

INSPECTION REPORT

St Hubert's RC Junior and Infant School
Warley

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique Reference Number: 103999

Headteacher: Mrs M Summerfield

Reporting inspector: Mr Don Gwinnett

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706692

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Stella Price
Date of previous inspection:	20-25 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Don Gwinnett Registered Inspector	Science; Design and Technology; Information and Communication Technology	Characteristics of the School; Attainment and Progress; Teaching; Management and Leadership; Efficiency of the school
Valerie Alford Lay Inspector		Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
David Major	Equality of opportunity; Mathematics; History; Geography; Physical education	Curriculum and assessment; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Maureen Sillifant	Special educational needs; Under fives; English; Art; Music.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2. Progress is good in design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 1, and in art, design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 2.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good as a result of effective support from teachers and support staff.
- Standards of teaching are good overall, and particularly so in Key Stage 2, where three-quarters of lessons are good or very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and their personal development are good in both key stages.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers are good throughout the school.
- The well-planned curriculum is helping to improve standards.
- Assessment is well used by teachers to plan and improve future work.
- Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and moral development is very good.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very good.
- The value for money provided by the school is good.
- The school gets strong support from parents, who share its values.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' wellbeing, health and safety

Where the school has weaknesses

- The number of support assistants in classes is not sufficient. This leads to some pupils in large classes losing concentration because they are not given enough help.
- The school spends too much money on employees who do not teach or help learning in classrooms.
- Despite recent improvements, the governing body relies too much on the headteacher when making decisions and does not monitor sufficiently what is happening in school.
- There is no enclosed outside play area and insufficient outside play equipment for pupils in the reception class. This has an adverse affect on their physical development.

The school's strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. To support continued improvement these weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996, and is better than it was. Improved use of in-service training for teachers has increased their confidence in areas such as music and information and communication technology. Subject co-ordinators now regularly monitor what is happening in their subjects and have clear job descriptions. There has been an improvement in the way that governors plan strategically for change, although this has only begun to happen very recently. Assessment of pupils' work now results in the use of targets that lead to higher motivation. The Key Stage 2 targets for English and mathematics, set in consultation with the Local Education Authority, were both exceeded in 1999. Standards of pupils' work have improved, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school is well placed to improve further as a result of effective leadership at senior and middle management levels.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
English	B	D
Mathematics	C	E
Science	B	C

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

This information shows that standards in the 1998 national tests were above the national average in English and science and in line with the national average in mathematics. When compared to schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were comparable in science, below in English and well below in mathematics. However, considerations that have not been taken into account when comparing the school to similar schools are the average attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the average proportion of pupils who arrive at the school with special educational needs, and the higher than average proportion whose first language is not English. Bearing these factors in mind, pupils' attainment compared to other schools is more positive than the published comparisons indicate.

The quality of work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 6 was above that of similar schools in English, mathematics and science and confirms the improved national test results in 1999. The school therefore adds good value to pupils' educational performance when comparing their attainment on intake to their performance on leaving the school. Standards of work in information and communication technology are satisfactory in both key stages and rapidly improving as a result of good use of recently purchased equipment. There was no inspection of religious education as this is being done separately under the government's approved arrangements for denominational schools. Standards in other subjects are at least satisfactory, with good progress in art, design and technology and physical education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Insufficient teaching seen	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Insufficient teaching seen	Satisfactory	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information Technology		Insufficient teaching seen	Insufficient teaching seen
Religious Education			
Other subjects	Insufficient teaching seen	Satisfactory	Good

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 92 per cent of lessons. In 26 per cent it is very good, in 36 per cent it is good, in 31 per cent it is satisfactory and in 8 per cent it is unsatisfactory. A high proportion of good and very good teaching occurs in Key Stage 2.

It was not possible to reach firm judgements about the quality of teaching in the Reception class for children under five as they were still being admitted to the school at the time of the inspection and formal teaching had not yet begun.

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	Good. Consistent in both key stages.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Similar to the national average.
Ethos*	The ethos is good. Relationships are good. Pupils are interested in their work and the school is keen to improve.
Leadership and management	Good overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. Subject co-ordinators manage their areas well and have begun to monitor effective standards of teaching and learning. The governing body has only recently begun to plan systematically and to take independent decisions. It is well placed to become useful 'critical friend' to the school.
Curriculum and assessment	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there is good planning across all subjects. Assessment is well used to tell pupils how to improve their work.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons and small withdrawal groups from specialist staff and class teachers. They make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for spiritual, social and cultural development and very good provision for moral development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall, but there is not enough non-teaching classroom support. This affects the progress of some pupils in large classes. Some rooms are too small.
Value for money	Good overall. Financial control is good and standards of work are improving. However, The school spends too much money on employees who do not teach or help learning in classrooms.

* 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school. •Parents find it easy to approach the school with problems. •The school enables pupils to attain good standards of work. •The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught. •The school's attitudes and values have a positive effect on pupils. •The school achieves high standards of behaviour. •Children like school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A small minority of parents said they would like the school to encourage pupils to participate in more than just their daily lessons. •Some parents felt that higher-attaining pupils could be stretched more.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' largely positive views. The welcoming ethos within the school produces happy pupils who are well prepared for the next stage of education. Standards of work match the national average in Key Stage 1 and are above this in Key Stage 2. Links with parents and the local community are particularly good. Inspectors noted the concerns of some parents about lack of extra-curricular activities, but found that provision is good, with regular clubs, frequent success in sporting fixtures and visits to places of educational interest. Inspectors found that higher-attaining pupils are being effectively challenged through work in class and through the increasing use of targets for teachers and pupils to achieve.

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KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards, the governing body should:

- Improve the provision of non-teaching classroom support. (paragraphs 6, 15, 73, 108)
- Improve financial efficiency by reviewing the number and cost of employees who do not teach or support classroom learning. (paragraph 81)
- Ensure the continuation of recent improvements to the quality of corporate decision making, strategic planning and school involvement by the governing body. (paragraph 67)
- Provide an enclosed outside play area and equipment for pupils in the Reception Class. (paragraphs 5, 96)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Comply with the following statutory requirements :
 - Publication in the Prospectus of the school's position regarding withdrawal from religious education and collective worship and the general provision for sport in the school.
 - Publication of information in the Annual Report of the Governing Body relating to progress since the last inspection; a full financial statement; a statement on school security; arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils; steps taken to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favourably; facilities provided to assist access by disabled pupils; professional development undertaken by teaching staff and the changes to the Prospectus since it was last published. (paragraphs 57, 73)
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INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school

1. St. Hubert's is a popular and over-subscribed one-form entry Catholic primary school situated approximately six miles north of Birmingham city centre, taking mainly Roman Catholic pupils from the parish of Our Lady and St Hubert's and other parishes in the area. There are 230 pupils on roll, 115 boys and 115 girls. There is no nursery class and pupils have a wide range of pre-school experience ranging from full-time nursery education, through playgroup, to little or no provision. Attainment on entry is in line with the national average. Admission to the Reception Class is in the September before the pupils' fifth birthdays, and pupils are admitted in small groups over a two-week period. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is above the average. The proportion who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Pupils leave St Hubert's to go to a wide range of secondary schools. The school has been the target of both organised crime and persistent vandalism. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone changes in management structure. A new headteacher has been in post since April 1997 and there have been significant changes to the teaching staff. Since the last inspection, the school interior has undergone major rebuilding to provide an open plan library area, a new security entrance, improved storage areas and a visitors' Welcome Area. Building improvements remain a priority with plans to remodel the Reception toilets, relocate the headteacher's offices, provide additional storage for the PE apparatus/furniture and provide a parents' consultation room with computer facilities. The site development plans include a millennium Peace Garden, an interactive playground and mural project and seating for pupils. The end of Key Stage 2 1999 national test results in English and mathematics exceeded the targets agreed with the Local Education Authority.

2. The aims of the school are:

- To lead pupils to a living and active faith by developing their awareness of God's presence in their lives.
- To provide teaching according to the Catholic faith, where the Gospel of Christ is at the heart of school life.
- To work in partnership with the home and parish to create a Catholic community.
- To create a happy school environment that will nurture the pupils' joy of learning
- To foster care, courtesy and consideration for others.
- To develop lively and enquiring minds and promote knowledge of, and concern for, heritage and the environment.
- To promote awareness, understanding and respect for other religious beliefs and cultures.
- To help every child to achieve his/her maximum potential.
- To recognise and develop the many facets of human potential and encourage the pupils to "have a go" and not fear failure.
- To establish an environment where teachers, support staff and governors can work together in confidence to achieve their own potential.

1. The priorities of the school are:

- The development of the school building and site.
- Improved use of target setting to raise standards throughout school.
- Improved information and communication technology provision and competence.
- To encourage enhanced independent learning.
- To improve results in writing
- To continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning, and to link this to staff development and appraisal.
- To further the home—school partnership.
- To extend parish links.

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
1998	14	18	32

4. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	27	25	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84(84)	78(93)	84(94)
	National	80(80)	81(80)	84 (84)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	26	25	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84(90)	78(81)	78(90)
	National	81(80)	85(84)	86(85)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	19	12	31

4. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	9	11	13
	Girls	11	8	12
	Total	20	19	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	67(88)	63(77)	83(89)
	National	65(63)	59(62)	69(69)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	9	10	13
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	21	20	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70(88)	67(77)	83(91)
	National	65(63)	65(64)	72(69)

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

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 1 2 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half-days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year: 1998

		%
Authorised absence	School	7.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised absence	School	0.1
	National comparative data	0.5

1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed-period	0
Permanent	0

1

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	26
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

1. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are in line with national norms. Pupils' social skills are satisfactorily developed as a result of a caring ethos in the Reception class. Children are encouraged to express themselves and to show care for others. The regular opportunities for collaborative play, combined with systematic daily routines, encourage the development of sound interpersonal skills. The availability of a wide choice of books, and well organised teaching that is based on the National Literacy Strategy, satisfactorily support pupils' emerging reading and writing skills. Young children on entry count to three, whilst older children understand how to compare and contrast sizes. This was noticeable when they had to choose the right-sized bed, plate and chair for the three bears. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactorily developed. They begin to understand their local environment through playing with model houses, cars and people. However, opportunities to develop their wider understanding of the world are not maximised. For instance, whilst children go on educational visits, there are no plants or animals in the classroom and people from outside are not often invited to talk to them. Pupils develop creatively through regular art and music lessons. They enjoy singing and reflect on things that mean a lot to them in class prayers. Whilst children's physical skills are satisfactory overall, the lack of an enclosed outdoor play area with large play equipment inhibits the range and diversity of possible activities.
2. The national tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 1998 indicated that pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading and was close to the national average in writing, mathematics and science. The provisional results of the 1999 national tests and teacher assessments indicate that standards are lower in reading, have been maintained in writing and mathematics, and have improved in science. There are no figures yet available comparing the school to schools nationally. The reason that standards have slipped in reading between 1998 and 1999 is the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the 1999 class and the lack of general classroom support to help with this greater spread of attainment. The results are much the same as when the school was last inspected.
3. In work seen during the inspection in English, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of seven are in line with expected levels in the three areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing and there is a clear indication that recent initiatives are beginning to promote improvements. The newly introduced National Literacy Strategy, for instance, is starting to have a positive impact on standards, as is a scheme that targets reading improvement for lower-attaining pupils. The extra time provided in the last year for creative writing is also starting to show results. Many pupils successfully use joined-up writing before they leave Key Stage 1. In mathematics, inspection evidence indicates that nearly all pupils in the current Year 2 will reach the expected Level 2 standard at the end of the year if current progress continues. This will be an improvement over the last two years' results. Pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are sound, they develop good mental computation skills and show a satisfactory understanding of the value of digits. Attainment in lessons seen during the inspection in science reflects the results attained in the national tests. Attainment broadly matches national levels overall in Key Stage 1, with particularly clear signs of rapid improvement in Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils appreciate the difference between animals and plants using criteria such as digestion, growth, movement and reproduction. They recognise parts of the body and satisfactorily describe the conditions necessary to sustain life.
4. The 1998 tests and teacher assessments for 11-year-olds show that attainment in English and science was above the national average and in mathematics was close to the national average. The provisional results of the 1999 national tests and teacher assessments show that attainment is well above expected levels in all three areas of English, mathematics and science. There has been very good improvement from 1998 to 1999.
5. In work seen during the inspection in English, pupils' attainments at the age of 11 are well above expected levels in the three areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Targets for improvement, set in consultation with the Local Education Authority, have been well exceeded in 1999. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy from September 1998 is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Despite very

good standards overall, restrictions on space result in the school library being used as a base for small-group special educational needs work during the mornings. As a result, pupils do not use the school library with sufficient frequency and this limits opportunities for developing independent learning skills. Spelling skills are systematically developed throughout the school, so that, by year 6, pupils attain a high level of accuracy. In mathematics, the standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average. Mental arithmetic skills are very well developed, pupils effectively apply a variety of methods when problem-solving and make good use of estimation when checking the likely accuracy of calculations. The early introduction of the National Numeracy strategy in 1998 has been beneficial to pupils, who have adjusted well to the new requirements a year ahead of the scheme's implementation in most other schools.

6. In science lessons observed during the inspection, attainment is well above expected levels in Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use scientific terminology with assurance. For instance, a Year 6 class recalled the names of parts of flowers such as the 'stamen' and 'sepal', with higher attaining pupils accurately describing the function of these parts. They have a very good understanding of magnetic forces, appreciating which different materials respond to magnetic attraction.
7. An analysis of the relative performance of boys and girls in national tests between 1996 and 1998 shows that boys' performance was higher than that of girls in Key Stage 1, but was similar in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, inspectors did not find any significant difference between the results of boys and girls in Key Stage 1. They each have similar attitudes to learning and teachers give equal attention to each. Within the different ability groups in classes, there is an even spread of boys and girls across the groups, and movement between groups is equally flexible for both boys and girls. Inspectors conclude, therefore, that the discrepancy between boys' and girls' results does not derive from factors that disadvantage girls', or advantage boys', learning, but is a result of natural differences between the attainment of pupils within the period in question.
8. The published figures comparing the school to other similar schools are misleading because they are only based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, which is very low. According to these figures, Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is below that of similar schools in reading and mathematics and is well below in writing. At Key Stage 2, attainment is below similar schools in English, well below in mathematics and close to similar schools in science. However, considerations that have not been taken into account when comparing the school to similar schools are the average attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the average proportion of pupils who arrive at the school with special educational needs, and the higher than average proportion whose first language is not English. Bearing these factors in mind, pupils' attainment compared to other schools is more positive than the published comparisons indicate.
9. Attainment in lessons seen in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 confidently use computers to write stories and poems using word processing software. They successfully edit their work using return, delete and space keys, know how to incorporate 'clip' art into their work and experiment with different shaped fonts. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils produce accurate pie charts and bar graphs using mathematics software and use desktop publishing programs to produce exciting page layouts in the style of a local newspaper. Pupils use programs that simulate different geographical areas. Pupils have developed sound competence in all required areas of the National Curriculum. New computers are providing improved opportunities that will shortly include use of the Internet and digital scanning. There was no inspection of religious education as this is being done separately under the government's approved arrangements for denominational schools.
10. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Pupils' have benefited from better teaching, better use of assessment and more effective monitoring of teaching and learning. All this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress in lessons. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2, and increasingly so in Key Stage 1. The realistic targets set by the school and Local Education Authority have been exceeded. The progress of children under the age of five is satisfactory across all the Desirable Learning Outcomes for young children. As they mature, they are introduced satisfactorily to the various Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. Teachers choose carefully when children should begin the National Curriculum so that there is a smooth transition that matches individual pupils' needs. The use of a baseline assessment provides good information regarding children's initial attainment. This is measured again before they leave and individual

details passed to the new teacher so that there is a continuity of provision.

11. Progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and is good in Key Stage 2. The difference in the rate of progress between the two key stages results from a high proportion of good and very good teaching that is noticeable in several classes, but particularly at the top end of Key Stage 2. There is also a high proportion of good and very good teaching at the top end of Key Stage 1 that has a positive impact on progress. However, pupils' lower in each key stage do not make sufficient progress because there is insufficient classroom support to help cope with large numbers of pupils and the significant minority in each class who have special educational needs. On those occasions when support is available, the rate of progress noticeably improves. The adverse impact of the lack of regular support lower in Key Stage 1 prevents overall progress rising above satisfactory within the key stage.

12. In Key Stage 1, progress is good in design and technology and physical education and is satisfactory in all other subjects. Improvement to the pupils' progress in music in Key Stage 1 is noticeable since it was unsatisfactory at the time of the last report. There is now no subject where pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, progress is very good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, is good in art, design and technology and physical education and is satisfactory in geography, history and music. There is no subject where progress is unsatisfactory. Very good progress in the core subjects results from good quality teaching, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies during the last year and very effective management of subjects by co-ordinators who monitor standards of teaching and learning in order to identify factors for improvement. Nearly all parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt the school helped their child to achieve good standards of work.

13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school. They are identified early in their school life and are monitored closely to ensure they make optimum progress. A twice-yearly review with parents provides effective opportunities for consultation that further enhances pupils' academic and personal advancement. In lessons seen during the inspection, including small-group withdrawal, class teachers and specialist staff provided a good level of support for special needs pupils, which had a positive impact on their learning. Some parents feel that higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In lessons seen during the inspection, teachers set specially prepared work for such pupils and grouped them with other youngsters of comparable attainment. In more practical lessons, such as music and design and technology, they were placed in groups of mixed ability that provided them with opportunities for leadership. Consequently, the progress of higher attainers was assured in most classes. There was little noticeable difference between the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Those who speak English as an additional language rapidly develop confidence in their speaking and literacy skills, so that by Key Stage 2 their attainment matches that of other pupils.

17. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

14. The attitudes to learning across all key stages are good. Pupils are well motivated and interested in their work. They listen attentively and concentrate well. They take a pride in what they do. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, show politeness and generally listen carefully when others are speaking. Pupils' responses to teaching are good. They usually follow instructions quickly, enjoy their work and persevere with tasks. They support and encourage each other in their learning. When given the opportunity to study individually, they work well. For example, in Year 5, pupils searched the Internet for information on the solar system and, in Year 6, worked independently on their projects about the rainforest. Pupils provide good support for each other when working in pairs or groups. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in Reception are good. They learn to cope confidently with routines, such as changing from one activity to another and lunchtime. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school; they behave well, their attitude to learning is good and they take part in all extra-curricular activities.

15. Behaviour is good. Pupils respond well to the school's high aims and expectations on behaviour. They are aware of the rewards and sanctions issued by staff and respect the consistency with which rules are applied. Each class sets its own rules and these are displayed prominently in the classrooms. There has been no fixed-term exclusion during the last academic year. There is a positive code of conduct, which is reflected in the orderly running of the school. Noise and disruption are kept to a minimum when pupils move along the long

corridor outside the classrooms.

16. Relationships are good and this is recognised and praised by the parents. The pupils respect adults; they are polite and courteous to visitors. The pupils are taught good manners and they behave in a responsible way in the dining room. They respect school property and are encouraged to care for the environment. Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils from different cultures socialise well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. For example, there was shared enjoyment and good humour between the pupils and the headteacher when trying to sing hymns as rounds with actions. Pupils are encouraged to share in each other's successes and recognise the effort involved. Incidents of bullying are rare. Any suggestion of bullying is investigated thoroughly and the victim and aggressor are treated sensitively. The anti-bullying and behaviour policies are both the results of working parties of staff, governors and parents.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. They respond well to praise. Pupils co-operate well when given the opportunity to help with the Reception pupils or in the collection of lunch boxes at the start of the day. During wet playtimes, the older pupils help to entertain the infants by reading stories or playing games. The School Council and the 'Bright Ideas' boxes have initiated worthwhile improvements to school life and encouraged its members to show increased responsibility. The pupils enjoy and benefit from the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as sporting clubs, musical activities and the French Club. Pupils take part in successful fund-raising events for local and national charities, such as CAFOD and Children in Crisis. The continual insistence on maintaining good standards of school uniform is reflected in the smart appearance of almost all pupils. The good climate for learning identified in the last inspection report has been maintained. There is an improvement in the opportunities for independent learning and for the pupils to set their own targets for educational development. Parents' positive views about pupils' attitudes and behaviour are fully endorsed by inspectors.

21. **Attendance**

18. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. The registers are well maintained. Teachers and pupils are punctual and lessons begin and end on time. The problems noticed in the last inspection, when older pupils sometimes attended lessons late, have been successfully addressed. The satisfactory attendance has a positive effect on standards of work. The school discourages the taking of family holidays in school time because this has a negative impact on the progress and attainment of those pupils.

19. The required statistics are published in the school brochure and the governors' annual report.

23.
PROVIDED

23. **Teaching**

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. When broken down by key stages, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 the teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Twenty per cent of lessons were very good, 27 per cent were good, 47 per cent were satisfactory and one lesson was unsatisfactory, representing 7 per cent of the lessons seen in the key stage. At Key Stage 2 the teaching also ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Twenty-nine per cent of lessons were very good, 42 per cent were good, 21 per cent were satisfactory and 8 per cent, representing two lessons, were unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, there was a high proportion of good and very good teaching. Instances of unsatisfactory teaching occurred with younger classes in both key stages. In each case, the class was large, there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and there was no support assistant to help the teacher cope. The result was that the teacher failed to keep all the pupils satisfactorily on task, pupils lost interest and progress suffered. When teachers have support, the quality of interaction improves. There is no class where the teaching is consistently unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching. The number of unsatisfactory lessons has decreased by half from 16 per cent to 8 per cent and the proportion of very good lessons has increased from 17 per cent to 26 per cent.
21. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching for children aged under five because the inspection was very early in the school year when children were still being admitted to the class. Teachers were preoccupied with settling pupils into school routines, sensitively dealing with those who missed home, and helping pupils to adjust socially. Consequently, teachers had not yet begun to introduce formal teaching towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils of this age.
22. Teachers throughout the school have a good knowledge of what they teach in all subjects. This is a result of good in-service training, effective dissemination of support materials and effective monitoring of provision by subject co-ordinators, who provide good advice and help to colleagues. Where a weakness is identified, staff receive additional help. For instance, a number of sessions using information and communication technology have been provided by Local Education Authority advisors to improve teachers' skills in using computers. Similarly, improvements to the teaching of music, which was weak at the time of the last inspection, have resulted from additional training. Whilst there are a number of subject co-ordinators who have not got initial qualifications in the subject they are responsible for, the school has ensured that they are qualified through experience and post-qualifying courses. Consequently, all subject co-ordinators confidently manage their areas of responsibility.
23. Expectations of pupils are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, there are realistic expectations of pupils with special educational needs, as a result of support provided by the special needs co-ordinator and assistant, and through the efforts of class teachers who provide compensatory support. The special needs co-ordinator's time is used very effectively. She has a secure knowledge of the pupils' needs and assesses them well. There are high expectations of higher-attaining pupils which has resulted in increasing numbers obtaining higher levels of competence in national tests. Teachers throughout the school use specially prepared materials to suit the divergent needs of the full ability range and pupils are grouped carefully in particular lessons to maximise learning. In occasional lessons, the high number of pupils in the class, and the absence of teacher-help, result in a lowering of expectations that culminates in unsatisfactory progress.
24. Lesson planning is good throughout the school. Plans are detailed, are linked effectively to other curriculum areas and contain specific reference to the different ability levels in classes. There is long, medium and short-term planning that enables teachers to address the broad requirements of the National Curriculum whilst shaping individual lessons to the needs of specific groups. Good planning is particularly evident in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This has helped to smooth the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies that were implemented in September 1998. Subject co-ordinators provide valuable broad planning to enable teachers to shape individual lessons that are matched to the needs of their classes.

25. Teachers use of variety of methods in order to sustain pupils' interest and motivation. There is a generally good balance of full-class work and group work. In all classes, pupils are often required to work quietly at individual tasks so that they develop independent learning skills. Teachers regularly use available computers across a broad range of subjects for a variety of purposes that includes word processing, data analysis, graphic display and topic research. In occasional lessons, teachers fail to use their voices effectively. When this happens, the pitch of the teacher's voice becomes too strident and pupils begin to lose attention. In the main, however, teachers make good use of gesture and eye contact as they communicate information and skills.
26. Management of classes is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Good management results from a thoughtful balance of class teaching and group or individual investigative work. Available space and resources are effectively deployed and there is generally appropriate challenge for each group within a class. Management of pupils is sometimes very good. This was noticeable particularly with the oldest classes in each key stage where there were trusting relationships and very good behaviour that enabled the teachers to increase the pace and scope of learning. Where management was less secure, teachers talked *at* the pupils rather than *to* them. This created a slight distance between the teacher and pupils. The size of classes sometimes has an adverse impact on the teacher's ability to create a purposeful learning atmosphere, particularly when there is no classroom support available.
27. Standards of discipline are generally good, even though the inspection took place in the second week of the autumn term when teachers were establishing secure control over their new classes. Consequently, there were sporadic difficulties in several classes as teachers asserted their authority over pupils who were occasionally unwilling. There was only one lesson where behaviour was judged unsatisfactory. In this lesson, pupils talked over the teacher despite being given warnings. In general, pupils do as they are told and respond quickly when corrected. Teachers secure the respect of pupils, leading to good relationships that promote a positive learning ethos.
28. Marking of pupils' work is good throughout the school. Work is handed back regularly and nearly all teachers write comments that help pupils to improve their next piece of work. Teachers give positive support to pupils in lessons so that they feel motivated. There is occasional over-effusive use of praise, but no instances of sarcasm or unnecessary harshness. Teachers, in the main, know how to get the best from pupils and use a judicious mixture of written and verbal feedback that provides sensitive and clear guidance.
29. There is effective use of homework. On the pre-inspection questionnaire the proportion of parents who feel there is not enough homework is equally balanced by those who feel there is too much. Inspectors feel that the school has got the balance right. Teachers use homework both to extend what is being done in class and to promote independent learning. However, there is insufficient use of the library as a learning resource because it is used for teaching small groups of pupils with special educational needs most mornings.
30. There is good equality of opportunity in classes. No pupils are denied access to the national curriculum and there is no difference in the way that boys and girls are treated. Whilst boys have better results in the Key Stage 1 national tests, inspectors found no evidence to suggest this resulted from teachers paying more attention to boys at the expense of girls or having higher expectations of one than the other.

34. **The curriculum and assessment**

31. The well-planned curriculum and good use of assessment has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are taught all the subjects of the National Curriculum including religious education. Appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the new strategies for these subjects are being implemented very well. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum in both key stages. Since the last inspection, subject policies and schemes of work have been reviewed or revised in all subjects, successfully taking into account new national initiatives and guidance. There is a well-established cycle of topics, and a comprehensive overall plan for the curriculum ensures that a good progression of learning skills is taught in each subject. There has been an improvement in the quality of teachers' planning since the last inspection, which now takes into account clear learning goals and pupils' prior attainment at each stage. The curriculum accurately reflects and promotes the aims of the school.
32. The planned curriculum for children under five is broad, balanced and relevant to their needs. It meets the expectations of the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes and provides appropriate opportunities to lead pupils onto the subjects of the National Curriculum. The curriculum takes good account of pupils' linguistic, numerical and social needs.
33. At both key stages, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. Health education is linked to science lessons, and there is a well-established programme for sex education and drugs awareness, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Swimming is taught in Year 4. The school offers good support to pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils make good progress. The school's arrangements comply satisfactorily with the recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The special educational needs co-ordinator works very closely with class teachers to diagnose effectively pupils' learning needs. Individual Education Plans set appropriate targets matched to pupils' circumstances. Pupils receive very good help from the special needs co-ordinator, usually in small groups. They also receive appropriate targeted help from classroom assistants, when available, who are well briefed by the class teachers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support, which enables them to take a full part in lessons.
34. The school has adopted successfully new national guidelines for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Teachers using the national frameworks to structure daily lessons in English and mathematics have become confident with new planning methods and teaching strategies, and used these to raise standards in both subjects in the last year. In addition, they plan carefully to incorporate the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
35. There is equality of access for all pupils to the full range of subjects. Whilst some parents feel that there is insufficient extra curricular activity, inspectors found provision to be good. Many pupils benefit from music tuition and a wide range of clubs. These include a good range of sports clubs, choir, French Club and a homework club. A good range of visits to places of interest supports learning in many topics, particularly in history and geography. Year 3 and Year 6 pupils also benefit from residential retreat visits to Alton Castle, and Year 6 visit the Frank Chapman Centre where they benefit from a well-organised range of outdoor pursuits. Regular visitors, invited into school to share their skills and expertise, help to broaden the curriculum and pupils' experiences. The curriculum successfully prepares pupils for secondary education.
36. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are good, and have improved since the last inspection. The marking of pupils' work is consistent, and follows the agreed policies. Assessments are used to inform future lesson planning, and teachers meet each term in teams to agree upon standards for marking and assessment. Comprehensive records of pupils' achievement and samples of work are kept in individual assessment files. The quality of teachers' assessments is consistently good.
37. A good range of formal tests is used to assess pupils' knowledge in English, mathematics and science, and the results are analysed in detail to set targets for year groups. Teachers use these assessments to track individual pupils' progress throughout the school. Individual targets are also given to pupils, which are agreed in discussions and written by pupils on target sheets, to help them become involved in their own assessment. These receive a high profile, and are often listed on classroom walls to serve as constant reminders to each pupil to improve in specified areas. Annual reports to parents include these target sheets,

give appropriate details of pupils' achievements, and comment on their attitudes to work in lessons. The school's arrangements for carrying out end-of-key-stage assessments are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements.

41. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was sound, but it was judged that a wider spirituality was not developed beyond religion. The school has improved its provision, which is now good overall, with moral development judged very good.

39. The good provision for spiritual development has its roots in the school's ethos of orderliness and thoughtfulness. Pupils are given time to reflect in assemblies when they listen to music and pray, and at other prayer times during the day. Care is taken not to rush these times. Thought is given to developing a spiritual dimension to the pupils' lives during school assemblies, especially when there is Mass. Pupils are very attentive during assemblies, which have a considerable influence on them. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 undertake a three-day retreat to Alton Castle each year, when they are encouraged to think deeply about meaning in their lives. The school works hard to ensure that opportunity for spiritual development occurs in classrooms. For instance, pupils gain insight into spiritual values when learning about the creation during religious education, the universe in science and aesthetic beauty in art and music. Further opportunities are provided when the school arranges visits to Birmingham's Art Gallery and Cathedral. Many attractive displays in the school encourage pupils to think deeply.

40. Pupils' moral development, which is very good, is nurtured by the school's supportive and caring ethos. Pupils have a clear idea of the standards expected and the difference between right and wrong. All staff take care to talk to pupils about this and use incidents in school to illustrate good and bad actions. For instance, a dinner time incident, involving the throwing of sticks, was followed up later in the classroom, when pupils prayed that they may play safely and always be honest. Relationships in the school are good and teachers' high expectations foster values of respect, honesty, justice and tolerance in pupils. Many charity collections enable pupils to support adults and children less fortunate than themselves. Money is raised for the local Fireside Centre and last year the school choir sang in a Children in Crisis charity concert at the National Exhibition Centre. A harvest fast day raised £80 for CAFOD and money donated during a Giving Mass went to a Romanian orphanage.

41. Social skills are well developed through the many opportunities provided. The school council, comprising two pupils from each year group, a mid-day supervisor, two teachers, the site manager and the school administrator, meets each month for half an hour to discuss an agenda containing items proposed by any member. A 'Bright Ideas Box' has been placed in the school for further suggestions. Pupils go on outside-school visits and stage performances for parents and the local community. From an early age, pupils are polite and helpful towards adults. They work collaboratively in class, showing confidence and independence in the way they answer questions, often in front of the whole school. There are opportunities to gain confidence in extra-curricular activities such as football, baseball, soccer and cross-country, especially when pupils meet and compete with other schools. Choir practices and a dance/drama club increase pupils' confidence for school performances. Pupils undertake responsibilities to help the smooth running of the school. They collect and distribute lunch boxes and operate the overhead projector in assemblies. Older pupils give organised help to the younger ones. The school stresses pupils' responsibilities to other children, as well as to themselves, and there is a house points system to support this. Individual achievements are celebrated in assemblies, including a headteacher's award for special occasions.

42. The pupils are very secure in their own Catholic culture which teaches a respect for all people regardless of race, creed or background, and this is incorporated in the school's multi-cultural policy. Cultural provision in the school is good, as the school celebrates the pupils' own culture as well as making provision for them to be aware of the culture of other people. The school has organised the curriculum so that Key Stage 2 pupils study one other culture each year. These include Sikhism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. The Jewish Rosh Hashanah was celebrated during the week of the inspection and afterwards a display was put in the school foyer. In geography, pupils study India and modern Egypt and the school takes care to purchase books which reflect the lives of all people.

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

43. The school continues to provide good support, guidance and attention to its pupils' welfare, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are well-known to staff and respond positively to the encouragement and guidance effectively provided in lessons. Staff operate the new marking policy consistently well, providing detailed comments that promote positive responses. Annual reports are detailed on achievements, set realistic targets and involve pupils in strategies to improve their learning and personal development.
44. Homework is set consistently across the school in accordance with the policy agreed recently by a working party set up by the school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into classes and support staff are employed effectively to give them extra attention either individually or in small groups in short periods spent away from class. Good use is made of the detailed Individual Education Plans, which are available for the use of all class teachers. A minority of the parents consider that the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and therefore are disadvantaged. However, inspectors found that teachers are aware of those who are higher attaining and prepare work that is suitably challenging. In all classes, there is judicious use of grouping so that those of comparable ability sit together when this benefits them. In other lessons, pupils sit in mixed-ability groups so that higher attainers take positions of responsibility and lower attainers receive effective peer support.
45. Appropriate health, behaviour and attendance records are kept. Clear policies are in place to promote good behaviour and to combat bullying. Although bullying is rare, the school takes any incident seriously and procedures are clearly laid down in the behaviour policy. Parents and pupils are aware of how to proceed and agree that the methods are effective.
46. Social, moral and health education, including sex education, is taught primarily through the religious education curriculum. It is an integral part of the school's aims and mission statement on which the school secures the full co-operation of the parents. There is also good coverage of these topics in other parts of the curriculum. This is extended by the visiting specialists such as the police and a poet who coupled an anti-smoking campaign to the writing of verse. There are adequate medical arrangements and the school nurse takes an active part in the life of the school. Three members of the staff have first-aid certificates. The school has regular contact with the education welfare officer, educational psychologist and social services.
47. There are very effective policies for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school is well aware of the need to ensure the safety of its pupils, both in school and off the premises. Safety inspections are performed regularly by the headteacher, the diocesan surveyor and site manager. Comprehensive measures for child protection are in place and the school takes very sensitive and effective care of the pupils. The staff are made aware of the correct action to take should they be concerned about the welfare of any pupil. Measures taken by the school confirm the views of parents that the school is a happy and caring place that enables their children to feel secure and therefore learn effectively.
48. The process of induction to Reception is sensitively organised by the staff. The proximity of the parish hall, where the playgroup meets, and visits for concerts and celebrations, familiarise the children with the school before they enter classes. They settle quickly into school in spite of the hurly-burly of a single playground. Effective arrangements are in place to ease the transfer of Year 6 pupils to secondary schools, whose staff visit at the Reports Evening to meet pupils and parents.
49. The high standards of care praised in the last report have been maintained. Punctuality has been improved and there is now careful analysis of attendance using the computerised system. The new behaviour policy and home-school partnership are well supported and have had a positive effect on the wellbeing of the pupils. Inspectors agree with parents that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on pupils.

53. **Partnership with parents and the community**

50. The school's partnership with parents, the parish and the community is very good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school's aim of improving the partnership with the community and parents, and extending parish links, is effectively supported through its actions.

51. Overall, the quality of information provided by the school to parents is very good. Inspectors agree with the large majority of parents on the questionnaire who said they felt well informed about the school curriculum and their child's progress. There are regular informative newsletters, comprehensive information is available at induction evenings, and parents, with their children, are invited to spend time in school. The welcome packs are attractive and informative. The home-school partnership booklet is well designed and parents are given clear advice in the home-school agreement. The two consultation evenings are well attended; parents welcome the opportunity for discussion after they receive the annual reports. The style of the annual reports is more informative following a recent change to its format. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are grateful for the support, detailed information and meetings provided for them.

52. However, whilst the quality of information is very good overall, there are a number of minor omissions to the school prospectus and annual report of the governing body. The prospectus does not contain a statement on the school's position regarding withdrawal from religious education or about the general provision for sport. The governors' annual report does not contain information on the following: progress since the last inspection; a full financial statement; a statement on school security; arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils; steps taken to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favourably; facilities provided to assist access by disabled pupils; professional development undertaken by teaching staff and the changes to the prospectus since it was last published. Whilst none of these omissions has significant repercussions for the education of current pupils, they are required information and should be included.

53. Parental involvement in the school is actively encouraged and very good. Parents fulfil an important role in helping in school with many activities such as reading, stage lighting, and assisting in the library. Some of the extra-curricular clubs, which positively contribute to the quality of the pupils' learning, are organised by the parents, for example the French Club. Practical help given to the school by parents on self-help schemes is of great value to the school and is much appreciated by the headteacher and governors. Parents also help to transport pupils during educational outings, and they are invited to attend Masses and concerts. The development of parent working parties has been successful in producing behaviour, drug education and homework policies and there is an established Millennium working party. The Parent-Teacher Association is a very effective social and fundraising body, which makes a considerable contribution to the school's resources, for example, by financing changes to the school library and main foyer.

54. The school has successfully established useful links with local businesses. Staff placements in industry have been followed by beneficial class visits. Participation in the Sandwell Education Business Partnership effectively provides extension activities to the normal curriculum. For example, the 'Words at Work' project provided the pupils with an interesting visit to a newspaper headquarters that prompted good work in English and was excellent publicity for the school. There is a well-established school savings bank. A recent visit to a local bank by pupils with special educational needs resulted in them helping to run the school bank. This increases their sense of responsibility and is an enjoyable way of enhancing their numeracy development. Local shops welcome the infant classes for educational visits.

55. Participation in the Investors in People scheme has benefited the school staff. A link with Rowley Regis College has enabled the school to offer training in national vocational awards to parent helpers; this promises to improve both parental commitment to the school and the quality of support to pupils.

56. The Parish Hall on the premises confirms the position of the school in the local community. The pupils entertain senior citizens to concerts and carol singing which helps them to understand their place in the local society. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as the Local Education Authority advisers, the school library service, the educational psychology service and the police. The curriculum has also been enriched by the visit of a poet to the school and the premises improved by the recent work of an artist who worked with

pupils to paint a colourful mural in the playground.

57. The pupils and staff profit from the school's links with others in the area. Staff visits to and from neighbouring primary schools, and other schools in the area, help to ensure continuity in the curriculum. The presence of students from colleges, and work experience pupils from secondary schools, is of mutual benefit. Pupils in their final year visit neighbouring secondary schools, which helps to familiarise them with the next stage of their education. Participation in sports fixtures with other schools and the dance festival make a positive impact on the personal development of pupils. Taking part in a technology competition resulted in the setting up of the School Council.

58. Educational visits to museums and outings to historical places of interest enrich learning and social development. The pupils held a sponsored spell and mathematics project to raise money to add to the governors' fund to pay for new doors and windows for the school. Such activity promotes their sense of ownership of the school. The school's contribution to local, national and international charities encourages positive values and extends the pupils' knowledge beyond the immediate locality.

59. The parents' perceptions of the school and its achievements have improved since the last report. This has occurred with the setting up of the home-school partnership and the involvement of parents in policy making. An effective start has been made in fostering wider community links beyond the parish boundary.

63. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

63. **Leadership and management**

60. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher's management and leadership are very good and provide decisive and influential direction that has a positive impact on standards of work. The school has undergone considerable management change since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in April 1997, two senior teachers have replaced the post of deputy headteacher, and there has been a recent change of chair of governors, following the tragic death of the previous incumbent. In addition, there has been a period of extended illness of several staff. Despite these rapid and challenging circumstances, the management has responded well, tackling new initiatives and maintaining and improving standards in an imaginative, flexible and resilient manner. The capacity to improve further is good.

61. There has been a strategic response to the five key issues of the last inspection report. Despite a delay in tackling the issues, owing to the ill-health and retirement of the previous headteacher, the Action Plan that was eventually put in place in 1997 effectively addressed all the outstanding issues. There is now greater consistency in the planning and use of assessment, particularly through the use of target setting based on tests and teacher assessment data. Subject co-ordinators are now more actively engaged in implementing and monitoring curriculum changes, and have recently started to provide regular information to governors through termly progress reviews. The professional development of staff has improved with the introduction of an annual review for each teacher and there is strategic use of professional development that is linked to regular teacher appraisal. Improvements have been supported by the Local Education Authority which, in May this year, participated in a thoroughgoing school self-review of the progress made since the previous inspection.

62. At the time of the last report, the full governing body was not sufficiently involved in planning, target setting or monitoring of provision. Important decisions were made without consulting the full governing body. Governors were uncertain of their responsibilities and felt obliged to accept decisions without exercising independent judgement. For instance, decisions regarding financial payments to employees were not sufficiently debated by the governors, and have resulted in unnecessary financial obligations. The autonomy of the governors has only begun to improve very recently. Factors that are leading to improvement include the recent appointment of a new chair of governors and the encouragement by the new headteacher for governors to be more involved in decision making and monitoring of provision. The governing body is still over-dependent on the headteacher, but is rapidly developing the ability to make independent judgements. There are regular well-attended meetings of the full committee and sub-committees for admissions, finance,

buildings, staffing and policy. Well-kept minutes indicate that governors are increasingly effective in making decisions based on relevant, detailed and up-to-date information supplied by the headteacher and staff. The governing body is increasingly prepared to debate issues critically. For instance, the full committee recently debated the admissions criteria before deciding that there should be no change for the time being. However, whilst there are positive signs of recent improvement, the governing body has not fully developed its role as a 'critical friend' or developed its capacity to hold the school to account.

63. The headteacher and staff successfully monitor aspects of the school's work. Job descriptions have been improved so that teachers are clear about what aspects of provision they are responsible for monitoring. A monitoring policy, implemented after the appointment of the new headteacher in summer 1997, includes a tight schedule governing aspects of provision to be reviewed and improved within a manageable timescale. There are regular staff meetings that allow for open debate and the building of consensus regarding new initiatives or changes to existing practice. There are a considerable number of policy documents that guide and inform the work of the school. The governing body is increasingly active in monitoring provision. Subject co-ordinators now monitor the quality of teaching and learning by visiting lessons. This is having a positive impact on standards by encouraging a culture of critical self-evaluation. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning and shares her perceptions candidly so that teachers are aware of issues requiring improvement. Governors visit lessons only in their capacity as classroom volunteers. This does not involve monitoring the effects of their decisions and they are therefore unable critically to appraise classroom provision. However, they are aware of this deficiency and intend to introduce classroom monitoring in the near future. In addition to monitoring teaching and learning, the senior management and subject co-ordinators monitor the curriculum and assessments. For instance, national tests are checked carefully to see where the weaknesses in pupils' performance could be improved. This has resulted in target setting that focuses on improvements across the full spectrum of pupils' prior attainment.

64. Provision for special educational needs is well managed. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps clear records of pupils requiring support. Assessments of pupils' needs are regularly updated and reviews shared with parents and other specialist services from the Local Education Authority. There is a named governor with responsibility for special educational needs who keeps other governors well informed.

65. The school has a clear set of values expressed through its mission statement and school aims. Parents feel strongly that the attitudes and values promoted by the school have a positive impact on their children and inspectors agree that these values are implemented very effectively in the daily life of the school. A clear statement of current priorities, primarily designed to raise standards throughout the school, but also further to improve links with the parish and with parents, has been agreed by the staff and governing body. There is a particularly good sense of partnership with parents, a number of whom have actively contributed to working parties considering such things as behaviour, drug education and home study arrangements. The school is properly proud of its continued 'Investors In People' status that was first awarded in 1996. One enterprising aspect of provision is the training of parent volunteers towards recognised vocational qualifications in partnership with a local college. Consequently, there is a positive ethos in the school with pupils and adults feeling valued and supported. Morale amongst teachers has improved recently as they are being given greater independence to manage their areas of responsibility. There is effective equality of access with no pupils being denied access to any part of the school curriculum.

66. The school successfully identifies relevant priorities and targets through its development planning. At the time of the last inspection, the targets on the school development plan were too long and were not sufficiently specific. The development plan now has clear priorities, is tied to the financial year, has clear success criteria and a relevant timescale. The planning clearly identifies improvements to standards as a central platform of provision. The effectiveness of the plan is successfully monitored through monthly senior management team meetings. There is full involvement of all staff and the governing body in the drawing up of the plan. There is successful planning for each curriculum area within the overall plan as well as planning for the library, special educational needs, staff development, community links and development of the site. The previous year's plans are reviewed in detail at the end of the year. Issues that have not been successfully resolved are carried through into the subsequent year's planning. The school recently undertook a helpful detailed 'self-review'. This specifically focused on the response to the last inspection and was undertaken by the senior management team and governing body led by a Local Education

Authority adviser. This contributed usefully to priority setting for the 1999 academic year.

67. Most statutory requirements are met with the exception of the lack of some items of required information in the school prospectus and annual report of the governing body to parents. For instance, the annual report does not provide a full financial statement, details of the professional development taken by teaching staff or progress on the action plan since the last inspection. There is insufficient information about provision for disabled pupils or a required statement on school security.

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

68. The school has a hard-working, caring and committed staff, who are suitably qualified and experienced. Some have served the school for a number of years, and good relationships and teamwork have been built up. The school coped extremely well when sustaining four long-term absences during the last two years. There is a good balance between experienced and less experienced staff, and all have agreed job descriptions. Teachers take responsibility for the co-ordination of at least one subject area, and their experience suitably matches the demands of the curriculum. The pupil-teacher ratio is average, although the average class size is about 33, which is high.

69. The staffing is enhanced by a relatively low number of experienced classroom assistants. One nursery assistant works very well with early years' teachers in planning and teaching and in ensuring that assessment and recording of pupils' work is effective. There is also an assistant who supports the special educational needs co-ordinator in providing specialist help to identified pupils in classes and small withdrawal groups. However, class teachers in the lower part of the school often teach large classes unassisted. This often means that, in important lessons, younger pupils receive minimal help with their literacy and numeracy skills, owing to the demands on the teachers' time in large classes.

70. There are sound procedures for the induction of new teachers. These teachers work closely with mentors, and they have regular opportunities to share planning and to observe classes taught by experienced colleagues. They have agreed targets as part of their career entry profiles. The headteacher updates job descriptions with staff each year, which take into account subject responsibilities and some targets for curriculum development. All staff also have professional development interviews with the headteacher, during which their future training needs are discussed. The school's success in promoting staff development has been recognised by Investors In People Awards. During the last year, training days have focused on whole school priorities, such as raising standards in English and mathematics, and numeracy training. There have been good opportunities for teachers to attend professional development courses out of school. Subject co-ordinators monitor colleagues' planning in their subjects, and some have been given time to work alongside them in classes, to help develop their teaching skills.

71. Indoor accommodation is clean and generally well managed, although some classrooms are cramped, and do not provide quality spaces for book corners, art areas and computer stations. Teachers work hard to ensure that this does not adversely affect the quality of education they offer pupils. The Reception provision does not have a separately enclosed outside play area for apparatus or wheeled toys. A small, attractive library and welcome area has recently been developed, partly by funding from the Parents and Friends Association. The library is not large enough for whole-class teaching, and does not provide a quiet, comfortable area for browsing or individual reading. Displays are used effectively to create a stimulating learning environment in many classrooms. For example, a superb display on the rainforests, using plants, paintings, posters, artefacts, books and a music tape is used to stimulate interest in geography and conservation in the Year 6 classroom.

72. The school grounds include a hard play area and a small field, offering adequate facilities for physical education and other activities. The field is used for games, some out-of-school sports activities, and sports afternoons. The school has benefited from additional grants to enable refurbishment projects to take place. Security has been greatly enhanced by a new perimeter fence and entrance gate, and a major window replacement project has been completed. Further improvements are planned.

73. In all subjects, the range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, resources for

information technology have developed, and the provision for both hardware and software has improved recently. Good quality books from the library loan service supplement the school's own learning resources each term. The Parents and Friends Association has also helped to supplement the school's library provision, and provided additional resources for the curriculum

77. **The efficiency of the school**

74. The efficiency with which the school utilises its resources is satisfactory. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection have partially been addressed. There was concern at the last inspection about the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring the impact of financial decisions on standards. The senior management team now regularly reviews the progress of the school development plan where the financial implications of meeting priorities, including planned improvement to standards, have been carefully costed. However, whilst the senior management team monitors the impact of financial decisions on standards, the minutes of the governing body finance committee, and curriculum subject reports to the full governing body, do not indicate how links between financial allocation and standards are monitored. The governing body and middle managers are therefore over-dependent on the headteacher when evaluating the impact of financial decisions on standards. Whilst the governors' finance committee is effective in budget setting, it does not, therefore, concern itself sufficiently with the impact that those budgetary decisions have on standards in subjects.

75. The school's financial planning is satisfactory. However, despite financial planning being satisfactory overall, decisions made several years ago, before the appointment of the current headteacher, have had an adverse repercussion on the budget. A decision to increase the number and remuneration of employees not based in direct classroom teaching or classroom support was not fully shared with the governing body. This additional expenditure on ancillary staff was excessive and remains well above the average for schools of this size and type. Consequently, spending across the various categories of staff is unbalanced, particularly in the light of the inadequate provision of classroom support assistants that has an adverse impact on standards in both key stages. The headteacher is aware that a review and adjustment to the various cost centres relating to employees is overdue.

76. Current financial planning has improved. Governors are increasingly involved in the long-term strategic management of the school. Finance committee meetings are attended by the Local Education Authority Finance Officer who brings relevant advice and comparisons that enable the committee to make well-informed decisions based on up-to-date knowledge. The officer also supplies projected figures for several years into the future so that the finance committee can plan longer-term developments without being constrained by imminent financial commitments. The headteacher keeps the committee fully informed of the current state of the budget. Prudent planning avoided the school going into a deficit budget following unavoidable staff absences for an extended period in the last financial year. The school ensures that there is sufficient financial support to maintain provisions as well as encouraging innovative new departures. For instance, there has been good planning for improvements to the site through the painting of a mural, planting of trees and provision of a millennium garden. Financial planning for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Projects has been effective and contributed to improved standards.

77. The school's development planning shows the likely cost of initiatives. The finance committee begins budget projections well in advance of the financial year and takes full account of the targets and priorities on the emerging development plan. Careful use of contingency funds, and strategic use of virement across cost centres, enabled the school to carry forward a small balance in to the 1999 financial year despite the problems of staff illness. This was partly done by making a decision not to spend allocated money on furniture and repainting of new windows, as well as other small cost-cutting measures. These, and other recorded considerations, indicate that governors' financial decisions normally have a positive impact on priorities related to standards of work.

78. School administration and financial control are good. Clear daily routines and procedures are mostly understood and carried out by staff and pupils. The audit of July 1997 identified aspects for improvement that have all been successfully addressed. The audit review of 1998, carried out by the Local Authority, commended the school for the efficient and effective way it had addressed all items identified in the original audit. There are

effective procedures for the collection, recording and banking of money. Records are processed in a systematic and methodical manner Clerical support enables the school to run smoothly and effectively. Funds available for special educational needs are invested soundly to benefit these pupils. The employment of a special needs assistant has a positive impact on the levels of support available to pupils and financial support for the 'Enable' project is having a positive impact on standards of reading amongst lower attainers.

79.The school makes effective use of its resources. All computers were recently replaced with modern industry-standard machines that are beginning to be very well used in each class. Resources and tools available for science, design and technology, music and art lessons are used safely and well. Whilst many classrooms are too small for the large classes in the school, teachers' use of space is good. Special interest corners and imaginative displays create a good working ethos. Corridor display space is well used to brighten up the environment and to celebrate pupils' work.

80.The school's income is average. By the time they leave school, pupils have attained well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is good and pupils respond well in lessons. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there is a good ethos in the school. The cost of educating pupils is below average and the school therefore provides good value for money.

Areas of Learning for Children Under Five

81. At the time of the previous inspection, language, mathematics and aspects of science were reported as being satisfactory but there were limited opportunities for structured play, role play, creative development and outdoor physical development. There were insufficient practical and investigational activities to provide first-hand experience in scientific, technological and mathematical areas of the curriculum. Provision has now improved in all areas, with the exception of outdoor play facilities, which are minimal. This limits opportunities for children's physical development.

82. The children are admitted at the beginning of the year in which they are five. The school has a well-thought-out system for admission and induction into school life. Near the beginning of the autumn term, when the rest of the school is settled and working, the pupils come into school in groups of ten, culminating in a full nursery class at the end of the week. This year, 30 full-time pupils were being admitted during the week of the inspection. In the June before their children start school, parents are invited to come into school one evening to see the classroom and meet the teacher. A booklet is issued for the parents to complete. This provides valuable information for the parents about the school, helps the teacher to understand the child's preferences and gives some indication of their social skills.

83. Staffing is adequate. It comprises one full-time teacher and one able and experienced nursery nurse who is working full-time with the Reception Class during the children's induction period. The time she spends in the Reception Class will be reduced as the year progresses.

84. Baseline assessment of each child, using the Durham system, is undertaken during their first few days in school. The results of the tests indicate that children have an overall average attainment on entry. There are a few identified as possibly having special educational needs and a few who show good potential. The children are assessed again at the end of the school year but no comparative figures are available at this time of the year. Observation of Year 1 pupils indicates that progress is satisfactory during the year the pupils are in the Reception.

85. Whilst it was not possible to judge overall quality of teaching, because children were still being received into the class and had not begun formal lessons, it was noticeable that children are sensitively supported, particularly in these early days in school. The teacher has prepared detailed plans and schemes of work, which skilfully combine the Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils under five years of age with the literacy and numeracy requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils over the age of five. The teacher provides a broad and balanced range of activities and available space and resources are well used.

Personal and Social Development.

86. The children are very well settled, early in the term, in their small groups, and most appear happy. The school integrates the children into the full life of the school as soon as possible. After six weeks, they attend the whole-school assembly. From the beginning, at playtimes and dinner times they are with the older children. The caring ethos of the school makes this system possible although this is rather daunting for some children who become very tired at the end of the day. They have a separate cloakroom and toilet area. The children behave well, co-operate in their play and show enjoyment. They respond well to any requests made by the staff and are eager to please. They are confident and will approach an adult for help. Children are encouraged to talk about God in their lives and express their feelings. With adult help, many can stay on a colouring and writing task for up to fifteen minutes. Independence and social skills are fostered when children are provided with table games and activities, which they play with alone or in a small group. They often select their own activities. Through a well-established daily routine, the school increases the children's confidence, which helps them tackle new challenges.

Language and Literacy

87.Children follow a modified version of the literacy hour as soon as they enter school, and there is a good selection of interesting books for this, supported by teacher-made sheets and other commercial equipment. The children enter school with a reasonably developed vocabulary and they answer questions sensibly using phrases and some adjectives. Most have attended a pre-school playgroup or nursery. As soon as they enter the Reception class, the children are encouraged to talk and express their opinions and to listen to each other. Listening skills are also well developed through structured discussion and stories. There is a good supply of books for children to choose and look at if they wish. Children are encouraged to write properly from the beginning. They successfully copy over the teacher's writing and higher attainers write underneath it. They know that books contain stories and are excited by them.

Mathematics

88.The classroom is equipped with a satisfactory collection of mathematical games including picture and spot dominoes, picture, colour and shape matching games, and animals to sort. During their first day in school, pupils showed some understanding of comparative size and counting to three when listening to the story of the three bears. A few of the oldest children were able to order the bears for size and give them the right-sized bed, chair and plate. The teacher plans to use selected sheets from a commercial scheme to fit in with the topics during the year.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

89.Children under five effectively increase their knowledge and understanding of the world they live in through use of play materials and computer programs. They have access to a road layout with small vehicles and play people to make imaginary parks and houses. There is a home corner with two rooms and children satisfactorily undertake cooking with the nursery nurse each week, making gingerbread men and small cakes. The properties of dry sand are explored in a sand tray. Children make several visits outside school to the local shops, the church and the library. They go into the playground to listen for sounds and have an autumn walk to look at the environment around the school. In the summer term, they have a whole-day visit to a farm. However there are no animals or plants in the classroom to gain first-hand knowledge from and few visitors to talk about their jobs and life experiences.

Creative Development

90.The children develop their creative thinking through art and craft activities. They make good use of available resources including two kinds of paint and materials for printing. Sound links are made with other curriculum areas, in particular literacy. During the inspection, a small group of children sang nursery rhymes from one of the big print books used in a literacy session. Creative use of tunes and words is encouraged by the teacher, who leads the children in singing about what they are doing when tidying up or gathering on the carpet. The creative development of the under-five children is linked to their spiritual development when they are encouraged to think of beautiful things in their prayers.

Physical Development

91.Children's fine motor skills are developed in their literacy activities. Most children hold a pencil correctly and some of the oldest in the group accurately outline bears and show good shading skills. Two children cut out their bears carefully and were able to use glue to stick their pictures. There is insufficient large play equipment to aid pupils' physical development. Although they are timetabled for three 'hall times' each week, there are no toy vehicles for them to ride outside and no safe, enclosed area for them to play. They share the large playground with older pupils; this inhibits their movements and leads to some emulation of rough habits in their play.

95. **English**

92. In the 1998 national tests for seven-year-olds, attainment in reading was above the national average and in writing was broadly in line with the national average. Although national comparisons are not yet available for 1999, provisional results indicate attainments are lower in reading but higher in writing with a cohort that had a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the previous year. At the last inspection in 1996, standards in English were judged to be in line with national expectations in Key Stage 1. Standards have therefore been maintained since the previous inspection. Inspection findings confirm these results, showing that attainment in English broadly matches the national average. However, there are signs of recent improvement. This follows the successful introduction of several initiatives to raise performance that are only just beginning to have an impact.
93. In the 1998 national assessments for pupils aged eleven years, attainment was above the national average. Whilst national comparisons are not yet available for 1999, attainment looks set to be well above the national average. The school appears to be well in line to meet its targets for the year 2000 and has exceeded its targets for 1999. Classroom observations and examination of school documents, including teacher assessments, show that there has been a significant rise in standards during the past year in Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection.
94. Published comparisons indicate that attainment in the 1998 tests was below that of similar schools at the end of both key stages. However, these comparisons are based only on the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is very low. They do not take into account the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, or the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which are both average.
95. In the inspection, there was no observable difference between the attainments of boys and girls in either key stage, despite test results indicating that boys outperformed girls in Key Stage 1 in the period 1996 to 1998. The discrepancy between inspection findings and test results is accounted for by the individual differences between pupils within years; there is no indication that girls are treated any less favourably than boys in Key Stage 1 English lessons. A carefully thought out reading precision teaching scheme is having a positive effect on the performance of lower-attaining pupils. The scheme targets individual pupils throughout the school and is operated by a skilled special needs support assistant. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is being carefully monitored by the school and is beginning to have a significant effect on the standards of English, particularly in Key Stage 2. The allocation of extra time for creative and story writing this year is also beginning to have a positive impact.
96. Standards of attainment in speaking and listening are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils listen intently to views expressed by others and follow carefully instructions or suggestions made by their teachers. When discussing issues, they eagerly offer opinions that are sensible and well thought out. Pupils take turns to speak, and, in older classes, present views clearly and knowledgeably in sentences about a wide variety of books and topics. They always have something to add to discussions, often with little prompting from the teacher. They listen well in school assemblies and answer questions confidently in front of the whole school.
97. In lessons observed, standards of attainment in reading are in line with the national average at Key Stage 1. The school's approach to early reading is well thought out and begins in the Reception class. Individual readers are taken home. In school, group reading and whole-class reading is undertaken daily by every pupil. Support from parents is sought and readily given, with many hearing their child read at home each day. Progress is documented in a home/school reading diary, which is used in all classes. Pupils have a very positive attitude to reading. The deterioration in reading standards in 1999 resulted from two factors: the high proportion of pupils having special educational needs in that class, and the lack of classroom support assistants, which limited how often pupils could be heard to read. In lessons seen during the inspection, standards are at the expected levels for the age group. To improve standards of support, the school is

currently training three parent volunteers who will assist with reading and other classroom tasks.

98. Reading standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are very good. Year 6 pupils understand and use words such as 'insatiable', 'hideous' and 'unique'. Pupils enjoy reading and eagerly talk about their books. They use their skills effectively in many other subjects of the curriculum. However, their library skills are not sufficiently well developed; they are sometimes slow to locate the books they require. This is because there is insufficient independent use by pupils of the school's non-fiction library. However, all pupils are taken from the school to visit the local library each fortnight. By Year 6, pupils are reading up to six books from this source every two weeks.
99. Progress in reading is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2 where there is an increase in the volume and diversity of reading in many areas of curriculum. The carefully graded reading scheme, the skill of teachers and the support they receive at home helps pupils' progress.
100. Standards of attainment in writing are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils develop their handwriting skills satisfactorily with many pupils beginning to join their letters by the age of seven. They develop sound formal skills in writing particularly in relation to punctuation, spelling and grammar.
101. Standards of attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are very good. Pupils complete a large volume of clear, legible, well-presented work containing accurate punctuation on a variety of subjects, such as the lives of David Livingstone, Charlotte Bronte and William Morris. Throughout the school, spellings are taken home each week to be learnt. All teachers follow a carefully thought out system of progression in their marking of spellings. Consequently, teachers expect a high level of spelling accuracy from the oldest pupils. This method encourages a positive attitude in pupils towards their writing and motivates them to try new words.
102. Progress in writing across the school is good overall and is very good towards the end of Key Stage 2. The many years of support given to pupils with special educational needs enables them to reach satisfactory standards. The progress of higher attainers is very rapid once they can write fluently in ink. All work is written in ink throughout most of Key Stage 2. By Year 6 many pupils who have entered the school just able to make marks with a pencil achieve a large volume of beautifully presented work containing accurate punctuation and very good descriptive language.
103. Pupils' attitudes towards learning English are generally good and in a third of observed lessons are very good. They enjoy quiet reading times and class discussions. They quickly settle to tasks, they work hard and concentrate throughout lessons. They happily share their knowledge and achievements and are helpful towards each other. They are confident and seek help if they need it. They show pleasure when showing their knowledge and expressing views, and listen attentively to the opinions and work of others. Their pace of work is good and they respond well to their teacher's voice. In Key Stage 2 pupils work co-operatively in a variety of groupings.
104. The quality of teaching overall in the school is good, and in half of lessons is very good. Teachers in both key stages have a good knowledge of how to teach English. They plan lessons well, following the clear guidelines of the English curriculum and expand it into interesting sessions that capture pupils' interest. Occasionally the teacher's voice is too loud and intrudes on the pupils' concentration. Where this happens, pupils stop listening with the same concentration. Discipline in classrooms is generally firm and kind, although lack of support staff in several classes puts a strain on teachers who have difficulties keeping all pupils on task. Pupils are praised and encouraged, classrooms are normally busy and well ordered and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers take care to develop pupils' vocabulary from an early age and encourage them to express opinions in class discussions. They ensure equal opportunities for pupils in both their planning and teaching. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well catered for. Sufficient resources are always available to pupils and learning is often reinforced by the use of computer programs. Homework is set regularly throughout the school and, in Key Stage 2, is used effectively to extend pupils' independent learning skills. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good, for instance in subjects such as history and geography, where they are effectively used to extend pupils'

reading and writing skills. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed and accurately recorded. Teachers make good use of both formal test results and their own individual assessments when planning lessons.

105. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored and teachers are given good advice on how to improve standards. Assessment is good. All pupils undertake a baseline assessment and the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In addition, Year 3 and Year 6 pupils are tested annually using the Local Education Authority's reading test and Year 4 pupils are assessed on the published Standard Attainment Tests. Pupils' work and attainment is monitored carefully by the two well-informed curriculum co-ordinators who act as consultants for the rest of the staff and lead in-service training. Test results are carefully analysed.

106. The school makes good use of the local library and also borrows a large supply of non-fiction books from the Schools' Library Service each term. The school's own stock of books is satisfactory, but in some Key Stage 2 classrooms there is a shortage of fiction books. A good deal of money has been spent on buying sets of class group readers to support the National Literacy Scheme. The school's non-fiction library is under-used and pupils have insufficient access to poetry and plays, especially to read aloud.

110. **Mathematics**

107. The results of national assessments in 1998 show pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 to be close to the national average, and below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above the national average, and broadly in line with similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, results were close to the national average, and below average when compared with schools in a similar context. Results over a three-year period to 1998 show that pupils' performance in mathematics is close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1, and above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Evidence gained during the inspection reflects the results in the most recent national assessments, and shows that standards of attainment are similar to national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and are now well above the national expectation in Key Stage 2.

108. Evidence gathered during this inspection shows that nearly all pupils in the current Year 2 will reach the expected standard by the end of the year. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils work confidently with number and can carry out a simple range of calculations. They are developing their understanding of larger numbers and show a sound appreciation of the value of digits. Pupils develop good mental strategies, and have quick and accurate recall of number bonds to 10. Most pupils make given sums of money, using different coins, and calculate their change from 50 pence. They describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes according to sides, corners and angles. Their skills in using and applying mathematics are sound. Pupils make satisfactory progress during the key stage. Those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective support from specialist support staff and class teachers.

109. Evidence from the inspection shows that attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is well above average. By Year 6, most pupils show a very good mathematical understanding in number. Their mental recall of number facts is very good and supports work in other areas of mathematics. Most pupils carry out calculations with numbers to 10,000, and express numbers to the nearest 100 and 1,000 accurately and with confidence. Most pupils successfully simplify fractions, and express them as percentages. They calculate fractions mentally, for example five-sixths of 30, and work out percentages quickly, such as 10 per cent of £2. Pupils show good understanding when exploring number patterns and sequences, and many estimate square numbers and square roots of large numbers accurately before checking their answers. Pupils develop a good range of strategies for problem solving, and effectively apply different methods when making calculations. Pupils' progress accelerates towards the end of the key stage because the teaching is more challenging, and this enables them to make very good progress, overall, during Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

110. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have sound numeracy skills, and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' numeracy skills are very good. Mental mathematics is well taught, particularly in Key Stage 2, and it receives appropriate attention in most lessons. In one very good Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher began the lesson with a challenging mental mathematics session. Pupils were given a series of numbers and asked which ones were

multiples of 9, and then asked to examine and explain a number sequence. When giving their answers, pupils were invited to explain the strategies used to make their mental calculations, and to provide alternative methods to find the correct answer. Teachers emphasise and reinforce mathematical terms in lessons, and display vocabulary lists related to the subject on the classroom walls. They encourage pupils to talk about mathematics during lessons, and to compare or share different methods with the group or the whole class. These good basic skills support work in mathematics and in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils measure accurately and display their information in a variety of charts. In information technology pupils produce tables and graphs, and in geography they use mathematics in their mapping skills and to collect and interpret weather data.

111. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They show interest and enthusiasm, listen carefully to explanations, are keen to participate in question and answer sessions, and offer their ideas and methods confidently. When working independently, pupils work quietly, selecting appropriate equipment or resources with a minimum of fuss. When required to work together, they do so in a supportive and co-operative manner. In most of the lessons observed, pupils were well behaved and sustained concentration well. However, in one Key Stage 1 lesson, some of the pupils lost interest and concentration, and this resulted in minor disruption and inappropriate behaviour.

112. The quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1, and good overall in Key Stage 2. Teaching was good or better in nearly half of the lessons seen, with the best teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2. However, teaching was unsatisfactory in two of the nine lessons observed. Where teaching is good, expectations are high and lessons are lively, with a good balance of time spent in whole-class work, practical activities and written tasks. For example, in one Key Stage 2 lesson, a brisk mental mathematics session was followed by the teacher setting targets for the class for the lesson to encourage them to use different methods of calculations, checking their results using another method. The pupils then worked on different set tasks or games, appropriate to their abilities, involving number calculations. The lesson concluded by pupils talking to each other about what they had learned and the methods they used. In the lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, the work set does not extend pupils' learning, and behaviour management is weak. Teachers have successfully adapted a common planning format and the structure of lessons is good. Most teachers make good use of resources, and provide clear explanations to the class before they commence focused tasks. Some good displays extend pupils' learning, with mathematical terms, tables, signs and number patterns displayed prominently in classrooms. The use of computers is developing, and they are used consistently in lessons. The provision for homework is good, and makes the best contribution to pupils' progress at the end of Key Stage 2.

113. There is a good scheme of work for mathematics, based on the new National Numeracy Strategy. The school has successfully piloted this programme in the last year, and it has helped to raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, and has a comprehensive monitoring programme in place, which informs training needs and future priorities for the subject. A subject action plan clearly identifies future developments. In-service training has included opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues, identified as good mathematics teachers, in lessons, enabling teachers to share good practice and develop consistent strategies. Good use has been made of outside training initiatives to support mathematics work within the school. There are thorough assessment procedures in place, including a series of formal tests at the end of each year. There is an adequate range of good quality resources and equipment to teach the subject, which is well organised.

117. **Science**

114. Teacher assessments for science in 1998 showed that standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with the national average. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection of May 1996. The proportion of pupils attaining the benchmark Level 2 and above matched the national average, as did the proportion attaining the higher Level 3. The provisional assessment for 1999 indicates that pupils' attainment is likely to match the national average again, although national comparisons are not yet published. The proportion attaining Level 3 in the part of the assessment dealing with 'Life and Living Processes' was far above the attainment of pupils nationally. This reflects the effective emphasis that is placed on this unit within school to teach about other aspects of the curriculum. There is little difference

between the attainment of boys and girls in teacher assessments. In lessons seen during the inspection, attainment matched the results of recent teacher assessments, with most pupils producing work that matched age-related and ability-related expectations across classes.

115. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment was above that of schools nationally. Attainment has improved since the last inspection. The proportion gaining the benchmark Level 4 was above the national average and the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 matched the national average. The provisional figures for 1999 indicate that attainment is likely to be well above the national average (as it was in 1997), although national comparisons have not yet been published. Over the three years, 1996 to 1998, attainment has been consistently above the national average and this is set to continue in 1999. The reason that the test results were lower in 1998 than in 1997 or 1999 is that there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the 1998 class. There is little difference between the results of boys and girls in either the national tests or in the teacher assessments. In lessons seen during the inspection, standards of work reflected the above average quality of results gained in the national tests.
116. During the inspection, Reception Class children were still being admitted to school. Evidence of work done in the Reception year is therefore based on the previous year's work. Pupils understand the differences between living and non-living things using simple criteria, such as "do they move" or "do they breathe". They begin to group materials according to their properties, and understand words such as 'steam', and 'boil'. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use classifications with greater discrimination and accuracy. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, pupils were considering whether to categorise something as a plant or animal using the criteria of growth, digestion, reproduction, movement and sensory response. They know why taking exercise and eating the right kind of foods has a beneficial effect on their body and describe conditions necessary for survival. Attainment is at least satisfactory across all the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and is very good in the 'Life and Living Processes' component that is used in a cross-curricular way to teach about aspects of personal and spiritual development.
117. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils intelligently classify everyday materials based on properties such as flexibility, hardness and magnetic behaviour. Early in the key stage, seven and eight-year-olds understand about the differences between baby teeth and adult teeth and correctly classify teeth as incisors, canines or molars. They understand why teeth are shaped differently. In an exciting Year 3 lesson, they noted which teeth they used when eating sticks of carrot. By the end of the Key Stage, pupils make very good use of scientific terminology. A year 6 class, for instance, used the words 'stamen' and 'sepal' with confidence as they dissected parts of a fuchsia plant. They understand through experiments that iron is attracted by a magnet but that aluminium and wood are not attracted. Pupils understand that a break in an electric circuit will prevent a bulb or buzzer operating. Higher attainers begin to understand the need to match the voltage of a battery to the capacity of the component they wish to make work.
118. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Progress is better at the end of Key Stage 1 than at the beginning. This is because there is not enough classroom support early in the key stage to help with a large class containing several demanding pupils. This is also the case early in Key Stage 2 where progress falters as a result of lack of a regular support assistant. Progress is very good later in Key Stage 2 as a result of very good teaching and high pupil motivation. The emphasis on use of investigative principles throughout the school has a positive impact on progress by bringing science 'alive'. In lessons seen, there is little difference between the progress of boys and girls in either key stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in both key stages. Higher-attaining pupils are also well supported with special learning materials designed to challenge them.
119. The pupils' attitudes to science are good in both key stages. They are well motivated and show an active interest in the subject. Pupils particularly enjoy practical investigations. Pupils use equipment sensibly and safely and return items to their proper place after they have finished using them. Pupils work well together as they conduct experiments and write up their conclusions. There was no unsatisfactory behaviour in any of the lessons seen during the inspection, although several pupils in two classes needed firm handling by the teacher. Most pupils, however, work well for extended periods without the teacher having to intervene. Pupils make increasingly good use of information and control technology in lessons.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 but with some very good teaching evident in Year 2. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall with very good teaching observed in Year 4 and Year 6. Where teaching is very good, enthusiastic teaching, which provides very clear direction and purpose, fires pupils' imaginations. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, very good teaching about living things extended to a consideration of moral and spiritual aspects. In this way, the teacher skilfully linked science to other parts of the curriculum. Teachers have an effective grasp of the subject and successfully engage the attention of the whole ability range within classes through good use of questions, and work that matches the different needs of pupils. There is good planning of lessons based on a detailed syllabus that has been improved over time. Most teachers manage pupils well. They use space effectively and have a range of resources to make teaching interesting. Pupils' work is thoughtfully assessed and teachers use the results of assessment effectively to target future learning. Homework is well used to reinforce work done in class.

121. The science curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator provides useful help and support for colleagues, and successfully monitors the quality of teaching and learning continually to improve standards. The co-ordinator has also produced a useful action plan that targets aspects for improvements in the next school year. The amount of time allocated to science slightly exceeds the national average and provides added flexibility that has an advantageous effect on standards. The internal accommodation is cramped but is well used by staff. Attractive displays effectively celebrate pupils' work and help produce a positive learning ethos.

125.
COURSES

Information and Communication

125.
Technology

122. Attainment is satisfactory at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use information and communication technology confidently to input text and symbols. They are conversant with many of the computer keyboard facilities such as delete, backspace and enter, and use the mouse with confidence. Higher-attaining pupils use keyboard punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops, and some pupils understand how to save their files to the hard drive for later retrieval. Pupils decorate their text by downloading attractive clip art, and pupils in Year 2 are beginning to use coloured fonts to improve the quality of their presentation. Year 2 pupils also control the movements of an electronic floor turtle by sequencing sets of instructions. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils modify text on the screen by using different fonts and incorporate graphics and pictures. Pupils create pie charts and graphs, which they use to analyse information. Year 3 pupils, for instance, create accurate block graphs to determine what proportion of pupils eat different kinds of fruit at dinnertime. Pupils use special software packages such as "Around the World in Eighty Days" to simulate imaginary situations. In doing this they alter variables to answer the question, "What would happen if...?" Use of mathematics programs requires pupils to compete against one another in pairs with questions that are specially programmed for the different levels of ability. There is effective use of CD-ROM to discover facts in geography, history and religious education topic work. For instance, pupils in Year 4 use the Encarta Encyclopaedia CD-ROM to research facts about Tudor life. Pupils control external events by inputting instructions to a computer to control electronic circuitry. Whilst lack of suitable equipment prevents pupils scanning documents or accessing the Internet, further use of more advanced applications is planned as the budget allows.
123. Progress is satisfactory in both key stages and is set to improve rapidly following the recent purchase of new industry-standard machines and software. Much of the teaching of information and communication technology is done through cross-curricular links. Consequently, progress in the use of information and communication technology is regularly and effectively reinforced across subject areas. There is no difference between the progress of boys or girls since teachers ensure that there is equal access to computers and available software. Pupils who have special educational needs are given suitable help when using computers and therefore make satisfactory progress. There is no difference between the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
124. The pupils' response to using information and communication technology is good. When sharing a computer, pupils co-operate well and will discuss how to achieve the desired results. Pupils take good care of equipment, listen attentively when being instructed in the use of computers and are genuinely enthusiastic when given the opportunity to use them. Pupils increasingly develop good independent study skills using computers for research. Pupils who have computers at home regularly use them to research facts for homework.
125. Very little direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection and so it is not possible to grade the quality of teaching accurately. Nevertheless, whilst information and communication technology is not taught as a discrete subject, all teachers ensure that there are regular opportunities to use computers in other subjects and plan for all pupils to have regular access to machines. Teachers are increasingly confident users of computers as a result of attending courses and through borrowing machines during the holidays in order to teach themselves at home. This "have a go" culture has a positive impact on standards throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively using nationally produced materials that ensure good coverage of the National Curriculum. Available computers are well used and are not left idle in classrooms. Teachers are aware of available software, which they make good use of to develop a range of skills.
126. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The latest government scheme of work has been adopted and this is providing additional incentives for pupils and teachers. There is good use of time to ensure all pupils have regular access to computers and this has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Each class has

at least one modern computer and most classes retain use of at least one other machine. Pupils' work is increasingly accurately assessed and their progress effectively recorded. Innovative developments include planning for family surgeries in computer skills in the near future. Only recently, the school worked with Sandwell Business Partnership to produce a page in the format of a local newspaper. This was great fun and 'brought alive' the commercial applications of media technology.

Art

127. At the previous inspection, pupils' attainment was satisfactory. Since then there has been further improvement. The quality of artwork around the school is good. It enhances the surroundings and successfully celebrates pupils' achievements. Art, and the way it is displayed, makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. It also makes an effective contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils develop a good subject vocabulary as they work and when they talk about the displays. A comprehensive list of art words that teachers use when describing works of art successfully encourages pupils to use a more expansive language.
128. Although it was not possible to observe a Key Stage 1 art lesson, work on display is of sound quality and shows valuable links with other curriculum areas. Detailed observational drawing of a plant supports their work in science, there are large collages of stories to support English, and work on patterns links successfully with mathematics.
129. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and is good in Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2 as a result of very good teaching that grips pupils' imagination. As a result, Year 6 pupils produce some very attractive work and are knowledgeable about artists and their work. Very good work by Year 5 pupils includes cutting a window in a commercial picture and then drawing and colouring in the space to complete it again. This requires detailed observational line drawing skills and thoughtful colour matching.
130. Pupils' attitudes in art lessons are good. They enjoy lessons, listen very well to teachers' introductions, use visual aids sensibly and try very hard to achieve good standards. From an early age, they use sketchbooks effectively to record their observations and to try out new ideas. Prints of work by artists are examined carefully by the pupils for content, style and techniques, which the pupils enjoy trying to reproduce. During the inspection, pupils were particularly interested in the work of Henri Rousseau. Generally, pupils are well behaved in lessons. They take pride in their work and enjoy the success of other pupils. They offer positive criticism and assessment of their own work.
131. No teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 and it is not therefore possible to provide a judgement. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2 and often very good. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher's expectations were over ambitious for a class containing a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan well, making sure all materials are readily available, and use language well in their introductions. In a very good lesson, the teacher's descriptive language, and her use of discussion as a teaching tool, excited and motivated the pupils to try very hard. They became so involved that they were reluctant to stop drawing. Teachers challenge pupils in all art lessons, and pupils with special educational needs are generally integrated well and involved.
132. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There has been some monitoring of provision and teachers receive advice on how to improve lessons. Pupils are encouraged to assess the work of artists, their own work and the work of other pupils. This technique is used in the school to improve pupils' own work. Homework is set to support the pupils' work in school and pupils are encouraged to find out about artists' lives, their style of work and the media they use. The school policy document is informative and useful. School resources are listed and are adequate. Useful support materials include a comprehensive list of questions for teachers to use with pupils when looking at paintings by famous artists.

133. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages. The school has improved on the satisfactory standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils comply well with the requirements of the National Curriculum by designing, making and evaluating products at both key stages. Pupils make accurate records of what they have done and use these to evaluate effectively the products made.

134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils effectively design and make a range of products. Some of the youngest pupils bake their own bread. Before doing this, they carefully plan what they are going to do so that the loaves will look attractive and be nutritious. By the end of Year 2, pupils design and make vehicles with moving parts that will carry small loads. They thoughtfully evaluate the success of these by testing them in use. In doing this, pupils understand that careful forethought is necessary if products are to be fit for their purpose. Pupils make good progress in their cutting, folding and sticking skills. They adapt their designs in response to suggestions and improve their work as a result of their own evaluations. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils design and construct bridges. In doing this, pupils accurately perform measured tests to determine the weight-bearing tolerance of structures and adjust the overall design through using strengthening cross beams and struts. As they design and make slippers, pupils bear in mind the purpose and commercial attractiveness of the final product. They evaluate how well the slippers have been made and cautiously assess commodity considerations such as age-related styles and fashions. Pupils use accurate vocabulary for naming and describing the equipment, materials and components used.

135. Pupils in both key stages respond well in lessons. They listen attentively to teachers and settle sensibly to practical activities involving designing and making. Pupils work collaboratively, often discussing group projects in a mature manner. They use equipment safely and sensibly and return items to their proper place when they have finished using them. Pupils persevere well with tasks that are difficult.

136. Insufficient class teaching was seen to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in either key stage. However, displays of work, photographic evidence and conversations with pupils and teachers indicate that teachers have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs, who are given additional support and encouragement. They plan thoughtfully for lessons, ensuring they have the necessary materials and guidance sheets. Teachers use available equipment effectively and ensure that the limited space is well used so that pupils have sufficient room in which to design and make their products. Teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils so that they understand how to improve their designs and products.

137. The co-ordination of design and technology is good. The co-ordinator provides helpful guidance to colleagues and monitors standards of work in order to ensure consistency of approach across classes. The newly introduced scheme that has been nationally approved is having a positive impact on standards. Whilst there is no whole-school assessment strategy for design and technology, individual teachers provide constructive verbal and written comments which help pupils to improve. The new scheme contains useful assessment guidelines that will improve consistency of approach across the school.

141. **Geography**

138. Few lessons were seen during the inspection, and judgements take into account discussions with pupils and teachers, and the scrutiny of previous work. During Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 successfully learn terms to describe features around the school and the local area. They study homes in the locality and plan a journey for a favourite book character. In Year 2, pupils accurately plot some physical features on basic maps using symbols. They use photographs to help draw their own map of a small island, and thoughtfully consider the types of transport used by people who live there. They draw comparisons and contrasts between life on an island in Scotland, and in the city of Birmingham. They make satisfactory progress in their mapping skills, and when learning about their immediate surroundings.

139. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their enquiry skills when learning about different places, patterns and processes, and environmental issues. In Year 4 pupils understand about conditions in a developing country by studying

a village in India. They appreciate why settlements develop in different locations, and contrast climate, homes, jobs, and agriculture to life in Britain. Year 6 pupils study the Amazon rainforest, successfully exploring a range of environmental issues. For instance, they take into account the culture of rainforest people, ecosystems in the forests, and the global effects of burning large areas to cultivate land. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own research skills, and to understand the interests and points of view of different groups. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.

140. Pupils enjoy geography, and sustain interest and concentration in lessons. They work well and co-operatively, and show a good degree of concern for environmental issues. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils responded well to different research tasks in pairs, mostly using photographic evidence, and confidently reported back their findings to the class. Their learning was supported by an excellent display on the rainforest, which stimulated interest in other subject areas. Teaching is sound throughout the school, but older pupils are insufficiently encouraged to develop independent studies and extend work recorded in class by further homework tasks.

141. Geography is taught through a series of established topics, within which teachers plan a suitable range of tasks and activities. The curriculum provides for a suitable progression of geographical skills, with the emphasis on enquiry. There are sound links with other subjects, such as science and history, and information and communication technology resources have improved. Visits to places of interest are used effectively to support and reinforce learning.

145.

145. **History**

142. Few lessons were observed during the inspection, and judgements take into account interviews with pupils and teachers, and the scrutiny of work. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

143. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop language related to the passing of time by finding out about different types of homes, and comparing old and modern homes. They visit a castle, look for evidence about the people who lived there, and consider what their lives were like. By the end of Year 2, pupils successfully identify famous people from the past and present, and learn about how they became famous. They infer information from photographs, recognising similarities and differences to life today. They recall and recount some main events in the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale.

144. In Key Stage 2, pupils begin to understand that history can be divided into periods of time. They know the names of invaders and settlers, and compare and contrast Roman and Saxon homes. Pupils study the Tudors and visit Oak House to look for evidence of people's lives, and use role play to learn about costumes and customs. They learn about the causes and effects of Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church. Year 6 pupils study topics on the Victorians, and Britain since 1930.

145. Pupils are keen to learn about past events, and show positive attitudes in lessons. They respond well to questions, and are able to share knowledge and research facts well and co-operatively. The recording and written work is often slow. Completed topic files often do not reflect the knowledge and understanding gained during a topic. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to research characters, consider different issues, and report back to other groups. In the Britain since 1930 topic, Year 6 pupils recorded some high-quality interviews with relatives about their war-time experiences. Overall, teaching in history is sound throughout the school.

146. The history curriculum covers a satisfactory range of topics and sound progression of enquiry skills. It is supported by a planned series of visits to places of historical interest. The school has continued to develop its own topic resources, and attractive displays of artefacts, pictures, and pupils' work are used throughout the school to enhance and extend pupils' learning.

Music

147. Progress in both key stages is satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, no music was seen at Key Stage 1 but the overall provision and standards in that key stage were unsatisfactory; there were insufficient instruments, and teachers' musical confidence was low. Standards of work in Key Stage 1 have now improved with the purchase of a large number of musical instruments and the appointment of a music specialist who is well placed to monitor provision and provide advice to colleagues. Very beneficial help from the Local Education Authority advisory service has also contributed to rapid improvements. Attainment at Key Stage 2 remains satisfactory.

148. Pupils begin to sing along with the teacher as soon as they enter the Reception class. In doing this they increase their English vocabulary and social skills as well as their musical awareness. Satisfactory progress is maintained across Key Stage 1, although the young pupils in Year 1 who attend the whole-school weekly hymn singing practice are over-challenged. Nevertheless, they extend their listening skills and learn to sing from memory. In Key Stage 1, careful use of selected taped material fosters pupils' sense of rhythm whilst introducing them to new songs. They learn the names of instruments and successfully accompany their singing. Progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2. A particularly challenging Year 6 lesson, based on sounds in the rainforest, was very successful. All the groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, showed a good understanding of how to compose music that reflected the subject. The pupils worked profitably in groups and confidently described what their compositions represented before playing them. During the summer, pupils in the school choir worked together to compose a lively Millennium Song, which they recorded and entered in a competition. As a result of this, the music curriculum will be enriched for all pupils later this year by the visit of a composer.

149. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They listen well to recorded music played at the beginning and end of each assembly, and sing and play enthusiastically in class lessons. Pupils receiving violin and woodwind tuition are very committed. Pupils become very involved in their music lessons, offer ideas and try hard. Pupils with special educational needs take part in all lessons and enjoy them. Behaviour is good and pupils often show enjoyment and pleasure.

150. Music teaching across the school is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching of music is being helped by a new scheme of work, which is being fully implemented for the first time this term. Many new resources have been bought for the scheme; these are well used by teachers for encouraging pupils to accompany their own singing and to make their own compositions. Teachers plan their lessons well with tape recorders, songbooks and instruments on hand. Discipline is firm and kindly and the pupils' interest is kept alive. One teacher fascinated the pupils by humming the 'Jupiter' tune from Holst's 'Planet Suite'. One effective whole-class lesson with every pupil playing a recorder was particularly ambitious. Well-rehearsed recorder playing and singing by the choir is included in school Masses.

151. During the past year the school has successfully increased pupils' understanding and pleasure in music by taking part in a Music and Dance evening for parents, by seeing a live musical production and by listening to the Sandwell Woodwind Ensemble, which came to the school. Early in the year, music teaching and planning in the school was effectively monitored and feedback given to teachers. Assessment is now being successfully linked to the new scheme of work.

155. **Physical Education**

152. Pupils make good progress in physical education at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils successfully make and hold different body shapes in gymnastics lessons, and are expressive in a range of movements. They show increasingly good variety and control of movement. Year 4 pupils learn to swim, using facilities at a local pool. They are also taught fitness routines and develop good football skills in games lessons. Year 6 pupils accurately perform a sequence of rolls and balances in gymnastics. They gain confidence through instruction during lessons, and work effectively in pairs to develop balance sequences. Year 6 pupils build on earlier experiences to develop a good range of football skills, and gain confidence in practice routines and small games. Outdoor and adventurous activities are successfully developed as part of Year 6 visits to Alton Castle and to the Frank Chapman Centre. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully and make good progress. Older pupils have a good range of sporting clubs, including athletics, cricket, football and netball. Year 4 pupil developed effective dance skills to perform in a joint schools' production. The

school also successfully participates in local cricket, cross-country, football and netball competitions.

153. Pupils have very positive attitudes to physical education. They enjoy lessons and come appropriately dressed and ready to start. They follow instructions promptly and safely. They behave sensibly in lessons. Pupils support each other well in pair and group work, and show enthusiasm and fair play when competing.

154. In the few lessons observed, teaching was good. Effective warm-up sessions began the lessons. Pupils learn and improve techniques when teachers use clear demonstrations for them to model, and they make individual suggestions to encourage improvements. Teachers use praise to reward effectively, and give pupils opportunities to show their skills or routines to the class. A sports coach supports teaching effectively in many Key Stage 2 lessons.

155. The school has developed a long-term plan for physical education to ensure systematic coverage of the different elements of the subject, and the progressive development of skills. The programme is linked to developing strength and fitness. It includes the use of incentive schemes, such as the '10-step award' in athletics, to encourage individual targets. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the range and quality of its resources for dance, games and gymnastics. Good use is made of indoor accommodation and the hard play and field areas are well used for games. Year 6 pupils are given the responsibility for organising the school sports afternoon in the summer.

159. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

159. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

156. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a total of 14 inspection days in school. A total of 59.5 hours was spent observing lessons, talking with pupils, scrutinising their past and present work and hearing them read. In addition, the following contributed to the preparation of this report:

- The inspection of extra curricular activities;
- Discussions with pupils, the headteacher, staff, parents and governors;
- The inspection of the school development plan and policy documents;
- The inspection of attendance registers and budget figures;
- The inspection of teachers' planning;
- The inspection of pupils' progress and reports for parents
- The inspection of collective acts of worship
- An analysis of parents' responses on the 75 returned questionnaires

Before the inspection, the lead inspector held a meeting attended by eight parents and examined the questionnaires sent in by 75 parents.

161. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

161. **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	230	0	52	9

161. **Teachers and classes**

161. **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26

161. **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	51.5

161. **Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	Not applicable
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	Not applicable

161. **Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of education support staff:	Not applicable
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	Not applicable

Average class size:	33
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161. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998
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	£
Total Income	338976
Total Expenditure	343192
Expenditure per pupil	1505.23
Balance brought forward from previous year	12908
Balance carried forward to next year	8692

161. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:
 Number of questionnaires returned:

338
75

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	51	47	1	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	43	51	3	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	27	47	19	3	4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	35	57	1	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	35	48	9	8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	43	53	3	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	44	9	8	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	39	40	7	13	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	55	41	4	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	49	47	3	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	56	36	1	3	1

161. **Other issues raised by parents**

A small minority of parents said they would like the school to encourage pupils to participate in more than just their daily lessons. Inspectors found that provision for extra-curricular activity is good. Many pupils benefit from music tuition and a wide range of clubs that include sports, choir, French and a homework club. There are regular visits to places of educational interest, particularly to support work in history and geography. Year 3 and Year 6 pupils attend residential retreat visits to Alton Castle. Visitors are regularly invited into school to share their skills and expertise, and help to broaden the curriculum and pupils' experiences. Those parents who feel there is too much homework equally balance those who feel there is not enough. Inspectors feel that the school has got the balance right. Teachers use homework effectively both to extend what is being done in class and to promote independent learning.

Some parents felt that higher-attaining pupils could be stretched more. Inspectors found that there is satisfactory challenge for higher attainers with class teachers setting work that is specially planned for them. In some lessons, such as English and mathematics, pupils compete with others in their group of compatible ability, whilst in other more practical lessons, such as design and technology and music, mixed-ability groupings provide opportunities for higher attaining pupils to provide leadership.