

INSPECTION REPORT

Pelsall Village School
Pelsall

LEA area : Walsall

Unique Reference Number : 104214

Headteacher : Mr Michael Wilkinson

Reporting inspector : Mrs Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection : 6 - 10 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706701

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

© Crown Copyright 1997

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

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Primary
Type of control :	Community
Age range of pupils :	3 - 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Old Town Lane Pelsall West Midlands WS3 4NJ
Telephone number :	01922 682073
Fax number :	01922 682677
Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr I Finney
Date of previous inspection :	29 April - 3 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara Crane, RgI.	English, art. Areas of learning for children under five.	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management.
Mr Bob Folks, Lay inspector.		Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mr John Brooke, Team inspector.	Mathematics, religious education, history, geography.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mr Paul Edwards, Team inspector.	Science, information technology, music.	Curriculum and assessment.
Mr Chris Scola, Team inspector.	Design and technology, physical education, Special educational needs.	Efficiency.

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants
16 Wychwood Drive
Trowell Park
Nottingham NG9 3RB

0115 9170823

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1 - 4

Characteristics of the school
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

5 - 20

Attainment and progress
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Attendance

Quality of education provided

21 - 48

Teaching
The curriculum and assessment
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

The management and efficiency of the school

49 - 63

Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

64 - 71

English, mathematics and science

72 - 94

Other subjects or courses

95 - 129

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

130

Data and indicators

131

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The school's drive to raise standards in writing and information technology has been successful.
The pupils achieve good standards in physical education.
The school's initiative to improve attendance has been successful.
The provision for children under five enables them to make good progress in all aspects of their work.
The pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities and these enhance the pupils' personal development.
The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and the school has a good ethos.
The school provides a strong moral framework for the pupils and good opportunities for them to develop socially. Their cultural awareness is well promoted.
The school's partnership with parents is strong and the parents have confidence in the school.
Homework is very well organised and supports the pupils' learning.
The school provides a good level of care for the pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

The pupils could do better in mathematics.
The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are too vague and this makes the monitoring of their progress more difficult.
Teachers' expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour could sometimes be higher in lower Key Stage 2.
The surfaces of the junior and Nursery class playgrounds are in a poor condition and this restricts opportunities for play.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has responded satisfactorily to the issues raised in the previous report. The rate of progress, whilst slow initially, has been good over the last year and the effectiveness of the school's response is seen in improved attendance, improved standards in information technology, art and the presentation of work. The roles of the curriculum co-ordinators have been clarified and extended and they are clear about the part they play in raising standards. School development planning has been extended and provides a clear strategy for improvement. The review of resources and careful financial planning has enabled the school to build adequate resources for most areas of the curriculum. The school is well placed 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 <i>well above average A</i>
-----------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---

English	E	C
Mathematics	E	E
Science	E	E

<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

These results relate to the pupils who took the tests last year. The table shows, for example, that the pupils' performance in English was well below the national average but in line with that in similar schools. The results of tests over the last three years show an upward trend in standards at Key Stage 1. The results at Key Stage 2 have been more variable but have been well below average, overall, in the core subjects. Inspection evidence supports the view of below average attainment in English and mathematics at the age of eleven. The pupils' attainment in science, religious education and information technology is broadly average. By the age of five, most of the children are unlikely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes in all of the areas of learning except for physical development.

Quality of teaching

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 92% of the lessons. In 45% of the lessons it is good or better. In 10% of lessons the teaching is very good or better. Unsatisfactory teaching is seen in 8% of the lessons.

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	Satisfactory. Many of the pupils behave well, both in class and on the playground. Most of the pupils are polite, helpful and friendly. A significant minority display challenging behaviour.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school places a high priority on improving attendance and

	monitors absence well. Good attendance is rewarded.
Ethos*	Good. There is a successful climate for learning and most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. The school is committed to raising standards.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school. The roles of the subject co-ordinators have been extended over the past year. The governing body provides appropriate support for the work of the school. The management of special educational needs is a weaker aspect.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum for children under five enriches their experience and prepares them well for Key Stage 1. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting.
Pupils with special educational needs	Most pupils make satisfactory progress. The support given by classroom assistants is effective. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans does not always allow a thorough review of progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good, overall. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides a strong moral framework. There are good opportunities for the pupils' social development. The school plans well to raise the pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school has an appropriate number of teachers and support staff. Teachers who are new to the school have an appropriate induction programme but need more guidance on dealing with special educational needs and behaviour management.
Value for money	Satisfactory

* *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
Their children enjoy coming to school. They find the staff approachable.	A very few parents do not feel that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is

<p>They feel encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school.</p> <p>Parents feel well informed about their child's progress.</p> <p>The school enables their children to achieve a good standard of work.</p> <p>Their child is encouraged to take part in a range of activities outside lessons.</p>	<p>taught.</p>
--	----------------

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views. The quality of information about what is taught is satisfactory

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

What the school needs to do now:

Improve standards in mathematics by:

- raising the teachers' confidence in delivering the Numeracy Strategy by providing appropriate support;
 - improving the teaching of place value;
 - ensuring a better pace in the mental arithmetic sessions.
- (Paragraphs 9, 24, 85, 87)

Improve the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- ensuring that the targets in pupils' individual education plans enable teachers to plan appropriate work and measure pupils' progress more easily;
 - providing better advice and support for teachers who are new to the school so that they have a more effective range of strategies to deal with special educational needs.
- (Paragraphs 7, 32, 52, 54)

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- establishing clear expectations of behaviour in lessons;
 - raising the teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - ensuring that the teachers give clear explanations of what the pupils have to do.
- (Paragraphs 21, 26, 79, 87, 93)

Improve the surfaces of the junior and Nursery class playgrounds.

(Paragraphs 57, 71,)

In addition to the key issues above, the less important weaknesses identified in paragraph 92, concerning the occasional lack of challenge in science work and in paragraph 177, concerning the pupils' lack of understanding of chronology in history, should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

The school is situated in Pelsall, about four miles from Walsall. The school serves an area of some social and economic disadvantage. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Eighteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is close to the national average. There are three pupils with statements of special educational needs. Seven pupils come from travellers' families.

Children enter the Nursery class when they are three years old and attend part-time. The children transfer to the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The attainment of children when they start in the Nursery class is well below average. Their use of language is very restricted and they have a poor vocabulary. At the time of the inspection, there were thirty-five children attending the Nursery class and twenty-two children who were under five in the Reception class. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. The school has three newly qualified teachers.

The school aims to provide opportunities for children to develop their full potential as members of the community, spiritually, morally, physically and intellectually. The school has set targets to improve the quality of teaching; improve standards in English and mathematics; promote high standards of behaviour; improve resources and the environment for learning and more fully involve parents in their children's learning.

4. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	11	15
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	27	25	31
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87 (66)	81(63)	100 (91)
	National	85 (80)	86 (81)	90 (85)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	9	14	12
	Girls	13	15	13
	Total	22	29	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	71 (66)	94 (89)	80 (69)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	10	5	11
	Girls	11	5	9
	Total	21	10	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	64(32)	30(40)	61(48)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

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

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	10	6	11
	Girls	11	8	12
	Total	21	14	22
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	64 (n/a)	45 (n/a)	70 (n/a)
	National	73 (65)	72 (58)	83 (69)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.2
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Number
Fixed period	10
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :	%
Very good or better	10%
Satisfactory or better	92%
Less than satisfactory	8%

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Children enter the Nursery class with well below average levels of attainment in most of the areas of learning. They make good progress as under fives in both the Nursery and Reception class, but most are unlikely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes in any of the areas of learning except for physical development.

The results of the Key Stage 2 tests in English in 1999 show that pupils' attainment is well below the national average but close to the results in similar schools. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 tests in reading show standards that are close to the national average and better than those in similar schools, but standards in writing are below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading are broadly average at the end of both key stages but that pupils' attainment in writing and speaking and listening is below average.

Key Stage 1 pupils have a limited vocabulary and do not readily engage in conversation. Their listening skills are limited. Both listening and speaking improve at Key Stage 2, but pupils' attainment overall remains below that expected for their age by the time they leave the school. The majority of pupils struggle to express themselves and use short sentences or phrases. The pupils make good progress in reading and most use good expression when they read. The pupils make satisfactory progress in writing, overall. Their spelling is good. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 write narrative pieces which reach a satisfactory standard in final draft, but their descriptive writing lacks imaginative and lively language. The pupils' handwriting is generally of a good standard. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Their individual education plans, however, do not always identify specific targets against which their progress can be measured.

The performance of the eleven year old pupils who took the national tests in mathematics in 1999 was well below both the national average and that in similar schools. The previous year's results were better, with a higher proportion of pupils attaining Level 4. Inspection evidence suggests that about 60% of the pupils are working at Level 4 in Year 6, which is below average. At Key Stage 1, the results of the tests in 1999 were closer to the national average, but inspection evidence suggests that only about two-thirds of the Year 2 pupils are working at the level expected for their age.

By the age of seven, the pupils have developed some strategies for mental calculation but their speed of mental recall of number facts is a weakness. Pupils use the mathematical skills they have learned in investigations and problem solving activities, although a significant number lack confidence in using mathematical vocabulary correctly. The pupils' understanding of place value is weak. They add and subtract numbers to 20 accurately and recognise some patterns such as odd and even numbers. Most pupils have a suitable understanding of the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes. They estimate lengths and weights and have average skills in measuring. The pupils are mostly confident in recognising fractions such as a quarter and a third. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have broadly average skills in using the four rules of number. Very few of the pupils attain above average standards in most aspects of mathematics. Many pupils have an insecure understanding of place value to 1000. They have average skills in recalling multiplication facts but are slow to do so. They know about fractions and percentages and explore and describe number patterns competently. The pupils have some knowledge of mathematical terms but use them infrequently when talking about their methods. They have average attainment in shape, space and measures and a secure knowledge of symmetry, angles and area. In data handling, the pupils construct graphs and interpret data appropriately. In using and applying mathematics, they try out patterns and make reasonable attempts to solve problems using number operations but most pupils are at a loss to suggest alternative strategies. The pupils use mathematics appropriately in other subjects. Progress in number in both key stages is satisfactory, overall, but the lack of understanding of place value by many pupils inhibits better progress. There is unsatisfactory progress in developing a knowledge of mathematical terms and language and using these appropriately. Progress in data handling is good at Key Stage 2 and good use is made of information technology to support this aspect of mathematics. The fastest rate of progress is seen in Year 6, due to the high quality of teaching. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is mostly satisfactory and is often good where additional support is given.

The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments and end of Key Stage 2 tests in science show that the pupils'

attainment is below the national average and close to that attained by pupils in similar schools. Taking the results from 1996 to 1998 together, the pupils' attainment has been well below the national average in science. Inspection evidence shows that there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' attainment during the last 12 months, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 and that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level is broadly average, although fewer pupils attain at the higher level.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the body. They know that exercise is important for getting fit and describe which foods should be included for a healthy diet. They are beginning to understand about sound and hearing and the other senses. They know the difference between living and non-living things and know what is required to make plants grow. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a secure understanding of electricity. They know how to make a circuit and how to incorporate a switch, bell and a buzzer. They recognise and use symbols when describing or drawing electrical circuits. They understand that some substances dissolve and that some can go through processes that are irreversible. The pupils in Year 3 understand the importance of using the correct material for making things and learn about the importance of recycling. Progress is satisfactory in both key stages and the pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress throughout the school. In Key Stage 2 greater emphasis is placed on practical and investigative work. For example, the pupils develop their understanding of exercise through investigating the pulse rate after exercise.

The pupils' attainment in religious education reaches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. They learn about some of the major religions and deepen their understanding of Christianity. The Key Stage 1 pupils have an awareness of the special occasions in the Christian, Jewish and Hindu calendar and know how important these events are. The Key Stage 2 pupils are able to appreciate the reasons behind some of the stories Jesus told, and have a sound knowledge of many of the major events in his life. They appreciate why a Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca is so important and the significance to many religions of the various festivals that are celebrated annually.

The pupils' attainment in information technology is average at the end of both key stages. The Key Stage 1 pupils confidently use tape recorders and CD players. They use keyboard functions such as capitals, space bar, cursor and delete. They use a word processing program and develop confidence in checking spelling using a computer spelling checker. Throughout the school the pupils show considerable confidence in selecting and loading files from both floppy disks and the hard disk and understand the meaning of folders and files. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. They draft and revise their work on screen and are confident in printing out their work and saving and retrieving their work from disk. They are becoming familiar with using the internet for research and to send e-mail. The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages and this includes those with special educational needs. In the early stages of Key Stage 1, the pupils are introduced to word processing and these skills are built on systematically. At the end of the key stage the pupils are writing text and inserting pictures into their work. They know how to select files and pictures and move them around the screen. They develop their accuracy with the cursor. In Key Stage 2, the pupil load pictures of the old village school as part of their history work. They know how to manipulate the pictures, reducing them in size and inserting them into their writing before saving to disk.

The pupils' work in all other subjects reaches the standard expected for their age and reaches a good standard in physical education.

Overall, the pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is slower than that in other years. This is mainly due to lower expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the weaker management of their behaviour. The pupils make particularly rapid progress in Reception and in Year 6, where the quality of teaching is very good.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

The children under five settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery. They learn to share, take turns and show an interest in their work. Overall the pupils' attitudes are satisfactory with some good attitudes observed in Reception and upper Key Stage 2. The pupils enjoy coming to school and work and play well together. They concentrate well in lessons particularly in the Nursery and Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2. At the lower

end of Key Stage 2 there are a significant number of pupils who display challenging behaviour and who are unable to stay on task when working individually.

Most of the pupils behave well. They enter and leave school calmly and move around the school sensibly. During mid-morning and mid-day breaks their play is generally friendly and boys and girls relate well to each other. They show respect to visitors and are friendly and welcoming. They have a clear understanding of the school's expectations and rules and know the difference between right and wrong. There were no instances of bullying seen during the inspection. They treat the school's and other people's property with respect. The school does have a number of pupils who have difficulties in behaving well. Through help and support provided by the headteacher and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator and an effective behaviour policy which is well supported by parents and carers, the school is usually successful in helping such pupils to play a full part in its daily life. The school had a high rate of fixed term exclusions last year. These related to a small number of older boys.

The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Responsibilities for the smooth running of the school and the classroom are shared out among all pupils and these duties are enthusiastically carried out. Opportunities are taken in lessons for pupils to take responsibility and organise their learning. A good example of this was observed during a physical education lesson, where the pupils organised a sequence of movements in small groups and presented a short display to their peers. The support and encouragement they gave to each other was a particularly strong feature of their response. They are interested in what other pupils have to say and discuss issues relating to their own lives and those of others, sensibly and thoughtfully.

Attendance

Attendance has improved dramatically since the last inspection. It is now in line with the national average. However, the school is not complacent, and is now, in conjunction with the Educational Welfare Officer, aiming to improve it yet again. The improved attendance is making a considerable contribution to the pupils' standards and attainment.

Registration is carried out very efficiently and the procedures comply with statutory requirements. There is little evidence of lateness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. In just over four out of ten lessons, the teaching is good or better. There is some high quality teaching in the Reception class and in Year 6, and it is in these classes that the pupils make the better progress in English and mathematics. The weaker teaching is mainly in Years 3 and 4. The teachers here have lower expectations of what the pupils can achieve and manage the pupils' behaviour less effectively. In weaker lessons, at both key stages, explanations of what the pupils should do are confused.

The teaching of children under five is good in the Nursery class and very good in the Reception class. The staff plan a range of interesting activities to develop the children's skills in literacy and numeracy. They have a good understanding of the children's social needs and promote their self-esteem and encourage their independence. There is good direct teaching of skills in information technology. The staff make detailed observations of children's progress and use the information effectively to plan future work.

The teachers have a sound knowledge of most subjects and often make good links between subjects in their planning. In the very good lessons, seen in English and mathematics in upper Key Stage 2, the teachers' planning has clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. The teachers have high expectations and use language that extends the pupils' vocabulary. Time and resources are well used and the progress of all pupils is monitored. The teachers encourage the pupils to express opinions and to talk about their work and the choices they have made. In good lessons at upper Key Stage 1, in English, science, physical education, religious education and music, the teachers' clear introduction to the lessons and skilful questioning ensures that all of the pupils understand the work and extend their understanding. The behaviour of the pupils in these lessons is

closely monitored and the teachers have a range of strategies for managing challenging behaviour.

The teachers have made a good start with the Literacy Hour and have reflected on ways in which their organisation and methods can be improved. These sessions generally have a good pace and are well resourced and organised. However, the teachers' expectations of what lower attaining pupils can achieve in writing in Years 3 and 4 are too low. There are sufficient opportunities planned in lessons at both key stages for pupils to use and extend their skills in writing and reading and numeracy across the curriculum. The Numeracy Strategy is reflected in teachers' planning and most have made a confident start, but some teachers are more tentative. The mental arithmetic session often lacks pace, however, and so does not promote a rapid and accurate response from the pupils.

Teachers are beginning to use their assessments in English and mathematics to set individual targets for pupils; these are more rigorously followed through in Key Stage 2. There is some good, evaluative marking of work at Key Stage 2. It gives the pupils clear pointers for improvement, but this is not seen in all classes.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are usually good; the teachers know the pupils well. Most teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well, even when it is particularly challenging. However, not all teachers have consistent expectations of the pupils' behaviour and as a result, the pupils become restless and inattentive. In the unsatisfactory lessons the teachers allow noise to rise to an unacceptable level and this distracts pupils from their work. The teachers' and the pupils' time is wasted and repeated requests for quiet are ignored.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory when support is available. On a few occasions, when this support is not available, the teachers do not take sufficient account of the pupils' individual education plans in planning their work.

The teachers have a consistent and very well organised approach to homework. All pupils know when they have work to do and the deadline for completion. The very good use of homework has a positive impact on the standards achieved by the pupils.

The curriculum and assessment

The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education takes account of the locally Agreed Syllabus for Walsall. It is broad and balanced and includes drugs and sex education. The school has made a significant improvement in the quality of the information technology curriculum since the last inspection and the pupils' attainment in art at Key Stage 2 has also improved and is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.

The curriculum for the under-fives takes full account of the recommended desirable learning outcomes. It is well-planned and balanced. The baseline assessment of the children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is used effectively to plan future work. An appropriate emphasis is placed on developing their language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. The children who are under five are presented with structured activities and imaginative experiences, including role play, which give them a good foundation for work in Key Stage 1. Appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy and they make good progress in these aspects of the curriculum.

There are policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects and the school takes good account of national guidelines. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented. Literacy planning has been in place for well over a year and this is having a positive effect on reading and writing across the school. Whilst all teachers implement the daily mathematics lessons in line with the national strategy, some lack confidence. As a result, there is lack of pace and rigour in some of the lessons. The school has however, addressed the issue of using mathematics across the curriculum and there are examples of its use in science and information technology. There is a good framework of topics which is planned effectively to take account of the mixed age classes. This ensures the curriculum has progression, enabling the pupils to build on work covered in previous years. Medium and short-term plans are comprehensive and detailed and provide a clear structure of what is to be taught. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was an inconsistency in the teachers' planning.

All of the pupils have access to the full range of activities and lessons provided by the school. The school has developed satisfactory procedures for identifying the pupils with special educational needs. The school's provision complies with the recommendations of the Code of Practice but the quality of the pupils' individual education plans is variable. The lack of specific targets in some plans limits their usefulness in reviewing the pupils' progress. Some pupils remain at the initial stage on the register, when a more effective review of their progress would highlight the need to move them on.

There are very good arrangements for homework throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Homework is set regularly for a range of subjects and there is an expectation that all of the pupils will complete the tasks. The provision of homework has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment. A programme of educational visits is carefully considered to link with current topics. The school gives considerable emphasis to the development of the pupils' personal and social development and residential visits in this country and abroad for the older children play a significant role in these aspects. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that add to the pupils' skills. The activities, which include choir, recorders, netball, competitive football for boys and girls, dance, gymnastics and French involve many teachers and are attended by a good number of pupils. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition in brass and woodwind. The school regularly participates in musical activities with other schools in the borough and their recorder players feature on a musical CD.

There is thoughtful assessment of the children when they first start the Nursery and the information that is gained is used to plan appropriate work. There are good procedures in both key stages for assessing the pupils' attainments. In addition to the statutory tests, the school undertakes the national optional tests and a range of tests at the end of topics. The teachers are beginning to make effective use of the results of assessments for planning future work and for grouping the pupils according to their ability. The school recognises the need for making more effective use of the assessments to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. There are clear plans in place for this.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The ethos of the school is good and is consistent with the aims stated in the school brochure.

The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies allow time for reflection and thought. The school has developed links with the local churches and other places of worship. A feature of religious education lessons is the emphasis on developing positive attitudes to everyone's beliefs and recognising similarities in belief. Listening to a variety of music, looking at varied art and observing the wonders of nature in the environment also enhance the pupils' spiritual development. A strong sense of spirituality was promoted in an assembly, for example, when an older pupil sang a solo verse of a carol. The entire school was enraptured by the performance.

The school's behaviour policy is effective and there is a strong moral framework for the pupils. The school successfully teaches the principles that distinguish right from wrong. There are distinct, clearly documented structures in place to promote good behaviour and each class has its own rules and aspirations displayed. A weekly assembly to celebrate success reinforces good behaviour. Parents feel very strongly that this is an area where there has been considerable improvement over the past year.

The social development of pupils is well promoted. They are encouraged to contribute actively to the life of the school. They are given responsibilities in the classrooms from an early age and their help and collaboration ensures that classroom and school routines run smoothly. Older pupils often take responsibility for caring for the younger ones during playtimes and lunch-break. There are good links with the local community through clubs, concerts, festivals, fairs and fund-raising events. The very good range of extra-curricular activities promotes the pupils' social development effectively.

The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures is furthered by lessons in religious education, art, music, dance, history and geography. Visits to local industry, museums and theatres are often linked to such cross-curricular work. The school has hosted dance groups, boat people and travelling theatres. These have made a positive contribution to the pupils' wider

knowledge and experience.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

Overall, the school provides good support, guidance and welfare for all of its pupils. The staff know their pupils well and relationships between staff are good. This is reflected in the way that the pupils conduct themselves in and around the school. The school provides a safe and secure environment. The good support provided by the school contributes to the pupils' self esteem and well-being and to their progress. Satisfactory support is provided for pupils with special educational needs by classroom assistants but there are weaknesses in the pupils' individual education plans and this prevents the effective review of progress.

Procedures for monitoring progress and personal development are satisfactory. The procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour are good and are consistently applied by the staff including the lunch-time supervisors. The attendance procedures are very good and absences are closely monitored. Attendance is very well promoted by the school and the pupils have responded very positively to this. There has been considerable improvement in attendance at the school. The Educational Welfare Officer provides valuable support for the school's efforts to promote attendance.

Health and Safety procedures are effectively implemented and all statutory requirements are met. Accident and injury procedures were seen to work well during the inspection and the school has a number of qualified first aiders. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Good support is provided for travellers' children in the school and by the speech and language service.

The school has continued to provide good support to the pupils since the last inspection. The promotion of attendance has improved considerably since then.

Partnership with parents and the community

The school has a good partnership with the parents who are supportive of the school. They are provided with good information to keep them informed of news and events and, more recently, with the curriculum covered. They are kept well informed of their children's progress. There are good links with the community and local businesses and with local schools. These links make a considerable contribution to the pupils' personal development.

A small group of parents help with swimming and with trips and visits. Parents are very supportive of the home/school reading project. A flourishing Parents' Association organises numerous events during the year to raise funds and have bought lots of equipment and learning resources for the school. They send out their own informative newsletter. The parents are kept well informed with a regular supply of newsletters and letters from the school. The school brochure and the annual governors' report to parents are informative and annual pupil reports are of a good standard.

The school has close liaison with a small cluster group of schools and particularly with the local secondary school. This close relationship helps with the smooth transition of pupils. There are also good links with the local churches.

Educational visits are made to places like Shugborough Hall, the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne and Cannock Chase. Residential visits are made to Hartington in Derbyshire where the pupils stay at the youth hostel. Plans are being made to visit France next year. Visitors to the school include visiting theatre companies and musicians.

Since the last inspection, links with the community have improved and are now good. A number of local organisations use the school facilities. The learner swimming pool is used by other schools. The football pitch is used by a local adult team and in return, they have provided the school with football strips, provide coaching for the pupils and organise a 5-a-side football competition at the Summer Fair. The school is used by a slimming club, a mothers and toddlers club, the local community association and by the Scouts, Guides and Cubs. The

school is building very close links with local businesses through the Education Business Partnership. One company has provided sponsorship for some of the resources in information technology and mathematics and the girls' football kit.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school and has put in place appropriate strategies for moving the school forward and raising standards. He is supported by a well informed governing body. The school's aim of improving its partnership with parents has been energetically pursued and its success is seen in the parents' renewed confidence in the school.

The school has responded satisfactorily to the issues raised in the previous report. The rate of progress, whilst slow initially, has been good over the last year and the effectiveness of the school's response is seen in improved attendance, improved standards in information technology, art and the presentation of work. The roles of the curriculum co-ordinators have been clarified and extended and they are clear about the part they play in raising standards. School development planning has been extended and provides a clear strategy for improvement. The review of resources and careful financial planning has enabled the school to build adequate resources for most areas of the curriculum. The school monitors the cost effectiveness of spending well and publishes all information that is required. All statutory requirements are met.

The headteacher monitors teaching and learning through observations in classrooms and provides feedback to teachers. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and standards achieved by the pupils. Effective support is provided for curriculum development. The introduction of target setting for individual pupils in English and mathematics is helping to raise standards. The introduction of the Literacy Hour has been well managed. The weakness in standards of pupils' writing has been identified as a priority and the literacy co-ordinator's action plan to improve the school's approach to this has been successful. The school analyses the results of tests and assessments and has set realistic targets for improvement. The targets for English were met last year and the school is on track to reach this year's targets in English and mathematics.

The management of special educational needs has some weaknesses. Overall, the work of the support assistants is well co-ordinated and they provide good support. However, the review of pupils' progress is limited by the lack of clear targets in pupils' individual education plans. The newly-qualified teachers have not always received adequate support to enable them to deal with pupils with special educational needs.

The school has a good ethos and is well poised to make further improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The school has a sufficient number of teachers who are qualified with an appropriate range of subject expertise. The newly qualified teachers have an induction plan with individual objectives but have only recently started to receive appropriate support with their management of special educational needs. Each newly qualified teacher has a mentor but the quality of support given is variable. Classroom and support assistants are suitably qualified and have received appropriate training. The programme for the professional development of staff over the last year has focused effectively on information technology, literacy and numeracy.

The administration staff are very efficient and contribute considerably to the smooth running of the school. The school caretaker maintains the school very well and, together with the cleaners, keeps it in a safe and clean condition.

The accommodation is generally satisfactory and enables the full range of the curriculum to be delivered. The school is based on a large site with a large attractive quadrangle which also provides a safe play area for the Reception pupils. There are two halls and one is large enough for whole school assemblies. Some of the tiled floors in

corridors are starting to deteriorate. The smaller hall is connected by a covered walkway but the adjacent computer suite and the Nursery cannot be reached under cover.

Externally, the school has two football pitches and a number of hard playground areas. The surface of the junior playground is in very poor condition and has sunk in a number of areas causing extensive puddles to form which make it hazardous. Lunch-time supervisors sweep away the puddles to enable play activities and this distracts them from following their normal lunch-time supervision duties. The Nursery playground comprises paving slabs and is very uneven, making it difficult for the children to ride wheeled vehicles. Both of these playgrounds were mentioned in the last inspection report, but have not been actioned. However, the toilets have been re-furbished and partitioned and the floors re-covered.

The range and quality of learning resources is satisfactory overall and is good for English, physical education and information technology. The resources are well maintained and are accessible. Resources for mathematics, history and art have been improved since the last inspection and the new computer suite has addressed the criticism about the range of computers.

The efficiency of the school

The school's resources are managed efficiently by the governors and the headteacher. Governors are well informed on the budget through the regular meetings of the finance committee. Subject leaders are responsible for spending in their own subjects and reports are presented to the governing body on this expenditure. The school development plan is a very effective and comprehensive document. By clearly outlining and costing its priorities, the school has been successful in addressing one of the key issues in the previous inspection. All developments, particularly those involving the curriculum, are promoted through careful financial planning. Identified priorities now have indicators by which the school can judge its success.

Financial control and daily administration are very good. Good management systems are in place and incoming monies, the ordering of equipment and the payment of invoices are handled extremely efficiently by the two school administrators. The few minor recommendations in the most recent auditor's report have been carried out and the school runs very smoothly.

The school benefits from the enthusiastic and generous support of parents and friends of the school and considerable funds are raised from events organised throughout the year. These funds are well targeted to benefit specific projects and curriculum areas.

Generally, efficient use is made of staff, accommodation and learning resources. Particular strengths of teachers are used well in the early years and in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. Recent input of resources has increased the school's effectiveness particularly in literacy and information technology. The funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively to provide support.

Taking into account the high cost of educating each pupil, their socio-economic circumstances, the progress of the pupils and the quality of educational standards achieved, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Children enter the Nursery class when they are three years old and attend part-time. The children transfer to the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The attainment of children when they start in the Nursery class is well below average. Their use of language is very restricted and they have a poor vocabulary. The children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes but most are unlikely to achieve the desirable outcomes in any of the areas of learning other than in physical development.

At the time of the inspection, there were thirty-five children attending the Nursery class and twenty-two children who were under five in the Reception class. The Nursery class is staffed by two nursery nurses.

Personal and social development

The children in the Nursery class are welcomed into a calm environment and behave well. They make good progress in this area. Some children are interested and eager to answer the adults' questions but a significant minority find listening difficult and concentrate only for very short periods. The children share things well but are not yet able to work effectively with partners or in larger groups. By the time they enter the Reception class, the children have formed good relationships and are able to work together with a better level of co-operation. The teaching in this area of learning is good in the Nursery class and very good in Reception. Good routines are established. The teacher and nursery nurses are sensitive to individual needs and have consistent expectations of behaviour. Children are encouraged to initiate their own activities and take responsibility and this promotes their personal development.

Language and literacy

The children make good progress in this area of learning. They listen to their teacher and the nursery nurses but most are unable to sustain attention other than for a short time. Their ability to respond is limited by their experience and vocabulary. For example, they know the names of familiar animals but cannot describe them. Children respond to the reading of stories and singing of rhymes, but those in the Nursery are often reticent to join in. They enjoy role play, for example in laying a table for a tea party, in the Nursery, but do not speak to each other as they play. The Nursery class children turn the pages of books, enjoy the pictures and most understand that print reads from left to right. About half of the under fives can write their own name. Most children are able to convey meaning by drawing pictures. In the Reception class, children talk about the pictures and guess what might happen next. A few children under five recognise familiar words. Teaching of this area is good in the Nursery class and is of high quality in the Reception class, where the teacher has a very good subject knowledge.

Within the Literacy Hour framework there are opportunities for the children to select from a range of appropriate activities. Reading is well organised, books are taken home regularly and children's individual progress is carefully tracked. The Reception children learn to form letters and copy over the teacher's writing.

Mathematical

The children make good progress in their understanding of number, shape and measures. The children in the Nursery class use some mathematical language but their ability with this is very limited. For example, some know 'more' and 'less' but are unable to reliably produce work showing one more or one less than a given number. Children's experience with repeating patterns is limited and not all children can name colours. Although most children in the Reception class can recite numbers to ten, most cannot write the numerals. Children in the Nursery class can match plates, mugs and cutlery but are unable to count objects because they do not reliably match the spoken number to the object. The children's facility with number remains limited. Teaching in this area is good in the Nursery class and very good in the Reception class, where there is a clear emphasis on mental calculation of number.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

The children make satisfactory progress in this area and especially at using technology. The children in the Nursery class understand the terms 'old' and 'new' but in comparisons they find it difficult to give reasons. Children

know that physical features of their environment can be represented on a plan. They observe plants and insects and sort materials in to 'shiny' and 'not shiny'. They are more reticent at explaining why things happen in the natural world. They are familiar with construction apparatus such as building blocks and play dough but their work is largely exploration and little explanation of what makes it happen. The children in the Reception class have a satisfactory level of skill on the concept keyboard and can already create sequences of movements to order. They recognise and can explain the main devices and commands. The children in the Reception class are interested and eager to learn about their world. They know about the five senses and are fascinated when they look through coloured acetate to see that 'everything changes colour.' Teaching is good in both classes, overall, and there is effective, direct teaching of skills in information technology. The strong points are the teacher's subject knowledge and good organisation related to the age of the children. Much effort is put into setting out the classrooms to stimulate the children's interest.

Creative development

The good teaching in both classes ensures that the children make good progress in exploring their ideas in paint, collage, clay and through making music. The children in the Nursery class make clay decorations with imprinted patterns to hang on the Christmas tree. They paint portraits and observe what happens when paint is blown rather than brushed onto the paper. In singing Christmas songs, they try to keep a steady beat and most end the song together. In the Reception class, the children make 'shape creatures,' using their knowledge of mathematical shapes. They make clay divas for Diwali.

Physical development

The Nursery class children learn to throw a ball and some are able to catch from a short distance. They learn to use pencils, brushes, glue spreaders and scissors. Most find the manipulation of small tools difficult, initially. The Reception pupils travel over and through apparatus in the hall. Their sense of balance and poise is appropriate and they enjoy physical exercise. The Reception children use their outdoor play area imaginatively to climb, ride and explore space. The Nursery class children have very restricted opportunities for imaginative outdoor play as the surface of their play area is uneven and the environment is bleak. Teaching is satisfactory in the Nursery class and good in the Reception class.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

The results of the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 show that pupils' attainment is well below the national average but close to the results in similar schools. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 tests in reading show standards that are close to the national average and better than those in similar schools, but standards in writing are below average. Most of the pupils who attained Level 2 in writing in 1999 gained at the lowest grade. The results of tests over the past three years have been very variable, with a dip in 1998 and almost double the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 in 1999. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading are broadly average at the end of both key stages but that pupils' attainment in writing and speaking and listening is below average.

The pupils in Key Stage 1 have a limited vocabulary and most find it difficult to express their ideas or opinions in any detail. They answer direct questions from the teacher but do not readily engage in conversation. Their listening skills are limited, although most pupils listen well when the teacher reads. Younger pupils have a very short attention span and are easily distracted. Both listening and speaking improve at Key Stage 2, but pupils' attainment overall remains below that expected for their age by the time they leave the school. A few higher attaining pupils can support their views in discussion and talk animatedly about their work, but the majority of pupils struggle to express themselves and use short sentences or phrases. They require prompting to express themselves more fully.

The pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in reading. Most pupils use good expression when they read. The pupils learn the sounds of letters and blend sounds together. They use their knowledge of phonics and the context of the story effectively to read unknown words. The pupils approach text confidently. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils use the contents page and index to locate information in books. Older pupils respond well to the

punctuation when reading aloud and many use good expression when representing speech. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in reading. Year 3 pupils identify how the writer's use of language creates an atmosphere of suspense in a story. They explain how a character is built up through the use of adjectives and can offer alternatives. Year 4 pupils identify different types of stories and express preferences. They refer to phrases in a passage that add to its dramatic impact. Year 5 pupils can locate and use reference material effectively to support their work in history and science. Year 6 pupils skim text to pick out the essential points and recognise the main characters and events in a broad range of texts.

Pupils in the Reception and Year 1 class practise forming letters and learn to spell common words. They use word books as an aid for spelling and refer to these when they write independently. These pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of the key stage, however, some pupils do not form letters correctly and do not put consistent spacing between words or write letters of a consistent size. The majority of pupils in Year 2 can write a sequence of sentences that describe an event or start a story, but few write extended pieces that develop an idea. Most Year 2 pupils use capital letters and full stops. Some higher attaining pupils are beginning to punctuate speech and use commas. Year 2 pupils write short poems and label some diagrams in science.

Year 3 pupils write instructions in which the sentences are ordered correctly and punctuation is accurate. They write 'newspaper reports'. Year 4 pupils plan a story that includes dialogue. They understand how to organise a playscript. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 write narrative pieces which reach a satisfactory standard in final draft, but their descriptive writing lacks imaginative and lively language. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, apostrophes and punctuate speech correctly. The majority of pupils' writing in first draft has accurate spelling but they do not use more complex sentence structures. The pupils' handwriting is generally of a good standard.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Their individual education plans, however, do not always identify specific targets against which their progress can be measured.

The majority of pupils enjoy their work and concentrate well. They are keen to read and from an early age enjoy the opportunities for silent reading. Younger pupils take pleasure in sharing books with a partner. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 take pride in the presentation of their work. Most pupils respond well to the target setting and are eager to improve. A minority of pupils at both key stages lose concentration when not directly supervised and become noisy. Some pupils at lower Key Stage 2 shout out answers or interrupt the teacher.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are some good features to the teaching in both key stages and very good teaching is seen in Year 6. Lessons are planned to reflect the Literacy Strategy and are mainly well organised and resourced. The learning objectives are usually made clear to the pupils but some explanations are confusing and so the pupils do not settle to their work quickly. The teachers choose suitable texts and use questions well to extend the pupils' thinking. The group reading is usually effective and the plenary session is used to assess learning. There are weaknesses, however, in the Year 3 and 4 classes and a lower Key Stage 1 class in the management of pupils' behaviour. The teachers here do not insist on quiet at appropriate times and so the pupils are distracted from listening to the teacher or concentrating on their work. The teachers' day-to-day assessment of writing is used well at Key Stage 2 to set targets for improvement. Whilst targets are set at Key Stage 1, they are followed through less rigorously. The teachers at both key stages plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Special needs support assistants provide good support in classrooms.

The co-ordinator has ensured that the implementation of the Literacy Hour has been planned and carried out effectively. He has begun to monitor lessons and provide feedback to teachers. Through the analysis of test results and monitoring work, the co-ordinator identified weaknesses in the school's approach to writing last year. These weaknesses have been largely overcome and the good progress made is reflected in the improved standards in writing this year. The school has invested in good quality resources for literacy over the past year and this has had a positive impact on standards. There is a good range of fiction and an adequate range of non-fiction in the library and the pupils use the facility well to support their learning in history, geography and science.

Mathematics

The performance of the eleven year old pupils who took the national tests in 1999 was well below both the national average and that in similar schools. The previous year's results were better, with a higher proportion of pupils attaining Level 4. Inspection evidence suggests that about 60% of the pupils are working at Level 4 in Year 6, which is below average. At Key Stage 1, the results of the tests in 1999 were more average, but inspection evidence suggests that only about two-thirds of the Year 2 pupils are working at the level expected for their age.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment is below average in number. They have developed some strategies for mental calculation but their speed of mental recall of number facts is a weakness. They add and subtract numbers to 20 accurately and recognise some patterns such as odd and even numbers. Most pupils have a suitable understanding of the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes. They estimate lengths and weights and have average skills in measuring. Pupils use the mathematical skills they have learned in investigations and problem solving activities although a significant number lack confidence in using mathematical vocabulary correctly. The pupils' understanding of place value is weak. They are mostly confident in recognising fractions such as a quarter and a third.

By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have broadly average skills in using the four rules of number. Very few of the pupils attain above average standards in most aspects of mathematics. Most pupils have an insecure understanding of place value to 1000. They have average skills in recalling multiplication facts but do not do so quickly. They know about fractions and percentages and explore and describe number patterns competently. The pupils have some knowledge of mathematical terms but use them infrequently when talking about their methods. They have average attainment in shape, space and measures and a secure knowledge of symmetry, angles and area. In data handling, the pupils construct graphs and interpret data appropriately. In using and applying mathematics, they try out patterns and make reasonable attempts to solve problems using number operations but most pupils cannot suggest alternative strategies.

The pupils use mathematics appropriately in other subjects. For example, in Key Stage 1 they read thermometers to find hot and cold temperatures. Older pupils have a secure understanding of co-ordinates and they use this knowledge in reading maps. In design and technology, they measure accurately and in science they present data using simple graphs and charts.

Progress in number in both key stages is satisfactory, overall, but the lack of understanding of place value by many pupils inhibits better progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is mostly satisfactory and is often good where additional support is given. In Key Stage 1, most pupils improve their knowledge of number. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good improvements in their mental arithmetic skills. Progress through the school is satisfactory in shape, space and measures. Pupils in Year 2 explore two-dimensional shapes and patterns and these skills are developed in Key Stage 2 so that pupils improve their understanding of symmetry and tessellation. Pupils move from comparative measure to the use of a ruler and scales, and develop satisfactory estimation skills. There is slow progress in developing a knowledge of mathematical terms and language and using these appropriately. Progress in data handling is good at upper Key Stage 2 and good use is made of information technology to support this aspect of mathematics. The fastest rate of progress is seen in Year 6, due to the high quality of teaching. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is generally slower due to the teachers' lower expectations.

The pupils have satisfactory attitudes to the subject. In most lessons, they are eager to answer questions and participate in mental arithmetic activities. Most listen carefully to instructions and move from class teaching sessions to individual activities quickly and without fuss. They settle quickly to their tasks and collect, use and return apparatus responsibly. The presentation of work is untidy in some classes. Most pupils take pride in discussing what they are doing, although they struggle to explain. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory, although in a few lessons in Years 3 and 4 some pupils become restless and a few are slow to settle to work. The Year 6 pupils concentrate hard and are very enthusiastic. They enjoy the challenging work and lively pace of lessons.

Teaching is satisfactory, overall, at both key stages, with some high quality teaching in Year 6. The new scheme of work introduced at Key Stage 1 is helping to support the teachers' planning. The Numeracy Strategy is reflected in teachers' planning for lessons at Key Stage 1, but the pace of the mental mathematics session is often too slow. Some explanations are not sufficiently clear and this confuses the pupils, particularly when mathematical games are involved. In the better lessons, with the youngest pupils in Key Stage 1, the teacher's very good

organisation, high expectations and clear explanations enable the pupils to make good progress in ordering objects and finding 'what one more or less makes.' In lower Key Stage 2, most lessons are well resourced. The teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and their planning reflects the Numeracy Strategy. The mental arithmetic session, however, is sometimes not sufficiently lively to promote the pupils' interest or rapid response. In Years 5 and 6, the teachers have a good subject knowledge and most lessons are well paced. The work is planned to challenge the pupils of all abilities.

The school has recognised the need to raise standards in mathematics and has a detailed action plan. The co-ordinators have introduced the optional national tests in the lower years of Key Stage 2 and improved systems of tracking the pupils' progress. A grant from a national company has enabled Year 5 and 6 pupils to develop their skills in using and applying mathematics in a project with a local engineering firm.

Science

The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments and end of Key Stage 2 tests show that the pupils' attainment is below the national average and close to that attained by pupils in similar schools. Taking the results 1996 to 1998 together, the pupils' attainment has been well below the national average in science. Inspection evidence shows that there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' attainment during the last 12 months, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 and that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level is broadly average, although fewer pupils attain at the higher level.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the body and they can describe some of the effects of growing old. The pupils in Year 1 can explain that exercise is important for getting fit and that the heart rate and breathing rate increase with exercise. Most can describe which foods should be included for a healthy diet and which should be avoided, although they are not able to justify their answers. They are beginning to understand about sound and hearing and the other senses. They know the difference between living and non-living things and know what is required to make plants grow.

By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a secure understanding of electricity and know the difference between mains and batteries and that the former can be dangerous. They know how to make a circuit and how to incorporate a switch, bell and a buzzer. They recognise and use symbols when describing or drawing electrical circuits. They understand that some substances dissolve and that some can go through processes that are irreversible. The pupils in Year 3 understand the importance of using the correct material for making things and learn about the importance of recycling.

Progress is satisfactory in both key stages and the pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, the pupils begin to carry out practical investigations. These skills are built upon in Key Stage 2 where greater emphasis is placed on practical and investigative work. For example, the pupils develop their understanding of exercise through investigating the pulse rate after exercise. They link their work to mathematics, producing graphs based on the measurement of a puddle throughout the day. Although many of the pupils have a limited scientific vocabulary, they are introduced to interesting and challenging vocabulary as they move through the school. There are instances when the pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable due to a lack of challenge in their work, or by being required to sit for too long without the opportunity to participate.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory although there are examples of good and unsatisfactory teaching. In the best lessons, the teaching has clear learning objectives and the tasks are well-matched to the pupils' ages and abilities. The pace of the lessons is good and the teachers' questioning is searching. This was seen in a good Year 5/6 lesson where the pupils were revising work on electricity. The questioning required the pupils to respond with more than a simple yes or no and no time was wasted. As a result, most of the pupils made good progress. In the less effective lessons, the teachers lack skill in managing difficult behaviour and this results in the pupils making unsatisfactory progress. The teachers also fail to balance the time given to teacher input and the time for pupil activity and this too results in too little progress.

The subject is managed by a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator. There is a policy in place and the scheme of work is based on the national guidelines. There is a two year cycle of topics that takes account of the mixed

aged classes throughout Key Stage 2. The headteacher monitors planning and the co-ordinator has carried out some monitoring of learning. The school recognises the need to monitor the quality of teaching further and to evaluate past test papers to establish areas of strength and weakness. Assessment procedures are satisfactory with the pupils undertaking assessments at the end of topics in addition to statutory tests. There is a satisfactory range of resources and information technology is used effectively to support the subject.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

By the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the nationally expected levels. The previous inspection report indicated that the pupils' attainment was below national expectations. The regular teaching of computer skills throughout the school on a systematic basis has improved the pupils' standard of work.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are confident in using tape recorders, CD players. Their skills in using the keyboard and mouse are satisfactory. They use keyboard functions such as capitals, space bar, cursor and delete with increasing confidence. They use a word processing program and develop confidence in checking spelling using a computer spelling checker.

By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. They draft and revise their work on screen and are confident in printing out their work and saving and retrieving their work from disk. They are becoming familiar with using the internet for research and to send e-mail.

The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages and this includes those with special educational needs. In the early stages of Key Stage 1, the pupils are introduced to word processing and these skills are built on systematically. At the end of the key stage the pupils are writing text and inserting pictures into their work. They know how to select files and pictures and move them around the screen. They develop their accuracy with the cursor through programs where they dress a teddy bear. In Key Stage 2, the pupils develop these skills, loading pictures of the old village school as part of their history work on the Victorians. They know how to manipulate the pictures, reducing them in size and inserting them into their writing before saving to disk.

Throughout the school the pupils show considerable confidence in selecting and loading files from both floppy disks and the hard disk and understand the meaning of folders and files. They are enthusiastic during computer lessons and are good at sharing time and resources with their peers. In both key stages, the higher attaining pupils willingly share their expertise. A small number find it difficult to take turns but this is due to their enthusiasm and eagerness to have a go.

The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. All of the teachers have a secure understanding of information technology. They have participated in in-service training and their skills have improved significantly during the past year. They make effective use of the computer suite; work is planned effectively to meet the needs of the pupils of all ages and abilities and they link their work effectively to work in other curriculum areas. For example, the pupils in Year 1 draw pictures of Goldilocks and the three bears as part of their language work and pupils in Year 3 and 4 link their history topic to computer work.

The school took the decision to operate a computer suite in an effort to raise the pupils' computer skills and this has been successful. Work is planned in line with the national guidelines and all elements of the curriculum are covered during the year. In addition to word processing and publishing activities, the pupils use data handling programs and screen based control programs. The school recognises the need to ensure that computers in classrooms are used effectively to develop other aspects of the curriculum. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in raising the pupils' attainment, improving the teachers' knowledge and in the range of hardware and software available.

Religious education

Attainment is in line with the locally agreed syllabus and the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

The Key Stage 1 pupils have an awareness of the special occasions in the Christian, Jewish and Hindu calendar and know how important these events are. They know that Advent precedes Christmas and are able to recall the main events associated with these seasons. In Year 1 pupils are able to re-write the conversation between Mary and the angel in their own words and in Year 2 they express their views as to how Mary actually reacted when she heard the news that she was expecting a very special child. They know that Jesus had a number of special friends, and are aware of the importance of family life and belonging to a group. They recall that during Hannukkah the Jews remember miracles that occurred long ago and that Diwali is a special time for Hindu people. They understand the reasons for the harvest festival and link it to a sharing theme related to their own lives.

In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to appreciate the reasons behind some of the stories Jesus told, and have a sound knowledge of many of the major events in his life. When writing the 'Diary of a Follower of Jesus' they re-call that 'It's a terrible sight seeing him carry that heavy cross on his back'. They know that the Greek Orthodox Church is one branch of the Christian faith. They record that at a Greek baptism the number three is, very important, as it is in an Anglican service, and that the priest cuts off three pieces of the baby's hair before its head is dipped three times in water with special oil in it. They appreciate why a Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca is so important and the significance to many religions of the various festivals that are celebrated annually. Pupils discuss, in a most perceptive manner, how they think that the reactions of the shepherds and the wise men may have been different on hearing the news of the birth of Christ as the three kings 'knew that something amazing was about to happen'.

The pupils' attitudes to learning are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils listen carefully and respond well during lessons. They are enthralled by the Christmas story and participate in the re-telling with enthusiasm and interest. In Key Stage 2 only pupils in Years 5 and 6 were observed. A majority of the pupils participate fully in the lessons and make a valuable contribution towards the class discussions.

The quality of teaching in religious education is satisfactory. Relationships with the pupils are good and the teachers have a sound subject knowledge. The teachers plan their lessons in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, on which the school policy is based. In the most successful lessons the teachers create a calm working atmosphere, establish clear expectations of behaviour and work and retain the pupils' interest in the lessons with the use of extended questioning and the passing on of interesting additional facts.

Art

No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of the pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils it is evident that the pupils' work reaches the standard expected for their age. The pupils make satisfactory progress in extending and applying their skills in each year. They develop an appropriate sense of colour and composition and work in a satisfactory range of media. Reception pupils paint portraits that show a developing sense of proportion. Year 1 and 2 pupils paint snow scenes and mix colours to represent fruit and vegetables. Year 2 pupils extend their skills in observation and use of line.

The pupils' work is often well linked to the topics being studied in history. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 create repeated patterns with a motif of their own design, after studying the work of William Morris. These pupils look at the work of Holman Hunt and other Pre-Raphaelites in connection with their work on the Victorians. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their observational skills well when creating patterns of images to decorate a mummy's case. The chalk landscapes by Year 4 pupils show a developing use of perspective. The older pupils' observational drawings show a good level of skill in shading and perspective. The Year 5 and 6 pupils' three-dimensional collages based on mathematical shapes show a sensitive use of form.

The pupils enjoy art and talk enthusiastically about their work. They are proud of the work on display and express opinions about what worked well or the difficulties of the technique.

A good scheme of work identifies the skills that will be developed in each year and the range of media to be introduced. This supports the teachers' planning. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development and they consider how images make them feel, or what atmosphere they wish to create in their work. The pupils have an appropriate understanding of their own and other cultures in art.

Design and technology

Only one lesson in Key Stage 1 was observed during the inspection. Therefore judgements are based on the evidence gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work, from teachers' planning, from talking to pupils and from work on display. By the time pupils leave school, standards are appropriate for their age and they make satisfactory progress.

Pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to test, design and evaluate their products. They are able to choose materials and use tools appropriately. For example in their work linked to creatures, the Reception pupils were able to plan the structure of the model of their creature, decide on suitable materials and work together to make the product. Throughout the school, work is related to topics being studied in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 5 and 6, for instance, pyramids, cylindrical landscapes, artefacts and pottery, are linked to work in mathematics, and to the history work the pupils are studying as part of their Egyptian topic. Good links are made to the music curriculum when, for example, the pupils in Year 3 and 4 design and make their own musical instruments.

Pupils enjoy design and technology activities and are able to talk confidently about their work with different materials. They have a good understanding of the design and making process and are proud of their finished products. They are able to evaluate the standard and use of the finished articles.

The subject is effectively co-ordinated. Teaching staff have received training in the use of materials and tools and there is an effective policy and well-structured scheme of work. Teachers plan an appropriate range of activities with clear learning objectives and outcomes. There are sufficient resources and tools and materials are well stored and cared for.

Geography and history

Three lessons in history, one of which was at Key Stage 1 and one lesson in geography at Key Stage 2, were observed. These lessons, together with the analysis of the pupils' previous work, teachers' planning and discussions with the pupils indicate that the standard of work is appropriate. The pupils make satisfactory progress.

Younger pupils at Key Stage 1 can plan a familiar route and draw this using symbols and pictures. They can follow directions. Year 2 pupils can interpret a map and understand that this represents physical features. They talk about which features they like in their locality and those they would improve. The older children in Key Stage 1 understand that things change over time and that their school was built before they were born. They know that their grandparents were children 'a long time ago' and that toys were different in the past. Following a visit to Shugborough Hall, the pupils in Year 1 recall some of the toys they saw and understand that none of these could have been powered by batteries. Their language in expressing their ideas is very limited.

The pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their ability to interpret maps. They have a sound knowledge of the countries of Europe. They use atlases competently and can interpret charts and graphs. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 create their own maps using a computer program. They understand that maps have different scales. The pupils in Year 6 recall how they measured the rate of flow of a river during a residential field trip. Year 5 and 6 pupils understand how a river changes its appearance and its effect on the landscape as it nears the sea. They use their knowledge of the River Nile, gained in history, to extend their understanding of irrigation and delta formation. Even the oldest pupils have a rather vague sense of chronology. They know that the Romans preceded the Tudors, but are not sure whether the Tudor period was a hundred or five hundred years ago. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 compare and contrast Victorian schooldays with their own and recall with pleasure the role play

opportunity through which they learned about a typical day in school for a Victorian child. The older Key Stage 2 pupils attempt to explain the mummification process in Ancient Egypt; their understanding outstrips their ability to express their ideas. The pupils have a good grasp of the use of evidence to deduce information about the past. They use the library and CD ROMs to find out more information. The pupils in both key stages enjoy the subjects and recall visits with particular enthusiasm.

In the lessons seen, the teaching at Key Stage 1 was sound and it was good at Key Stage 2. The teachers are supported by good schemes of work. They plan good opportunities for the pupils to use their literacy skills in both subjects. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and ensures an appropriate level of resources to support both subjects. Good use is made of visits to extend the pupils' first hand experience. The residential visit by older Key Stage 2 pupils is well planned to enable them to use their geographical skills in practical activities such as a survey of land use.

Music

Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection, but inspectors were able to observe the pupils singing and playing instruments in assemblies and hymn practices. In the lessons the pupils usually make good progress. The pupils in Key Stage 1 recall songs from memory, singing in tune and keeping to the rhythm. They play a range of percussion instruments, beating in time to the songs. The pupils in Key Stage 2 improve their ability to sing in tune and show improvement in their ability to control the pitch and dynamics. Older pupils develop their knowledge of musical terms and symbols. The pupils' singing in assembly is tuneful and clearly expressed.

The pupils' attitudes to music are mainly good. From the earliest stages they enjoy singing together and they are keen to volunteer to play instruments. They enjoy performing with their peers and work hard to improve their performance skills. Most pupils are well behaved, listen carefully to the teachers' instructions and are confident when performing. A small minority of the pupils are excitable and misbehave but most teachers manage these pupils well.

The quality of the teaching is good. The teachers have a good musical knowledge and understanding and have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. As a result, singing is tuneful and they attain good standards. The teachers use praise and encouragement effectively to enhance the pupils' performance. The teachers are successful in creating a good atmosphere for music. The school also benefits from a small amount of class tuition provided by the local authority music service.

There is a range of musical tuition for the pupils in Key Stage 2 and these include brass and woodwind tuition. The tuition is free and instruments are provided, although the number of pupils able to participate is relatively small. In addition, the pupils are able to take part in beginner and advanced recorder tuition and choir organised by the staff. Their performance reaches a good standard. Their personal development is enhanced by taking part in singing and musical events with other schools in the borough.

The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is well-supported by colleagues. There is a satisfactory range of instruments. There is a policy in place and a scheme of work that enable the subject to be taught progressively. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development.

Physical education

Physical education has a secure place in the curriculum and is a strength of the school. By the time they leave school, the pupils demonstrate above average standards of skill and knowledge and they make good progress. The school makes good provision for the physical education of its pupils and the curriculum includes gymnastics, dance, games, swimming and outdoor education activities.

The pupils in Key Stage 1 catch and throw a ball with reasonable accuracy over short distances. They move round safely, stopping and changing direction when instructed by the teacher. They make effective use of space on the floor and on the apparatus and show a good level of control and flexibility. They understand the importance of warming up and have a good bank of warm-up exercises.

By the end of Key Stage 2 gymnastic skills have become considerably refined. Pupils are able to develop imaginative linking sequences both individually and in matched movement, both as floor and apparatus work. In a dance lesson the pupils were observed to use this control of their movements to respond imaginatively to music. Older pupils develop good ball skills. They develop control travelling with a ball, stopping and shooting it. They experience a variety of team and individual games such as netball, basketball, cricket and football and improve their skills in these. They have experienced a range of outdoor adventure activities. Records indicate that by the time they leave school, almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres.

The pupils are enthusiastic and keen to take part in physical education activities. They listen carefully to instructions and consider how they can improve their performance. They appreciate the need for safety when carrying equipment or working with others. The pupils are always suitably dressed for physical activity.

Overall the teaching is satisfactory and has some strong features. Lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives and high expectations. Most teachers manage lessons well and overall a high standard of behaviour is maintained. Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Good care and attention is given to pupils' safety. Effective use is made of pupils' performance to demonstrate good practice.

There is a policy and very effective scheme of work, which gives structure and direction to the teaching. The co-ordinator has a strong role in developing the subject. She shares her own expertise, commitment and good practice and evaluates and monitors provision. The school is currently participating in a national scheme to increase teaching skills and improve resources. A wide range of extra-curricular activities delivered by several of the staff effectively provides support for the subject and extends Key Stage 2 learning. The school's effective use of its own learner pool ensures that the pupils make very good progress in their swimming.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

130. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspection was undertaken by a team of five inspectors, with the number of inspector days totalling nineteen.

Sixty-two lessons or parts of lessons were observed.

The time inspectors spent in gathering evidence from lesson observations and discussions with pupils and staff totalled 79 hours.

In addition, the work of a sample of pupils from each year group was scrutinised, along with their records and reports.

Discussions were held with pupils about their work and other activities.

Inspectors heard 35 pupils read from their reading books as well as reading their work during lessons.

Inspectors observed registration sessions, assemblies and other activities during the inspection week.

The pupils were observed entering and leaving the school and in the dining hall at lunchtime.

They were also observed on the playground at break and lunchtimes.

Extra-curricular activities were observed.

A range of documentation provided by the school, including curriculum planning and teachers' planning files was analysed.

Discussions were held with the teaching staff and the support staff.

Discussions were held with parents, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.

One parent attended a meeting with the inspectors and gave views about the school.

Thirty-three questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed.

131. 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
YR - Y6	240	3	41	63
Nursery Unit/School	17.5	0	1	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

11.1

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

21.6

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

7

Total aggregate hours worked each week

138

Average class size:

24

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

0

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

0

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff

2

Total aggregate hours worked each week

65

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/1999

	£
Total Income	482481
Total Expenditure	496121
Expenditure per pupil	1823
Balance brought forward from previous year	51007
Balance carried forward to next year	37367

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

240

Number of questionnaires returned:

33

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	30.3	63.6	6.1	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	51.5	48.5	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	15.2	72.7	9.1	3.0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	21.2	54.5	15.2	9.1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30.3	45.5	24.2	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	39.4	54.5	6.1	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	37.5	50.0	12.5	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30.3	45.5	18.2	6.1	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	36.4	54.5	6.1	3.0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	24.2	63.6	9.1	3.0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	54.5	42.4	0	3.0	0