

INSPECTION REPORT

Boldmere Junior School
Sutton Coldfield

LEA area : Birmingham

Unique Reference Number : 103341

Headteacher : Mrs D Thomas-Wood

Reporting inspector : Mrs J Schaffer
23698

Dates of inspection : 20th – 23rd September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706671

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Type of school : | Junior |
| Type of control : | County |
| Age range of pupils : | 7 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils : | Mixed |
| School address : | Cofield Road Sutton Coldfield Birmingham B73 5SD |
| Telephone number : | 0121 354 3656 |
| Fax number : | 0121 605 9355 |
| Appropriate authority : | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors : | Mr D Sansom |
| Date of previous inspection : | April 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| J Schaffer, RgI | History Geography Music | Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching Leadership and management |
| L Kuraishi, Lay Inspector | | Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community The efficiency of the school |
| B Bowen, Team Inspector | Science Information technology Physical education Equal opportunities | Curriculum and assessment |
| T Handforth, Team Inspector | Mathematics Design and technology Art Special educational needs | Staffing, accommodation and resources |
| A Welch, Team Inspector | English Religious education | Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development |

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Pupils achieve very high standards in English, mathematics, they achieve high standards in religious education, art, design and technology, history, geography and music.

- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in a high proportion of lessons.
- Provides very well for pupils' social development with initiatives such as the School Council.
- Provides a good range of extra curricular activities
- Good resources for learning in all subjects.

Where the school has weaknesses

Standards in information technology are not high enough.

- I. There is insufficient long term financial planning.

The school's strengths significantly outweigh its weaknesses. The governors will draw up a plan to show how the school intends to tackle the weaknesses identified during the inspection. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has improved all the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. In science, history and mathematics pupils are now given good opportunities to investigate problems and to use a wide range of sources to carry out research. Curriculum planning supports the needs of all levels of attainment and, in particular, those of high attainment. There is good provision of challenging work in most lessons specifically devised for pupils of high attainment. The management responsibilities of staff, where appropriate, and the role of the deputy head teacher have been extended. Teaching time now matches national requirements. There is now an effective school management team and this together with the high quality of teaching indicates that the school has the capacity to maintain high standards and to make further improvements.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

The information above shows that, in mathematics, standards are well above average when compared to schools nationally and in comparison to similar schools. In English, standards are well above average in comparison to schools nationally and above when compared to similar schools. Slightly fewer pupils achieved the higher levels in English. In science, standards are above average in comparison to all schools and average in comparison to similar schools. The pupils currently working in Year 6 are achieving standards similar to those achieved by pupils in the 1999 tests: their work in mathematics and English is well above average. Pupils work in religious education is above the expectations set in the locally agreed Syllabus. In information technology, although current work is satisfactory, standards of attainment at the end of the key stage are below expectations.

Quality of teaching

| Teaching in: | Under 5 | 5 - 7 years | 7 - 11 years |
|------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| English | n/a | n/a | Good |
| Mathematics | n/a | n/a | Good |
| Science | n/a | n/a | Satisfactory |
| Information technology | n/a | n/a | Good |
| Religious education | n/a | n/a | Good |
| Other subjects | n/a | n/a | Good |

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. It is very good or better in 22 per cent, and less than satisfactory in 5 per cent. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach for almost all of the curriculum. They provide stimulating lessons with activities which help pupils build on their previous learning. A few lessons were let down by errors in organisation and occasionally when knowledge of the subject area was not secure. The standard of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a particular strength and this makes a significant contribution to the achievements of the pupils at the end of the key stage.

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 have good attitudes to their work and there is good behaviour in all classes and around the school. A very small number of pupils need extra support to understand what is acceptable behaviour. |
| Attendance | Remains good and unauthorised absences are better than the national average. |
| Ethos* | Good. Relationships throughout the school are good. The school promotes a good understanding of equal opportunities and has a good climate for learning and high achievement for all. |
| Leadership and management | Good. The headteacher leads an effective senior management team. The governors are very supportive and play a satisfactory part in school planning. Long term financial planning is not securely in place. |
| Curriculum | Good. There is very good planning in most areas but all subjects need to make better plans for the use of information technology. |
| Pupils with special educational needs | Support and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. |
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | Good spiritual, moral and cultural development and very good social development. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation | Provision for the number of staff is good. The school has generous accommodation with extra rooms for music, science, art and a computer suite. The addition of ramps for access by disabled pupils is a good feature. The school has very good resources for learning, including computers. |
| Value for money | Good. The pupils enter the school with above average attainment. The school uses its resources well to ensure that pupils are able to realise their full potential in almost all areas of the curriculum. |

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

The parents' views of the school

| What most parents like about the school | What some parents are not happy about |
|--|---|
| <p>II. Staff are easy to approach.</p> <p>III. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in school life.</p> <p>IV. Most parents feel that it is a very good school with a caring, happy environment.</p> <p>V. The school enables children to achieve high standards in their work and in sports.</p> <p>VI. The school keeps them informed about their children's progress.</p> <p>VII. Staff give up a lot of their time for extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>VIII. The school has made changes and has developed good policies.</p> <p>IX. Their child(ren) like(s) school.</p> | <p>X. Some parents are concerned that they are not</p> <p>XI. Some parents are not happy with the work y were not happy with the work of the school.</p> <p>XII. A few expressed concern about the lack</p> <p>XIII. Children are not sufficiently made aware ically diverse schools in the city.</p> |

Inspectors agree with all the parents' positive comments.

The school has recently changed its policy with regard to allowing parents to help with learning in their own child's class. There is now a good system in place, which allows parents to do this but also asks them to help in other classes on occasions.

Inspectors feel that homework is good in some instances but that there is not always consistency from class to class. Inspectors also felt that the school does not give parents sufficient information on how to help with learning, particularly with regard to the reading books coming home.

Inspectors do not agree with the parents who felt that pupils of high attainment were given insufficient support. This has been very carefully looked at and this area of school work is good.

All schools have to make greater efforts to help pupils understand racial issues and Boldmere has made a start but needs to do more. Plans are in place to make links with another school in Birmingham with an ethnically diverse school population.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

Improve the standard of work in Information & Communication Technology (ICT) by fully addressing all areas of the programme of study and by integrating the use of ICT throughout curriculum planning. (paragraph references: 13, 28, 91, 95)

Ensure that the governing body sets up long term financial plans and procedures to prioritise spending and determine value for money in their spending. (paragraph references: 53, 61 and 62)

· In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:-

- * continue to strengthen links with parents, particularly by giving more information about how to help their child(ren) make more progress with their reading and other kinds of homework; (paragraph references: 26 and 45)
- * eliminate inconsistencies in the completion of assessments and class records; (paragraph references: 31, 75 and 81)
- * provide greater clarity in the guidance for sanctions of unacceptable behaviour so as to achieve more consistency for the management of behaviour; (paragraph reference: 38)
- * ensure that the missing statutory items, in the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are included; (paragraph references: 46 and 55)
- * up-date the health and safety policy. (paragraph reference: 42)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 Boldmere Junior School is situated south of Sutton Coldfield in an area where there is a good level of employment and most families enjoy a good standard of living. Some pupils come from the neighbouring ward of Erdington where there is more unemployment amongst the population.
- 2 The school follows the local authority policy for admissions and admits both boys and girls in the September term. Most of its pupils have attended Boldmere Infant School, which is adjacent. There are currently 355 pupils on register which is larger than most primary schools. Class sizes match the national average.
- 3 There is a small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Currently all these pupils joined the school as competent English speakers. There are 10 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs. This is below the average for most schools. The percentage of pupils with statements of special need matches the national average at one per cent. There has been an increase in the number of pupils on the special needs register since the last inspection. The school is on one floor and is well adapted for access for pupils with physical handicaps. The majority of the pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above the national average.
- 4 The school has set targets to raise standards in the coming years. It aims to encourage all pupils to work towards achieving the best all round education. It also aims to build good relationships; to develop the pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural awareness and to offer a stimulating variety of challenges and opportunities within the wider curriculum.
- 5 Current school priorities reflect the requirements of government which are developing the Literacy and Numeracy strategies and the use of information technology through the National Grid for Learning. The school has also identified aspects of science, assessment and recording and equal opportunities as priority areas for development.

5 Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

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

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1998 | 51 | 35 | 86 |
| 1999 | 41 | 49 | 90 |

| National Curriculum Test Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | 32 (33) | 36 (32) | 36 (34) |
| | Girls | 43 (31) | 46 (26) | 44 (29) |
| | Total | 75 (64) | 82 (58) | 80 (63) |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 83 (74) | 91 (67) | 89 (73) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | 32 (40) | 35 (36) | 36 (36) |
| | Girls | 42 (33) | 46 (31) | 46 (33) |
| | Total | 74 (73) | 81 (67) | 82 (69) |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 82 (85) | 90 (78) | 91 (80) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 75 (72) |

Attendance

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

| | | % |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Authorised Absence | School | 4.3 |
| | National comparative data | 5.6 |
| Unauthorised Absence | School | 0.08 |
| | 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 |

¹

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

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

| | % |
|------------------------|----|
| Very good or better | 22 |
| Satisfactory or better | 95 |
| Less than satisfactory | 5 |

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1 In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' performance was well above average in English and mathematics. In comparison to similar schools, it was well above average in mathematics and above average in English. The slight difference reflects the higher number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) in mathematics. In science, pupils achieved a standard above average nationally but average when compared to pupils in similar schools. The results in all three subjects were an improvement on the standards achieved in 1998. The school explains their lower results in 1998, which were below their standards for 1997, in part, as owing to a cohort with a large proportion of boys. The under achievement of boys in the school reflects the national picture but in 1998 there was also a significant number on the special needs register.
- 2 The level of attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 in all core subjects reflects the standards achieved in 1999. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this, together with good teaching and good assessments of pupils' achievements through the year groups accounts for the rise in standards.
- 3 On entry to Year 3, the pupils' attainment judged from the end of Key Stage 1 test is above the national average. However there is a marked difference between the number of pupils attaining the higher level, Level 3 in reading and the number gaining this level in writing. This is reflected in the classroom work of this year group.
- 4 In Year 6, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line to achieve standards well above national expectations by the end of the year. Pupils are able to express their own ideas articulately, for instance about "suffering" in a religious education lesson, showing awareness of the views of others. They listen and respond with confidence when asked questions. Pupils of all levels of ability are able to read challenging texts such as "Robinson Crusoe" during class sessions with good expression. They can identify the vocabulary and phrases in the text which have fallen out of use. Written work is well organised into paragraphs by nearly all levels of attainment. Higher and average attaining pupils use very imaginative vocabulary and can make successful choices about style. Lower attaining pupils write competently.
- 5 In mathematics, pupils' attainment is in line to achieve standards well above expectations at the end of the key stage. In Year 6 higher attaining pupils are able to multiply large numbers using partitioning. They are able to explain, product, brackets and factors. They are able to extend their work into the use of decimals. Average attaining pupils are also able to use partitioning successfully to multiply a two digit number. Lower attaining pupils can double multiples of 5, some up to 100, others working to 50.
- 6 In science, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is in line to reach standards above national expectations by the end of the year. In a series of work on the Sun, Moon and Earth, the pupils have a good understanding of the meaning of words such as orbit, can explain the phases of the moon, and the reasons for daylight and night. They are able to carry out an investigation into the effects of gravity and to relate this to the craters on the moon. Most have a secure understanding of fair tests, although the need to limit the variables in a test sometimes trips them up.
- 7 Pupils are achieving standards in line with the appropriate term's work for both Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, including the extension activities. This is a good standard. The school has set appropriate targets for continuing improvement based on the current attainment of the pupils. Evidence shows that the school is moving towards those targets well.

- 8 The attainment of pupils at the end of the key stage in information technology is below national expectations. Pupils know that information can be stored and organised in different ways, for example in a bar graph or pie chart but have had little opportunity to control equipment to achieve specific outcomes. They are able to use the keyboard and mouse but many are slow in these operations. Some have difficulty accessing their own file. Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the main world faiths. They are able to discuss similarities and differences between religions with good understanding.
- 9 At the end of the key stage, attainment in history and music is well above expectations, attainment in art, geography and design and technology is above expectations and attainment in physical education is in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. There is a generous allowance of curriculum time for physical education but teaching does not always take advantage of this time and pupils are often given insufficient challenge.
- 10 In all year groups, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history and music. In science and physical education progress is satisfactory. Progress in information technology is unsatisfactory. Pupils of higher attainment are well challenged and opportunities for them to work at a higher level are provided. In lessons such as history and geography, special care is taken to ensure that pupils of lower attainment benefit from the interesting activities and methods of working which raises their self esteem and improves their progress. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their peers. The pupils with special education needs are identified with regard to their specific area of need and given good support. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils build systematically on their knowledge and understanding in all subjects as they move through the school. This is particularly the case for their learning about grammar and punctuation. In information technology there has been insufficient progress in previous years, which accounts for the lower attainment in this subject.
- 11 The previous report gave overall standards as good. This has been maintained and in the case of English and mathematics there has been improvement.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 12 The pupils have a good attitude to their school work. They come to school ready to learn and they work hard in their lessons. In a few classes there are pupils who find concentration on the set tasks difficult. These pupils are managed very well by teachers and in nearly all cases proceed with their work satisfactorily. Many pupils show a good independent attitude to their own learning. In younger classes they proceed with tasks without direct adult supervision, for example during the Literacy Hour, whilst in the older classes, pupils in Year 5 and 6 are able to carry out their historical research in various parts of the school building independently.
- 13 Pupils behave well during play and assembly. The long corridors sometimes tempt pupils to run, but generally they move about the school showing respect and understanding for others. Many pupils are very polite and helpful. At lunch time pupils share the dining area well. They sometimes sit with pupils from other classes and are friendly towards those they are not well acquainted with. School property and the property of others is treated with respect.
- 14 During religious education in Year 5, pupils' response to the teacher's questions about their understanding and ideas of heaven showed a very good level of respect for other people's views and beliefs. This was evident in all classes. Pupils have good relationships with adults and other pupils. They work well together in groups and pairs, and in some classes this is a noticeable feature.
- 15 There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions over the past three years. The monitor system and school council give the pupils very good opportunities to use their own initiative and from their comments these are enjoyed and responded to very well.

20 **Attendance**

- 16 Attendance is generally good, although slightly below the national average. The school has a low level of unauthorised absence below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually and both morning and afternoon sessions start promptly. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

21 **Teaching**

- 17 The quality of teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons and good or better in approximately two thirds. Five per cent of lessons are unsatisfactory. There is a particularly high standard of teaching in Years 5 and 6 and this makes a significant contribution to the achievements of the pupils at the end of the key stage.
- 18 In the best lessons good subject knowledge provides teachers with the confidence to devise stimulating activities and to extend pupils' learning through astute questioning. This was most evident in English, history, religious education, art and music. The school introduced the National Strategy for Numeracy at the start of this term and whilst some very successful lessons were seen in mathematics, some lessons lacked the flair evident elsewhere. There were also some science lessons where the need to limit the number of variables in proposed tests was not well perceived by teachers.
- 19 In most lessons teachers have high expectations appropriately matched to pupils' ability. In one Year 6 English lesson, all levels of ability tackled the unabridged text of "Robinson Crusoe" in a whole class shared reading. Although the pedantic style of the author, and the references to life on board a sailing vessel were all unfamiliar to the pupils, they revelled in the text. This was due to the challenges set by the teacher, which were all appropriate to the individual pupil's level of learning.
- 20 Planning is securely based on the National Curriculum and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In many lessons teachers explain to pupils the aim of the lesson and what they should learn. This involves them right from the start and is good practice. Generally the planned objectives are the focus of all the teaching. Occasionally, though, activities are not well matched to the objectives, or the teacher's questions and explanations deviate too much. Teachers employ a wide range of organisational strategies and methods. An afternoon on history involved all of Year 5 in a workshop on an aspect of Tudor life. The success of this workshop was the result of good joint planning by three teachers and careful organisation. Some lessons were let down by organisational errors, occasionally unprepared resources, or an activity which was too long.
- 21 Pupils are managed very well. Opportunities are sought, when appropriate, to encourage pupils to work together either in pairs or as a group of mixed gender, and sometimes ability. In some classes this is done particularly well. Teachers praise and encourage pupils' efforts and assess their achievements well, providing support and explanation when it is needed. Work is marked to show if it is correct and some teachers write thoughtful comments which encourage or stimulate further thinking. However, this is not done consistently. Similarly, the setting of homework is inconsistent. Spelling tests are set throughout the school and reading books are sent home. Although there is a home school diary, these do not give parents any idea of what aspects of reading they should concentrate on, or how well their child is progressing. Homework is given in Year 5 and 6 for mathematics and this is generally well organised. The history project set at the end of the year is a good opportunity for parents and pupils to work together to discover the recent past of their own family and community.

26 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 22 The school curriculum is well organised. It is broad and balanced, fulfilling all requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. A very effective transition has been made to covering the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The school has chosen to use some of its discretionary time in increasing the pupils' opportunities for physical activities and this is proving successful in leading to high standards in swimming and competitive sports. A well organised programme of personal, social and moral education is assisting the development of a mature school community. Sex education is well integrated within this study. The school is clearly committed to providing equal opportunities and all pupils receive their proper curriculum entitlement.
- 23 The code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is well established in the school. Support is planned effectively, The pupils' individual education plans are appropriately specific to each pupils' special needs and are used well to support their progress. This applies equally to pupils with physical disability who are given time for their own remedial exercise, whilst good planning ensures that they have equal access to all other areas of the curriculum. The school has put in place good curriculum planning for pupils of higher attainment. This is having a beneficial effect on the progress that is made by these pupils, especially in English, mathematics and areas of the curriculum such as history and geography. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection. However, planning in information technology has not yet sufficiently identified how to support pupils of differing levels of attainment, skill, or knowledge.
- 24 All subjects have policy guidelines and are planned around yearly programmes of work. Teachers work well in year group teams to plan, in the medium and short terms, a co-ordinated range of activities for their pupils. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators monitor these plans to ensure that they are comprehensive and appropriate. Planning to ensure that information technology is developed through all subjects is not fully in place.
- 25 The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. This has led to sporting success in football, netball and cross-country. The school has won a number of inter-school tournaments, and pupils have gone on to represent the school in district teams. The large school choir sings to a high standard and many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. There is a lively school orchestra and other groups such as the chess club. Residential weeks are organised to provide older pupils with the opportunity to extend their environmental and sporting awareness.
- 26 In the period since the last inspection the school has worked well to develop a good system of assessing pupils' attainments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and charting their progress throughout the key stage. This enables teachers to plan a range of study activities that provide an appropriate level of challenge. The information gathered from these assessments is sufficient to enable the school to set out its overall targets for improvement. Currently, however, pupils are insufficiently involved on an individual basis in the process of identifying their specific targets for improvement. The school has moved some way towards making the pupils aware of their own progress. They complete records of their reading experiences, computer and gymnastics skills. In Year 6, an appropriate period of time is allocated to revision prior to the end of key stage tests. There are some instances of inconsistencies in the maintenance of teachers' class records, and assessments. However, this is an area where the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 27 Since the last inspection, the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all pupils. Provision for social development is very good. The school's ethos, the quality of relationships and the quality of teaching contribute very positively to these aspects of school life.

- 28 Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Assemblies create an appropriate sense of occasion for spiritual reflection and help pupils to think about what they hear and to reflect upon their own beliefs. Opportunities are provided in religious education for pupils to reflect on the different aspects of their lives and to analyse their own feelings. Pupils extend their attitudes to and understanding of other people, through their studies of Buddhism and Sikhism. Pupils' work in English, art, music, and history enables them to gain spiritual understanding through reflection on their own and other people's lives and beliefs. Pupils in Year 3 gave considerable thought to the lives, feelings and circumstances of the Pilgrim Fathers during their voyage to America in the nineteenth century. There are occasions when opportunities are skilfully taken in lessons to engage fully the pupils' level of interest, wonder and enthusiasm. For example, Year 5 pupils listened, enthralled, to Yeat's poem 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Gold' during a discussion on their perceptions of heaven.
- 29 The school promotes a strong moral code that emphasises the care and respect which pupils should have for one another. There are very clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and teachers make sure that pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers' expectations of good behaviour are very high; relationships are invariably positive. Teachers and adults in the school provide good role models for pupils. The school involves the pupils in making rules for their own class. This is effective in allowing them to play an active part in promoting their own moral development.
- 30 Provision for social development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Teachers provide many good opportunities for social development. In lessons, pupils work together in pairs or small groups and show high levels of co-operation. When moving about the building pupils learn to be polite and courteous to each other and visitors. Consideration for others is promoted through support for charities. These include Barnardos and Marie Curie Cancer Care. Pupils carry out a range of tasks that contribute to the smooth running of the school, such as organising the libraries, physical education, music and science equipment and being class monitors. There is a School Council with pupil representatives from each year group who meet regularly with the headteacher. Issues arising in and around the school are discussed, for example, weeding the quadrangle to improve the school's environment. Outcomes of meetings are reported by council members during school assemblies, thereby developing a strong sense of community. Older pupils get the chance to take part in residential visits and all pupils go on outings that support the curriculum. The school provides pupils with a range of sporting events, which bring them into contact with pupils from other schools. The provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school and has a very positive impact on the development of pupils' social awareness.
- 31 Provision for cultural development has also improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers plan work in English, history and geography which gives pupils a clear understanding of their own cultural traditions. They introduce pupils to the cultural heritage of their own locality by involving them in the life of Boldmere village. Studies of past societies, such as the Romans and the Ancient Greeks, as well as contemporary ones in India, help pupils to broaden their knowledge of other cultures and compare them with their own. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to experience aspects of French culture during a residential visit to France during the summer term. Art and music provide opportunities to appreciate the works of celebrated artists and composers and in religious education they are introduced to major world faiths. A good range of books and artefacts which reflect cultural diversity is available. The school organises visits to museums, art galleries and orchestral concerts. Although pupils have had some opportunities to experience the wide range of cultures now flourishing in Birmingham, this aspect of the city has not been fully exploited.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 32 The school provides a secure and caring environment for its pupils. The procedures for recording and monitoring pupils' academic progress are good. The school uses the Key Stage 1 assessment results as a starting point for checking pupils' achievements. The headteacher continuously monitors pupils' progress to highlight their strengths and weaknesses. Appropriate educational plans are prepared for pupils with additional educational needs. The class teachers evaluate and adjust their plans so that the pupils receive adequate and appropriate support. Teachers know pupils well and provide good opportunities for personal and social development. For example, the school council meetings provide a good platform for debates on matters of common concern to the whole school. Work in the school library and the provision of a suggestion box enables pupils to take care of the school's resources and put forward suggestions to improve their environment.
- 33 Parents and pupils understand the agreed code for classroom behaviour. However, the hierarchy of rewards and sanctions are not clearly defined and for the very few pupils who need extra support to behave in an acceptable way this is occasionally confusing. Informal procedures to encourage good behaviour and to eliminate bullying and harassment are effective. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour throughout the school. Staff deal sympathetically with minor incidents.
- 34 The school's attendance policy complies with statutory requirements. Attendance registers are completed correctly. The school secretary successfully monitors attendance on a regular basis and matters of concern are brought to the attention of the education welfare officer. Parents are expected to obtain permission for family holidays. The management has recently revised procedures for authorising absences for holidays during the term time.
- 35 The school has adopted the local authority's child protection procedures and these have been put in place effectively. The head teacher is the designated person responsible for child protection and has received appropriate training. A further two teachers have now been trained in child protection matters. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Newly appointed members of the staff and mid-day supervisors are fully aware of the necessary procedures.
- 36 Parents are happy about the quality of care for their children's wellbeing and with the values and attitudes that the school promotes. Pupils like to come to school, they feel valued, therefore develop self-esteem and make good progress. The class teachers know their pupils well and give good attention to all aspects of their wellbeing. Relationship between pupils and staff are good, this has a positive effect on pupils' social and personal development. Parents feel that their children are safe and secure in the school. If a child is ill in the school parents are confident that the school will take appropriate action, including contacting them if necessary.
- 37 The school has an outdated health and safety policy, although the staff is aware of the need for vigilance. Regular checks are made on the buildings, grounds and equipment. There are records for the inspection of fire fighting equipment. Fire drill records are maintained by the school services manager. However these records are not updated for the autumn term.
- 38 There is adequate number of qualified first aiders and first aid boxes are adequately stocked and strategically placed in the school. There were some health and safety issues, brought to the attention of the school during the inspection. The school has dealt with them satisfactorily.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 1 The school recognises the importance of a partnership between home and school. The management works hard to establish good communication with parents and the majority, in turn, feel able to approach the staff at any time. Parents feel that the school encourages them to play an active part in school life and a number assist in classrooms by hearing readers or helping with other activities. Many parents are appreciative of the emphasis that the school places upon their children's personal as well as academic education and most are supportive of the school's aims published in the prospectus.
- 2 In response to parents' request for information about the school and its routines, the management has produced a yearbook, which contains useful information on curriculum, and guidance for parents for helping their children with homework. However some parents would like more information regarding the work their children do in the school and are expected to do at home. The school sends reading books home with a diary but no comments from teacher to help parents understand how to support best. Some parents expressed concern regarding lack of support for higher attaining children. The inspectors found that the school deals with this well, and concern was unfounded.
- 3 The annual reports to parents are satisfactory and contain information on pupils' progress and attainment. The school prospectus and governing body's report to parents are concise and easy to read. There are some omissions of statutorily required information in the governors' annual report to parents, and in the school prospectus the information about the school's policy for special educational needs is very brief. At a preliminary meeting for parents with children joining the school the teachers establish mutual expectations and responsibilities in respect of behaviour and attendance matters.
- 4 The school belongs to a local group of 'family' schools. However, joint curriculum planning with the neighbouring infant school is underdeveloped. Links with the secondary schools are complex since pupils often transfer to various neighbouring schools. A realistic approach is adopted and particular efforts are made according to the needs of individuals. The school contributes to various charitable appeals and maintains good relationships with the local church.
- 5 Some parents expressed concern that the school has no contact with ethnically diverse schools in the city. The inspectors noted that the contacts with the major religions of the world, other than Christianity, also, are not established. This makes it difficult for pupils to achieve a shared understanding of cultural, religious and ethnic differences in the multicultural society within which pupils will grow up and play their part. A large majority of parents feel that their child(ren) like(s) school and are happy to attend.
- 6 Links with local businesses and the wider community are established to raise pupils' commercial and cultural awareness, such as visits to local business areas in geography studies, art galleries and a historic house Shugborough enhance pupils' understanding of the world beyond their school environment.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

- 7 The leadership and management of the school is good. The governing body is organised appropriately and has good systems in place to ensure that they have a clear view of the work of the school. Both the chair and vice chair of the governors are frequent visitors to the school and they ask relevant questions of senior management. Information analysing the year on year progress pupils make is presented to the governors by the headteacher but as yet the governors' role in monitoring these standards is not fully developed.
- 8 The headteacher has led the school through a difficult period with regard to senior management. However, subject managers and the newly appointed deputy headteacher now form a well structured and effective team. Job descriptions are clear and everyone in the school understands their roles and responsibilities. Methods of communication are well established to support the day-to-day running of the school. The co-ordinator for special education needs has sufficient time and delegated responsibility to ensure that pupils' individual education plans are supported by classroom work.
- 9 The previous report identified the need to review whole school responsibilities of teaching staff and the management role of the deputy headteacher. The subject managers for English, mathematics and science have been involved in monitoring the curriculum and the achievements of pupils over the current year and this has been effective in improving standards. Where standards in subjects are lower, such as information technology, subject managers are in a good position to implement improvements. The strength in the school's management and the good quality of teaching will enable improvements in standards in information technology to be made and high standards in other subjects to be maintained.
- 10 The school has identified appropriate and manageable priorities for development. There are detailed and effective plans for each area indicating how the improvement is to be brought about and how success is to be judged. Financial implications are considered and noted. However the governing body has not implemented long term budget planning and the current reduction in the school's surplus may effect the implementation of plans, for instance release of subject managers for monitoring teaching and curriculum development. There is a contingency plan but it is not part of a formal long term planning procedure.
- 11 The ethos of the school is good. The headteacher leads the staff in striving to provide an education which develops all pupils full potential. The school has been successful in many ways in implementing its policy for equal opportunities, but particularly in establishing a climate in which pupils with disabilities can feel completely at ease.
- 12 The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations with the exception of ensuring that all statutorily required items on the annual report to parents and in the school prospectus are included.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 13 There is a good number of well qualified and experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. A number have useful additional qualifications. The classroom and special educational needs support staff are also well qualified and experienced and generously represented.
- 14 Classroom teachers work effectively in year teams to plan and teach. Job share arrangements work well. Specific responsibilities are appropriately allocated and all curricular and other key areas are well covered. Teacher appraisal arrangements, although informal, are well established. A good range of training opportunities is provided, which enables staff to develop their expertise effectively. At the time of the last inspection there were major problems of staff illness necessitating changes of teachers for many pupils. These matters have now been resolved and the situation stabilised.

- 15 The school's teaching accommodation is generous. Classrooms are of sufficient size and corridors have been added to enable all areas of the main building to be under cover and hence much warmer and more comfortable. Ramps have been installed to enable easier access for those with physical difficulties. The corridors are used well as additional teaching or private study areas and have many fold down work surfaces to aid these activities. The annexe spaces provide good bases for science, art, design and technology and musical activities. Under the main roof a new library and good computer suite have been provided. Two large halls provide good accommodation for assemblies, drama and physical education and for dining and after school activities respectively. The school is clean and in sound decorative order internally and there are a number of colourful displays of children's work. Spacious grounds provide grass and hard surface areas for physical education and support other curricular activities such as science. There is a quadrangle with pond, paths and a variety of plants for pupils to study – at the time of the inspection some weeding was necessary here. Externally a number of parts of the original building for example, doors on the frontage are falling into disrepair as are some pathways. Overall the accommodation is well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff.
- 16 The school is very well resourced over the full range of subject areas. Resources are well maintained, carefully stored and easily accessible.

The efficiency of the school

- 17 The governing body offers the school considerable expertise and exerts a strong influence upon its work. Full meetings of the governing body are held regularly and there is an effective committee structure to enable specific tasks and responsibilities to be carried out when necessary.
- 18 However there is no long term financial planning as a basis for the school development plan. Long term priorities are not established formally and there is no stated success criteria from which to judge the effectiveness of spending.
- 19 The school has a short-term approach to the financial planning. This makes it difficult for the management to adjust to changing circumstances such as changes in the staffing structure, as recently being considered by the school. The budget in the previous year was overspent which has resulted in the reduction of surplus to a level which is a matter of concern for the management.
- 20 The teaching and support staff is generally well deployed. The use of skilled support teachers and staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning in particular in Year 6 and in support of pupils with special educational needs. The administration staff work hard and effectively support teachers. The accommodation and learning resources are used well and have a positive impact upon the quality of education provided and upon the standards which are achieved.
- 21 The efficient school secretaries in conjunction with a teacher and the headteacher manage the accounts very well on a day-to-day basis. Careful financial control is maintained and appropriate monitoring systems are in place. The governors and the senior staff take their financial responsibilities seriously and responded appropriately to the recommendations made in the recent audit report. Funds for special educational needs are used appropriately.
- 22 The pupils attainment on entry to the school is above the national average. They make good progress in all year groups and attainment in English and mathematics is well above average by the time they leave the school. Taking this into account, together with the good quality of education provided and the good quality of the pupils' personal development, it is judged that although funding is slightly higher than the national average, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

- 23 Standards of attainment at the end of the key stage have risen considerably since the last inspection. The results of National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 4 was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was also well above the average. Over the three years 1996 to 1998, while pupils' performance overall was above average, a rise in attainment in 1997 was followed by a slight dip in 1998. Over the three years the performance of girls exceeded that of boys, reflecting the national trend.
- 24 The attainment of pupils in Year 6 reflects the standards achieved in the 1999 tests. The proportion of pupils whose work indicates that they will achieve the higher level in the end of key stage tests is well above average.
- 25 The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 reflects the above results. Standards of speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. Most pupils express themselves clearly and confidently. By the time they are in Year 6, higher attaining pupils have an extensive vocabulary which they use with understanding and maturity. They are very articulate and speak fluently. Lower attaining pupils have a good range of vocabulary. They discuss their ideas with both classmates and adults; they express themselves effectively and clarify points in response to questions. Pupils of different abilities listen attentively to a wide range of poetry, fiction and factual material and to others in discussion. Pupils' speaking and listening skills make a significant contribution to their progress in subjects across the curriculum.
- 26 Attainment in reading is very high. Most pupils in Year 6 are fluent readers who read widely for enjoyment. Higher attaining pupils are very confident. Their wide knowledge of literature and authors is often beyond expectations for their age and maturity. They are able to evaluate texts very effectively. For example, higher attaining pupils reading *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, had a very good understanding of the use of nineteenth century language and were able to describe how this had changed over time. They have no difficulty in selecting the key points from reference books and fictional texts, or in explaining how they research information and use library classification systems. Average attaining pupils read fluently and expressively, and also have well developed tastes in reading. Other pupils in Year 6 understand the ideas, characters and main events of texts and make reference to the text when explaining their ideas.
- 27 Pupils in Year 6 produce writing for a variety of purposes using a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils produce varied and interesting writing for different audiences in a wide range of forms. Their vocabulary is impressive when they write stories or poems. They use grammatically complex sentences that they are beginning to organise into paragraphs. Higher and average attaining pupils punctuate their work to a high level with commas, semi-colons and apostrophes, and speech, exclamation and question marks in making complex sentences. Their spelling is mainly accurate. Lower attainers punctuate sentences correctly, produce many accurate spellings and choose words for variety and effect. Most pupils use clear joined handwriting.

- 28 Progress is good throughout the school. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils work at their appropriate levels. Progress in pupils' understanding of grammar and punctuation is particularly strong. It results from high levels of expertise on the part of the teachers and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils in Year 3 use capital letters, full stops and speech marks with confidence while pupils in Year 6 are beginning to use parenthetical commas, dashes and brackets. Accuracy in spelling develops effectively from the extensive early work that teachers provide in phonics, regular homework in spelling, and skilled teaching in the use of strategies to improve pupils' accuracy. The wide range of texts chosen by teachers for use in the Literacy Hour has been instrumental in developing pupils' comprehension and writing skills. A group of pupils in Year 3, comparing the adjectives used in different story settings, chose mysterious, dark-greenish, umbrella-shaped trees to set the scene for their own story. Year 6 pupils, reading 'Black Beauty' by Anna Sewell, were able to distinguish between biography and autobiography by recognising the effect on the reader of the choice between first and third person.
- 29 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. They work in small groups or on a one-to-one basis with very effective support. Work is planned to meet their individual requirements in subjects across the curriculum.
- 30 Literacy is developed very effectively across the curriculum. Throughout the school, there are opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions, and to talk to other pupils on a wide range of subjects. Pupils' skills in researching information allow them to work independently in science, history and geography. They write accounts of historic events. In science, design and technology and geography they label diagrams and make good use of technical language. In Year 6, all pupils are working on or above the expected level in the Literacy Framework and are achieving a high standard of literacy.
- 31 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are almost always well behaved and this has a positive effect on attainment. Pupils maintain high levels of concentration and enjoy working on the challenging tasks set by teachers. They relate well to each other and work co-operatively in pairs and groups. Pupils work independently without the need for constant adult supervision. Very good relationships in class between pupils and teachers are a strong feature and encourage pupils to join in class discussions with confidence.
- 32 The quality of teaching in English is mainly good. Almost a quarter is very good with a small amount being satisfactory. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong. A strength of the teaching, which underlies the good progress pupils make, comes from the teachers' clear understanding and ability to teach the skills of reading and writing. They implement the Literacy Hour to good effect on the learning of pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers generally have a good or very good knowledge of the subject. This is evident in their clear explanations of the work and the good use they make of examples; they give well informed answers to pupils' questions. Teachers' expectations of pupils' ability and behaviour ensure that pupils work with high levels of concentration and the effort needed to do their best. Interesting and challenging tasks are set to stimulate pupils and keep them motivated. Teachers use the information from assessments of pupils' work, that build up as they move through the school, to plan the next stage of learning. There is, however, throughout the school, some inconsistency in the recording of reading assessments. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Through the use of skilful questioning, teachers check whether pupils fully understand an idea before leading them to develop it further. Marking is generally positive and is particularly effective when constructive advice is given to help pupils to develop their work further.

- 33 The English co-ordinator provides a very strong lead for the subject. With the introduction of the Literacy Hour, English has been a main priority for recent development. The co-ordinator has worked very hard at training, assisting and encouraging staff during this introductory phase. Monitoring teachers' planning and teaching, and pupils learning in the classroom has contributed to rising standards in literacy. Resources for the subject are of good quality and quantity. The reference library is attractive and well organised and provides a good range of reference books for pupils to access. A computerised system is used which allows pupils to use their IT skills to access information about each book in the library. The fiction library, which has recently been updated, is used well by pupils. The English and library co-ordinators work well together to provide a wide range of reading materials which are accessible to all pupils. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing is developed and emphasised in all areas of the curriculum.

Mathematics

- 34 Standards of attainment in mathematics have risen considerably since the last inspection, although results dipped in 1998. The pupils' performance in the 1999 test at the end of the key stage achieved a standard well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In current work in Year 6, attainment is well above national expectations.
- 35 Pupils at the top of the key stage are confident with mathematics. They discuss numbers and problems, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary, they know how to plan and record the parts of an investigation. They are able to use data effectively. They are able to work with fractions, decimals, percentages and long multiplication. They show good levels of competence in all forms of mathematical activity and present their work well. There has been marked improvement in the achievement of higher attaining pupils since the last inspection. This has been brought about by the school's efforts in setting in Year 6 and extra teacher support at the end of the key stage. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good and at times very good amongst the higher attainers at the top of the key stage. Challenging situations, good debate about mathematics and high expectations all contribute to the progress made by pupils.
- 36 Pupils in Year 3 carry out simple investigations with coins to find out the number of ways a given number of coins can be combined and record all the totals, they compile shopping bills and calculate the change from £1.00 tendered. In Year 4, pupils measure objects in metres, decimetres and centimetres, record their results and can convert between the units of measurement. In Year 5, pupils undertake calculator supported investigations for example, to make a total of 100 using the numbers 1 to 9 once each and any of the mathematical operations multiply, divide, add or subtract. They also work with common fractions and can identify the numerator and denominator. Pupils in Year 6 learn percentages and can readily recall their fractional equivalents, for example, one quarter equalling 25 per cent, and use these in their mathematical work. They can also use positive and negative numbers and multiply together numbers such as 23×17 or 32×1.6 . Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and work on related topics. They generally make good progress towards targets set for them, helped by the well matched work and support from the special needs assistants
- 37 Pupils enjoy their lessons and have good relations, based on mutual respect, with their teachers. There are high levels of interest in the school with much involvement in discussion and interactive number work. Pupils work well in groups, sharing the tasks and recording effectively. Work in exercise books is mainly neat and well set out.

- 38 Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Approximately a third of lessons are good and just under a third very good. The special needs assistants and other support staff are well briefed and guided by teachers so that they can carry out their work with confidence and efficiency. The teachers and staff have undertaken in service training for the National Numeracy Strategy, which was introduced at the beginning of the autumn term. Although teachers have worked hard to prepare and resource the new initiative the ‘newness’ of the work means that they are still gaining experience with the pacing and balance of their lessons and occasionally one component receives more than its due share of time. The school is aware of this and intends to undertake an evaluation of its work later in the term. All teachers are effective in their communication with pupils and are well organised and purposeful in the lessons for this subject. There is good use of apparatus and materials to support teaching and learning and an effective and detailed system for assessment in mathematics is in place, although occasionally this is not consistently used.
- 39 The subject is well led. The co-ordinator for mathematics has appropriate qualifications and a high level of interest in the subject. The work being done through the new numeracy project is having a good impact in the school although from the short time it has been introduced, the school is not yet in a position to fully assess this. All requirements for the National Curriculum are met.
- 40 Resources for mathematics are good. Staffing and accommodation are good and effectively used. The overall provision for the subject is developing well. Pupils use their numeracy skills to good effect in other areas of the curriculum, for example, time-lines in history and measurement in design and technology. The standard of pupils’ numeracy is high. Planning for pupils to use their mathematical skills when working with information and communication technology is not yet well developed.

Science

- 41 In the 1998 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, 73 per cent of the pupils reached or exceeded the level expected for their age. This was close to the national average but below the average for similar schools. In the 1999 tests the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation rose considerably to 89 per cent. Evidence from the scrutiny of completed work and from the observation of lessons during the inspection indicates that standards of attainment continue to be above the national expectation.
- 42 Currently in Year 6, pupils’ attainment is above the national expectation. Pupils can work methodically on investigations, and understand the need to check their results. They make predictions and construct reasons as to why changes have taken place. They use correct scientific terms in their writing. They show understanding of abstract information, for example when discussing the effects of gravity in respect of the craters formed on the moon.
- 43 Most pupils enter the school with a high level of scientific knowledge and skills for their age. Throughout the key stage, they make satisfactory progress in all areas of study. They follow a developing programme of work which allows them to build on previous knowledge. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the pupils learn about circuits and switches. In Years 5 and 6 they develop the study further into aspects of resistance and the effects of circuits in parallel and series. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment through the provision of work at a level of difficulty they can tackle successfully. The pupils’ skills in literacy and numeracy are well supported by work in the subject as they learn to use technical language and to tabulate results in various ways.
- 44 The school rightly places an emphasis on pupils learning the principles of a “fair” test. On a number of occasions during the inspection, this was difficult to achieve as too many variables were allowed in the testing which destroyed the validity of their findings. For instance, in an investigation into the load-bearing strength of structures, pupils were asked to test the structure by applying weights, but they altered both the weight and the area on which they placed the weight. Generally, though the emphasis placed on practical experimentation is providing pupils with a good understanding of the scientific process.

- 45 Pupils have positive attitudes towards science. They enjoy the practical aspects of the study, and co-operate willingly with one another. Some pupils become over excited and press on without making accurate recordings of the outcomes of their experiments. This causes a lack of pace in some lessons, as the work has to be repeated. Even in the most active lessons, the level of noise is maintained at an acceptable level and behaviour is good. Pupils take pleasure in seeing others succeed.
- 46 In the lessons observed, the overall quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in 20 percent of lessons and very good teaching was seen in a further 10 per cent. Teachers plan well and in detail. They explain tasks well and prepare a good range of experimental materials. They circulate well, giving advice and drawing out suitable responses from their pupils. In a small minority of lessons, the introduction is too long and this causes the pupils to lose sight of the aim of their activity. All teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to enable them to bring about consistently higher standards.
- 47 The science curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced, satisfying all statutory requirements. It is supported by the school policy document and a published textbook scheme is well-integrated with national requirements. Topics are repeated every second year, and this caters for pupils to acquire knowledge and skills at progressively higher levels of understanding. On occasions where pupils are asked to work independently by using the CD-ROM facility, they are not given sufficient guidance to focus their investigations. Their search through information programs become aimless and often results in little increase in learning. The subject is well-supported through a range of research books and experimental resources. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the policy guidelines, to monitor teachers' plans and their teaching strategies, to supplement resources and provide information on the subject for the governing body. All teachers maintain accurate records of the results of regular assessments. As a result, teachers are well prepared in Year 6 to know what needs to be taught to enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment. However, targets for achievement are not yet identified for individual pupils in their annual end of year report.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

- 48 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' overall attainment in information technology falls below the level expected nationally. Most pupils in Year 6 are able to save, retrieve and amend their word processing documents. They can use instructions such as 'cut' and 'paste', knowing most of the functions of the icons displayed on the tool bar. They are able to enter data onto spreadsheets, and some can use instructions to carry out operations such as totalling and averaging. However, their experience of control technology is very limited and at a basic level. They can use programs that simulate movement across the screen, but with little confidence in how to make turns or control distance. Most older pupils know how to use the CD-ROM to access information programs, but their interrogation is sometimes aimless and lacking structure. Scrutiny of work provided little evidence that skills in information technology are irregularly used to support attainment in other subjects. In English, most pupils display the ability to draft and amend their creative writing, and higher attaining pupils can express data in a variety of graphical forms.
- 49 Although progress over the key stage as a whole is unsatisfactory, this has been recognised by the school and a number of initiatives have taken place to address the situation. A computer suite has been established to cater for whole class teaching of basic skills on a weekly basis. In these lessons, pupils progress well. Pupils learn from careful explanation of procedures, as in a Year 3 lesson on the techniques of moving text around the page. Many pupils have a wide experience of using computers from home, and in many classes there is insufficient provision of varied activities to cater for their development. In two classes, particular provision was made where higher attaining pupils were given worksheets that allowed them to progress individually to higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs progress well as a result of the one to one teaching attention that they receive in many lessons.

- 50 As a rule, pupils enjoy information technology lessons. Some pupils lack confidence in using the mouse and keyboard. Such pupils are assisted by the staff through careful management of the grouping to overcome their reticence. Confident pupils are encouraged to assist rather than dominate others. There is an excited buzz in the classroom when the pupils are engaged in their investigations, but teachers have very little difficulty in gaining the quiet attention of all the class when necessary.
- 51 In the lessons observed during the inspection, the overall quality of teaching was good. These were carried out in the specially equipped information technology suite which has been in full operation for just over one term, and as yet is used mainly to teach skills rather than supporting work throughout the rest of the curriculum. Good teaching was evident in two thirds of lessons. It was satisfactory in all other lessons except one where unsatisfactory teaching was the result of a lack of subject expertise and where pupils who had 'lost' their program were unable to retrieve it. Teachers have good skills of exposition. They circulate well to give advice.
- 52 In the last inspection report, a number of deficiencies were identified in the school's provision for information technology. The co-ordinator for the subject has worked very hard to develop a policy document and to provide regular in-service training for the staff. Resources to support studies in other subject areas have been appropriately distributed to year groups, but as yet these have been insufficiently integrated into teachers' planning. Often, pupils are left to work in pairs to research information packages without clear guidelines and without desired outcomes being linked to their current attainments. A system to assess the pupils' attainments is established and maintained by all classes. This properly involves the pupils themselves, but does not sufficiently cover the higher levels of attainment and is not yet backed up by the collection of evidence in individual portfolios of printed work. As a result, although satisfying statutory requirements in covering all aspects of the programme of study, pupils do not have sufficient experience of using information technology to support work in mathematics and science.
- 53 In the school as a whole, there is a very good range of resources for the subject. As well as a specialised room, each class is equipped with at least one computer with a CD-ROM facility. These are well maintained by the staff, and checked daily by the co-ordinator. The school will very shortly have access to the Internet. Although the pupils' attainment in the subject are not as developed as in other core subjects, the school is now well placed to make progress to higher levels.

Religious education

- 54 Pupils' attainment by the end of the key stage, is above the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils in Year 6, during their study of Buddhism and the Four Noble Truths in particular, show a mature sensitivity to suffering in other parts of the world. Their social and moral awareness is heightened as they express their own feelings of sympathy, frustration and guilt. They have a good knowledge of the major aspects, symbols and stories of Christianity, using this to compare the principles behind other world religions. They are able to draw on their knowledge of religious customs and traditions in written pieces.

- 55 Pupils in Year 3 know many of the stories of the Christian faith surrounding Christmas and Easter. They recount such stories as 'The Prodigal Son' and 'The Good Samaritan' with some understanding of their significance. Pupils in Year 4, studying the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers, understand the importance of harvest as a time for giving thanks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study different faiths alongside Christianity and are knowledgeable about Sikhism and Buddhism. They explore the practices and beliefs and see the similarities and differences between religions. The visit made by pupils in Year 5 to a Sikh temple helped them to understand the importance of symbolism and ritual to Sikhs. Pupils understand that all religions have special places for prayer and different religious ceremonies. Through visits to local churches, pupils learn about the main features and objects to be found inside the church and their significance for worship. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing respect for the values and beliefs of others. They advance from exploring religion at a factual level to responding to it imaginatively. Pupils in Year 3, in creating their versions of the Ten Commandments, begin to analyse their own feelings and beliefs. Year 5 pupils discussing their perceptions of God and heaven, recognise that they have different thoughts and beliefs about these concepts. They show understanding of the way world beliefs differ one from another and, the fact that some religions believe in one God while others believe in many.
- 56 Pupils' response to the teaching of religious education is very good. They enjoy their work and are clearly interested in the subject. This is evident in their high levels of concentration and their readiness to answer questions and join in discussion. Most pupils listen attentively to stories in assemblies and lessons. During periods of reflection they are quiet and thoughtful.
- 57 The quality of teaching was good in a third of lessons and very good in a further third. One excellent lesson was seen. During one lesson there was a lack of focus on religious aspects and this was unsatisfactory. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and have good knowledge of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and attainment. The support they provide for the learning of pupils with special educational needs allows them to make good progress. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and provide pupils with a wide range of stimulating activities. They give thoughtful and interesting introductions to lessons and involve everyone in discussions. They have high expectations of behaviour and discipline, which results in a creative working atmosphere and allows pupils to make good progress.
- 58 Work undertaken in religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It interests them in serious issues, develops their thinking and encourages them to express their views. Pupils demonstrate a growing spiritual awareness and a sensitivity to the needs of others.
- 59 The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has a clear overall view of the curriculum and good progress has been made in the development of the subject since the last inspection. The policy and scheme of work are good and give useful support for teachers' planning. The co-ordinator monitors the quality of teachers' planning and the standard of pupils' work to ensure continuity and progression for pupils' learning. There are no opportunities at present to monitor classroom teaching. Resources for learning are good. They are used effectively and include a wide range of artefacts from different faiths.

102 **Art**

- 60 Progress in art is good overall. Pupils across the key stage gain significantly in understanding of the qualities of the materials and media and they have an effective grasp of techniques, for example, charcoal sketching and its associated shading and texturing. They know about a range of artists and their personal styles and they learn to reference these to make some simple comparisons and attempt different styles of working. Their understanding grows to enable them to make some informed choices about how to approach their art tasks and, particularly at the end of the key stage, they achieve good standards of finish and presentation in their completed works.
- 61 Pupils' response to art is generally good. The rich variety of activities and media on offer ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can develop their skills and interest and have a completed project to enjoy and take a pride in.

- 62 This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and with the appointment of a teacher with expertise in art, made shortly after that inspection, all the issues raised have been addressed and art now makes a strong contribution to the school's curriculum and in many subject areas.
- 63 The art curriculum is good. Pupils are introduced to work in two or three dimensions. They see a range of stimulating pictures and artefacts and are involved in skills development related to manipulating clay, painting, patterning, decoration, drawing and collage. They draw inspiration from stories, topics, visits and objects and the school is enhanced by displays of their artwork.
- 64 Teaching in art is good and sometimes very good. Teachers are developing confidence in this subject through good collaboration, team work and guidance from the co-ordinator. They are planning with care and developing valuable programmes of work. Lesson plans are effective and there is good use of demonstration and examples to help pupils progress. Teachers guide the support staff effectively enabling them to lead some of the pupil groups through the activity with confidence. Samples of work are regularly collated for assessment and some for reference.
- 65 The subject is managed very well. There is written guidance available, a useful draft policy and a scheme of work which attends to progression and continuity of skills in this subject. Whilst having little official time for communicating the needs of the subject because of other priorities in school, the consultation work is still effective and the positive impact upon the school's performance in this subject is evident.
- 66 The resources to support this subject are good with attention being paid to quality and variety and careful, accessible storage. All staff are involved in teaching art and understanding of the subject is growing in the school. The specialist room for art is also used well.

109 **Design and technology**

- 67 Only a limited amount of teaching was observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was gained by looking at pupils' work on display, talking to teachers and pupils and examining an extensive collection of photographs of previous work.
- 68 Progress in design and technology is good overall. Pupils across the key stage develop their skills and understanding of the design process, their knowledge of materials and their properties and their skills in the safe use of simple tools. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection which also notes that the curriculum was developing but insufficient attention was given for assessing the stage of development of individual pupil's skills and hence providing progression in the subject. Also activities seldom allowed pupils to exercise creativity at the outset or provide a context that is relevant to their lives.
- 69 In the two lessons seen teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other. In the good lesson the teacher had clear learning objectives, supported by the subject planning across the year group and sound subject knowledge which enabled pupils to extend their designing skills and their understanding of the design process. Pupils enjoyed the lessons and the practical work involved. Parent helpers were also used well to support the teaching and facilitate progress.
- 70 The co-ordinator has provided a policy, teacher guidelines and schemes of work which ensure progress and continuity, together with full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. These enable year group teachers to plan together and thus increase their own personal knowledge of and confidence in teaching the subject. Although not having any non-contact time during the school day, the co-ordinator monitors the subject via evaluation/assessment sheets and pupils' completed work. Photographs are taken and kept for reference together with others taken by teachers of lessons in progress. The subject is well managed and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

113 **Geography**

- 71 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils achieve a standard above what is generally expected for eleven years old. Progress throughout the classes is good. The subject is used well to provide pupils with opportunities to investigate and to carry out focused research. This benefits the progress of all levels of ability and those with special educational needs. Pupils from different ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers and there is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls.
- 72 In the youngest classes pupils make good progress in their understanding of routes and maps. They begin to record observations on tally charts and to develop an understanding of the purpose of field work in geography. They gain a secure basis of knowledge of the size, shape and main geographical features of the British Isles. In Year 4 they are able to carry out simple investigations into the effects of pollution on the outside areas of the school. In their individual study of the immediate environment they are able to make judgements and justify their observations. Pupils in Year 5 continue this study of the effects of pollution but on the wider scale of the world's tropical rainforests. By the time they are in Year 6 they can all express an opinion on some of the effects of deforestation.
- 73 Pupils show a good level of interest in their work and when working outside in small groups they are not significantly taken off task by outside distractions. They share resources well. Their work is well presented and map work especially is carried out with care and attention.
- 74 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, drawing from the very good medium term planning which incorporates not only content and high level activities but also good progression of skill and understanding. Teachers motivate pupils well and have high expectations of their achievements, particularly with regard to their understanding of the need to record accurately. Occasionally a lapse in organisation occurs, for example sorting out clipboards for outside work, which loses some of the lesson time.
- 75 The subject is well led. The subject manager is able to give good advice and has provided a very well structured scheme. Some recent monitoring of curriculum provision and pupils' achievements resulted in an improvement in one year group where teachers were giving insufficient attention to field work.
- 76 Resources both inside and outside are good. A new initiative with a group of businesses in Sutton has resulted in support from them, and will increase opportunities for observations and visits into the locality. Teachers provide links to pupils' learning in other areas, for instance the Year 4 survey of the school grounds was to be reported to the School Council. Links with mathematics occur but are not sufficiently planned and there is insufficient use of information technology in pupils' recording of data.

119 **History**

- 77 By the end of the key stage pupils achieve a standard of work and understanding well above levels expected for eleven year olds. Pupils' progress throughout the school is good. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their peers. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies in history. For example, lessons are often targeted by teachers as a time when pupils can work together collaboratively or do individual research. This ensures good progress for both those of the highest attainment and those with special educational needs. There is no difference between the progress of boys and girls.

- 78 In the youngest classes, a sound basis is laid for the pupils' understanding of the ways in which we learn about the past. In Year 3 in their project about Ancient Greece, the pupils make good progress in understanding how we can obtain insight into the past from artefacts and the role of museums in preserving them. As they move through the school this understanding is developed and by the time the pupils are in Year 5, when they are studying the Tudors, they have a good grasp of the relative importance of secondary and primary information. Although time for history study is now curtailed, pupils consistently build up their own chronological framework of events and historical periods so as to be able to place them in an accurate chronological order. For example in Year 6 the lower attaining pupils were able to place all the periods of history, that they had studied in a correct chronological sequence, and the higher attaining pupils could include specific important events within that sequence.
- 79 Pupils show particular enjoyment of the work they do in history. From observations of their past work it is clear that they take pride in presenting written and illustrated pieces well. They work together collaboratively on the challenges set by their teachers and in a Year 5 workshop afternoon they gathered together in a large group in the hall to listen appreciatively to the presentations offered by their peers.
- 80 The quality of teaching is good in almost three quarters of lessons and very good in almost a quarter. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. This was uncharacteristic and resulted from a lapse in organisational planning. Generally, teachers' planning is good, backed up by very secure long term planning by the subject manager. Teachers have good, and in some cases, very good subject knowledge. They motivate pupils well and provide stimulating and challenging tasks. Resources are good and are generally used well, although in the Year 3 lessons a video session was insufficiently focused to gain full benefit from this resource. Many classroom displays support pupils' interest and learning. In Year 6 pupils are set history projects to complete at home. These projects are specifically designed to involve the pupils' parents, family and community. They are a good opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's learning. Most parents appreciate this but some need more information, and others may not be in a position to help.
- 81 The subject supports pupils' learning in literacy very well, particularly in the development of their vocabulary and understanding of their cultural heritage. There are strong links with moral and social learning. The pupils use computers to access information but use of all aspects of communication through technology is not yet fully developed.
- 82 The subject is very well led. There is a well planned programme of work covering all aspects of the National Curriculum with clear indication of how to curtail the programme during the current year. Planned links with literacy and numeracy are not yet in place, although links do occur frequently in the best lessons. There is a good level of resources within the school and the use of outside visits and visitors is now satisfactory, although this could be developed further.
- 83 The current level of work and pupils' attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection.

126 **Music**

- 84 The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 indicates that by the end of the key stage they will have achieved a standard well above national expectations. Pupils of all levels of ability make good progress in all year groups.
- 85 Pupils in Year 6 understand the term ostinato and are able to work in groups to compose a short piece on tuned percussion instruments using the pentatonic scale. They are able to make decisions about whether to repeat the pattern they have composed or whether to introduce an element of change. A good proportion of pupils in Year 6 learn to play a musical instrument and to read notation. Pupils gain confidence and skills as they move through the classes. A particular strength of the school's provision in music is the teaching of singing. Throughout the school pupils learn about pitch, dynamics and rhythm through the songs they sing. Pupils sing in tune, aware of the performance of others. They can express mood through the use of voice. Their control of breathing is advanced and they sing for pleasure.

- 86 Pupils are enthusiastic about their music. Almost a 80 pupils, boys and girls from all classes attend the choir practice in the lunchtime. They listen attentively to one teacher singing the line of music and then sing themselves, needing nothing but a simple counting in to come in on time.
- 87 The teaching of music is always at least good and in a quarter of the lessons very good. The scheme, which has been recently introduced, provides good access for those teachers who have little specialist knowledge and they are now taking on more of the class teaching. However, during the inspection the lessons seen were given by teachers with very good musical knowledge and the level of work and pace of lessons reflected this. Activities are enjoyable and at an appropriate level of difficulty and lessons generally provide good opportunities to appraise, listen, perform and compose.
- 88 The subject is very well led by two co-ordinators. There is a new commercial scheme in place and the co-ordinator, who is part-time and not class based provides example lessons for class teachers without musical expertise to watch so that they can gain confidence in their own musical skills. This is an efficient use of staff. There is a good range of music tuition available for those pupils who wish to pay for this opportunity. Resources are good. The school has forged new links with the city orchestra, and there are visits to the immediate locality to perform, for example, to an old people's home. Large numbers of pupils belong to the school choir and orchestra. Annual school productions benefit from a musical contribution of a good standard. The subject makes an important contribution to the life of the school.

131 **Physical education**

- 89 By the time that the pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they demonstrate attainments in all aspects of physical education that is in line with the expectation for their age. In gymnastics, they learn to perform sequences showing the ability to curl and stretch and hold controlled balances. They play competitive games paying due regard to the rules. They show an awareness of space and methods of moving the ball around the playing area. They experience a range of adventurous activities, including orienteering. Last year all eleven year olds had learnt to swim at least 25 metres.
- 90 The school places a great emphasis on the development of pupils' physical health and competence, providing extra curriculum time for this purpose. As a result all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils' skills in controlling a ball and co-operating in games develop well, but in many class lessons teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to strive for greater control over their movements, in balancing, stretching, jumping or moving at speed. Pupils with physical disability are given exercises particularly designed to assist their development. Progress in swimming is good. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, including entering teams in inter-school leagues and tournaments for football, netball and cross-country. Over the years, an admirable sporting tradition has been established and school teams have met with considerable success. Individual pupils have gone on to take part in district teams.
- 91 The pupils enjoy their lessons in physical education and their attitudes to learning are good. They are attentive and trustworthy. Apparatus is put out and taken away in good order. The pupils are eager to learn new skills and increase their control over movements. They learn to co-operate in pairs and in teams, and begin to be able to make constructive suggestions for improvement. Most pupils are able to take losing without sulking.
- 92 During the course of the inspection, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory, with two out of five lessons being considered to be very well taught. These were characterised by a high degree of subject knowledge, with good strategies for teaching skills on a step by step basis. Pupils successful at an activity were used very well to demonstrate for their peers. In other lessons, pupils who had the potential to reach a high level of performance were not taught how to increase their finesse. For example, a lesson on forward rolls showed little teaching of the need for extending the movement to include straight legs and reaching a standing position without pushing up with the hands.

- 93 The co-ordinator for the subject has developed a comprehensive policy document for the subject, and statutory requirements are fully satisfied. A system for charting the pupils' progress in gymnastics has been developed, but its completion is inconsistent across the classes. There is some lack of expertise in teaching the dance elements of the programme of study. Resources for the subject are good and they are well maintained. The hard-standing playing area and large school field have a good impact on the development of high standards in outdoor games.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 1 The inspection in school was carried out over four days from the 20th to the 23rd of September 1999. The inspection took the equivalent of 19 days. Prior to that, school documentation and the previous Ofsted report had been examined.
- 2 The team comprised:- a lead inspector, three team inspectors and a lay inspector.
- 3 A meeting was held for parents and their views sought on a range of aspects of the school's work and a questionnaire was used to survey parents' views. The results of the survey were analysed.
- 4 During the inspection, the team saw 87 lessons, or parts of lessons. Every class in the school was included in the inspection. The work of support teachers and staff was inspected.
- 5 Pupils were observed in lessons, on the playground, in assemblies and in the dining hall.
- 6 Pupils' work was scrutinised across the age and ability range and included the work of both boys and girls, the pupils with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds. School records of assessment were looked at, together with registers and examples of pupils' reports.
- 7 Pupils were heard reading and inspectors had discussions with groups of pupils.
- 8 The headteacher, teachers, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body were interviewed. The views of non-teaching staff were sought and the work of the office administrators was examined.
- 9 Extra-curricular activities such as music provision during the day and clubs after school were observed.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

| | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on school's register of SEN | Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|---------|---|---|--|---|
| Y3 – Y6 | 355 | 3 | 34 | 26 |

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y3 – Y6)

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 14.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24.3 |

Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week | 101 |

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Average class size: | 29.6 |
|---------------------|------|

Financial data

Financial year:

| |
|------|
| 1999 |
|------|

| | £ |
|--|------------|
| Total Income | 601,047.00 |
| Total Expenditure | 586,047.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,655.00 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 5,000.00 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 20,000.00 |

PARENTAL SURVEY

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out: | 306 |
| Number of questionnaires returned: | 88 |

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 | 24 | 59 | 7 | 9 | 1 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 40 | 52 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well | 16 | 51 | 25 | 5 | 4 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 26 | 61 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 27 | 57 | 10 | 5 | 1 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 33 | 60 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 37 | 52 | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 26 | 54 | 13 | 7 | 0 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 31 | 53 | 9 | 7 | 0 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour | 33 | 55 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school | 58 | 35 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Percentage of responses are rounded to nearest integer, the sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, excluding nil replies