboard. Their mouse skills are frequently good as shown by the good quality finished pictures when using drawing software. They are able to load and follow the instructions for simple programs in Year 1 and pupils in Year 4 have used the Internet to obtain information on the weather as part of their studies in science.

- 156 During the inspection only one short lesson of direct teaching of information technology was observed. This lesson was judged to be satisfactory and was introducing a group of younger children to some new software. The teachers' planning shows that opportunities for the use of information technology are identified within some of the planning for other subjects. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in information technology in small groups or individually.
- 157 The range and quality of the computers available are satisfactory and there is a satisfactory range of software to support learning in the subjects of the curriculum. However the use of sensor devices to record information in science and the use of the computer to control simple devices is under-developed. There are very effective procedures and systems to ensure that both teachers and pupils use the access to the Internet appropriately.
- **Religious education**
- 158 At both key stages, attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the local education authority's Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop a sound code of conduct that supports their social and moral development. There are shortcomings in their spiritual awareness and in their knowledge and understanding of other faiths. Spiritual and cultural development were identified as areas for further development in the previous report.
- 159 At Key Stage 1, there is an emphasis on personal and social development linked into Christian themes. They learn about the Christian ceremonies and festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Harvest and they visit a local Christian church where they take part in the Harvest Festival. The older pupils have been linking their work on Joseph with design and technology. The second religion upon which they focus is Judaism and they are learning about Rosh Hashanah and designing their own cards for the birthday of the world. There are good quality Jewish artefacts on display for pupils to examine but few are clear about their exact use and purpose. Pupils are familiar with the basic customs, events and traditions of Christianity, for example, baptism and marriage, but are less certain about the deeper meanings.
- 160 At Key Stage 2, pupils focus on Christianity and Hinduism. They build on their earlier learning appropriately. At Year 3, they explore the cultural similarities and differences between India and England and their learning has been greatly enhanced by a stimulating display of Indian artefacts, pictures, toys and games. They study the reasons for pilgrimages to the Ganges. The oldest pupils at this key stage are undertaking work on signs and symbols linking their origins and purposes to their religious roots.
- 161 Generally, at both key stages, although overall progress is satisfactory within the areas covered, some of the pupils' understanding and knowledge of other faiths is not secure. There is a lack of spirituality and sense of wonder within the teaching of religious education and, although religious themes are covered in lessons and collective worship, pupils are not given enough time to reflect on the deeper meanings. The richness of the cultures of other faiths and their place within a multi-cultural society is not substantially in evidence in the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- 162 Pupils' response to their lessons is usually good. They enjoy the elements that enable them to relate their own knowledge and experiences, although sometimes the religious focus to the lesson can begin to be obscured. They observe artefacts with interest, listen intently to stories in collective worship and take part in listening and repeating prayers.
- 163 In the few lessons observed, teaching was sound in both key stages. Teachers' planning is usually suitable to the age of the pupils and contains appropriate learning objectives. Teachers'

subject knowledge is satisfactory and they engender a respect for faith and belief. In the best lessons, teachers ask challenging questions and encourage pupils to think deeply. In some instances, the follow up activities planned do not always sufficiently consolidate pupils' religious knowledge and understanding. This is particularly noticeable when whole class discussion, led by the teacher, has been the main form of delivery.

- 164 The scheme of work is sound. There is coverage of the main Christian religious festivals, traditions, customs and buildings and as they grow older they compare and value similar features of other religions and cultures. Visits to places of worship, other than those associated with Christianity, do not currently form part of the curriculum and visits from outside specialists are limited. This has a negative impact on learning about other world religions. There is sound co-ordination of the subject but no formal monitoring of teaching and learning, at present. The last inspection report commented that there was a need for more resources to support the development of the subject. The school has addressed this issue and there has been significant improvement.

## · OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### Art

- 165 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in art at both key stages. Standards are similar to those achieved in other schools. These findings reflect the findings of the previous inspection. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection.
- 166 At Key Stage 1, pupils have experience of drawing, painting and collage work. Younger pupils, for example, emulate the work of Klimt and have produced some well-observed prints. They experience computer-generated pictures that support their story writing. Older pupils also use the computer to generate designs linked to their work in religious education. They have been focusing on work on 'tone' and have produced paintings with graduated backgrounds embellished with detailed silhouettes in the foreground.
- 167 At Key Stage 2, the range of work is broadened and they have experimented with techniques. For example, a group have cut up the picture of 'Sunflowers' by Van Gogh, painted each square separately and reassembled them to produce an interesting group picture that has taken on an abstract appearance. Papier-mâché has been used to make face masks. Younger pupils have used the 'cross hatching' techniques of Hogarth to inspire their pictures of everyday objects. They use charcoal and chalk and demonstrate their observation skills in drawing portraits of their friends lit by strong light. Pupils have linked their work effectively to history, producing clay pots and artefacts linked to the Egyptians. Others have used work on 'shadows' to inspire creative writing and the use of shadow puppets. Pupils produce some good work in batik, tie-dying and fabric painting. Paper is marbled and fabric collage is produced. There is photographic evidence of a bronze shield being made and of frames being used to focus the eye on one section of a picture. There is a range of good quality work on threading, use of textiles to make purses, metal work to make raised relief patterns and the computer has been effectively used to make patterns based on the Earth in space.
- 168 At both key stages, pupils' progress in skills and techniques is sound. The majority of pupils develop appropriate skills of control. Their sense of colour and use of materials develops well across the key stages. There is an increasing attention to quality as pupils move through the school.
- 169 Discussions with pupils indicate that their attitudes towards art are positive. They enjoy the

practical nature of the subject and take pride in the end results, there is evidence of improving and refining. They like working with others and enjoy seeing their work on display. They feel that it makes the learning environment pleasing to be in. Pupils indicate that they respect the work of others and this is borne out by the way in which the display around the school is carefully looked after.

- 170 No teaching was observed but teachers' planning linked with the work on display indicates that they are delivering an appropriate curriculum with a systematic approach to the development of specific skills and techniques. The subject is soundly led by the co-ordinator who has ensured that an appropriate scheme of work is in place, gives advice when needed and ensures that there are sufficient resources available to deliver the curriculum. No formal monitoring of the subject and no evaluation of standards is currently taking place. However, an art assessment sheet is regularly completed by the pupils and placed in their portfolios.

### **Design and technology**

- 171 Although only two lessons of design and technology were observed during the inspection a wide range of evidence of pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with many pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 pupils attain standards which are at least typical for their age in a wide range of work. Pupils are able to work with a range of materials and show appropriate making skills. For example, in Key Stage 1, linked with their work on Joseph in religious education, pupils designed and made a coat from felt which they then decorated to represent the multi-colours. The majority of pupils show sound design skills, with even the youngest pupils presenting several design ideas. They are then able to evaluate their product and suggest improvements to their designs in discussions but their evaluations are not always recorded which reduces the impact of their learning on future work.
- 172 By the end of Year 4 pupils have developed more sophisticated design skills. They are able to produce trial designs and evaluate them in order to develop them further and identify the making skills they need to develop. For example, Year 4 pupils designed a purse and then transferred the design to a sheet of paper and made a trial product using a variety of joining techniques. From the trial they refined their design which they then made from felt and other materials. Different groups helped each other with suggestions making elements of their designs.
- 173 Pupils are making sound progress in both key stages. They work with interest and often enthusiasm and sustain their concentration to complete their designs. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress being effectively supported by in class assistants.
- 174 Pupils respond well to their design and technology lessons. They enjoy working individually but regularly help one another with suggestions and ideas. They concentrate well and persevere with their work to produce some good quality finished articles.
- 175 Only two lessons of design technology were observed during the inspection. Teaching in these lessons was judged to be satisfactory overall with many positive features. Lessons are well planned with a range of activity. Teachers have high expectations and use particularly effective interventions with pupils to sustain both the challenge and the pace of the lesson. Teacher' planning records show that the full range of the National Curriculum programme for the subject will be covered and effectively ensure progressive skill development and learning throughout each Key Stage.

### **Geography**

- 176 Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Evidence from pupils' work, classroom displays and lesson observations indicates that

attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in both key stages with some good aspects to work in Key Stage 2.

- 177 In Year 1 pupils compare and contrast their home locality with that of the seaside towns of Torquay and Weston-Super-Mare. They are able to indicate the approximate locations of these towns on a map of Britain and use correct terminology to describe physical features such as sea, beach and buildings. In Year 3 pupils study India and the village of Chembakolli, contrasting this with their own village. They use maps of the world and India to locate Chembakolli and are able to draw a plan of the village. They compare and contrast aspects of life such as travel, food and school; and devise questions that they would like to have answered in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding. In one particularly successful lesson they had to decide, using a land use map, which areas of hills and river valley would be most appropriate for settlement and growing a range of economic crops. Their knowledge and understanding of this relationship between human activity and the physical environment is good. However, in general, across the school, there is little evidence of developing mapwork skills in terms of making plans and using symbols, keys and scale.
- 178 Pupils are attentive and able to work with sustained concentration. They are willing to discuss their work and to answer questions and offer sensible opinions. In Year 3 they worked co-operatively when tackling the land use exercise. Speaking and listening skills are developed well through discussions in geography but there are only limited opportunities for extended writing. There is some limited evidence of data handling in relation to climate in Key Stage 2 but, in general, there are few activities which support the development of numeracy skills.
- 179 In both key stages pupils with special educational needs are well-supported and in Key Stage 2 benefit from the focused support of a special educational needs assistant during geography lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks set.
- 180 The impact of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages with some good features in Key Stage 2. Good use is made of photographic evidence to encourage pupils to observe and extract information about physical features of different localities. Teachers make good use of questioning to re-inforce and extend learning. Lessons are well planned and the school makes effective use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work to provide a framework for planning the geography curriculum and identifying key learning objectives. Evidence from teachers' plans and class timetables indicates that an appropriate amount of time is allocated to the subject.
- 181 Marking of work is inconsistent and contains few constructive comments relating to geographical skills and understanding. Group assessments are made at the end of each topic and teachers record pupils' attainment against level descriptions. The link between these assessments and the next stages of learning is not always evident in planning.
- 182 The subject co-ordinator has attended appropriate training and has had opportunity to undertake a scrutiny of work. She has a realistic view of the standards of attainment and quality of education in geography and recognises improvements that have been made since the last inspection. She is trying to build up a range of resources which at present are just adequate. The school library contains a reasonable range of reference texts and limited use is made of educational visits to support teaching and learning.

## **History**

- 183 Pupils make satisfactory progress in history in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Evidence from pupils' work, classroom displays and lesson observations indicates that attainment is in line with national expectations and sometimes exceeds these.

- 184 In Year 1 pupils are developing an understanding of old and new through observing toys and identifying key characteristics such as materials, technology and style of clothing. They are using observation as an essential tool for historical enquiry. In Year 2 observational skills are further developed when extracting information from illustrations of 17<sup>th</sup> Century buildings to understand why the Great Fire of London spread so rapidly. They demonstrate good factual knowledge relating to the story of the fire and sound understanding of the social conditions of the time.
- 185 In Year 4 pupils study Ancient Egypt and gain sound knowledge and understanding of its cultural traditions and lifestyle. They extend their skills of historical enquiry through learning about the archaeological discoveries of Howard Carter and experiencing their own imaginative 'dig'.
- 186 Pupils' response in lessons is always good and sometimes very good. In Key Stage 1 they are attentive and keen to respond. They behave well and work with sustained concentration when observing and recording. In Key Stage 2 they engage in the simulated archaeological dig with excited curiosity and record evidence conscientiously. They work co-operatively and have a very positive attitude to their work.
- 187 The planned activities in history provide good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. In Key Stage 1 recording observations of both toys and buildings enables pupils to extend their literacy skills by selecting appropriate descriptive words and sometimes recording these in sentences. The 'dig' activity in Year 4 also involves the use of co-ordinates to locate finds and thus supports aspects of numeracy.
- 188 The quality of teaching in history is good in both key stages. Lessons are well planned and materials are well prepared and effectively deployed to support learning. Learning objectives are often made explicit to pupils and good use is made of questioning to re-inforce and extend learning. Lessons are conducted at good pace and effective use is made of the time available. Teachers manage behaviour well and relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and are often provided with different recording formats so that recording does not impede their interpretation of historical evidence. Equally, higher attaining pupils are given opportunities to extend their learning through the open-ended nature of tasks and more challenging questions put to them.
- 189 The school uses the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work as the basis for long, medium and short-term planning for history. Appropriate time is allocated to the subject. Teachers record pupils' attainment at the end of each topic using group assessments related to National Curriculum level descriptions. Marking varies in quality and there are few examples of constructive comments relating to historical knowledge and understanding. There is little evidence that assessment is used consistently to inform future planning.
- 190 The subject benefits from several teachers who are history specialists, including the curriculum co-ordinator. She has undertaken a scrutiny of pupils' work and has a realistic understanding of the quality of education and standards of attainment within the subject. Resources for history are adequate but the school lacks artefacts, old maps and photographs to develop further skills in historical enquiry relating to the locality. The library contains an adequate selection of reference books and limited use is made of educational visits to support teaching and learning.

## Music

- 191 Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence on which to make whole-school judgements on attainment, progress, pupils' response in lessons and teaching.

- 192 The previous inspection identified pupils' attainment as average across the school. It identified a need to replace some resources in order that opportunities could be generated for extending pupils' learning. Although the school has a limited range of tuned instruments, there is a sound range of untuned percussion, that encompass instruments from other countries. The school, therefore, has made sound progress on this issue.
- 193 The school has adapted a commercial scheme to meet the needs of its streamlined curriculum. The curriculum plan appropriately covers the main strands of the programmes of study through listening, appraising and composing of music. Music is linked with the dance curriculum.
- 194 Throughout Key Stage 1, planning records indicate that pupils sing a range of songs, some of which they learn from memory. They learn about musical patterns and rhythm. There are sound elements of music through the ages and celebrations.
- 195 At Key Stage 2, in the one lesson observed, pupils were able to use a wide range of instruments to compose a collective piece of music based on sports' day. Each group interpreted a different race through sound and percussion and for the final performance it was linked by dialogue. They built upon and consolidated their previous work well. They were able to rehearse, refine and perform for others whilst considering the beginning, development and conclusion of their composition. They showed a sound ability to appraise their own performances and those of others constructively. Pupils at this key stage learn to play the recorder.
- 196 In the one lesson observed and through conversations with pupils about music, they have very positive attitudes. Singing in collective worship is satisfactory and improves considerably with piano accompaniment. Pupils are able to concentrate on a task, behave well and are able to collaborate with others. They use their own initiative in the selection of instruments. They understand that it is important to work hard to improve their performances.
- 197 In the lesson observed the teaching was sound. There was a good range of instruments provided and the lesson proceeded at a suitable pace. There was good use of demonstration and rehearsal to highlight good practice and the lesson was well controlled. During this time a small group of pupils worked alongside a support assistant to generate a composition using the computer.
- 198 The subject co-ordinator is not a specialist but has done sound work on redeveloping the scheme and linking it to the dance curriculum, whilst ensuring that the required elements of the National Curriculum are met. No formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are taking place. Music is enhanced by being an integral part of collective worship, including events such as Harvest Festival and the school productions. There is not a regular choir but the school participates in the Bromsgrove Festival and local events. In addition, there is an after school keyboard club. Music makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development. The indications are that there is satisfactory coverage of the music curriculum.

• **Physical education**

- 199 Evidence from the small number of dance lessons observed indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress and are attaining standards of performance appropriate to their age in both key stages. This represents a significant improvement from the last inspection when attainment was deemed to be below average in Key Stage 1.
- 200 Pupils in Year 1 are able to move with control and respond to the speed and rhythm of the music. Most have good awareness of space though one or two immature boys find this a difficult skill to master. In Year 4 pupils learn the movements of traditional British dances and practise these movements individually, in pairs and in larger groups. They show good levels of

control and co-ordination and are beginning to express the mood of the music and respond to its tempo. They make perceptive evaluations of what they have learned.

- 201 Pupils engage with enthusiasm in physical education lessons and generally work well with sustained concentration. In Year 4 pupils co-operated well together and danced willingly in boy-girl pairs. Behaviour observed was good overall though one or two boys in Year 1 with emotional and behavioural difficulties found the freedom and space of a physical education lesson difficult to cope with.
- 202 In the two lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory and at times good. Teachers engaged in the lessons enthusiastically and modeled movements with control and energy. This provided good support for less confident pupils. Lessons were well structured and conducted at good pace. Pupils' behaviour was generally well managed and relationships between teachers and pupils were very good. Some opportunities were provided for pupils to evaluate learning at the end of the session; but insufficient evaluation was made during the lesson to identify how movements could be improved or refined.
- 203 The school uses a commercial scheme to provide a long-term curriculum plan for physical education. Teachers draw on this for their medium and short-term plans which are completed conscientiously and with appropriate detail. The planned curriculum provides broad coverage of the essential elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study and pupils are able to go swimming in Year 3. Teachers make regular and comprehensive assessments of pupils' attainment and these are recorded in a common whole-school format.
- 204 Physical education is in a process of continued improvement and is led enthusiastically by a recently appointed subject co-ordinator. She has developed policy and involved the school in the TOPS sports initiative. This has led to professional development for all staff including good support and advice from the local education authority's physical education adviser. The subject co-ordinator has been able to monitor teachers' planning and assessment files.
- 205 The school benefits from a large hall, playing field and hard play area on site. Considerable investment has been made in resources for games and the school is now well-resourced. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a number of after-school sports activities and competitive games are organised with neighbouring schools in kwik cricket, for example. Tennis coaching is also available on site through an independent coach.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

206 Four inspectors spent a total of 10 days in the school. During this time:

- 36 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- A selection of assemblies and registrations were observed.
- Discussions were held with many pupils during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with all teaching staff. Brief discussions were held with non-teaching staff.
- Discussions were held with a number of governors.
- The work of a group of pupils from each year group was scrutinised. The group covered higher attainers to those with special educational needs.
- The work of pupils was also scrutinised during lessons.
- A close scrutiny was made of the available baseline assessment information to clarify the levels of attainment of pupils on entry to the school.
- A meeting was held at which parents' views on the work of the school were gathered.

· 207  
**INDICATORS**

**DATA AND**

· **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
YR – Y4	124	0	19	0

· **Teachers and classes**

· **Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21

· **Education support staff (YR – Y4)**

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	49.5

**Average class size:** 25

· **Financial data**

Financial year:	1999
	£
Total Income	246,504
Total Expenditure	238,615
Expenditure per pupil	1,940
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,384
Balance carried forward to next year	39,273

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 124  
Number of questionnaires returned: 46

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	40.9	52.3	6.8	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56.5	34.8	6.5	2.2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	34.2	42.1	15.8	7.9	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	37.0	58.7	0	4.3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	34.1	43.2	11.4	9.1	2.3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	37.2	55.8	7.0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	40.0	55.6	4.4	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	36.4	52.3	6.8	4.5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	43.2	47.7	9.1	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	39.1	50.0	8.7	2.2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	70.5	25.0	4.5	0	0

### Other issues raised by parents

- 1 The meeting for parents was attended by 14 parents. The main points arising from the meeting were:
  - Parents are generally happy with the standards attained by their children and with the progress they make in school.
  - Parents are happy with the values promoted by the school and its 'family feel'.
  - Parents acknowledge that information from the school relating to the curriculum and school activities has improved since the last inspection. They have found the 'curriculum maps' particularly useful in supporting their children's learning at home.
  - Parents feel that their children are well looked after at school.
  - Parents are happy with the amount and regularity of homework.
  - Parents believe that children behave well in school. They are aware of the behaviour policy and support it although they have had little input into its creation.
  - Parents feel that they are enabled to play an active part in the life of the school. They have ready access to the headteacher and teachers. They feel that their suggestions or complaints are listened to and acted upon when appropriate.
  - Parents agree that this is a 'friendly, caring and approachable' school and that their children love coming to school.