

INSPECTION REPORT

Ashwood Park Primary School
Stourbridge

LEA area: Dudley

Unique Reference Number: 103818

Headteacher: Mr T. Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs O.M.Cooper
IRN: 10859

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706687

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:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bells Lane Wordsley Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 5DJ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs I. Lester
Date of previous inspection:	21 – 24 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs O.M.Cooper, Registered Inspector	Science Art	Attainment and progress Teaching
Mr S. Hussain, Lay Inspector		Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Ms W. Crouch, Team Inspector	English Under fives Equal opportunities	
Mr J. Porteous, Team Inspector	Information technology History	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs C. Cressey, Team Inspector	Design and technology Music	The efficiency of the school
Mrs A Heakin, Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography	Curriculum and assessment
Rev. E. Milroy, Team Inspector	Special educational needs Religious Education Physical education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Relationships in the school are excellent, both between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and have a positive impact on their progress.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Standards in science and information technology are above average by the age of eleven.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and promotes pupils' progress in many lessons.
- The partnership with parents and the community is very good.
- The inclusion of deaf pupils in all lessons is very good and beneficial to the personal development of all pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

- In pupils' attainment in aspects of reading and writing, particularly spelling, the use of punctuation and locating information.
- In teachers' expectations of what pupils in Key Stage 1 can attain overall, and in expectations in English at both key stages.
- In the opportunities offered to children under five to choose from a range of activities.

The strengths of the school far outweigh the weaknesses, which will form the basis of the governors' action plan, a copy of which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The action taken in response to the key issues contained in the last report has been successful in overcoming most of the weaknesses identified. Whole school schemes of work have been successfully implemented for the non core subjects which clearly identify the key learning objectives for each subject and which provide good support for teachers' medium term planning. This has been most successful.

There has been some improvement in raising teachers' expectations of more able pupils, but there is still further work to be done in raising teachers' expectations of what most pupils can achieve in reading and writing.

Appropriate steps have been taken to improve the security of the buildings and further work is to be undertaken shortly to fit security gates to the main entrance. Sound proofing has significantly improved the acoustics in the resource base for the deaf.

The school has put a great deal of time and effort into implementing agreed, detailed procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and the teachers are making satisfactory use of the information they collect when planning their lessons. The procedures are currently too time consuming and unmanageable and there are plans to reduce the workload. However, it was necessary to go through the process to be able to determine what can be taken out and what needs to be left in.

The use of educational resources is now satisfactory, although there is some over use of photocopied material, especially at Key Stage 1 and this is leading to a lack of interest and enthusiasm in some lessons.

The roles of members of the senior management team have been changed and are now satisfactory. Both key stage coordinators have responsibility for a class of pupils and lead by example. The deputy headteacher does not have responsibility for a class of pupils, but teaches classes to release other colleagues to check on what is happening in classrooms and the progress being made by pupils.

There has also been improvement in the quality of teaching as a result of classroom observations; virtually all lessons seen were at least satisfactory.

Parental involvement in the life and work of the school has also improved, mainly through the implementation of the home/school agreement.

The school is well placed to make further improvement in the future.

· **Standards in subjects**

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

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

This information shows that the school's results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average and the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

Inspection findings confirm standards in English and mathematics are in line with national averages and find standards in science to be above the national average. In information technology, standards are above average and have been sustained since the previous inspection. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils aged eleven.

At the end of Key Stage 1, inspection findings show standards in English, mathematics and science are close to the national average. In information technology, standards are higher and are above average. In religious education they are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

· Standards at the end of the under fives phase are above those expected for the age of the children in personal and social and physical development. In language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development standards are in line with those expected for the age of the children.

· **Quality of teaching**

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

The overall good quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 99% of lessons. Just over half the lessons (56%) are good and this includes 12% which are very good, and on occasion excellent. The overall quality of teaching is better at Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 where photocopied worksheets are used in many lessons. The teaching for children under five is better in the nursery

than in reception. The very good quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is often in non-core subjects. There is unsatisfactory teaching in the remaining 1% of lessons.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good at all times. The school is a very friendly and orderly community.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance rates are close to the national average. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.
Ethos*	There is an ethos of mutual respect, care and concern, which is conducive for learning. Attitudes to work are very good and relationships excellent. There is a commitment to striving for higher standards in English and mathematics.
Leadership and management	Good: The headteacher and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have effective strategies for school improvement. The senior management team and most curriculum leaders ably support the headteacher and carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and includes all National Curriculum subjects, religious education and areas of learning for children under five. It complies fully with statutory requirements. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and visits.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good support from the teachers and classroom assistants and make satisfactory progress towards their targets.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall; provision for social development is outstanding and has a positive impact on pupils' progress in lessons.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There are enough teachers for class sizes to be below thirty; and a very good number of support staff. There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils, but some classrooms are cramped. There are adequate resources for learning with the exception of the quantity and range of books in the Key Stage 2 library.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- The school achieves a high standard of behaviour.
- Standards of work are high.
- The teaching and non-teaching staff are approachable.
- Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school.
- The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on the children.
- Parents are well informed about what is to be taught each term.
- Parents feel well informed about their child's progress.
- The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is beneficial to all pupils.

What some parents are not happy about

The parents' questionnaires show that most parents are very happy with all aspects of the school and with no parents disagreeing strongly with any of the statements. Inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views of the school, although standards in English and mathematics could be higher.

A small number of parents feel that pupils have too much homework. Inspectors judge that the homework policy is appropriate for the pupils' ages. Whilst no homework was set in lessons observed during the inspection, pupils reported that they do have homework regularly and the amount and range of work set is in line with that found in most primary schools.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise and sustain the standards in the school, the headteacher and governors should:

1. Raise pupils' attainment in reading and writing at both key stages by:-

- encouraging greater fluency in reading;
- placing more emphasis on developing the skills of inference and deduction and locating information on pages in books;
- extending the range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books available at Key Stage 2;
- placing greater emphasis on the correct use of punctuation and spelling when writing, not only in English, but in other subjects too;

Discussed in paragraphs 7, 12, 89 - 96

1. Increase the proportion of good and very good teaching at Key Stage 1 by:-

- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of attaining;
- increasing the pace in lessons;
- avoiding the over use of photocopied worksheets and reliance on commercial schemes;
- planning and carrying out more interesting and exciting activities for pupils.

Discussed in paragraphs 25, 28, 93, 100, 106, 118.

1. Improve the balance between free choice and adult directed activities for children under five to provide a smooth transition from nursery to Key Stage 1 by:-

- providing more opportunities for children to choose from a range of activities and make decisions;
- planning play activities with a purpose and which build on the skills developed in the nursery;
- planning and carrying out activities which promote the children's creativity.

Discussed in paragraphs 76 – 88.

In addition to the key issues, consideration should be given to including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- More rigorous checking of termly planning for full content completion and sufficient detail about tasks to be set at different levels so that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged;

Discussed in paragraph 33, 59

- Improving the quality of marking by checking adherence to the school's marking policy;

Discussed in paragraphs 26, 36.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Ashwood Park Primary School is situated in Wordsley on the western edge of the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley and is set in its own attractive grounds. It is a large, popular school, which serves the surrounding area of mixed housing. The small majority of pupils live in local authority or housing association properties, the remainder in privately owned houses. A small number of pupils travel some distance to attend the school through parental choice. The school consists of two separate buildings, one housing the nursery and Key Stage 1 classes and the other Key Stage 2 classes.

1 There are currently 354 pupils on roll in the main school with slightly more girls than boys. A further 59 children attend the nursery, with all except one attending part-time for morning or afternoon sessions. Nearly all the pupils are of white European heritage. The school has a designated unit for 21 deaf children and most of these pupils use sign language. A very small number of pupils have Hindi as their first language. There are 2 admission dates to the reception classes in September and January of each academic year. Overall attainment on entry is broadly average, but varies noticeably from year to year.

2 Just over one fifth of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils having formal statements of their needs is above the national average due to the resource base for the deaf. Most pupils receiving support for their special educational needs are deaf or have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.

3 The school aims to provide an education suited to the needs of each child by creating a happy, stable environment where pupils develop positive attitudes, independence, confidence and self-discipline. The school aims to ensure that each individual leaves having worked fully to their capabilities, having confidence in themselves and eager to continue with their education. The priorities for development in the school in recent years have focused on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, along with information technology. The school has targets in English and mathematics to the year 2002.

4

4 **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	23	32	55

4 National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils	Boys	13	12	20
At NC Level 2 or Above	Girls	22	24	26
	Total	35	36	46
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (67)	91(69)	89 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	84 (85)

4 Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	14	18	17
At NC Level 2 or Above	Girls	25	27	25
	Total	39	45	42
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (75)	83 (87)	78 (81)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	22	21	43

4 National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	13	14	16
At NC Level 4 or Above	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	31	30	34
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	72 (74)	70 (70)	79 (80)
	National	70 (65)	59 (58)	78 (69)

4 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
At NC Level 4 or Above	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	34	33	36
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	79(70)	77(76)	84(70)
	National	67(65)	69(65)	75(72)

4 Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete Reporting year:	Authorised	School	5.6
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

4

4 Exclusions

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

4 Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	12
	Satisfactory or better	99
	Less than satisfactory	1

.....
2

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

4 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

4 Attainment and progress

4Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average, although there is a wide variation in children's abilities. Progress is good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception; and the large majority of children attain above average standards in personal and social education and physical development by the time they are five. In language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, most children attain average standards by the time they enter compulsory education at five years of age. Progress is better in the nursery due to good quality of teaching. The school has introduced a pre-school education programme for nursery children in the last year to promote the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. This is having a positive impact on attainment on entry to compulsory education and is lifting attainment slightly above the average for the Local Education Authority.

5Attainment at the end of both key stages fluctuates from year to year due to the varying abilities of each year group, the number of pupils in the year and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In some year groups there is a higher turnover of pupils due to the transient nature of families in housing association properties. There has already been a 20% turnover in the pupils in Year 2 since they started school, with a noticeable difference in attainment levels due to the majority being admitted having special educational needs. This makes it difficult for the school to set accurate targets for year groups by the end of key stages. The school exceeded its targets set for the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics in 1999 and is on course to achieve its target of 74% of pupils reaching the expected level or above in English and 64% in mathematics in 2000.

6Overall standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained close to, but slightly below the national average in recent years, with annual fluctuations for the reasons given above. In 1998, pupils' attainment in the national tests in reading was below the national average and well below that of similar schools. In 1999, overall attainment in reading rose in line with the national average for pupils reaching the expected level and was well above average for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. When compared to similar schools these results were average. The school's results in writing tests in 1998 were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. There was a significant improvement in 1999 when the results were above the national average and the average for similar schools, although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was below the average for similar schools. The results in the spelling test in 1999 did not show the same improvement as in reading and writing and remained below average. In mathematics, the results of national tests in 1998 and 1999 show pupils' attainment to be broadly average, both in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show standards were well below the national average and the average for similar schools in 1998 and 1999. A thorough scrutiny of pupils' work revealed insufficient time was being devoted to teaching science and this was leading to a superficial coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study and hindering the progress of all pupils. This has been rectified and inspection findings show improvement with standards close to the national average. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in science.

7 Taking the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together, overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have also remained close to, but slightly above, the national average in the last three years, but with similar fluctuations. In the national tests in 1998 and 1999, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was close to the national average and the average for similar schools. In science whilst overall attainment was in line with the national average, it was below the average for similar schools in 1998, but improved to be in line with the average in 1999. Evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and lesson observations, confirms that attainment in English and mathematics is close to the average at the end of both key stages. In science, attainment is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2 as a result of the good progress made by pupils over the key stage.

8 Bearing in mind the average attainment on entry to compulsory schooling, the broadly average attainment in English, mathematics and above average attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2, along with the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need, overall progress is judged to be satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 where there is very good progress in several subjects. In the remaining core subjects of information technology and religious education, progress is good in information technology in which attainment is above average at the end of both key stages; the high standards in this subject have been sustained since the previous inspection. In religious education, progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils aged seven. There is evidence of improving standards in Key Stage 2 as a result of the good quality of teaching, but it will take a little longer for this to impact fully on pupils' attainment. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Although other subjects are no longer statutory elements of the National Curriculum the school includes them as part of a rich curriculum. Progress in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, progress is good in art and design and technology, is very good in music and physical education and is satisfactory in geography and history. The very good progress for many pupils in music and physical education is partly due to the good teaching by specialist teachers and the wide range of good quality extra-curricular activities provided and in which many participate. The difference in the rate of progress in English is due to some lack of confidence in teaching literacy hours.

9 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. These are mostly based on the development of language skills. There is a very good number of support teachers and assistants for the deaf pupils and this is beneficial to their progress. There is one teacher working part-time to support other pupils on the special educational needs register. A small number of pupils who do not have English as their first language are appropriately supported by class teachers and they make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in literacy hours and this hinders their progress.

10 The National Literacy Strategy has been phased into the curriculum satisfactorily, but teachers are not confident in their teaching of it. The pupils say they like it and find it more interesting than previous work in English. The literacy hours are beginning to consolidate and reinforce the pupils' understanding and use of literacy skills but teachers have low expectations of pupils' work and achievable standards. Inspection findings show attainment in reading is currently average at the end of both key stages, although there are fluctuations between year groups. At Key Stage 1 pupils read from a commercial reading scheme which restricts the range of their reading. They develop understanding of letter sounds which they use when attempting to read unfamiliar words. By the end of the key stage pupils have an appropriate range of skills to read unknown words, although they sometimes need prompting to use them. Pupils have a sound understanding of what they read but the reading material is undemanding on comprehension. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read with understanding and some expression. They can locate books in the library to support research work. However, the range of literature experienced is not as wide as it could be and pupils throughout the key stage were giving the same author as their favourite. The range of books, both fiction and non-fiction is insufficient for pupils to develop fully their skills in reading. There is some weakness in pupils' ability to locate key facts on pages of information.

Progress for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language is satisfactory, but higher attaining pupils are capable of making better progress in English and mathematics. The school has identified this weakness which is included in the latest school development plan.

11 In writing, inspection findings show pupils' attainment is average at the end of both key stages and progress is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities. The pupils at Key Stage 1 develop their ideas when writing sentences and most are beginning to use basic punctuation with some degree of accuracy. Spelling is phonetic at this stage, but spellings learned are linked to the commercial reading scheme rather than to the most frequently used words. Dictionaries are not used as often as they should be at Key Stage 1 to check and seek out words. Writing skills continue to develop satisfactorily at Key Stage 2, although pupils' use of punctuation and spelling is more accurate in written exercises than in other written tasks. There is insufficient reinforcement of skills learned previously and in consolidating spelling patterns when writing, not only in English, but in other subjects. There are, therefore, weaknesses in spelling at both key stages. Handwriting is joined towards the end of Key Stage 1 and is not always as tidy as it should be at Key Stage 2. Skills in speaking and listening develop satisfactorily as pupils mature. The youngest children communicate effectively with each other during role-play and listen attentively to their teachers and other adults. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority can express their thoughts and ideas clearly and join in question and answer sessions. By the time the pupils leave the school they are confident speakers and are able to express opinions in a mature manner. Progress in developing speaking and listening skills is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively to support their work in other subjects such as history and geography.

12 The pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills throughout the curriculum at both key stages. There is now a stronger emphasis on developing mental skills since the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and pupils are making good use of their increasing ability to apply different strategies to solve a problem. In a significant number of lessons, there is a heavy reliance on worksheets and text books which do not always have the most appropriate activities for the pupils and hinder the rate of progress for higher attaining pupils as there is colouring in for part of the lesson. It was pleasing to see pupils transferring numeracy skills across the curriculum in subjects such as science and design and technology. There is increasing use of information technology to support the development of skills in numeracy and this is a good feature of mathematics. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress.

13 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The school has successfully maintained this aspect since the last inspection. Pupils co-operate very well with teachers and are eager to please them. They show high levels of interest and enjoyment in their work, particularly at Key Stage 2 and apply themselves well to tasks. They take pride in their work and achievements. Most pupils play a very active part in lessons. They are keen to answer questions put to the whole class. A good example of this was seen in music where Year 6 pupils answered questions very enthusiastically about chords and musical notes. Pupils listen well and are able to concentrate for sustained periods. The under-fives are developing positive habits in their learning. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. The under-fives show very good attitudes to learning, they listen attentively and behave very well. They share role-play areas and equipment with good consideration for each other and generally play and work very well together. The attitudes of hearing pupils to those who are deaf are a strength of the school, with many pupils learning to sign so that they are able to communicate with their deaf friends and help them if necessary.

14 Behaviour is very good. This makes a considerable contribution to pupils' progress in lessons. Behaviour has improved from the good standard found at the last inspection. The school is a very friendly and orderly community. Pupils behave consistently very well in classrooms and in and around school. The pupils are courteous and well mannered. They show respect for staff and visiting adults. Pupils are well aware of the school's code of conduct. They respond very well to the high expectations of behaviour set by staff. Staff take the view that exclusion should only be used as a last resort, if all else fails. There have been no exclusions for unacceptable behaviour in the last three years.

15 Relationships are outstanding. Pupils relate very well to each other, showing respect for others' feelings, values and contributions in lessons. They show excellent manners in their dealings with each other outside of lessons, for example at play and lunchtimes. The staff positively encourage pupils to think of, and care for others. Pupils work exceptionally well collaboratively. For example, Year 5 pupils were seen to do warm up and dance routines in pairs and small groups effectively, during an Indian Bangra dance session. There are very warm relationships between deaf pupils and others. This is strongly evident throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are also outstanding. Pupils respect staff, have confidence in them and talk about their worries and concerns with them. The school has successfully maintained the excellent relationships found at the last inspection.

16 The pupils at this school are trustworthy and care for property. They respect their own property and that of others. Pupils view litter-picking duty as being important. They take pride in the litter free environment of the school. Pupils share equipment and resources sensibly in lessons.

17 Personal development is good. This makes a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Most pupils are able to express themselves confidently and well. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and conscientiously. This was a notable feature at the last inspection that is still evident. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility including caring for younger pupils, answering the telephone at lunchtime, library and register monitor duties. Pupils are also given responsibilities for starting up computers and this contributes to their growing confidence in using them. The use of information technology in lessons is a strong feature of the school at Key Stage 2, with pupils making good use of computers for independent learning and research. However, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, in discussion with teachers are limited. Pupils use their initiative well in project work. For example, Year 6 pupils recently produced autobiographies making good use of many sources of information.

18 Pupils make a very good contribution to the community. For example, they frequently give performances of plays and sing at a number of events and venues in the community. They also raise large sums of money for charities and good causes. Clearly, pupils care for their community and show concern for those less fortunate than themselves.

19 **Attendance**

19 Attendance is satisfactory. Levels of attendance are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The attendance rate is broadly in line with the national average for this type of school. The school has reduced the level of authorised absence since the last inspection. The little unauthorised absence found at the last inspection has been eliminated. The school works very closely with parents to account for all absence.

20 Registration procedures conform to requirements. Registers are marked twice a day. Pupils are quiet and respond politely during registration and this creates a calm and positive atmosphere that enables teachers to move smoothly on to the beginning of lessons.

22 Punctuality is good in the mornings. During the day, timekeeping is also good, and lessons begin and end on time. Pupils respond positively to staff at the end of break and lunchtime play and come back into school ready to start work promptly.

22 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

22 **Teaching**

21The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection due to classroom observations and resulting guidance given. It has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. In 99% of lessons, teaching is satisfactory or better; it is good in over a half of lessons which includes just over one tenth which are very good and occasionally excellent. The quality of teaching is better at Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and with children under five where it is satisfactory overall, with few examples of very good teaching. There is room for improvement in the proportion of good teaching at Key Stage 1 where it is only evident in three-tenths of lessons as teachers rely heavily on photocopied worksheets. The quality of teaching with children under five is better in the nursery than in the reception class. The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is always satisfactory and often good. The unsatisfactory teaching is in a literacy hour in Key Stage 2, and is due to a lack of knowledge and confidence in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The examples of very good teaching are in mathematics at both key stages and in art, design and technology, music and physical education at Key Stage 2. These very good lessons are characterised by the secure subject knowledge which leads to confident teaching. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils at the beginning, with the criteria for success often written on the board and checked to see if they have been met. This is a good strategy which acts as a reminder to pupils as to why they are undertaking the tasks. Pupils are well organised and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. All pupils are involved in practical activities with a minimum of fuss when collecting resources. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in self-evaluation of their work, which is a particular strength of the teaching at Key Stage 2.

22Most teachers have a sound understanding of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and are competent in teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. The insecurity in understanding of the National Literacy Strategy is reflected in the teaching of English which is satisfactory overall. Some teachers do not include guided reading within literacy hours. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of the other subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and areas of learning for children under five. Individual teachers have very secure knowledge in particular subjects, for example music and physical education and they offer good support to colleagues and teach classes other than their own, and this is effective in helping pupils to make good progress.

23Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and sufficiently high expectations of work with children under five and at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, expectations of what pupils can attain are not high enough and a small number of pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The heavy reliance on commercially produced materials for reading and for recording work contributes to the problem. Pupils spend time colouring in during mathematics lessons and the amount of recording on worksheets is often minimal. Pupils are allowed to produce work which is inaccurate, for example in Year 1 when drawing the small hand of a clock pointing between eight and nine when it is eight o'clock.

24Lessons are satisfactorily prepared in the light of the long and medium term plans which reflect National Curriculum requirements. Lesson plans identify what pupils are expected to learn and this provides a focus for the teaching. The amount of detail in the plans varies from year to year and there is a direct link between the adequacy of detail, particularly in relation to tasks for pupils of differing attainment, in the lesson plans and the quality of teaching. Good plans identify the key learning objectives from the school's schemes of work and link these to the attainment targets and areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers plan together in year groups and this is effective in sharing expertise and

ideas. Classroom support assistants who work with deaf pupils are involved in the planning process which enables them to provide good support in class. Individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs are available in classrooms and are consistently and effectively used. The joint approach to planning for these pupils enables all those who have special educational needs to make satisfactory progress and attain appropriate levels for their ability. Teachers take care to check pupils who do not have English as their first language understand the tasks set for them.

25 All the teachers are competent communicators with most of the pupils in their classes and are well supported by other teachers or classroom assistants who sign for the deaf pupils. Teachers usually use an appropriate vocabulary for pupils' ages and give clear explanations, although in some lessons there is insufficient emphasis on the correct technical terminology, for example in design and technology in Year 3 and Year 5. Very occasionally introductions go on too long before pupils get started on activities, for example in a literacy hour in Year 4. The teaching methods are wide ranging at Key Stage 2 and the organisation of pupils is very good overall. The setting of pupils for mathematics is effective in supporting pupils' progress, as the ability range is narrower. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are encouraged to work independently and make choices and decisions about their work, for example in Year 6 when modifying their designs for landscaped jacket potatoes. The organisation of children under five is good, the staff work well as a team. Throughout the school the management of pupils is good and it is very good at Key Stage 2 where self-discipline is actively encouraged. All adults are successful in identifying examples of good behaviour and bringing them to the attention of others. The times when pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from class are minimal and are carefully planned to make sure that the work done in the classroom is similar to that done in the withdrawal group. Teachers and other adults who work with the deaf children use their skills to enable pupils to be fully included in lessons and to benefit from all the opportunities offered in the classroom. Very good opportunities are provided for deaf pupils to develop language and communication skills through role-play and drama.

26 The use of learning resources has improved at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection and is now good. Resources are used satisfactorily with children under five and at Key Stage 1, but there is a lack of thought and imagination in the use of resources to make some lessons more interesting. The computers are used frequently to support work in many subjects throughout the school. At Key Stage 2, resources are used well, the only exception being in the use of the library. Resources are well organised for ease of access by pupils, for example when making landscaped jacket potatoes in Year 6; pupils collected their ingredients and cooking utensils quickly and safely. There are instances of ineffective use of time through slow pace in lessons in Key Stage 1 which prevents pupils making good progress.

27 Most teachers make appropriate adjustments to their lessons in the light of pupils' answers to questions checking their level of understanding. Written work is marked, but helpful comments, which indicate how pupils can improve upon their work in future, are not written often enough in most classes. Marking often only indicates completion of work or effort. There are good examples of marking and teachers' assessments, for example in a Year 3 class, that indicate what pupils have gained from a lesson but this is not extended to other classes.

28 There is an appropriate homework policy and pupils say they receive homework on a regular basis, although inspectors did not hear any homework being set at the end of lessons. A small number of parents feel pupils have too much homework, but most agree that it contributes to pupils' progress.

29The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is successful in promoting pupils' intellectual, physical and social development and in preparing them for the next stage of their education. The school has successfully achieved the recommendation from the last report that they should establish whole school schemes of work for the non-core subjects, that include skills and concepts that need to be taught and which will help teachers plan more efficiently and effectively. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, and includes sex education, religious education and the areas of learning recommended for children under five. The curriculum places an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and science and the National Literacy Strategy, has been satisfactorily implemented and adapted for the under fives. The school is in the process of introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and this is starting to have a positive effect on the provision for mathematics throughout the school, again including the under fives. The curriculum for under fives links well to the National Curriculum and promotes the attainment of the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five.

30Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There are efficient arrangements for the teaching of sex education and for building awareness of the dangers of misusing drugs. Sex education is taught within the framework that upholds the concept of the family and is addressed within science, religious education and English lessons. The concepts of family and relationships are introduced in the nursery and reception classes and are programmed to continue throughout the key stages. Research opportunities offered in subjects such as geography develop pupils' capacity to work independently and prepare them well for the transition to secondary education.

31There are good policies and schemes of work in use for all subjects and effective planning procedures are in use. Planning for work in English is based on the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and is effective, except for lessons which do not offer sufficient challenge to a small number of higher attaining pupils. The planning for mathematics follows the National Numeracy Strategy which is in the early stages of implementation, but is already having a positive effect. There is a well-designed curriculum map which gives an overview of what is to be taught and when. It provides a structure and progressive build up of skills and knowledge. This does not reflect the new time allocations for non-core subjects and the introduction of new published schemes of work. Teachers' weekly planning lacks rigorous monitoring and results in an inconsistent quality throughout the school, though there is consistency within year groups as teachers share expertise and plan together. Medium term planning includes opportunities to set work at different levels of difficulty and to ensure that all pupils are challenged by work well matched to their ability. However this is not consistently implemented in lessons resulting in some lack of challenge.

32All pupils have equal access to the curriculum offered. The school fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice, in having a special needs register, consulting parents and holding annual reviews. The curriculum meets the needs of these pupils and is formally monitored by the special needs co-ordinator. The school has established an effective recording system of personal folders for each pupil; this includes regularly updated assessment information. In the case of pupils who have special educational needs, the system also includes all individual educational plans including targets, plus advice from other professionals including speech therapists. The special needs co-ordinators consult staff to ensure that individual educational plans are sharply focused. It is a strength of the school that pupils who are deaf are able to access the full curriculum despite their disabilities. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, these pupils being supported by class teachers.

33The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and a programme of school visits and visitors provide good support for pupils' cultural development and significantly enhance what is taught in school. For example the visit to the Black Country Museum increases Year 6 pupils' understanding of life in Victorian times, and the visit to Severn Valley Country Park and Steam Railway encourages Year 2 pupils to understand early travel before the advent of the family car. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in lunchtime and after school activities including recorders, dance, choir, gym and badminton. It is to the credit of teachers that in acknowledging the emphasis on literacy and numeracy on the timetable, they provide numerous well-attended sporting and musical activities during lunchtime and after school. These activities are of good quality and the staff are supported by professional coaches from the 'Top Sport' scheme which adds rugby, tennis and cricket to the list of after-school sporting activities.

34Procedures for assessment and record keeping are satisfactory. They are very detailed and are collated for ease of access in individual pupil profiles. In addition to the tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the school administers end of year tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers assess effectively pupils' learning and attainment in English, mathematics and information technology against the progression of key learning objectives identified in schemes of work. In science and the non-core subjects, pupils are assessed against yearly grouped learning objectives. Teachers systematically record pupils' ongoing attainment and at the end of the year this valuable information is transferred into pupils' personal files. Usually teachers make satisfactory use of assessment information, the only exceptions being in religious education, and in literacy where assessment information is not used to consistently inform planning. Portfolios of pupils' work, for example in English and geography, provide a useful reference point for maintaining continuity of standards. The school has a good marking policy, but the advice is not used consistently when marking pupils' work.

35Since the last inspection the school has focused a tremendous amount of energy on developing effective assessment and recording procedures to support the teaching. This has resulted in the development of a cumbersome system. However the benefit is that having done this work, all staff have a very good understanding of assessment procedures and their place in improving teaching and raising educational standards. The school is examining ways of streamlining the assessment and recording system to retain the effective practice but reduce the amount of administrative paperwork required by the present scheme.

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

36The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The provision for spiritual development is good and is reflected in many areas of the school's life. It is seen in a memorable act of collective worship when pupils sing in tune with feeling, great enthusiasm and a joy which celebrates the best in the human spirit. Acts of worship meet statutory requirements and are of satisfactory quality. Spiritual development is further enhanced when a majority of the pupils complement their singing by signing the words along with the teacher of the deaf. In a religious education lesson Year 6 pupils are asked to consider how they would feel in Joseph's place when Mary told him of her pregnancy. They decide that they would feel both confused and angry. In science pupils are delighted when they arrange mirrors so that the images appear to go on for ever, and Year 4 pupils express pleasure when they make a board game on which a bulb lights when questions are answered correctly. Pupils consider the life of children in Tudor times and express gratitude that they do not live in similar circumstances. Opportunities for reflection are offered in many lessons and silent, personal reflection is part of most acts of collective worship.

37 There is very good provision for the moral development of the pupils. The daily life of the school has a strong, unwritten moral code and this is underpinned by a good behaviour policy which is understood by pupils. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and make a conscious choice to do what is right. No misbehaviour was seen during the inspection. Teachers give pupils opportunities to share their concerns with their friends and pupils discuss problems sensibly. Pupils know that it is important to make good choices when faced with a dilemma. They undertake routine classroom tasks and respond positively when they are given responsibility. Teachers raise pupils' self esteem by praising their work, behaviour and attitudes. Classrooms have good displays which promote pupils' successes, especially their bronze and silver certificates. Pupils point out their certificate to visitors and are proud of their achievement.

38 The school's provision for the social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils work hard in lessons and co-operate well when working in pairs or small groups. In whole class sessions they wait for their turn to speak and they listen attentively to their friends. Pupils are open and friendly towards adults, including visitors. Adults and pupils are at ease in each other's company and the adults are very good role models for the pupils. There is a strong bond of mutual respect between adults and pupils. The school has high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and they respond positively to these expectations. The school chooses to have only a few formal rules. These are displayed in all classrooms and pupils work hard to abide by these rules. Pupils are involved in setting targets for both work and behaviour. They play together on the playground without rancour or malice, irrespective of background or ability. They move around the school sensibly and take great care not to hurt one another. Children from a nearby special school spend time in the nursery and are treated with kindness by the children already there. The dining hall at lunchtime is a place where pupils and adults share time together in a friendly, peaceful and convivial atmosphere. The choir sings to the residents in nearby homes for the elderly and pupils raise money for a number of charities. The many strong friendships between hearing pupils and the large number of deaf pupils are a notable feature of the school's life. In many lessons hearing pupils are seen signing for their deaf friends when there is no adult to help. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with hearing difficulties, are fully integrated into the social life of the school and this contributes to the excellent social development of all pupils.

39 The school makes very good provision for the cultural development of the pupils. In assemblies, junior pupils are asked to identify the country of origin of the introductory music. The singing of the choir contributes to the musical life of the school and enhances worship in assemblies. The choir meets to practise during the lunch break and pupils enjoy working hard to produce high quality music. Pupils' cultural experiences are enriched in many areas of the curriculum. In art pupils study the work of a wide range of artists from both western and eastern traditions. They look at the comparisons and contrasts between their own lives and the lives of the people in St Lucia in geography lessons. Pupils are helped to understand the growth of their own culture as they study Tudor and Victorian Britain in history. The culture of ancient people such as the Greeks and the Egyptians is also studied. This work is supplemented by a visit from a theatre group who help pupils to live in the past for a day. The customs, beliefs and culture of people from other lands are studied when pupils consider the beliefs and values of faiths such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism in religious education. In an outstanding session during the lunch hour a group of volunteers are enthralled and totally absorbed as they learn the background and the steps for Bhangra dance. The curriculum is enlivened by a number of visits to a wide range of places. Visits to the Black Country Museum help pupils to understand their own cultural inheritance. Residential visits to places such as Boreatton Park in Shrewsbury also contribute to curriculum enrichment.

40 At the time of the previous inspection the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was described as sound. Since that time the school has worked hard to improve the provision and can take pride in the considerable improvement which has been made.

42 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

41 Provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good. This strength of the school has been successfully maintained since the last inspection. The school provides a warm, caring and secure learning environment where pupils are valued.

42 There are good arrangements for induction to the school. Prospective pupils have the opportunity to attend many well-organised sessions in school where they can experience class routines.

43 The school has effective procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by specialist staff and are able to participate in all school activities. The high quality of support makes a significant contribution to their progress. They also receive appropriate specialist support from outside agencies. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality, providing a firm basis for their progress. They contain specific and realistic learning targets for future work.

44 There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development. There is a uniform approach in monitoring pupils' academic progress in each class. Procedures have improved significantly since the last inspection. The school maintains records of achievement in good order, and there are many tests and assessments undertaken at regular intervals. Assessment information is detailed and effectively used to inform and guide pupils in their work. A strong feature of assessment is the effective involvement of pupils and teachers in target setting each year. Consequently, staff know the pupils very well and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress. Teachers keep a number of records of pupils' personal and social development. However, the quality and extent of assessment in this regard, varies from class to class. The school recognises this and is about to review its procedures.

45 There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour of individual pupils is very carefully monitored and detailed records are kept of any significant behavioural problems. The school's code of conduct is prominently displayed around the school. The school has a good quality and effective behaviour policy. There is an emphasis on reinforcing good behaviour in the policy and in practice. Praise, encouragement and a variety of rewards are effectively used to recognise and value pupils' achievements, including good behaviour. Merit points and graduated certificates provide a good incentive for pupils. Staff are consistent in managing the behaviour of pupils across the school and reinforce the same messages. This helps to maintain the high standards of the school. The school has effective strategies to eliminate bad behaviour and any form of bullying. There is a good quality and effective anti-bullying policy. Pastoral education includes guidance for pupils on how to deal with bullying.

46 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. There is an effective partnership with the Educational Welfare Officer who attends the school weekly to monitor and support pupils experiencing difficulties. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by the deputy head-teacher and head-teacher, with good use made of a computer-based system of information. The school gives parents regular reminders about the benefits of good attendance for their children. Attractive certificates are awarded to pupils who achieve 100% attendance over a school term and also the school year. However, the positive arrangements have had little impact in raising attendance since the last inspection. The school is currently reviewing its arrangements for promoting good attendance.

47 Child Protection procedures are good. The school complies with legal requirements. There is a designated member of staff who has received appropriate training and liaises effectively with outside agencies. The school has a good quality policy for child protection. All staff are aware of the school practices and procedures and are provided with good quality guidance.

48The school has very good procedures to promote pupils' health, safety, hygiene and well being. There is much work done in the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of health and safety issues. Healthy lifestyles are positively encouraged in the curriculum. Topic work includes activities and work about healthy eating, the effects of smoking and the need for regular exercise. The school has a good quality policy on the safe use of drugs. Personal and social education lessons make a very good contribution to raising pupils' awareness of health and safety issues. For example, older pupils learn about water safety and what to do in difficult situations. The school makes good use of external support agencies. Years 1 and 2 visit the 'safety town' each year. Through information and role-plays organised by the emergency services, pupils are able to develop a basic awareness of many emergency situations. The school nurse visits the school weekly and gives talks and advice to pupils. The nurse makes a significant contribution to sex education. The community police officer attends the school regularly to talk to pupils about personal safety and 'stranger danger'. The school also works effectively with the Road Safety Office in providing cycling proficiency training for Year 6 pupils. Many pupils took part in certified training at the end of the last school term and they were all successful. Accident and emergency procedures are well developed and there are two members of staff trained in first-aid. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. Fire procedures are well developed and drills are carried out periodically. The school is aware of the potential hazards to safety caused by rotting window frames in the nursery and Key Stage 1 buildings; and is working with the Local Education Authority to resolve this. No other risks were identified during the inspection.

Partnership with parents and the community

49Partnerships with parents and the community are very good. They make a significant and positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Parental involvement in the life of the school and in pupils' learning is very good and has improved since the last inspection through the implementation of the home/school agreement. The school positively encourages and welcomes parents to become involved in school life. The 'Home and School Association' continues to provide outstanding support for the school through organising fund-raising and social events. Considerable funds are raised by the Association each year at events such as the Christmas Fair, Grand Barbecue and sponsored activities. Money raised by the group has gone towards establishing the school's libraries and purchasing new computer equipment. A high number of parents help in school regularly and this support is very well organised by the school. For example, parental help is included in lesson planning. Parents assist in classrooms, act as 'reading buddies', support pupils with special educational needs and accompany school trips. Parents work very effectively with staff. The school is host for a very high number of parents' courses including nationally recognised qualifications in childcare and education. Other courses include 'learning together', Sign Language for Beginners and Flower Arranging. Clearly, parents have very good quality opportunities to become more effectively involved in their children's education. Home-school records show that many parents are well involved in their children's learning. A member of staff has a special responsibility for supporting the Home and School Association, organising courses and developing partnerships generally. This teacher plays an invaluable role in this work.

50There is a close and effective partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language. The school involves these parents at an early stage. They are appropriately involved in reviews of progress and in setting future learning targets.

51 Information to parents is good. The good quality of information found at the last inspection has been maintained. The weakness in informing parents about homework arrangements has been corrected. Arrangements are clearly stated in the prospectus and in an information leaflet. Parents of pupils new to the school are provided with a useful and good quality information pack. This includes information about the nursery, school routines and policies. The prospectus is well presented and informative. The school is aware that the admissions policy is omitted and is in the process of correcting this. Governors' Annual Reports to parents are user friendly and summarise the work of the school well. Curriculum information sheets are provided for parents at the beginning of each school year. These give brief and useful information about the forthcoming work to be undertaken in each Year group. Very good quality newsletters are sent home to parents each week. These inform them about events in the school and developments in education generally. The school holds three parents evenings each year so that they can speak to staff about how their children are settling in and progressing. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality. They clearly inform parents what their children know, can do and understand. A good feature of these reports is that learning targets involve pupils. The school regularly organises information evenings for parents. For example, evenings have been held about the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

52 Links with the community are very good. The school has maintained the high quality of links since the last inspection. School trips are well planned to support the curriculum and topic work. Venues include the Black Country Museum, Saltwells Nature Reserve, Old Rep Theatre and many others. The school has very good links with many Christian churches. Members of the clergy attend the school frequently to lead assemblies and this makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school has wide ranging links with sports clubs and organisations. These make a very considerable contribution to pupils' physical education. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in many sports activities and receive specialist coaching, for example in football, rugby, netball and basketball. The school has a very good link with an environmental action group. A good example of recent work is the 'growing sculpture' on the school grounds. Many pupils worked closely with adults in the creation of this valuable area of the school. Many visitors attend the school on a regular basis. Theatre groups include the Kinetic Theatre and Timezone Historical Enactment. The school works closely and effectively with colleges and universities. For example, many of the parents courses are developed in conjunction with these institutions.

53 There are a few links with local businesses. For example, a clothing manufacturer acts as host for 'design technology trips'. However, more could be done to develop partnerships with local employers and businesses. The school has a good link with Pens Meadow Special School. The weekly integration programme in the nursery has mutual benefits for the pupils of both schools. For example, it contributes well to pupils' social development.

54 There are effective links with high schools regarding transition to secondary education. Year 6 pupils are able to spend a day at the school of their choice, so that they can meet staff and experience the new routines of work. Staff liaise effectively regarding the transfer of pupils' records and this ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

56 **Leadership and management**

55The leadership and management of the school are good and have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The headteacher is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses and how to bring about school improvement. All the weaknesses identified during this inspection are contained in the current school development plan; the key issues from the previous inspection have mostly been overcome. The wide variation in attainment of pupils on entry from year to year has been problematic in the past when setting targets for continuing school improvement. The information gathered from assessment of pupils on entry to the reception classes is now being used effectively to set targets for the end of Key Stage 1. Target setting procedures are already well established for the end of Key Stage 2 using information from national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and other standardised tests. There are good procedures for involving pupils and parents in setting individual pupil targets. The headteacher is to be seen about the school on a daily basis and knows the pupils well. Despite the difficulties of having two separate buildings the staff work together well as a team for the benefit of the pupils. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

56The governors are very knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have an effective committee structure with clear terms of reference. They are actively involved in decision-making and in the daily life of the school, for example in leading assemblies and visiting classrooms, which enables them to monitor at first hand the implementation of their policies, teaching and standards. They keep abreast of curriculum changes by inviting curriculum leaders to their termly meetings and by being linked to year groups. The governing body has a positive impact on the school's direction.

57There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring teaching and curriculum development. The headteacher and two members of the senior management team are involved in observing lessons and what started as informal observations have developed into a more rigorous system with constructive feedback and points for development being given. This has been effective in maintaining and improving the good quality of teaching evident in the previous inspection. Curriculum planning is monitored satisfactorily by the deputy headteacher and the curriculum coordinators, although inconsistencies in the required information and in the quality are not always picked up or feedback given to support improvement and good quality teaching. Curriculum co-ordinators offer good support and advice to colleagues which has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

58The school's ethos is conducive to learning and is based on mutual respect. The values of respect, care and concern for others are actively promoted, are evident in the quality of relationships and underpin much of the good work of the school. There is a commitment to striving for higher standards and in providing equality of opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school is very successful in meeting its aim to create a happy and stable environment, to foster close cooperation between home and school and in developing pupils' skills in evaluating their own work. It is currently less successful in ensuring that each individual leaves the school having worked fully to their capabilities, notably in English. The school has all the required policies in use and these are reflected in the daily life and work of the school and supported by parents. Statutory requirements are met with the exception of admission arrangements in the school prospectus.

59The development plan 1997 – 2000 is a good clear document for promoting school improvement, it contains the action to be taken, the people responsible, timescales, success criteria and costings and shows the school has continued to work on the key issues from the last inspection. The progress being made in bringing about the developments and improvements are checked frequently. The framework for future development is already planned. Staff development and training have been closely linked to the priorities

outlined in the school development plan and have focused, quite rightly, on literacy and numeracy as this is where staff are currently less confident in implementing the national strategies.

60 There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers for class sizes to be below thirty. No teachers studied religious education or history as a subject of their initial teacher training, but subjects of the National Curriculum are well covered and teachers have adequate knowledge of the subjects they teach, although they are not yet confident in teaching the National Literacy Strategy. Most teachers have additional responsibilities for curriculum subjects that are well matched to their initial qualifications and experience. There is a good balance of newly qualified and experienced teachers. Although the school has 3.6 less teachers than at the time of the previous inspection, this has not led to classes of more than 30 pupils as two members of the senior management team now have responsibility for a class of pupils. The school mentors students undertaking initial teacher training each year and offers good support for newly qualified teachers and other staff new to the school through the induction programme. The appraisal system is well established and linked to professional development.

61 The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and non-teaching staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs are suitably qualified and experienced for their work. The school has recently focused staff training on the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but teachers are committed to improving their own skills and undertake specialist training where possible. The unit for pupils who are deaf has recently been refurbished and provides a pleasant cheerful working area. Dudley Deaf Children's Society has helped in providing funding for the library and office in the resource base for the deaf. The unit receives funding for resources and staff development. The existing resources for learning meet the needs of pupils in the school. The good number of support assistants is beneficial to the progress of all pupils, not only the deaf.

62 Staff have attended training courses in order to develop their expertise and have shared the outcomes with colleagues. The curriculum coordinator's role has been developed effectively since the previous inspection and is having a more positive influence on standards. In science and physical education, new coordinators are being well prepared by shadowing the work of the experienced coordinators. A small, but insufficient, amount of time is available for subject coordinators to monitor and support the work of their colleagues on a rolling programme. This is regular, but not frequent. Informal support is continuous and in many cases appreciated by colleagues.

63 Teachers are well supported by skilled classroom assistants, especially in Key Stage 1, who benefit pupils with special educational needs and support their progress. Support staff are well informed about the needs of the pupils they work with and aid their progress substantially.

64 Outside and inside accommodation is sufficient, very well maintained and generally of a high standard. It is clean and bright; a tribute to the caretaking and cleaning staff. The Key Stage 1 building is in poorer condition but governors have made this a priority. The open plan nature of the building housing the younger pupils leads to some disturbance due to noise from adjoining classrooms, even with very well behaved pupils. Some folding screens do not work and although teachers train pupils to work and move between areas very quietly, some disruption to learning is inevitable. Some window frames are rotten and in need of urgent repair. The school is aware of this and is replacing them as part of an on-going maintenance programme. The site is spacious and pleasant and provides adequate space for the delivery of the curriculum. The two points for action at the last inspection have been resolved. Security has been improved. The provision of carpet and appropriate soundproofing has improved the acoustics of the resource base for the deaf. Outdoors pupils have the benefit of a large hard play area and field but on very wet days there are problems with drainage. This has been a persistent problem, but it does not interfere with outdoor activities. Two large halls provide good facilities for physical education lessons and are used well. They are also used for eating lunches, extra-curricular activities, community classes and youth groups, such as brownies, which lead to efficient use of the accommodation.

65 Learning resources are satisfactory overall, with strengths and weaknesses. The provision of computers is good throughout the school. However, the range and extent of both fiction and non-fiction books in the Key Stage 2 library is unsatisfactory. Some books are old, out of date and in need of replacement. Although the areas are accessible, the school does not make enough use of library facilities at Key Stage 2 to promote independent research skills. Resources for physical education are good, and for music are very good. Religious education is well supported by a wide range of artefacts to increase the understanding of symbols and rites of Christianity and other world faiths. The school makes effective use of its local environment and resources beyond the school, including outdoor centres. These have a positive impact upon the quality and diversity of education which the pupils receive.

67 **The efficiency of the school**

66 The overall efficiency of the school is satisfactory and the school plans conscientiously for its future. Financial management by the headteacher and governors is good and ensures that available funds are appropriately targeted towards the school's identified priorities, a major one of which is to further raise standards. There are suitable systems to support budget planning and the identification of priorities at all levels. Budget preparation and control is detailed, thorough and systematic. The governing body discharges its responsibilities rigorously. The finance committee oversees the budget. This committee is provided with up-to-date financial information. The latest audit report indicates that financial and other records are well maintained and that there are suitable controls in place.

67 The school development plan is a well-constructed and useful tool for school improvement. Areas for development include clear targets, details of associated costs, personnel responsible for implementation, and success criteria. Progress towards these targets is monitored and governors are informed about progress made, thus enabling them to determine the effectiveness of their spending decisions.

68 There has been some improvement in the deployment of staff since the last inspection. Overall staff are appropriately deployed and their skills are matched to maximum effect. For example, in Key Stage 2, some teachers with particular subject expertise teach classes other than their own. The majority of members of the senior management team now have full-time teaching roles setting good examples in the classroom. The deputy head teacher has an effective role in monitoring and evaluating school assessments and test results in science in order to raise standards but has fewer opportunities to influence standards of teaching and learning in the classroom. Some of his duties are administrative and lack educational focus. Subject co-ordinators are now responsible for auditing resources and for spending within their curriculum area. Their work has a favourable impact on standards of teaching and on pupils' progress throughout the school. Efficient use is now made of most resources to promote pupil's learning. However, the Key Stage 2 library is not used effectively as pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use the limited range of books available for independent research. The school purchases consumable items with due regard to value for money.

69 Accommodation is used effectively and good use is made of shared areas and the hall. Teachers make good use of their classrooms, which provide a suitable environment for learning.

70 The funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are spent appropriately and efficiently. Classroom support assistants and additional teachers and assistants for the deaf are used appropriately and enable these pupils make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

71 Day to day administration is good. The secretary provides effective financial and administrative support to the headteacher, governors and staff, which contributes highly to the smooth running of the school.

72The income per pupil is higher than similar schools due to the resource base for deaf pupils. In view of pupils' attainment on entry, the appropriateness with which resources are used, the progress made by pupils, the overall good quality of teaching, their very positive attitudes towards learning, the excellent relationships and attainment by the age of eleven, the school is judged to give satisfactory value for money. At the time of the previous inspection value for money was judged to be good.

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

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

73Children are admitted to the nursery at the beginning of the term in which they become three. At the time of the inspection there were 85 children under five; 55 children attended part-time in the nursery and 30 children attended the reception class full-time. Pupils are admitted to the nursery at the beginning of the term in which they become four and to the reception classes in September or January. The two classrooms are open-plan and adjacent with interior access to Key Stage 1. The provision for children under five is good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. By the age of five attainment meets nationally agreed targets, and all work is based on the six recommended areas of learning. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and progress is often better in the nursery. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average.

75 **Personal and social development**

74Children's personal and social development exceeds the level expected by the time they are of statutory school age. Progress is good for children of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs. Children are all well behaved in both the nursery and reception. They follow the rules and routines such as lining up to go to the hall sensibly and maturely. Children make very good relationships with the adults who work with them, being confident to refuse to do something they do not like such as being the snowman in drama, or asking for help like the boy who did not like the toilet door shut. They enjoy their work, as shown when the nursery children take part in their Christmas dance and reception children laugh at characters in stories in literacy. Children work well together, taking on family roles in the home corner, sharing toys sensibly while playing with small world zoo animals and involving visiting special school pupils in play by showing and encouraging them on the slide and caterpillar crawling tube. They concentrate well when counting in reception. In the nursery most can already change shoes for dance, and independently don overalls for water play. By the time they are in reception, they can change their clothes completely for physical education, including tying shoelaces and doing up buttons. Children make choices when offered opportunities such as in designing Christmas wrapping paper in reception, and are very good at clearing away toys and equipment at the end of sessions.

75Staff in both the nursery and reception set good examples for children by treating them with respect and expecting them to be responsible and to play together. When instances of lack of consideration occur, children are corrected quietly and sensitively, and any special effort or new achievement is praised. Staff take a genuine interest in children's preferences and fears and know them well as individuals.

77 **Language and literacy**

76In language and literacy children are in line with the level expected for their age. Children in the nursery talk freely about their activities and offer sentences to be written under their pictures. They listen attentively to and enjoy the story of 'Sammy the Snowman' and can relate parts of it. They know what title and author mean and can talk about characters in a story. Nursery children are learning to hold pencils correctly and can recognise and copy their names, and trace over words. Some reception children are beginning to remember key words like 'mum', 'and' and 'the' and can copy their names from cards and the date from the board. Some children are beginning to write their own words and to copy sentences legibly. Progress is satisfactory, with early reading and writing skills being taught and consolidated, but all activities are strictly structured, directed by adults and related to published scheme material rather than relevant and taking account of children's own interests.

77The teaching of language and literacy is satisfactory overall, but is better in the nursery than in reception due to more experienced staff. In the nursery adults take every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary and closely oversee early attempts at writing, demonstrating correct letter formation and how to hold pencils where necessary. In the nursery and reception children are given useful opportunities to share and discuss work with their groups. In reception children have sentence books to enable them to develop writing skills, and the teacher questions them pertinently to check on understanding of stories. However, tasks are infrequently matched to individual children's precise needs.

79 **Mathematics**

78In mathematics, children are also attaining standards in line with those expected on entry to compulsory education, and make satisfactory progress in early number skills. Nursery children can match geometric shapes to make pictures, and some can name triangle, square and circle. Some children can count to 8 when they put a given number of buttons on a snowman, and can recognise the associated digit. Children also practise counting with small numbers on the computer. Reception children extend counting skills to 10 and learn that nought has no value. In reception children also learn to sort by size, shape and colour.

79The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Activities are appropriate and build on the children's prior experiences and attainment. Occasionally activities are well matched to children's interests. Incidental opportunities like stacking chairs in fours at the end of the day and counting characters in drama ensure work is relevant in the nursery. Adults in both the nursery and reception question children regularly to check on their understanding. Where appropriate the reception teacher demonstrates and explains well and supports lower attaining children effectively. In preparation for the National Numeracy Strategy reception mathematics sessions are well balanced between individual, group and class activities.

81 **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is being satisfactorily developed and their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. They are learning about the past in the nursery and reception through the Christmas story. Nursery children talk about babies as they bath the dolls during water play. Children in both nursery and reception learn to use a computer to support their learning, dragging icons and using the mouse confidently. Nursery children are also learning about plants through planting bulbs. Reception children learn about animals and sort out pets and recognise the main parts of their bodies. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress in this area of learning.

81A classroom assistant provides the nursery children with useful introductions to computer usage and encourages them to be independent once familiar with a program. Adults are aware of children's abilities and adjust tasks to closely match their needs. Opportunities are taken to discuss the world around them with children during play, particularly where nursery nurses are freely associating with them. Teachers also respond effectively to children's interests, such as when a nursery child saw the first growth of a bulb, and provide relevant information, encourage observation and offer opportunities for prediction. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory.

83 **Physical development**

82Children's physical development is good and exceeds the level expected on entry to compulsory education. In the nursery they colour pictures carefully, use scissors and glue spreaders adeptly. They climb, crawl and jump confidently on the equipment in the classroom, roll large balls readily on the playground and copy a range of arm movements and bounces, jumps and turns for their Christmas dance. In reception they thread beads dexterously, print with sponge shapes neatly and cut out accurately. They make a cardboard semi-circle into a cone to make an angel with help from adults. In dance, reception children skip, run and jump freely with good control, and many are good at balancing on one leg while exercising the other foot.

83Daily opportunities are provided in nursery for children to explore indoor climbing and sliding apparatus, and for them to jump on the trampette whilst supervised appropriately for safety purposes. They also have regular activities which provide practice in colouring, cutting and gluing. In physical education lessons there are good levels of energetic activity after appropriate warming up, although reception children are not always expected to sustain these energetic movements. While adults in the nursery set good examples throughout, in reception their footwear is inappropriate. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and enables the children to make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. The higher attainment is due to physical skills being more developed on entry to the nursery.

85 **Creative development**

84Children's creative development is in line with that expected for their age, and they make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. In nursery children paint freely, experimenting with their own ideas. They also create Christmas cards using collage and glitter. They use their imagination while acting out the story of 'The Snowman' in drama. In reception children print Christmas wrapping paper to their own choice and decorate their angels using felt pens. During dance lessons children move in their own ways, although they offered a limited range of movements.

85Opportunities for children to respond imaginatively are relatively limited, especially in reception. Most activities are closely controlled and children are given restricted choices. However, in both nursery and reception adults are readily available to give support, talk about work and demonstrate at timely intervals. Organisation, including the provision of resources, is efficient so that many children can produce pictures or models in the available time, although in reception arrangements mean that children may have to wait for others to finish before they can proceed to the next stage. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

86 Although the curriculum includes all the recommended areas of learning, the organisation and management of the children are very controlled and at times offer them few chances to select their own play equipment or to sustain concentration on a chosen activity. In nursery, each child is directed to formal literacy and numeracy tasks and groups are rotated at set intervals around play activities. The reception curriculum is already mainly timetabled like a Key Stage 1 class and opportunities for play are also for set periods on any one task. Play activities in reception are often routine rather than stimulating and related to class topics or interests. Assessment against checklists is regularly done but higher attaining children are not always challenged, being set similar work to peers, or left without attention because they can cope unaided rather than being stimulated to think further. Children with special educational needs are well integrated, with deaf children signing back confidently to adults and taking a full part in all class activities. The resources for learning are used well in the nursery and satisfactorily in reception.

88 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

88 English

87 Standards of attainment are average by the end of both key stages. This accords with the 1999 National Curriculum test results including weaknesses, which are identified in spelling at Key Stage 1 in these tests over the last two years. Although test results fluctuate year by year test scores are broadly similar to schools nationally and to similar schools. Inspection findings judge significant strengths and weaknesses within the English curriculum although the overall attainment is satisfactory. Girls do better than boys in English tests, but there was no significant difference in the progress of boys during the inspection.

88 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is average at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident to share their work in front of their classmates, as in Year 2 when they read their Christmas stories, although some have to be encouraged to speak audibly to the large group. They contribute ideas and thoughts readily in whole class discussion as shown when Year 2 pupils shared their own lines for the poem Ten White Snowmen. Pupils listen carefully to each other's ideas when discussing which of the poems they prefer. By the age of 11 pupils talk confidently for many purposes. Year 5 pupils offer hypotheses about mass and area in their investigations of plasticene boats, and in Year 6 pupils discuss and empathise with conditions for the poor in Victorian times. In English lessons they offer opinions about the character of Spit Nolan and listen attentively to those given by peers before using all the information in subsequent written work. Pupils are aware of standard English and attempt to use it when speaking in formal situations.

89 In reading, pupils' attainment is average overall. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are sound readers. Higher attainers often read with expression and relish new vocabulary. All pupils have acquired essential skills to enable them to tackle any unknown words, but not all pupils have the confidence to apply them without prompting. Nevertheless, they are generally accurate and can understand what they have read. Pupils are also aware of the author and title of a book, and Year 1 pupils know the function of a contents page. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils often read with expression, taking account of the characters and situation. However, many lack fluency, still following the text with a finger, and losing the flow if they encounter an unknown word. Unknown words are too often misread as more common ones which adversely affects the pupils' deeper understanding of the text, although pupils generally have satisfactory comprehension of the sequence of a narrative. While most Year 6 pupils can use a catalogue to locate a suitable volume on a given subject in the school library, and many can then find a relevant page by using contents or index, when they need to pick out essential facts from the text they are less confident. For example they resort to reading the whole page aloud. During the inspection Year 6 pupils began to use inference in considering the character of Spit Nolan and a few are already able to use this in their work.

90 Pupils' attainment in writing is also average overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can express their

thoughts in writing in geography, science and design and technology, and write stories and poems, although because some of these pieces are closely controlled by a given format, such as story frames, they are often brief. Such pieces are correctly structured, sometimes in sentences demarcated by full stops and capital letters. Although pupils know how to use this punctuation, they do not always do so consistently. In one Year 2 class, for instance, when writing part of the Christmas story, only about a quarter of pupils did so throughout their stories. Similarly, although pupils spell common words accurately in tests, words like 'they', 'would' and 'because' are misspelt even by higher attaining pupils in their stories. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to write at greater length for different purposes, conveying their intentions clearly, such as in contrasting evaluations of their art work and exciting stories in Year 6. In these stories pupils consciously plan their writing to include a beginning, a middle and an ending and attempt to include some interesting vocabulary and detailed description. Like the younger pupils, though, they are less successful at consistently using correct punctuation, although some pupils do use paragraphs and a range of punctuation marks correctly. Similarly, spelling is still weak with common errors in words like 'Saturday', 'friend' and 'throw'. Older pupils have difficulties with written grammar, mixing tenses or failing to match person with verb. Although pupils can write neatly, and often do so for finished work in Key Stage 2, their day to day writing too often includes rubbings or crossings out and poorly formed letters. Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills to support learning in other subjects.

91Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory both in lessons and throughout the school. However, it is not as rapid as could be expected, especially for higher attainers, in some aspects of English. In reading pupils receive regular practice, including daily homework, but individual books are not always well matched to pupils' needs. In Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils often continue to read published scheme books, selected by their teachers, with limited vocabulary and sentence structure when they are able to tackle and enjoy more challenging texts. Average attaining pupils also continue to practise each reading book until they can read every word. In literacy lessons there are occasions when all pupils read the same text aloud even when it is not useful, such as sharing a play script in Year 3. Advice on books for Key Stage 2 pupils is inadequate with the result that all pupils, irrespective of age and reading skill, who have a favourite author cite the same ones. While pupils acquire the skills for locating information, they are not required to use them purposefully on a regular basis to complete independent work. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receiving regular practice at spelling are improving steadily at those skills.

92Pupils have positive attitudes to English throughout the school. They usually enjoy the discussions and activities set for them, such as in Year 5 where they groaned when they had to stop talking about the characters from *The Suitcase Kid* in order to change focus. They are often eager to participate, settle quickly to work and carry out tasks conscientiously. When required to do so, they work well together, such as while agreeing rhyming words in Year 1, and frequently assist each other spontaneously including signing for a deaf peer in Year 4. While pupils are eager to be correct and often rub out or delete errors on the computer repeatedly, this can waste an inordinate amount of time and lead to weaknesses in presentation. Many pupils in Year 6 adopt unsuitable positions for writing properly.

93 Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and is good in one quarter of lessons. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in approximately half the lessons, although one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teachers, except in the one unsatisfactory lesson, have been successful in adopting the National Literacy Strategy and lessons are planned accordingly. In Key Stage 2, good lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and lessons clear objectives which are shared with the pupils. Good questioning enables pupils to extend their thinking, and because of the very good relationships and regular praise even reticent pupils are confident to contribute in lessons. Sessions are effectively organised, with relevant resources provided. While in the best lessons teachers assess pupils' work effectively to match the tasks to their needs, to enable them to improve and to provide exemplars of good work, there are occasions where tasks are not sufficiently challenging or feedback is insufficiently focused to help pupils. While some teachers use the time towards the end of lessons effectively to recapitulate how well objectives have been met, some of these sessions are an unselective sharing of work done. Although classroom assistants frequently provide very valuable support to pupils during independent work, during oral sessions some are inactive. Information technology is effectively incorporated in most Key Stage 2 classes and effectively supports the development of literacy skills.

94 Because the two co-ordinators both work in Key Stage 1 and have no oversight of the whole school, there is no shared ethos for teaching English, which adversely affects aspects like levels of expectation, marking, approaches to spelling including use of dictionaries and purpose of tasks. Although resources for literacy have been built up and are adequate overall, there are still shortcomings, for instance, where photocopies are made of the actual texts used for whole class work and the size of the print makes it difficult to read.

96 **Mathematics**

95 Test results over the last three years show fluctuations, but taking the 1996 to 1998 results together the performance of the pupils was above the national average. The 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results show the pupils' performance in mathematics was in line with both the national average and that of pupils from similar backgrounds. Key Stage 1 tests show a similar picture with pupils' recent performance being in line with that of pupils from similar schools and that of pupils nationally. Test results show that the number of pupils in Key Stage 1, with above average performance is lower than the national average. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of work show that currently pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national averages at the end of both key stages. Inspection findings show no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

96 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident in addition of numbers between 0 and 20. They can count on and count back in 2s and 4s to 20, and can sequence numbers up to 30. Pupils understand that halving is the opposite of doubling, they have appropriate mathematical vocabulary and understand the difference between odd and even numbers and single or double digits. The majority of pupils can halve numbers up to 20. Using apparatus, pupils can work out what a quarter of 12 will be and know that two quarters make a half. Less able pupils can work out half of 8 and record this calculation in words and numbers. All pupils recognise squares, circles and can divide them in half. More able pupils can accurately divide triangles and hexagons in half. They can identify the number of edges and faces that cuboids, cylinders, spheres, cones and pyramids have. Less able pupils can identify shapes that have more than or less than four sides. Pupils know the difference between analogue and digital clocks and the majority can tell the time to quarter of an hour. All pupils understand the use of graphs in giving information and have drawn block graphs giving data from their survey of the colour of their front doors.

97By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the number system including fractions, decimals and percentages. They use their knowledge of addition of money to work out the cost of simple menus; they can represent and interpret data on tally charts and graphs. In one lesson observed, pupils plotted points on graph paper including negative co-ordinates. The higher attaining pupils can identify the properties of a rhombus, trapezium and square, they are also able to use the 24-hour clock competently and explain how to work out percentages. The lower attaining pupils can apply the four rules of number effectively, can accurately record a dice throwing activity on a tally chart and understand the 24-hour clock.

98Pupils of all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress. In approximately a half of lessons good progress is made; often because the teacher ensures that the work is well matched to the differing needs of pupils within the class. Pupils show gains in knowledge and understanding and their ability to use mathematical skills. At both key stages pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically as they get older. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire an appropriate mathematical vocabulary through activities that develop understanding of patterns, numbers and shapes, but progress is hindered in lessons where worksheets are not clear and confuse pupils. In Year 3, pupils learn about time and apply their new knowledge to timetables and calculations, such as, what time it was four and three quarter hours ago. In Year 4, pupils consolidate their knowledge of tally charts and consider other ways of presenting the same information, for example in pictograms. When pupils are in Year 5, they make good progress in understanding and recording the time and using their knowledge to solve problems. For example, when calculating what time someone would get to work if they got up at a given time and took further time to get washed and dressed, eat breakfast and travel to work. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of number sequences and calculating percentages. At both key stages, the increased emphasis on mental arithmetic, which is a feature of the National Numeracy Strategy, is beginning to make pupils more confident in their own abilities to calculate quickly and accurately. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately to support work in other subjects such as science and design and technology.

99The majority of pupils display positive attitudes to mathematics at both key stages. They are keen to join in oral work at the beginning of lessons, and many pupils put their hands up to answer questions. Pupils co-operate well with their teachers and sustain interest throughout the lesson. They organise themselves well, and move smoothly from whole class teaching to group work, helping to give out books and resources. Pupils behave very well and respond positively to the challenges of the lessons. Pupils co-operate well with each other, they discuss ideas and share equipment sensibly. They are courteous and have very good relationships with each other and all the adults who work with them.

100The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory in over half the lessons and good and occasionally very good in the remainder. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in almost two-thirds of the lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. Lessons are well prepared and are structured to reflect the aims of the National Numeracy Strategy. All lessons begin with a whole class session of mental arithmetic and in the good lessons teachers set a fast and lively pace, with pertinent questioning, before presenting the challenges of the main part of the lesson. Classroom management skills are good and this means that pupils sustain concentration without disruption. In the small number of very good lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour, lessons proceed at a good pace and work is well matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils. For example in a Year 5 class working on factors and number patterns the teacher shows very good knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, interacts in a lively way with them and devises interesting games to reinforce pupils' understanding of their work. In another Year 5 class, the teacher assesses pupils knowledge of time and changes the focus of teaching to ensure accuracy of time telling. Teachers throughout the classes praise pupils efforts and encourage them to feel confident with their mathematical skills. There is a lack of varied activities which provide further challenges for the most able pupils which could help to raise the numbers of pupils who perform above expectations in the end of key stage tests.

101 The National Numeracy Strategy, for which staff have received appropriate training has been introduced this term. Teachers are changing their teaching styles and organisation to ensure that during this academic year the strategy will be successfully established. The subject co-ordinators are monitoring the implementation of the new strategy and are in the process of rewriting the mathematics policy and guidelines; this will be done after consultation with staff who are trying out a variety of resources and support materials. Resources recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy have been bought and are available to support teaching and learning. The co-ordinators monitor the test results for Years 2 and 6; they also analyse end of year tests to highlight areas of concern and to inform teachers' planning. As yet the co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching of mathematics but expect to do so according to the school's rolling programme for monitoring.

103 **Science**

102 Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the last two years have shown standards to be below the national average and the average for similar schools. Inspection findings show an improving picture. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 identify classes of living things; they know, for example, that birds lay eggs and that mice are born from their mothers' bodies, without hair and with their eyes shut. They know that all animals grow and change; some can sort them into categories except when the teaching in Year 1 offers too many examples and choices and the task is too complex. For example they recognise fur, feathers and scales but find it very hard to understand 'skin' for animals as diverse as sharks or elephants. In so doing they create an obstacle to later progress when they need to separate mammals, for example, from fishes.

103 Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been close to, and slightly above, the national average in the last three years, with fluctuations from year to year. Inspection findings confirm above average standards, both in comparison with all schools and similar schools. Girls have performed better than boys over the last three years, but there is no clear evidence as to the reason for this. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the elements of the National Curriculum. They explore light and know that it travels in straight lines. They consider reflection and images in plane and curved mirrors, noting the multiple reflections when they place two mirrors in different positions and consider how periscopes are made. They know that opaque materials do not allow light to pass through while others such as translucent paper and transparent acetate sheet transmit light better. By this stage pupils know what it means to 'hypothesise' and understand the principles of why you need to vary factors. They gain a wide and precise vocabulary. For example, they can describe what they mean by mass as the amount of material or density as to do with 'the heaviness of things.' They know that the mass of plasticine does not change whether it is shaped as a sphere dropped in water, which sinks, or made into a boat which floats successfully. One deaf pupil offered his solution to the class, 'it is the area which changes' helping the class to put the solution into a scientific context.

104 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Progress is slowed at Key Stage 1 by the over use of work sheets which are undemanding and particularly hamper the progress of high attaining pupils. At Key Stage 2 pupils design their own experiments, often assisted by the link with design and technology projects. Pupils consolidate and refresh their knowledge. Many achieve real success, and make very good progress for example in constructing true-false circuit boards as part of their work on electricity. A good feature of the progress at Key Stage 2 is seen in pupils' ability to construct graphs, for example of predicted and actual results. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good at both key stages. Supported by their special needs assistants and by carefully differentiated tasks and materials they make progress in line with their friends.

105 Key Stage 1 pupils respond satisfactorily. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' response is good, and often very good. In Key Stage 1 lessons pupils join in the discussions and listen carefully to the teacher and offer their opinions. They settle to their tasks well and usually persist except when the complexity baffles them and they give up. Key Stage 2 pupils work with real application and interest and persist when they find tasks difficult, for example when wiring their circuits. Pupils are polite, courteous and co-operate well in sharing their findings and listening carefully to each other. There is an air of enjoyment in many classes.

106 Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 is predominantly good and very good in over a third of lessons. There are clear purposes to lessons which are shared with the pupils. Teachers' grasp of the subject is adequate for the levels at which they teach in Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Individual lessons are well planned and prepared and successfully reinforce, apply and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. At Key Stage 2 an insistence on the use of correct technical vocabulary helps pupils to develop scientific ideas. In the best lessons teachers' enthusiasm generates a buzz of excitement through the lesson. Classes are managed very well and relationships are often excellent. Pupils' work is assessed well and they are taught to evaluate their progress as a natural part of their learning. The scrutiny of pupils' work at Key Stage 1, carried out by the co-ordinator, effectively identified the shortfall in time allocated to the subject leading to superficial coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study. This has been rectified and has had a positive impact on standards at Key Stage 1.

107 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show real fascination in their experiments on light and in the hard-thinking discussions on floating and sinking. They behave like a community of scientists solving problems and come to appreciate something of the provisional nature of science as they account for and compare their findings.

109 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

109

109 **Information technology**

108 Standards in information and communication technology are above the levels expected in the National Curriculum for pupils aged seven and eleven. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident users of computers. They load programs and change the colour and size of fonts as a matter of course. They learn click and drag techniques to create their own town and learn to flip and rotate shapes. They use investigative skills to work their way through a program that tells the story of a family at Christmas. Pupils enjoy using the listening centre along with a copy of the book to which they are listening. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident and competent users of a wide range of programs in many curricular areas. In art, they produce computer-generated pictures that require skills in the use of shape, colour and composition as well as a good knowledge of the computer program. They demonstrate good skills in word processing, for example, when they write their own book reviews and incorporate clip art pictures to illustrate their writing. Pupils use the local authority's Intranet service with considerable skill to discover information about life in Victorian England. They show good skill and patience when the system apparently locks or crashes and they are well practiced in using first principles to regain information that has apparently been lost.

109 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in information technology as they mature. Pupils in Year 1 collect information about their friends and use a graph program to present the information to the class. They use a word bank to write a story on which they have worked in class during the literacy hour. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 produce their own newspaper using a mixture of written and computer-generated text. They use CD Roms to find information about the Ancient Greeks and produce maps showing the countries and city states of the time. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 incorporate digital pictures of the day they spent living as Tudors into their written account. They use a language program which tests their skill in spelling and comprehension and records their improvement as they work. Teachers use this information to plan further work for those pupils who may need help. Pupils enjoy working on computers and are aware that they are a powerful learning tool.

110 Direct teaching of information technology was seen in only two lessons. In both the lessons teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the programs and computer conventions, and are able to help pupils who experience difficulties. They encourage pupils to resolve problems for themselves, but intervene appropriately when pupils are becoming frustrated. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate confidence when helping pupils to use computers in other curriculum areas. Thoughtful questioning by teachers enables pupils to solve problems and resolve difficulties. Volunteers and support staff are able to help pupils who experience problems.

111 The school is well resourced. There is a good number of up to date computers in Key Stage 2 classrooms and a growing number in Key Stage 1 classrooms. Key Stage 1 teachers make good use of older technology to teach pupils basic computer conventions and keyboard skills. The school is adopting the national policy for information and communication technology. The co-ordinator, who took on the responsibility in September 1999, hopes that a new scheme of work based on the national policy will be ready for colleagues to use by the beginning of the next academic year. She is keen to ensure that the school uses its technology resources to supplement the work in literacy and numeracy.

112 The school has maintained the quality of work seen during the previous inspection in information technology. It is well placed to make further improvements.

114 **Religious education**

113 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. By the age of seven, pupils have gained an elementary understanding of key elements of Christianity and features of the beliefs and customs of the Sikh community. In occasional lessons pupils achieve above average due to better quality of teaching. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, the pupils recall very well the symbols seen in their Christingles. They know that the orange represented the world, the candle, Jesus the light of the world, the ribbon represents the girdle of God's love, and the sticks the seasons of time. By the end of Key Stage 2, overall attainment is broadly at the level expected, but improving as a result of good teaching. In Year 6 pupils are able to research and sequence birth narratives in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. They re-interpret the accounts in their own words and by combining the two discover the sequence of reported events. They can relate these features to the way Christians celebrate Christmas: for example using candles, the crib, placing angels on Christmas trees, and the significance of the Star of Bethlehem. They know that the Christmas tree came through Prince Albert in the reign of Victoria, integrating their work on the Victorians in history, and so separate sacred and secular elements. They deepen their understanding of world religion.

114 Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress in lessons at Key Stage 2. Progress is good in half the lessons at Key Stage 2, but varies between classes and year groups. Progress is better where teachers are more secure in their subject knowledge. Pupils recall their previous work satisfactorily and build new knowledge, for example of symbolism, of Sikhism and Judaism. They come to appreciate the rules and responsibilities that govern personal, family and community life. By Key Stage 2 pupils have gained enough skill to write sensitive and detailed accounts of the Easter Story which show their understanding and ability to enter into the feelings of others. They interview Christian people to explore their beliefs and compare them with their own. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

115 Pupils respond well in lessons: all have positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils sometimes show reverence, when talking about faith symbols for example. Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively and follow instructions carefully. In a lesson on the Christingle pupils are awe-struck, responding with real delight to the candles which were lit on tables shaped in the form of a cross. At Key Stage 2 pupils make very mature responses to sensitive material. For example, led by skilled teaching they explored the feelings of Joseph on discovering that Mary, his betrothed, was pregnant. 'Furious' and 'confused' were the adjectives used. They are keen to volunteer, for example in answering the teachers' questions, reading aloud or offering opinions. Pupils at Key Stage 1 sing, and in one Key Stage 2 lesson, led by the teacher the class burst into song as it tidied away and ended the lesson on a very positive note.

116 Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and has good features in half the lessons seen at Key Stage 2. Discussions with pupils and staff indicate that the teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved in the last year since a teacher with experience of a major world faith has been appointed. It will take a little longer for this improved quality of teaching to become evident in pupils' attainment. Classes are well managed. Lessons are well planned to help pupils achieve the objectives set out at the start of the lesson although there is undue reliance on photocopied material especially at Key Stage 1. At each key stage, good relationships foster good behaviour in pupils. Teachers give clear explanations and help pupils to express their opinions confidently. Sensitive issues are managed very well especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils are encouraged by their teachers and are motivated, for example, by animated questions or expressive reading. One feature which leads to the overall quality of teaching being satisfactory at Key Stage 1, is a lack of confidence in subject knowledge. Occasionally teachers at Key Stage 2 are more hesitant than they need to be and teach their classes less effectively than they do in other subjects.

117 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced but the school has not given enough thought to the experiences which pupils need to deepen their knowledge and understanding when they return to topics, for example from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. In addition there is still no periodic full assessment of pupils' progress or how well the curriculum is meeting pupils' needs. The school proposes, wisely, to redevelop its scheme of work after the publication of the new Locally Agreed Syllabus in 2000. At that time the school has an opportunity to plan progression more carefully. Currently the subject is taught as a series of discrete topics isolated from previous learning. There is no formal assessment of the subject to promote improvement of individual progress or to help pupils take the subject as seriously as others. The school relies heavily on the subject to extend pupils' understanding of other faiths and the cultures from which they spring. Religious education makes a good contribution to this.

118 The school and the new co-ordinator are poised to grasp effectively the opportunities offered by the publication of the new Agreed Syllabus. The subject has a higher profile in the school than at the time of the last inspection and this is evident in the improving attainment of pupils by the age of eleven.

119 No lessons in art were seen at Key Stage 1, due to the focus being on design and technology in Year 1 and the lessons taking place on Friday afternoon in Year 2. Judgements are therefore based on the scrutiny of pupils' work on display, photographic evidence and teachers' planning. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.

120 At Key Stage 1, pupils have opportunities to handle a range of different resources. They use a range of media evident in the collages and paintings which decorate the classrooms and corridors. Some of the tasks involved are over directed by adults and all pupils do similar tasks and this restricts their creativity. This is particularly noticeable with Christmas cards and calendars on display. In Year 1, pupils successfully copy the work of Jackson Pollock when splashing, dripping and squeezing bright colours of paint onto a mural. They mix two colours and effectively experiment with shades and tones when imitating the work of Robert Bevan in Year 2. There is limited evidence of three-dimensional work in Key Stage 1, other than rockets which were made by pupils in Year 1.

121 Good progress is made in Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities develop their skills and techniques and by the end of the key stage they are producing work of a high quality evident in their paintings of wrapping paper. Pupils in Year 3 have studied portraits and their paintings of Mona Lisa show a close match of colour to the original. In Year 4, pupils have worked in the style of Van Gogh and created their own paintings of sunflowers which show good proportions and shape. They made good attempts at producing winter landscapes using pastels and colour smudging techniques. They have made Greek vases and clay pots which they have decorated. They have also made Greek masks; copying designs from the period carefully, and using a wide range of materials. By the end of the key stage they produce wrapping paper designs starting from a postcard in the centre of their work and continuing the pattern to cover the paper. From a distance it was very difficult to see where the postcards ended and the pupils' painting began as colours had been matched closely to the originals and they had used their observational skills well to copy the shapes and designs. The pupils' written evaluations of their wrapping paper designs show maturity for their age. Pupils are currently undertaking work on landscapes and are making good progress in developing their skills in designing by creating their own patterns which they are weaving. Good progress is also being made in developing observational skills through copying landscape pictures using pastel and paint. They can create eye-catching pictures of landscapes using a computer program. Work in art is often linked to topics being undertaken in other subjects such as history and this effectively reinforces pupils' learning.

122 Pupils respond well to activities, with a very good response in Year 6. They handle the media and materials with care when getting what they need, and tidy away sensibly. They take care not to spoil the work of others when undertaking tasks, work well together, and are constantly evaluating their work. They are willing to persevere when tasks prove challenging, for example when weaving their landscape designs. They listen to advice and guidance when offered by adults and follow it, for example when creating winter landscapes they colour the background first before drawing the trees. Pupils settle quickly to their tasks and most work with enthusiasm.

123The work on display at Key Stage 1 indicates that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good with one third of lessons being very good. Lessons are well planned to make effective use of the media, materials and level of adult support available. In the very good lessons, pupils are organised into groups with each group undertaking a different activity requiring various levels of adult support. The classroom support assistants are deployed well to offer as much support as possible where it is most needed. Pupils are actively encouraged to solve their own problems through questions being posed, or in discussion with others. A brisk pace is sustained throughout and there are high expectations of behaviour. Computers are used effectively to support the work on landscapes. In other lessons, demonstrations are used effectively to show pupils how to approach the task and this is beneficial to their progress. The evaluation of work by pupils themselves towards the end of lessons is a good feature of all the teaching seen. Teachers mount pupils' work in many attractive murals and other displays around the school and this makes it colourful and stimulating to work in.

124The school has sustained the good provision evident in the previous report and has overcome the weakness in curriculum planning. The scheme of work is based effectively on developing pupils' skills through key learning objectives. The good resources for three-dimensional work are being used in Key Stage 2, but three-dimensional work is less evident in Key Stage 1. The co-ordination of art is currently being undertaken by the headteacher as the coordinator has left the school. This is not ideal and is only a temporary measure. Pupils' experiences in art contribute positively to their cultural development.

126

126 **Design and technology**

125Pupils in Key Stage 1 including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and produce work of a high quality. The school places considerable emphasis on developing pupils' skills in construction and in planning and evaluating. Pupils of all ages evaluate and amend their work in order to produce work which is well presented and of a high quality.

126All pupils are given good opportunities to design, make and build using a wide variety of different materials and techniques. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with dough, clay, bricks, card boxes and fabrics. They are able to plan and select materials for particular purposes. Year 1 pupils created their own recipe for a fruit salad. Year 2 pupils visited a local textile factory before designing their own T-shirts. They modelled their finished garments for the whole school to admire.

127Skills are developed well in Key Stage 2. Year 4 pupils have designed and made Greek theatre masks. They first researched their designs using CD ROMs. Having completed their designs they evaluated them and looked at ways of improving their designs. Older pupils in Year 5 design their own Tudor villas using a range of joining techniques. In Year 6, pupils use their own carefully thought out designs to create 'landscaped jacket potato'. They adventurously design islands, volcanoes and use foods such as beetroot, baked beans, tomatoes and cheese to create the desired effect. Any modifications are recorded as are ideas that would improve future designs. By the end of the Key Stage pupils consolidate previously acquired skills and solve problems confidently.

128Pupils in both key stages respond well to design technology. In Key Stage 2 they are particularly good in Year 6. They have positive attitudes to their work and are highly motivated. Through design technology pupils are becoming self-critical and independent and responsible for their own actions. They evaluate their own work and that of their classmates with fairness and considerable maturity. When designing their 'landscaped potatoes' pupils were not only responsible for the planning and designing but for collecting all the necessary foods and materials needed. Any pupils who forgot listed materials had to modify their designs before continuing. Pupils are keen to be involved in practical activities; they enjoy both planning and making artefacts. They put considerable effort into their work and persevere at difficult tasks. They work very hard to improve their finished designs and are rightly proud of their efforts. Pupils use equipment carefully and safely. When called upon to work together pupils co-operate well and share ideas, tools and materials fairly.

129The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 where there are examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, particularly at Key Stage 2 and are supported by good schemes of work and detailed planning. This enables them to be confident and enthusiastic about the subject. Teachers plan and prepare with care. Pupils are given clear instructions and very good support to enable them to improve their designs and develop good skills. Teachers set challenging tasks to match the differing attainment levels of all pupils including those with special educational needs. Tools and materials are of a good quality and resources are well organised and used with safety in mind. Classroom assistants provide good support and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress. Where lessons are very good or excellent teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to be very independent, think of solutions to their design problems for themselves and to work collaboratively in pairs or groups. The subject is well managed by the curriculum coordinator who offers good support and advice to colleagues.

131 **Geography**

1During the inspection, no geography lessons were observed. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers, and an examination of teachers' planning and displays of work around the school.

2Pupils at both key stages including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing subject knowledge and skills.

3Early in Key Stage 1, pupils identify special places in the school, such as the library and dining room. They compare King George's Park and Ashwood Park and are able to express views on attractive and unattractive features of the environment. Pupils know that different types of weather affect people's lives, and that people have to dress according to the weather. Year 2 pupils compare the localities of Wordsley and Bobbington; they use the appropriate vocabulary, such as detached and bungalow to identify the different types of properties in the two areas. Using their mathematical skills, pupils make a tally chart to record the lampposts, post boxes, litter bins, shops and bus stops. Pupils also, as a way of recording their expedition out of school, create their own map of their walk in the locality. Year 2 pupils can name and locate on a map the countries of the United Kingdom. They know that maps have symbols and a key and are able to use compass directions and simple co-ordinates to find places on their own map of Wordsley. They make good use of a computer program to create a map of their own 'made-up' town.

4By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can name the main rivers and mountains in the United Kingdom, and also those in Africa. They research a detailed 'river study', each pupil choosing a river and producing a ten page booklet including photographs as well as script. The studies include the Amazon, Nile, Thames and Severn. Some pupils make use of their word processing skills to research and to produce their projects. Pupils also examine the journey of a river and take part in a field study to look in a practical way at the depth, width and flow of a local river. They record their findings and are able to draw a correctly labelled transect view of the river. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can follow compass directions, name the oceans and continents and are able to compare their own home with that of a person living in St Lucia. Pupils know the difference between natural and built features and use their developing literacy skills to produce an advertising leaflet showing the main features of Wordsley including the attractive features for the prospective visitor. Year 5 pupils compare a village in Africa with their own, looking not just at weather and housing but also such health issues as the different infant mortality rates.

5Pupils are enthusiastic about geography. Year 6 pupils recall with glee their river study at Bourney Brook, laughing at the recollection of the visit and full of enthusiasm for their next geography module which they report will be on conservation. They enjoy using libraries and the Internet to research their 'Fact Files' built up on countries of their choice, such as Latvia, Spain and Finland.

6The previous report identified that topics in geography were too far apart and had a detrimental effect on pupils' progress and attainment. Geography is still taught in topics, which is why no lessons were seen during the inspection; however these are now closer together with pupils having one geography topic each term. The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them indicate teaching is at least satisfactory.

7During the last year, the co-ordinators have consulted the Local Education Authority advisor and the school has worked to ensure that the scheme of work provides a systematic build up of knowledge and skills over the key stages. The two co-ordinators monitor the work effectively, by informal discussion and by examining the displays made by the different classes when they have completed their module of work.

138 **History**

8Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and judgements are made by examining teachers' planning, looking at previous work and from talking with pupils. Pupils have a good sense of times past as they examine photographs of old Wordsley and try to decide what has changed and what has remained the same. They also read a story set in post war Britain and use contemporary artefacts such as a black chip pan and a washer posher to think about the lifestyle of their grandparents. When infant pupils look at photographs of their own parents from babyhood to the present day they begin to understand that things change through the passage of time. Pupils in Year 6 study life in Victorian Britain. They appreciate that living conditions for ordinary people in Victorian times were vastly different from their own. They understand that many of the freedoms and living conditions we take for granted are in place because of the reforming zeal of concerned people of that time. For example, they consider how they would feel if they spent their day working down a mine. Pupils recognise that there are many different sources of information available including books, photographs and the Internet. Year 5 pupils learn that Henry VIII married six times and they consider the political influences of the day that impelled the king to act as he did. They also look at the different forms of entertainment available for rich and poor people. When thinking about the differences between that time and the present day one pupil said, 'Technology was not as advanced in those days.' Pupils in Year 4 study the battles between the Ancient Greeks and the Persians and they are aware that Alexander the Great united many nations. They are surprised to learn that the language of the Ancient Greeks survives today in many of the words we use today such as 'telephone' and 'geography'. Year 3 pupils look at photographs of artefacts and records to discover that the Ancient Egyptians grew crops, were fine artists and skilful engineers.

9Pupils have consistently good attitudes to history. It is clear from talking to them that they enjoy the lessons. Pupils in the junior classes behave well and use resources very sensibly. They are skilful when accessing the internet and are not discouraged by the whims of the technology. When pupils studying the Tudors read a play describing the reasons for Henry VIII's marriages they are animated and lively but co-operate well. In many of the lessons seen there is a busy, inquisitive atmosphere as pupils use the different kinds of resources available to them to discover something of life long ago. Pupils identify with the children from times past and are often appalled at the conditions under which they lived. In small groups they discuss social and moral issues sensibly and give clear reports to their friends when the class comes together.

10The scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate the overall quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. All of the teaching seen at Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory and two thirds of the lessons observed during the inspection had good features. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well and provide the pupils with a number of interesting and stimulating sources of information. This ensures the sustained interest of the children in all lessons seen. The hallmark of many lessons is the way in which teachers make history come to life through good story telling and the careful selection of material which they know will engage the interest of the pupils. For example in Year 3 where groups of pupils researched different aspects of life in Ancient Egypt using pictures, written information and computers. Pupils are given tasks that are relevant to the subject, but do not always offer sufficient challenge to a small number of higher attainers. Teachers have good understanding of the subject and they know the pupils well. This enables them to relate historical facts and ideas to the lives of the pupils at the present time. The very good relationship between teachers and pupils is a significant contributory factor to the enjoyment seen in lessons.

11There are adequate resources for the subject. The school enlivens the pupils' experience by the visit of a theatre group when they are studying the Tudor and Viking periods. Pupils spend the whole day playing different roles and wearing costumes of the period. Grandparents come in to tell the youngest pupils what life was like for them at the age of 5 or 6. The school makes good use of visits within the local area, including the nearby canal, and to places of interest such as the Black Country Museum.

143 At the time of the previous inspection there was limited development of historical skills and the key elements of history were not always included in teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has tackled these problems and has introduced a scheme of work and medium term planning which is exemplary. It ensures that pupils are given very good experiences of all the periods of history that they study. The hard work undertaken and support given by the co-ordinator is appreciated by her colleagues, and they make very good use of a first class teaching resource. The coordinator is now collecting material for a portfolio of work and hopes that it will be in place at the beginning of the next academic year. The school's provision for history has improved markedly since the previous inspection

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143 **Music**

12Pupils in Key Stage 1 including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs make very good progress in the development of their musical skills.

13All pupils have very good opportunities to develop their singing skills through very well planned singing lessons and assemblies. Emphasis is placed on pupils improving the quality of their singing. They sing with accuracy, expression, controlled phrasing and very good articulation. Pupils sing songs such as 'Swing low sweet chariot' in three parts. They have a good understanding of the difference between harmony and unison.

14 Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, and cultural development. Music from different cultures is used very effectively to create a reverent atmosphere in assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to listen closely to music and to make comments on its origins, composer and style and whether they like or dislike it. Pupils have opportunities to perform in local music and arts festivals and they perform concerts for senior citizens, parents and friends

15 In class music lessons in Key Stage 1 pupils are learning to play a wide range of percussion instruments. Year 2 pupils select the most appropriate instrument to represent animal noises and play them as part of a class performance.

16 In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in the development of composition and listening skills. Year 4 pupils composed pieces of Spartan and Athenian music. They recorded their compositions and evaluated them in order to improve their performance. Year 6 pupils show a very good understanding of pitch, rhythm and musical notation. They recognise, sing and hold a given note. Working in pairs they work with recorders, guitars, chime bars, and key boards to discover chords. They are developing a good 'ear' for music and determine which notes sound right together to form a pleasant sounding chord.

17 Pupils' attitudes to music are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2, reflecting the better quality of teaching. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are proud of their musical achievements and put considerable effort and time into improving their performances and achieving high standards. They become engrossed in discovering their own chords and enjoy co-operating with their classmates to compose a piece of music. Pupils with hearing impairment enjoy music lessons and are fully included. Their 'hearing' friends are eager to sign for them to explain the tasks they are expected to complete.

18 Teaching of music is always satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 it is consistently very good due to the curriculum coordinator, who has a high level of subject expertise, taking classes other than her own. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress and enthusiasm for music. The teachers in Key Stage 2 have very high expectations of pupils' musical knowledge and skills. Lessons are motivating and challenging and as a result pupils achieve very high standards of performance and musical appreciation.

150 **Physical education**

19 Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have sound control of their movements. All pupils know that exercise has effects on the body and check heartbeats simply by placing a hand on the chest before and after movement. In the best lessons, seven year olds show that they can control a ball with considerable dexterity. They move it slowly and more quickly with the inside of the foot, starting and stopping it accurately and with great concentration. They can pass a ball and use skills in dodging to intercept a partner and although some find these activities difficult, pupils work with great energy.

20 By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils succeed in a wide range of activities. In dance and gymnastics they achieve high standards and in games such as netball and soccer, attainment is above the expected level for eleven year olds. In dance and gymnastics pupils move beautifully with grace and discipline. They develop interesting sequences in response to rhythmic musical stimuli such as 'Caramina Burana' and adapt them well when a partner is absent. They rise to the challenge of accommodating new conditions such as a barrier or a smaller area in which to work. Often pupils start activities with rapt attention; a necessary focus for performance.

21 Specialist teaching of non-swimmers by school staff has enabled all but about one fifth of pupils to progress to swimming unaided by the end of Year 3. This is a significant achievement. Other swimmers increase their level of skills each week. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn to use space well. They practise their new skills effectively, for example, when dribbling a ball, or learning to be part of a small team. Although some pupils with special educational needs find it hard to understand what is required of them with adult support they learn to succeed. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made very good progress building on their earlier development, particularly their skills in self-evaluation and they comment in a mature manner on what they could improve or adapt in future. They gain confidence in their abilities and practise hard in order to improve their performance. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers increase pupils' confidence and skills in all aspects of the subject.

22 Pupils greatly enjoy their work at both key stages and respond with enthusiasm to their teachers. They listen carefully and respond quickly and obediently to instructions so that maximum use of time is possible. Classes work very well and co-operatively. Alone, with a partner or in a group, the arrangements develop pupils' physical and social skills. Pupils are very well motivated and highly committed to their lessons. An outstanding feature of pupils' response is their ability to evaluate performance. Group by group they offer constructive criticism to their friends. All pupils receive evaluation as helpful and positive and this builds self-esteem and confidence and helps all to make progress.

23 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and has good features in one quarter of lessons. Teaching is very good at Key Stage 2 where pupils are taught by two specialist teachers. The best lessons at Key Stage 1 have a good pace. They are carefully planned and start with good warm-up sessions; the atmosphere is usually very productive and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work. Some opportunities extend to pupils' skills are missed, for example in lessons with the reception pupils. Although the children find great joy in moving to music not enough attention is given to enhancing quality, for example by stretching and extending movement. Teachers' very secure subject knowledge enhances progress markedly at Key Stage 2. Lessons build carefully on the previous progress of pupils, effective use is made of praise and enhances pupils' skills to a high standard. Teachers draw attention to how performance can be improved by summarising the comments made. In addition, pupils are given opportunities to watch videos of their work to identify successful strategies and areas for development. This is a notable strength in the teaching. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly during lessons against a series of objectives. Pupils are trained to work safely and they handle apparatus and equipment carefully.

24 Pupils have access to an exceptionally broad curriculum. In addition to their work in lessons, a good programme of widely enjoyed extra-curricular opportunities is exemplary. Teachers run gymnastics clubs at both key stages, and as appropriate, netball, badminton, soccer and cross-country training. Pupils also benefit from the visits of professional coaches, for example in tennis, cricket and rugby, as part of the 'Top Sport' scheme. This broad range of experiences raises pupils' expectations and progress significantly. Teams are very successful in local competitive sports.

156 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

156 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

1The school was inspected over a period of four days by a team of seven inspectors, including a lay inspector. More than 78 hours were spent observing 109 lessons or parts of lessons. Approximately 8 hours were spent interviewing staff, governors and parents. In addition assemblies, registrations, play times, lunch times and extra-curricular activities were observed.

2A sample of written and practical work covering pupils of all ages and abilities was scrutinised. This took a further 14 hours. Inspectors spent over 4 hours talking to pupils about their work and perceptions of the school and hearing a sample of pupils read. Inspectors examined teachers' plans, and a full range of documentation, data, records and reports.

3A meeting attended by four parents was held to seek their views. Questionnaires were sent to all parents to gain their perceptions of the work of the school, with 153 being returned out of 413 sent out. In addition ten letters were received. In total over 107 hours was spent gathering first hand evidence.

159 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

159 **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	354	18	75	57
Nursery Unit/School	30FTE	0	5	N/a

159 **Teachers and classes**

159 **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	17.40
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	20.3

159 **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	136.5

159 **Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	30

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

Total number of education support staff:	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	64
Average class size:	27

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	651,475
Total Expenditure	656,817
Expenditure per pupil*	1737.61
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,722
Balance carried forward to next year	5380

* This includes additional funding for the resource base for the deaf.

Number of questionnaires sent out: 413
 Number of questionnaires returned: 153

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	37	56	5	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	46	52	3	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	52	19	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	33	60	5	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	37	56	6	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	34	59	4	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	58	7	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29	65	2	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	58	9	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	40	52	7	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	45	48	5	2	0

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%

Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.

159 Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues of concern raised by parents. There were expressions of appreciation for the support staff give by attending out of school functions organised by the Parent Teacher Association.