

INSPECTION REPORT

Gilbertstone Primary School
Birmingham

LEA area : Birmingham

Unique Reference Number : 103201

Inspection Number: 188926

Headteacher : Mrs F Laurie

Reporting inspector: Mr D Speakman
20086

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th November 1999

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clay Lane South Yardley Birmingham B26 1 EH
Telephone number:	0121 706 1474
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Hildreth
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D Speakman	Mathematics Geography History	Attainment and progress Leadership and management
Mrs M Jacobs (Lay Inspector)		Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs M Griffiths	Design and technology Art Physical education Under fives Special educational needs	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr R Eaton	Science Music Religious education	Curriculum and assessment
Mr D Williams	English Information technology Equal opportunities	Teaching Efficiency

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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

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

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 7
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 20
Attendance 25

Quality of education provided

Teaching 26
The curriculum and assessment 38
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 45
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 50
Partnership with parents and the community 57

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 63
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 71
The efficiency of the school 76

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five 85
English, mathematics and science 94
Other subjects or courses 131

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 162
Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards in most subjects especially English at Key Stage 2, where standards are very high.
- The headteacher leads the school very well and it is very efficiently managed.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables very high standards to be achieved in pupils' attitudes, relationships and personal development. A very good ethos is established.
- The provision for children under five is very good and enables them to make a very good start to their schooling.
- The support, guidance and welfare provided for pupils including those with special educational needs, is of a very high standard.
- There is a very strong partnership between the school, parents and the community.
- The school provides very good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school does not achieve standards of presentation in pupils' work that accurately reflect the high standards achieved.
- II. Procedures for improving attendance levels are satisfactory but recognition of good attendance could be further developed.

This is a very good school with many strengths and a few minor weaknesses, which are far outweighed by what the school does well. These will form the basis of the governors' action plan that will be sent to parents and guardians of all pupils in the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Overall the school has made very good progress in improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection, which took place in April 1996. On appointment she conducted a full audit, identifying a range of weaknesses that needed attention. These were consistent with the findings of the inspection. They addressed planning, raising standards and improving the learning environment. All of these aspects of school improvement have been well met and very good progress has been made in these respects. There has been very good progress in meeting the key issues identified in the previous report. There has been good progress in preparing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in information technology. The school has made a bid under the National Grid for Learning and funds are now available to set up a new computer suite in the new building early next year. Schemes of work for all subjects are in place, which support teaching well and promote continuity in learning. Very good progress has been made in meeting this key issue. Further considerable progress has been made in improving the assessment and recording of pupils' work to be used in planning the next stages of learning. Good systems are in place to support this. Improved school development planning processes have been achieved through strengthening arrangements to monitor and evaluate what is being taught in each subject. There is a clear school development plan that details objectives, activities, contribution to school aims, resources and costings, success criteria, monitoring systems and evaluation methods for the current year. It also takes account of an assessment of the previous years' progress in meeting its targets. There is further detail that looks beyond the current year and lists school priorities for the future years. This meets the requirements of the key issue to improve development planning well and very good progress has been made in this respect. Excellent progress has been made in improving the learning environment. The old school has been demolished and a new school building is nearing completion for full occupation early in the New Year. Overall the school has made very good progress in improvement since the previous inspection.

There has been an improvement in standards attained since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be generally in line with national expectations and progress was mainly satisfactory. Now attainment is judged to be above average by the time pupils are five and at the end of both key stages. All pupils now make good progress.

Bearing in mind the very good quality in the leadership and management of the school, the good quality of teaching, the potential of the new building, and the commitment of all staff and governors to raise standards, the school has an excellent capacity to sustain current good quality and to improve where there are weaknesses.

• **Standards in subjects**

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

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

well above average **A**

above

B

average

C

below

D

well below average **E**

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in English is above average. In mathematics and science standards have been maintained and remain above average. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations and in religious education they meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The progress that pupils make in all foundation subjects is good. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English is well above average and in mathematics and science it is above average. The below average grades in science in the table refer to the test results of pupils who have left the school. Pupils currently in Year 6 show above average knowledge and understanding of science. In information technology standards are in line with national expectations and attainment in religious education is again in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Progress is good in all non core subjects, but satisfactory in physical education. The previous report criticised the standard of handwriting, which has now improved, but the presentation of pupils' work is sometimes unsatisfactory.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Very good	Good	Very good
Mathematics	Very good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Religious education		Good	Good
Other subjects	Very good	Good	Good

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and it promotes high standards. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost every lesson seen. Teaching of children under five is good or better in 85 per cent of lessons. On one occasion it was excellent. It is very good overall. Teaching at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall with teaching in 75 per cent of lessons being good, very good or excellent at both. Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teaching in mathematics and science is good at both key stages. In information technology insufficient lessons were observed to enable a judgement to be made. Teaching is generally good in all foundation subjects and in religious education at both key stages. However there are some minor weaknesses in lessons that are judged to be satisfactory overall.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in classrooms and around the school. This results in a calm and ordered school in which a very good learning atmosphere is established.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are keen to come to school and are punctual.
Ethos*	Very good. The climate for working, attitudes and relationships are very good. The school is committed to achieving high standards.
Leadership and management	Very good. There is a very clear vision for the future of the school and staff and governors work well together. The school's aims, values and policies are very well implemented.
Curriculum	Is very good for children under five and is good at Key Stages 1 and 2. It is enriched by a very good provision of visits and visitors.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and enables pupils to make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. It is good for their spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the school. There are good arrangements for the professional development of all staff.
Value for money	The school provides very good value for money.

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

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

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
III. They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems. IV. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. V. High standards of behaviour are achieved VI. Children like school.	VII. Some parents do not feel that the school VIII. They do not feel that their complaints are IX. They are not happy with the work that children

During the inspection, inspectors found that they agreed with the positive aspects of the school reported by parents. Their view of parents on homework is not substantiated. Homework is used effectively to support and pupils' work in school. There is no evidence to suggest that complaints are not handled well. Opportunities are offered for parents to be involved in school life.

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KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are no key issues for the school to address. However, the governors should consider the following minor issues to further improve the quality of education.

1. Improve the quality of the presentation of pupils' work so that it more accurately reflects the high standards achieved in the school.
(Paragraphs 9, 14, 16, 35, 96)
2. Review the strategies for promoting good attendance, and act upon the findings in order to improve attendance from satisfactory to good.
(Paragraph 54)
3. Improve the minor weaknesses in teaching.
(Paragraph 35, 36)

3. INTRODUCTION

3. Characteristics of the school

- 1 Gilbertstone is a primary school administered by the City of Birmingham Local Education Authority. It is situated in South Yardley, which is about six miles to the south east of Birmingham city centre. Pupils come from a variety of homes that consist of privately owned and rented houses. The housing is mainly post war semi detached. There are 306 pupils aged between four and eleven on roll in the school, which is bigger than other schools of the same type. The school accepts up to 60 children into two reception classes. Children are admitted to school at the start of the academic year in which they become five. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils are divided into mixed age classes, dependent upon age. Admission arrangements are in line with Birmingham Education Authority's Policy on priorities.
- 2 The school is in a phase of total rebuilding. Work on the first phase began in 1997 and the school is now housed in the new junior block and in the administrative and general accommodation areas. The final phase is due for completion in January 2000 and will include the infant accommodation, playground, staffroom, nursery, a physiotherapy suite and a central garden/play area.
- 3 Since the last inspection a large proportion of the staff is new to the school. Nine out of the 15 teachers have joined the school in the last two years.
- 4 The school role has increased slightly since 1994 when there were 278 pupils. The roll has changed slightly each year to the current 306. There is a great deal of housing development in the area and numbers are likely to rise in the near future. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals at 11 per cent is below the national average. Data suggests that attainment on entry to the reception classes is average overall. There are currently three pupils with a statement of special educational need and this figure is in line with the national average. There are 54 pupils on the school's register of special needs. The percentage of pupils with special needs at 15.3 per cent is broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils in the school are white. In addition there are pupils from Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and other black origins. Seventeen pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is very high. There are two pupils that qualify for support through Section 11 funding.
- 5 The governing body has a mission statement, which states that they "aim to provide the highest quality of education for all our pupils by active involvement in decision making and by supporting the policies of our school." The school also has a mission statement: "Gilbertstone Primary School encourages a shared partnership to enable active participation by all concerned which seeks to improve the full development of the child." The aims of the school are underpinned by their commitment to improvement. They state that they aim to do the best for the children in their care by continuously improving. The school aims to provide a challenging programme within a stimulating learning environment of work, which realises each child's needs and potential and fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. They aim to ensure that a high priority is given to the establishment of the key skills of oracy, literacy and numeracy and have raised standards in these areas of work. They intend to provide a caring and secure environment where children feel valued, confident and happy and where they develop high standards of courtesy, self discipline and regard for others, encouraging children to learn about the way other people live and develop an understanding and a respect for their own and other religions. They aim to ensure equality of opportunity for all and value the positive contribution that parents, carers and the wider community can make to children's education. Encouragement for children to take responsibility for their environment and understand how they can effect change is forms the basis of another school aim, as does the promotion of healthy attitudes towards learning and leisure.
- 6 The current whole school focus is to improve provision and thus raise standards in information and communications technology, continue to implement the National Literacy Strategy and to introduce the National Numeracy Project. There are ongoing developments in all other areas of the curriculum and in assessment.

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	26	15	41

National Curriculum Test Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	22	23	24
	Girls	13	13	15
	Total	35	36	39
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	85(71)	85(73)	96(78)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	24	26	25
	Girls	13	15	15
	Total	37	41	40
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90(76)	100(80)	98(82)
	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	19	25	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	23	20	19
	Total	36	34	32
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84(56)	77(44)	72(74)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	13	9	15
	Girls	23	14	24
	Total	36	23	39
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84(79)	54(77)	89(88)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

6 Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.9
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.016
	National comparative data	0.5

6 Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	3
Permanent	0

6 Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	31
Satisfactory or better	99
Less than satisfactory	1

6 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6 Attainment and progress

- 7 The proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 or above in the national tests in 1999 for seven year olds in reading and writing was broadly in line with the national average and was well above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above average in reading and writing but well below in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the school's results in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 was well above the national average in English, above average in mathematics and well below in science when compared with the national average. The percentage of pupils who attained Level 5 or higher was very high in English, above average in mathematics and broadly average in science. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 or higher was well above average in English, above in mathematics and well below average in science.
- 8 There has been an improvement in standards attained since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be generally in line with national expectations and progress was mainly satisfactory. Now attainment is judged to be above average by the time pupils are five and at the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language, now make good progress.
- 9 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics and science has been maintained and remains above average. Standards in English have improved and are now above average. Standards in information technology are now average, whereas they were below average at the time of the last inspection. Standards in religious education remain at satisfactory levels, as at the time of the previous inspection. The progress that pupils make in all foundation subjects is good whereas it was generally satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English is well above average and was judged to be average at the time of the previous inspection. Attainment in mathematics and science has improved and is now above average. In information technology standards have improved from below average and are now average. Attainment in religious education is now in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. At the time of the last inspection, standards and progress were judged to be satisfactory in all non core subjects except in history where they were above average and unsatisfactory in music. Progress is now good in all non core subjects, but satisfactory in physical education. The previous report criticised the standard of handwriting, which has now improved, but the presentation of pupils' work is still often unsatisfactory.
- 10 In each of the four years between 1996 and 1998 the trends in average levels followed the same pattern for boys and girls. The average levels remained close for both genders. There is no significant difference in the pattern of levels of attainment in any of the core subjects at any year. Inspection evidence indicates that there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 11 Assessments completed within the first few weeks of entry indicate that the overall attainment on entry to the reception classes is average. Children under five make good progress and achieve the desirable learning outcomes for children at five in all the six areas of learning. Particular strengths are children's attainment in personal and social development and in physical development. Pupils enter school with standards that are at least in line and sometimes above average, particularly in their physical development and personal and social skills.
- 12 Pupils at both key stages make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and pupils make good progress. In religious education and information technology standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and progress is satisfactory. Progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education is good. There is insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement on progress in music. At Key Stage 2, pupils make very good progress and attain standards that are well above average. Progress is good in maths and science and standards are above average. The well below average grade for science refer to test results for pupils who are no longer in school. Pupils currently in Year 6 show above average knowledge and understanding of science. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology, religious education and in physical education, attaining standards that match the national expectations. Progress is good in art, design and technology, geography, history and music.

- 13 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets that are set for them. This is largely due to the good teaching and the high quality of support both in and out of the classroom. Work is mostly matched to their individual needs and linked appropriately to targets on individual education plans.
- 13 Standards in the core skills of reading, writing and number are good. However there are weaknesses in the presentation of pupils' work across the curriculum. Standards in the use of information technology are appropriate in other subjects.
- 14 By the age of seven pupils attainment in English is above average and by 11, attainment is well above. Test results show that pupils make good progress in English at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. The attainment of seven year olds in speaking and listening is, overall, above average. Pupils express themselves well. They make suitable responses to teachers' questions. They listen very carefully to the opinions of others. They discuss matters of immediate interest. At Key Stage 1, pupils' reading is broadly in line with the national average. Many pupils are beginning to read with confidence. They recognise a good range of words on sight and can sound out words. They have an increasing knowledge of sound blends. They know how to use the context of the story to help them identify unfamiliar words. The attainment in writing is close to the national average with a slightly greater proportion of pupils obtaining above average attainments. Most pupils write in sentences. Many know how to use full stops and capital letters.
- 15 Pupils performed very well in the 1999 national English tests for 11 year olds and attained standards that are well above the national average. Over half of the year group attained the higher Level 5. These results show that there has been a significant improvement in standards since the school was last inspected. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in English is well above average and pupils speak confidently in a range of settings. They listen carefully to the opinions of others. They are able to convey their thoughts and feelings clearly. They read with expression. Lower attaining pupils listen and talk confidently but they use a more limited vocabulary. At the end of the key stage the vast majority of pupils are fluent, competent and independent readers. They read aloud with expression and bring out the meaning of the text very clearly. Most read regularly for pleasure or to gain information. Pupils' attainment in writing by the age of 11 is well above average. Year 6 pupils write extended pieces, which are well organised and very imaginative. Higher attaining pupils use complex sentence constructions and paragraphs very competently. They know when to use quotation marks, apostrophes and exclamation marks. They have a good understanding of standard English and recognise when alternatives can be used. Pupils are able to write in different styles, for example, they realise that a job application letter must appeal itself to the reader in terms of content, style and standards of presentation. By the end of the key stage most pupils have developed a neat cursive handwriting style. Work is nearly always written in ink. However, there is a lack of consistency in the standards of presentation in different subjects.
- 16 In mathematics, pupils at Key Stage 1 competently count, read, write and order numbers accurately. Pupils extend their knowledge well by counting forwards and backwards in twos and threes accurately recalling the answers to addition bonds with numbers up to 20. Higher attaining pupils recognise place value in numbers to a 100 and effectively and quickly use a hundred square to add 10 to numbers, readily recognising the patterns established. They have a good knowledge of both two and three dimensional shapes, recognising and naming those around them and more specifically in mathematical situations. Pupils have a good idea of time, realistically quoting what they are able to do in a set time. Pupils make good use of the opportunities provided for them to investigate in a good range of mathematical situations. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils work with numbers confidently. Most accurately and quickly perform mental calculations. Pupils have a good understanding of place value. They know that to multiply a number by 10, they move each digit one place to the left and do not just add a zero. Older pupils apply different ways of calculating the answers to multiplication problems where the two numbers are greater than 10. They show a good knowledge of factors and a quick recall of multiplication tables. They use their knowledge of number to accurately calculate answers to division questions. Pupils understand the ideas of metric measures of length, having a sound idea of the size of a metre and use this well to estimate accurately heights and lengths. They have a good idea of what a centimetre is and estimate smaller lengths accurately. Pupils confidently say which measurement, centimetre, metre or kilometre is appropriate for measuring different distances. They have a secure knowledge of a wide range of aspects of number. Pupils know a good range of facts about solid shapes and they know the names. They identify which lines are parallel to each other and can describe the properties of parallel lines accurately. Their knowledge and understanding of graphs is good. They use their knowledge of percentages to draw pie charts accurately and to interpret the information. They are able to calculate the mean and the range of samples of data. Pupils have a good knowledge of probability and work with likely and less likely events, using the 0 to 1 probability scale. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 investigate problems at an appropriate speed and level. They organise their work in a clear and methodical way.
- 17 In science pupils understand the experimental process well and are clearly used to asking the question "what if?" and

experimenting to find out. At Key Stage 1, pupils know that chocolate melts when it becomes hot and that water turns into steam. They understand that some changes like this can be reversed and that some cannot. At Key Stage 2, pupils have a good grasp of what friction is and how it has sometimes to be overcome. They had good ideas for helping to move the heavy box. Some showed more advanced ideas by designing footwear for slippery surfaces. Older pupils have a good knowledge of electrical circuits and understand how to make electricity flow through a given circuit. Some of the most able could apply this knowledge to other situations. Pupils no longer have difficulty remembering scientific terminology as previously reported and they now have a good science vocabulary.

18 The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and is taking the same approach to the introduction of the National Numeracy Project, the effectiveness of which is good. Their implementation is having a positive impact upon standards and pupils use their literacy skills across the curriculum well, such as when they discuss artefacts in history. They make good use of their numeracy skills, for example, representing science results as charts and graphs, and in measuring in design and technology. Information technology is used regularly in English to aid the writing of stories and poems.

19 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

19 Children who are under five in the reception classes show lively interest in their work. They listen and concentrate well and already understand the right of others to speak and be heard, for example during circle time. In science they wait their turn patiently for blind tasting and accept if they are not chosen. Children relate well to each other and to adults. They are willing to help each other on the computer and with dressing after physical education lessons. Most children can look after themselves and be trusted to go sensibly to the toilet. They have settled well into the routines of school life. Their behaviour is good.

20 Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their work. The majority of parents feel that the school promotes good attitudes and values. Pupils listen very well to teachers and respect each other's right to speak and be heard. There are high levels of racial harmony in the school. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work and concentrate hard. They persevere with tasks and are eager to answer questions and to participate in discussion. Pupils take a pride in showing their work and talking about what they are doing, but presentation is variable. Some pupils produce neat, well finished pieces of work, but there is also untidy work with inconsistent use of pen or pencil. Pupils use the library and computers reliably and without the need for the direct supervision of their teacher.

21 Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. Parents are pleased with standards of behaviour. Pupils are attentive and polite in lessons. In the few lessons where response is satisfactory rather than good, this is directly linked to teaching. During the week of the inspection, the school was housed in what will be the junior building with the Years 5 and 6 classes in mobile classrooms. Pupils of all ages have responded very well to the difficulties this causes. They move sensibly around school, conscious that other classes are working. On the playground, which is currently rather cramped, pupils play well together, usually respect their designated areas and respond well to lunchtime supervisors. There is a strong emphasis on positive discipline and pupils receive rewards for good work, effort and good behaviour with pride. They also understand the consequences of poor behaviour. Two pupils were temporarily excluded last year having failed to respond to all the school's strategies.

22 Relationships between pupils of all ages and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils are friendly and respectful towards volunteer helpers and visiting adults. At lunchtimes, supervisors actively involve themselves with pupils and encourage play. The supervisors record both good and poor behaviour at lunchtime in special books that are passed back to class teachers every day. Playground rules are posted on large, bright boards so pupils fully understand how they are expected to behave. Any incidents of bullying are discussed and dealt with very quickly. Pupils help each other willingly, cooperating well for grouped and paired tasks.

23 There are many opportunities for pupils to make a significant contribution to the school community. Pupils have been elected from each class to serve as school councillors. They meet with the headteacher regularly to put forward ideas and suggestions for changes and improvements. They are also consulted when policies, such as the behaviour and discipline policy, are reviewed. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 are appointed as monitors and carry out their roles with care and pride. They are equally conscientious about unglamorous tasks such as checking toilets at lunchtime, as about more exciting jobs such as fetching stock for teachers. Two older pupils play with younger children at lunchtime. Pupils in every class are appointed as monitors and help willingly and efficiently. Art monitors in Years 3 and 4 clear away after the lesson quietly and quickly, leaving tables clean and tidy. Pupils work independently and without direct adult supervision, allowing teachers to concentrate on one group without interruption.

24 **Attendance**

24 Attendance based on last year's figures is satisfactory at about the national average. Attendance figures for this term are improving. Unauthorised absence is below the national average because parents are very conscientious about informing school for reasons of absence. Pupils mostly arrive punctually to school. Registers are properly marked and collated. The statutory requirements for the recording and reporting of absence are met.

25 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

25 **Teaching**

25 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and it promotes high standards. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost every lesson seen. Teaching for children under five is good or better in 85 per cent of lessons. On one occasion it was excellent. It is very good overall. Teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall, with teaching in 75 per cent of lessons being good, very good or excellent at both key stages. Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teaching in mathematics and science is good at both key stages. In information technology insufficient lessons were observed to enable a judgement to be made. Teaching is generally good in all foundation subjects and in religious education at both key stages.

26 The teaching of children in the reception classes is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge and a clear understanding of how children learn. Expectations are very high. Teachers' planning is excellent and good methods and organisation together with good management of the children have a direct impact on the good progress they make. Teachers address all areas of learning appropriately in their planning and ensure that children receive a balance of each area throughout the week. The use and quality of day to day assessment is excellent. This enables appropriate targets for work to be set. Teachers create a very positive atmosphere for learning. They keep activities moving at a lively pace and make good use of time and resources. Some excellent teaching was observed. In these lessons the use of planning, assessment and recording was of the highest quality. Relationships with the children were excellent, as was use of time. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties.

27 The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because the subject knowledge of teachers has improved, for example, in design and technology and in literacy and numeracy. Subjects now have schemes of work to support effectively teachers' planning. Lesson planning and teaching are of a high quality and are regularly monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and senior staff. Teachers plan work which is now more challenging and their higher expectations are evident. Teachers use the procedures for assessing the progress of pupils well and pupils' work is now marked more consistently.

28 In general, teachers throughout the school have good subject knowledge. They present lessons well, confidently and capably. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses. Within lessons, for example, in English and mathematics, pupils are appropriately grouped. This enables the work set to have appropriate challenge for pupils of differing abilities including those with special educational needs.

29 Teachers' planning is very good. They submit their lesson plans to members of the senior management team and to coordinators for evaluation and comment. Each lesson now has a clear learning objective, which is clearly explained to the pupils at the start of every lesson. The well structured lessons often include both class and group activities and time is allocated at the end of each lesson to summarise what has been learned. Planning for literacy is very good. It is good for the recently introduced numeracy lessons. Teachers take every opportunity both within these and other lessons to develop pupils' skills in these key areas.

30 The methods and organisation used by teachers are good. They are varied and appropriate. Lessons are introduced well with clear explanations of what pupils are expected to learn. There is a good balance between questioning, discussion, information and pupil activity. Careful thought is given to the needs of pupils across the ability range and to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Methods are appropriately linked to the targets on individual education plans. Support assistants are used well.

31 Teachers manage pupils very well, applying the detailed behaviour and discipline policy consistently. Praise and verbal encouragement is used constructively. All teachers work hard to create a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere in their classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to try hard, to work hard and to enjoy their learning. Teachers maintain effective control of their pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school reward scheme is used well, as is the behaviour management policy.

- 32 Teachers' use of day to day assessment is good. The information gained is used to plan the next stages in learning. There is a detailed assessment policy. Each class has an agreed homework timetable. Good use is made of homework to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Pupils' work is regularly and carefully marked, consistently following the whole school marking policy. Teachers, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2, indicate to pupils the levels they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Teachers give pupils regular encouragement through their verbal and written comments.
- 33 Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants. Children with identified learning difficulties in the reception classes receive prompt additional support and in particular those with emerging reading difficulties. This enables these pupils to make good progress. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language and ensure that these pupils have full access to the learning opportunities lessons provide.
- 34 There are no major weaknesses in teaching and there are many strengths. Teachers continue to work hard to improve their skills and knowledge of subjects and of their pupils. Teachers within year groups plan cooperatively and receive good support from subject coordinators. These partnerships are effective. However, occasionally tasks are too demanding for some pupils, who become frustrated that they cannot complete the work set. Again, occasionally in literacy hours, the time allowed for pupils to complete their tasks is insufficient. This has a negative effect on the standards of presentation achieved and the learning taking place. Quite frequently, teachers' work on the "blackboard" does not match the standards expected of pupils, for example, teachers' spellings are sometimes incorrect.
- 35 Most teachers make good attempts to match tasks and resources to pupils' individual needs. However, practice is still inconsistent and needs further development. This applies equally to more able pupils where there has been significant progress since the previous inspection. In many subjects they are now working at more appropriate levels with teachers planning extension activities on a regular basis. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils requiring them and teachers take an active role in setting and monitoring targets. These are used well by most teachers who are aware of targets that have been set for pupils and plan their work accordingly.
- 36 In summary, teaching is consistently good with many strong features throughout the school. These good standards enable pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards in most subjects and in particular English at Key Stage 2 where standards are very high.

37 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 37 The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last report relating to curriculum and assessment. The curriculum for children under five is very good and fully meets the requirements of the areas of learning for pupils of this age. Planning, which reflects desirable learning outcomes is excellent and ensures appropriate development and continuity through to the beginning of Key Stage 1. Planning also identifies the particular needs of groups of children and tasks are matched appropriately. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is very broad and well balanced. There are policy documents for all subjects and for sex education. A drugs education policy is prepared and awaiting the approval of the governing body. The school addresses sex education well as part of science for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and through talks by teachers to each year group separately. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements.
- 38 The school's literacy and numeracy strategies have been well thought out. Teaching of the numeracy and literacy hours takes up much time but the school continues to teach the full curriculum. The arts remain important. The school provided additional lessons to develop pupils' extended writing following test results showing this need. Subsequent test results showed that these were successful.
- 39 Teachers plan well and at three levels. There is a school curriculum framework, which provides a two year cycle of work to fit the mixed age group classes. There is also termly planning, which constitutes the schemes of work, and weekly planning. All this is well developed across the core and foundation subjects. Curriculum leaders have considerable input into the termly planning for their subject and in some cases, plan the subject across the school. Progression and continuity are built into the schemes of work and curriculum coordinators check that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
- 40 All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, have full access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad, balanced and relevant

curriculum and they are well supported. Equality of opportunity is implicit in all that the school seeks to achieve. There are clear procedures for the early identification and assessment of pupils and these are fully understood by all teaching staff. Rigorous assessment and monitoring procedures are a strength of the school, providing a clear indication of the progress pupils are making. Statutory requirements are fully met in respect of pupils with statements of special educational need. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged in most subjects and in most classes although there is little in the planning documents making specific preparation for this. There are good open ended activities in mathematics, science and music for example. Extra curricular activities are open to all pupils although parents have to pay for instrumental music lessons taking place after school. The range of extra curricular activities, including sport, is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 make residential visits each year and there are many day excursions to places of interest.

- 41 The school makes very good provision for the personal and social development of pupils. "Circle time" is good in many classes and pupils are led to think about important moral as well as social issues. There is a signed notebook for homework for Key Stage 2 pupils.
- 42 The school has made considerable progress since the time of the last report and now has good systems of assessment and monitoring. An assessment policy is in place. The school has good systems to evaluate and monitor work in the core subjects and is developing them for the foundation subjects and religious education. All staff track pupils' progress in English and maths. Teachers assess one piece of writing each term for every pupil. There is a recently installed computer programme to help with the tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers in reception use the baseline assessment to predict Year 1 results and Key Stage 1 national test results. Other standardised tests, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests are used at both key stages and optional SATs in years 3,4 and 5. Teachers analyse the results of these tests and use the information in planning pupils' work. The school has analysed the results of the 1999 SATs, especially in science, where standards fell compared with the previous year.
- 43 There is a good policy for the marking of pupils' work and overall it is well marked. Some teachers write full and helpful comments in pupils' books and there is evidence of dialogue between teachers and pupils in some of the Year 5/6 books. Some marking at Key Stage 1 is difficult for pupils to read but if the teacher reads it with pupils then it is very full, positive and helpful. There are good annotated portfolios of work in the core subjects for all pupils. Rigorous assessment procedures are a strength of the school, providing a clear indication of the progress pupils are making.

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

- 44 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- 45 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies follow a theme each week. The theme of Families was introduced to both key stages in assemblies on Monday morning during the inspection and followed through in a daily act of worship in each class. In the Key Stage 1 assembly, pupils spontaneously join hands to sing "We're a family, Lord". During a religious education lesson for Years 3 and 4 on the symbolism of candles, candles were lit and pupils asked to reflect on the meaning of light while they listened to a piece of music, creating a truly spiritual atmosphere. Reception classes already understand that Circle Time is special and respect the right of each other to express their feelings. All classes have a weekly time set aside for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education which make a very good contribution to pupils' education and as each session finishes, they are asked to reflect on their discussions. Pupils are actively encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions in all subjects and are consistently praised for perceptive, considered answers. Because, they feel free to express their own feelings without fear of ridicule, pupils in year 5 and 6 history understand how to question a volunteer visitor about his experiences in the Second World War with sensitivity.
- 46 Pupils clearly know right from wrong. Provision for their moral development is very good. Children who are under five behave very well and already understand what is expected of them. Older pupils admit to wrong doing outside of school and discuss occasions when they have been tempted by others to do something they know is not right and have had the strength to say no. All pupils fully understand the school's behaviour policy and the accompanying rewards and sanctions. Any inappropriate behaviour is closely monitored and parents are involved when necessary. Pupils usually respond very well if they are disciplined and good behaviour is considered the norm. Bullying is considered in depth in citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural sessions. All pupils express their feelings and opinions about bullying in contrast to friendship. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 already show a very perceptive understanding of how hurtful bullying is and the importance of kindness and care for one another.
- 47 The school provides very well for pupils' social development. Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for

themselves, for each other and for the school as a community. The school council makes a strong contribution to the running of the school and all pupils are invited to put forward their ideas through class representatives. Year 5 and 6 pupils do an excellent job as school monitors, and class monitors carry out their jobs with pride. On residential visits, older pupils learn to work and play with each other in a new social context. They develop new ideas at these times, for example the buddy system, which recognises a pupil in each class weekly who has been a special friend. This is a happy, caring school into which pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. Their social and independence skills are very well developed and this has a positive impact on the progress they are able to make. Other pupils respond very well to them and are always supportive. Their well being and confidence is a high priority.

48 Strong emphasis is placed on pupils' cultural development and provision is very good. Displays show a very good range of art with pupils producing their own interpretations of the work of artists such as Turner, Klune, Picasso and Chagall. Pupils are introduced to the music of other cultures, for example South Africa and India in assembly. The school has a close link with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and pupils enjoy and gain musically and socially from workshops with the musicians. Pupils in all years have worked with professional dancers from the Birmingham Royal Ballet and pupils learn Irish and English country dancing and experience dance from other cultures such as the Caribbean and Asia. In religious education pupils learn about major world faiths and there is an interesting display on Diwali, showing Rangoli patterns pupils have devised. Pupils from Years 3 and 4 consider the symbolism of light for Christians, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. Books for literacy and in the library have been well selected to depict a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

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

49 One of the school's aims is to provide a caring and secure environment where children feel valued, confident and happy and it very successfully achieves this aim.

50 Staff know their pupils very well. They take time to talk to pupils and to listen to them, both in circle time, spiritual, moral, social and cultural sessions and informally. Academic progress is closely monitored in progress books and in thorough ongoing records, which are kept throughout pupils' time in the school. Targets are set with individual pupils for each term. The process of getting to know pupils begins before they start school. Children joining the reception class visit the school in the summer term; reception teachers visit them in their nurseries and offer a home visit a few days before they start. When they do begin, they already feel familiar with their teachers and surroundings and settle quickly. Most Year 6 pupils now transfer to a school out of the area and liaison with the main receiving high school is improving significantly. Both schools are making real efforts to take into account all pupils' needs. Pupils meet teachers and visit the school so that they feel confident about moving on to the next stage in their education.

51 There are good arrangements for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils with special educational needs. Provision from class teachers and support staff, including non teaching staff is of a very high quality. All staff receive clear guidance about their roles and responsibilities and they are familiar with procedures for ensuring that pupils' needs are met. Early identification enables problems to be dealt with before they become major concerns. Since the previous inspection, steps have been taken to ensure that more challenging work extends the progress of higher attaining pupils.

52 The policy for behaviour and discipline has recently been revised and is designed to involve pupils, parents and all adults working in the school. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions and full understanding that bullying will not be tolerated in any form. There are carefully devised strategies for pupils whose behaviour does present problems and they usually respond well. Good behaviour is recognised and rewarded and the great majority of pupils respond by behaving well at all times.

53 Pupils' attendance and punctuality is closely monitored and the school secretary plays an important role in checking registers. The school quickly recognises if any pupils develop unexplained patterns of absence and acts accordingly. Parents of pupils who are persistently late are contacted. The education welfare officer offers good support to help the school deal with any problems. As a result of the emphasis placed on regular attendance and good punctuality, attendance figures are improving this term. However, the school only rewards very high attendance on an annual basis. There are no awards for full attendance each term or for classes achieving the best attendance each week for example.

54 Procedures for child protection are very good. The designated person is trained and all staff are vigilant and aware. If any pupils do give cause for concern, careful records are kept and appropriate agencies contacted if necessary. Through spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, pupils learn how to protect themselves and others and understand the importance of being able to say 'no'.

55 The school takes its duty of care for all pupils very seriously. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and there is particular vigilance whilst the building work is being completed. A number of issues have arisen as a result of design errors and the school has ensured these are put right. First aid is administered with sensitivity and care and good records are kept. Every incident involving a bump to the head is recorded and parents are always told. The needs of pupils with specific medical conditions are understood. There are good links with a range of outside support agencies for pupils with special educational needs and their involvement is valued. Lunchtime is well organised and sociable. Pupils play well together in the playground and are well cared for by supervisors. Picnic benches have been thoughtfully provided for those who prefer to sit quietly, while for more active pupils the playground has been marked with imaginative games.

56 **Partnership with parents and the community**

56 The school keeps parents very well informed. The prospectus and Governors' Annual Report to Parents are both detailed and well written. There are very useful handbooks for parents and volunteers helping in school and for parents of new children joining the reception classes. Notices are displayed in the windows to keep parents informed about events and meetings and there is an excellent curriculum map outside what will be the community and parents' room. Special workshops are offered on new educational initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy hours and they are well attended. Newsletters also keep parents up to date on what is happening in school. Reports clearly show parents what their children know, understand and can do. Targets for pupils are set in discussion at parents meetings.

57 Good partnerships have been established between parents, teachers and pupils with special educational needs. Parents are closely involved in all procedures aimed at supporting their children. They frequently take an active part in their children's learning both in and out of school. Home diaries are sent to parents at the end of each week and this keeps them informed about the progress their children are making. Attendance at annual reviews is good and the majority of parents are supportive of what the school is trying to achieve to meet pupil's individual needs. The quality of relationships between parents, teachers and pupils is very positive and good partnerships have been established. This is an improvement since the last inspection when relationships with parents were judged to be satisfactory. A good quality home/school agreement has recently been introduced.

58 Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. Many parents help out in school on a regular basis and some are training as nursery nurses. Along with other volunteers, they feel their work is valued and appreciated by staff and pupils. Parents hear their children read and support homework. They are invited to put their ideas forward in a 'suggestions' box in the entrance to the school hall. A questionnaire is sent out annually to canvas parents' opinions before the school development plan is reviewed. A booklet about the school's behaviour guidelines has been produced and distributed at the request of parents. Parents help on trips and visits and accompany residential stays. The Friends of Gilbertstone organises fund raising and social events for pupils and parents. While building work has been underway, it has been difficult to arrange evenings, but they plan to hold a disco for pupils to celebrate the opening of the new school when it is completed.

59 The relationship with the main receiving high school is developing very well. The majority of pupils transfer to a school in the neighbouring education authority. Significant effort has been put in by both schools to develop curriculum links through teachers inter-visiting to observe lessons and by pupils being invited to concerts and productions.

60 The school has particularly good links with industry through the Birmingham Education Business Partnership and with local businesses which it has forged itself. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have viewed the building of the infant block as part of a maths at work project on measurement. A nearby supermarket has displayed Year 5 and 6 pupils' posters of curries, shown them around the store and given them the opportunity to talk to buyers and a marketing manager from another local company as part of their technology studies. Strong arts links have been developed with the Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Midlands Arts Centre.

61 Pupils' understanding of the needs of the local and wider community are fostered through fund raising for charities such as Children in Need and Red Nose Day. Some pupils also organise their own events, for example Blue Peter "Bring and Buy" sales. Harvest festival gifts are delivered to the church for distribution to the homeless. This links well to work which Year 1 and 2 pupils are doing on the homeless in religious education and dance. Volunteers work in school on a weekly basis and talk to pupils about their experiences. Hearing what it was like to live in Birmingham at the time of the Second World War from a volunteer helper significantly enhanced Years 5 and 6 pupils' knowledge about the period in history. Involvement with the community has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. This is now very good.

62 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

62 Leadership and management

- 62 The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection and the deputy had been recently appointed. Since then, ten other members of staff have joined the school. On appointment the headteacher conducted a full audit, identifying a range of weaknesses that needed attention. These were consistent with the findings of the inspection, which closely followed her appointment. They included a need to create an improved professional culture of reflection, collaboration and self development amongst teachers and support staff; to devise a curriculum planning model, which would focus on learning provision across the school and establish detail schemes of work with assessment measures identified; to establish whole school development planning with consultation and contribution from all staff, parents and governors in order to provide an effective approach where ownership by the school community of the vision and aims of the school would support the implementation of policy; to review and revise the staff responsibilities and management structure and to ensure that space available is used to maximum effect and to introduce the use of information technology across the curriculum and provide the resources and training in order to do this. All of the above aspects of school improvement have been well met and very good progress has been made in these respects.
- 63 There has been very good progress in meeting the key issues identified in the previous report. There has been good progress in preparing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in information technology. The school has made a bid under the National Grid for Learning and funds are now available to set up a new computer suite in the new building early next year. Schemes of work for all subjects are in place, which effectively support teaching well and promote continuity in learning. Very good progress has been made in meeting this key issue. Further considerable progress has been made in improving the assessment and recording of pupils' work to be used in planning the next stages of learning. Good systems are in place to support this. School development planning processes have been improved by strengthening arrangements to monitor and evaluate what is being taught in each subject. There is a clear school development plan that details objectives, activities, contribution to school aims, resources and costings, success criteria, monitoring systems and evaluation methods for the current year. It also takes account of an assessment of the previous years' progress in meeting its targets. There is further detail that looks beyond the current year and lists school priorities for the future years. This meets the requirement to improve development planning well and very good progress has been made in this respect. Excellent progress has been made in improving the learning environment. The old school has been demolished and a new school building is nearing completion for full occupation early in the New Year. Overall the school has made very good progress in improvement since the previous inspection.
- 64 Bearing in mind the very good quality in the leadership and management of the school, the good quality of teaching, the potential of the new building, and the commitment of all staff and governors to raise standards, the school has an excellent capacity to sustain current good quality and to improve where there are weaknesses.
- 65 Working closely together, the headteacher, deputy head, governing body and the senior management team, have established a very clear direction for the development of the school. The headteacher's initial audit of the position of the school, identifying the school's strengths and a range of weaknesses that needed to be addressed, showed a very clear insight into the needs of the school and what should be done to meet the specific needs of the pupils. In response to this initial analysis, the governing body, headteacher, deputy, ably supported by the senior management team and staff, have worked hard to develop a strategic plan for school improvement and to implement their strategies effectively. Their leadership is having a positive impact upon the improving standards that pupils are achieving.
- 66 Each subject has a coordinator and a link governor with the responsibility to monitor its development. Coordinators are capable, enthusiastic subject managers and they support other staff well. Each has clear plans for the development of their subject and in some subjects such as mathematics and English, good management has effectively raised standards at the end of Key Stage 2 this year. Subject coordinators identify well weaknesses in standards so that these can be improved. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. This is partly due to the excellent quality of monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and her deputy. Each teacher is observed by both each half term. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and feedback is constructive and honest, when outcomes are discussed and supported. Targets for development are identified. At the following observation, the headteacher or deputy focus on these targets to check improvement. Governors also closely monitor curriculum development and standards. Following visits, they report to the full governing body, which is fully aware of the work of the school.

- 67 The leadership and management of special needs provision is now good. Improved procedures ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and clear targets established. The special needs coordinator presently maintains an overview of the effectiveness of provision and ensures that resources are effectively deployed. She liaises regularly with class teachers and provides guidance to the support staff. Despite frequent changes of coordinators, the day to day management of special educational needs is effectively carried out. The school fulfils all statutory requirements. The Code of Practice operates effectively and all procedures are well known to all staff. Documentation and recording systems are of high quality and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress of pupils are very clearly detailed. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- 68 Governors are now much more involved. They work in committees, Finance, Curriculum, Buildings and Health and Safety, Personnel and Staffing. Each has a clear remit and stated terms of reference for their work. Governors' minutes (both full committee and other committees) show good insight and knowledge of the school and its developmental needs. The work of the governing body is well structured and through these mechanisms, informed decisions about the future development of the school are made. They are fully involved in forming the school improvement plan, which is of good quality and effectively focuses and guides the development of the school. Relevant priorities and targets are identified, appropriate attention given to national initiatives and requirements and the schools' needs are well met in development planning. Good levels of involvement are evident and governors are fully involved in development planning and in monitoring the progress of improvement. The school meets its statutory requirements.
- 69 The school's ethos is very good. The governing body has a mission statement. "The governing body of Gilbertstone Primary School aims to provide the highest quality of education for all our pupils by active involvement in decision making and by supporting the policies of our school." The school also has a mission statement. "Gilbertstone Primary School encourages a shared partnership to enable active participation by all concerned which seeks to improve the full development of the child." There is a very good climate in which pupils work effectively and which encourages very good attitudes to work. There are very good relationships in the school and all adults working in the school are committed to high standards. School management is very successful in implementing its aims, values and policies.

70

70 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 70 There is good provision of teaching and support staff to ensure that the demands of the curriculum are fully met. All teachers, apart from those who are newly qualified, have areas of curriculum responsibility. There are opportunities for coordinators to monitor teaching in these areas although classroom observations are carried out every half term by the headteacher and her deputy. On these occasions all teachers are seen. This practice is exemplary and supports not only teachers but curriculum development. It also effectively replaces appraisal, which for the moment has been suspended. A sufficient number of support staff are well deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. They operate very effectively by working alongside class teachers or by occasionally taking pupils out of the classroom for specific support. Parental help continues to be widely used. It is valued and contributes effectively to the quality of education offered by the school.
- 71 Teachers are all appropriately trained for this phase of education. Learning support assistants, including those for pupils with special educational needs are sufficiently well qualified and experienced to have a very positive impact on the progress that pupils make. Since the last inspection their role has been more clearly defined. They are now given greater responsibility and are actively involved in planning for the needs of pupils. Teachers value their expertise. The school's administration and caretaking staff are suitably experienced to support the day to day running of the school.
- 72 Staff work well as a team, providing good opportunities for mutual support. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and those of others. Support for new and newly qualified teachers is good. All staff have signed job descriptions which clearly identify their individual roles. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. They reflect the educational priorities of the school and the needs of individual members of staff. Expertise gained from courses is shared with all staff to maximise the benefit of training and enable all staff to benefit from the best practice. Recently priority has appropriately been given to the introduction of national strategies for improving standards in literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects at both key stages.
- 73 Accommodation was a key issue at the last inspection. Since then there has been excellent progress towards improving accommodation and the learning environment, by making the most effective use of the accommodation available. Although currently satisfactory, when the building programme is complete there will be a very good accommodation. It is to the credit of the headteacher, the deputy and the staff that major disruption is having a

minimal effect on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. With the building programme almost complete morale is high. There are currently no facilities for children under five to have an enclosed play area but this will be remedied shortly. At the present time accommodation for the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs is restricted but this will be remedied in the near future when the building is complete. There are no playing fields as the adjacent sports ground has fallen into disrepair and the Local Education Authority has no immediate plans to rectify this. Library provision is still inadequate due to ad hoc arrangements until the next phase of the school is complete when there will be a designated library area. The hall is an excellent facility and the new entrance and office accommodation offers a bright and interesting welcome to visitors. The school buildings are well maintained by the caretaker and his team of cleaners. Displays of pupils' work both in classrooms and around the school help to create an exciting learning environment for pupils.

74 Resources in many areas of the curriculum are now good after deficiencies in foundation subjects, identified at the last inspection, have been rectified. Resources for literacy are very good and there is a good range of multi ethnic instruments in music. The quality of resources for information technology is very good and there is a wide range of software. The purchase of additional software to support literacy and numeracy for pupils with special educational needs is a priority for the coming year. Otherwise, resources for pupils with special educational needs are good and are well used throughout the school. The overall use of resources is satisfactory to good and the majority is accessible within the constraints of the present building programme. Access to physical education resources is barely satisfactory at the moment due to the layout of the store. The school continues to make use of local resources such as the leisure centre for swimming and the Barber Institute in town. There is also good use of the School Library Service and the museum service, the latter providing a wide range of artefacts for art and history in particular. Visits and planned visitors, some professional, to the school continue to enrich and extend the curriculum, particularly in dance, drama, music, history and food technology. This provision is well thought out and is incorporated into schemes of work.

75 **The efficiency of the school**

75 The quality of financial planning is very good. Very full consultations take place with members of staff before decisions are taken. The School Improvement and Development Plan is used very effectively to prioritise expenditure. Consequently, levels of spending strongly reflect the school's needs. Very regular checks are kept on the school's financial position. Through precise consideration of the needs of the school and responsible financial management the school has built up a healthy balance. Through effective planning for the longer term, the governing body and headteacher have a clear picture of how this balance will be used in the near future to the benefit of pupils. For example, through the provision of a well equipped information technology suite and a relocated school library.

76 While the headteacher carries the main responsibility for day to day financial management, other members of staff play an important role. Subject coordinators are given an annual budget through which they resource their subjects. Each budget holder provides the headteacher with a clear spending plan ensuring that expenditure is directly linked to the aims of the school development plan. Coordinators carry out their responsibilities very effectively. They follow and comply appropriately with the whole school finance policy. Particular attention is paid to securing value for money and avoiding waste.

77 The governing body plays an active role in the financial management of the school and provides the headteacher and the school as whole, with effective support. The finance committee carefully considers budget plans before final agreement by the whole governing body. Spending is regularly monitored throughout the year. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very efficiently and effectively. The school makes effective use of available resources and they are well deployed throughout the school. Funding associated with pupils with statements of special need is spent appropriately.

78 The use of teaching staff within the school is very good. Individual teachers' strengths and interests are very well used and effectively match the classes they take and the subjects that they coordinate. Part time teachers are used very effectively to teach specialist subjects, for example, art and music, to enhance the quality of the curriculum.

79 There are very adequate numbers of learning support staff. Their effective deployment is very carefully planned, closely reflects the school's priorities and the needs of pupils and ensures their effectiveness. Support staff assist those pupils with recognised special educational needs and give additional individual support to those pupils with identified literacy difficulties. Since the last inspection support staff are actively involved in planning. The additional support they receive enables pupils with special educational needs to participate fully in lessons and to make good progress. The school makes appropriate use of funding provided for special needs pupils with statements.

80 The headteacher, deputy and staff have managed the difficulties posed by the rebuilding of the school very well.

Pupils have coped very well with building continuing around them. Good use is made of the accommodation and it is regularly reviewed. Changes are made if necessary to improve the quality of education provided for the pupils. For example, the area originally designated as the library is to be redesigned as an information technology suite equipped with modern computers, linked to the world wide web and to the whole of the Birmingham learning community. The rebuilding of the school gives the staff new opportunities to ensure that the accommodation available is used effectively. This was a stated weakness in the last inspection report. Teachers make efficient and regular use of the school's learning resources and this has a positive impact on the quality of lessons and on the progress pupils make. The shortages in resources in certain subjects, identified during the last inspection, have now been addressed.

- 81 Financial control and day to day school administration are both excellent. The administrative staff make a most effective contribution to the day to day running and life of the school. They are an integral part of the school. The two members of the team have clearly demarcated responsibilities. These complement each other very well. The school buys in the additional services of a financial consultant who is employed to give specialist advice and to supplement the internal staff. This further enhances the quality of the financial control. The school employs an efficient computerised financial management system. This enables the headteacher and the governing body to receive regular updates on income and expenditure. All financial figures are regularly checked and different sources of information reconciled.
- 82 The school has a private fund, which is regularly audited. Parents raise funds to assist the school in its work. The accounts of the Friends of Gilbertstone are balanced and audited privately. Private funds are used to improve the resources of the school. The most recent audit of the school accounts states that the school's systems for checking expenditure are efficient and effective. They meet all the standards required for effective financial administration and meet all legal requirements. However, it was recommended that the governing body should have clearer agendas for meetings and that minutes must formally record policy decisions, e.g. the approval of the school budget plan. Income for educational visits should be recorded as official school income. The headteacher and governing body have now taken all appropriate action necessary to implement these recommendations.
- 83 Pupils are well taught and by the age of 11 attain very high standards in English and good standards in mathematics and science. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development and a very strong ethos prevails and their behaviour is good. The school provides all its pupils with a good standard of education, which enables them to make good progress. This is achieved at a cost that is slightly higher than the national average. The school gives very good value for money.

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

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

84 Pupils enter the reception classes with broadly average levels of attainment. During the first half term the local authority baseline assessment is carried out having been well planned. The policy of teachers getting to know children before they start school is helpful in establishing positive relationships. Very good provision is made for their learning needs and children make significant progress after having been in the school for only a short time. Most children are well on course to reach the attainment expected for children of this age with many exceeding this attainment in all areas of learning. Children's development judged against the national "desirable learning outcomes" is almost always good. They are confident and happy in school and this has a beneficial effect on their good rate of progress.

85 **Language and literacy**

85 Children make good progress in language and literacy and achieve good standards when compared to the desirable learning outcomes for children of this age. Within a very short time they speak confidently and when questioned can always explain what they are doing. Children interact well with each other, particularly during role play which helps to develop their communication skills. Role play sessions are changed each half term and they are linked to topics which successfully reinforce learning. For example, working in the "area" library enables children to find books about particular animals whose name begins with the particular letter they are learning at the time. Written work highlights progress children make with letter formation. From mark making which is largely indecipherable, children are now beginning to use recognisable letter shapes and are writing their own names. Some understand upper and lower case letters. They know that a name has a capital letter and that a sentence starts with one. Children's reading is developing well and a few children are able to read simple text with enthusiasm. Most already know the difference between fiction and non fiction books, describing fiction as telling a story and non fiction as giving them information. Almost all know that reading is done from left to right and that pages are turned from right to left. They also know that a person who writes a book is called an author. Children who cannot yet read are nevertheless still able to talk knowledgeably about their reading books by referring to the pictures. Children under five are not yet involved in the literacy hour but a good range of language activities prepares them well for this. However, the structure of their language and literacy follows a similar format in preparation for the time when they will participate.

86 **Mathematics**

86 Children make good progress in mathematics and they are on course to attain the standards expected by the time they reach the age of five. Number work is developing well with strengths in sorting, matching and counting. Working with objects and shapes in two and three dimensions they explore their properties and identify similarities and differences. Most children are beginning to solve simple addition and subtraction problems. The majority can recite numbers to at least ten, with some reaching 20 and they clearly identify from two sets, which has more. As well as reciting numbers some children can recognise and write them without help.

87 **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

87 Most children have remarkably good knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live and their attainment is good when compared to expected standards. Most are able to talk about themselves and their families, their likes and dislikes. They soon become familiar with their immediate surroundings and draw simple maps of their journeys around school, identifying important features such as the office. Role play linked to hospitals, a library, a bakery, travel agent and weather station successfully provide children with an insight into the part these play in their lives. Children use computers confidently with many having good "mouse" control and all of them can operate a tape recorder.

88 **Physical development**

88 Pupils attain high standards in their physical development when compared to the desirable learning outcomes and they make good progress. Their manipulative skills when using scissors for example are often very good and all of them hold pencils correctly. Physical education lessons taken in the school hall highlight the fact that most pupils are capable of using space well and can control the speed at which they travel. Concepts such as tall, wide, small and curled are quickly learnt and there is good interpretation of "action words" into movement. Lack of large playground toys and a suitably enclosed space to play does not inhibit children's physical development to any great extent.

89 **Creative development**

89 Pupils make good progress in their creative development and attain high standards when compared to the desirable learning outcomes for children at five. They have ample opportunities to explore texture, shape and colour and they make good progress in their creative development. They have good control of brushes, pencils and crayons and are able to do modelling with plasticine. Some of the teddies produced were very detailed. A large proportion of children are able to colour within an outline shape without going beyond the lines. Most cut very accurately with scissors and are given opportunities to explore a range of materials when making a collage. All children respond well to music. They sing with enthusiasm, even to the extent of “singing” the register and their capacity for remembering the words of songs and rhymes is also good.

Personal and social development

90 Children make very good progress in areas of personal and social development and this is a strong area of their learning. Many of them display confidence beyond their years. They are remarkably tolerant and sensitive to the needs of each other. They respect the fact that others have views and on many occasions they listen carefully to what is being said. However, such is their enthusiasm to contribute that they occasionally find it difficult to wait their turn to answer questions. Children under five relate well to all staff and they are encouraged to be polite and well mannered. At the lunch table they freely enter into social discussion. Independence is developing well and pupils are able to organise themselves with a minimum of fuss when they change activities. Their behaviour is good.

91 Teaching for children under five is very good. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. Planning, which reflects desirable learning outcomes is excellent and ensures appropriate development and continuity through to the beginning of Key Stage 1. Planning also identifies the particular needs of groups of children and tasks are matched appropriately. Teachers administer baseline tests well, identifying all assessment opportunities in their planning. The quality and use of day to day assessment is also excellent and is supported by good documentation. Teachers’ expectations are very high and this is the main reason why children make such good progress. Good use is made of classroom assistants and parent helpers to support children.

92 Good management and organisation allows children to initiate activities and take responsibility. Present classrooms are of an adequate size and provide a stimulating working environment through colourful display which includes a lot of children’s own work. Assessment is consistently used and is backed up by careful, extensive record keeping, which is used to determine future planning.

93 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

93 **English**

93 In the 1999 national reading tests for seven year olds, most pupils attained the expected Level 2 or higher. Overall the school’s reading results were similar to the national average. Pupils’ performance in writing was similar but a greater proportion attained the higher Level 3. Attainments in writing are close to the national average with more pupils obtaining above average attainments. Inspection evidence confirms that by the age of seven pupils attainment in English is above national expectations and that they make good progress at Key Stage 1. Pupils performed very well in the 1999 national English tests for 11 year olds and attained standards that are well above the national average. Over half of the year group attained the higher Level 5. These results show that there has been a significant improvement in standards since the school was last inspected. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment is well above average by the end of the key stage and that pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 2

94 The attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in speaking and listening is, overall, above average. Pupils express themselves well. They make suitable responses to teachers’ questions. They listen very carefully to the opinions of others. They discuss matters of immediate interest. By the age of seven pupils’ reading is close to the national average. Many pupils are beginning to read with confidence. They recognise a good range of words on sight and can sound out words. They have an increasing knowledge of sound blends. They know how to use the context of the story to help them identify unfamiliar words. Lower attaining pupils including those with special educational needs, are given additional help, either from teachers or from support assistants. This ensures that pupils who find reading difficult maintain their interest and self esteem. The attainments of seven year olds in writing are close to the national

average, with a slightly greater proportion of pupils attaining at above average levels. Most pupils write in sentences. Many know how to use full stops and capital letters. Higher achievers are able to write for a purpose, for example, they write clear instructions, which inform readers how to make a puppet. Pupils practise letter formation on a regular basis. Higher attainers are developing an attractive style of print writing. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to write for a range of purposes, for example, to inform readers how to make a puppet. They write a letter of sympathy to Humpty Dumpty. In religious education they compose prayers. Higher attaining pupils know how to use dictionaries to find out the meanings of words or to check spellings.

- 95 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils speak confidently in a range of settings. They listen carefully to the opinions of others. They are able to convey their thoughts and feelings clearly. They read with expression. Lower attaining pupils listen and talk confidently but they use a more limited vocabulary. At the end of the key stage the vast majority of pupils are fluent, competent and independent readers. They read aloud with expression and bring out the meaning of the text very clearly. Most read regularly for pleasure or to gain information. They use their skills very well in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in history when reading about the experiences of evacuees in the Second World War. Lower attaining pupils are given additional teaching. This is well organised and delivered. Pupils' attainment in writing by the age of 11 is well above average. Year 6 pupils write extended pieces of writing. These are well organised and very imaginative. Higher attaining pupils use complex sentence construction and paragraphs very competently. They know when to use quotation marks, apostrophes and exclamation marks. They have a good understanding of Standard English and recognise when alternatives can be used. Pupils are able to write in different styles, for example, they realise that a job application letter must impress the reader in terms of content, style and standards of presentation. By the end of the key stage most pupils have developed a neat cursive handwriting style. Work is nearly always written in ink. However, there is a lack of consistency in the standards of presentation. The school policy is not always followed. Pupils are infrequently reminded of the essential requirements for the neat presentation of work, for example, at Key Stage 2 some pupils use pencil when ink should be used. Opportunities are offered to pupils to plan, draft and redraft various types of written work successfully.
- 96 The progress pupils make is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. There is a gradual growth in pupils' confidence as speakers and their listening skills develop well. Reading standards improve as pupils' phonic skills develop. Good progress is made in writing, punctuation and spelling. Standards of handwriting are improved through regular practice. Pupils research skills are gradually developed. Their knowledge of the alphabet improves and by early Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils can use a thesaurus or dictionary effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress toward targets set for them in their individual education plans. Class support staff give good support to these pupils. The progress of pupils for who English is an additional language is good.
- 97 Pupils' response in lessons is good across both the key stages. Pupils have very good attitudes at Key Stage 2. These positive attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to the standards achieved particularly in English by the age of 11. They make a significant contribution to the very good ethos of the school. Most pupils are very attentive in lessons. They are very keen to contribute to discussion. They are confident enough to answer a question even when they are unsure whether they are correct. Pupils work well within groups and settle down quickly to independent work. They work well without direct supervision. When they require assistance request they ask for it politely. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are very enthusiastic learners. They demonstrate mature and responsible attitudes. They work well in pairs, for example, when working on computers and discuss responsibly how a difficulty might be overcome, for example, when setting up a page on which to write a report.
- 98 Overall the quality of teaching in English is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. At both key stages, three quarters of lessons were either good or very good. Teachers subject knowledge is very good. Lessons are very well planned. Expectations are generally appropriate for the range of abilities being taught. However, occasionally expectations are unrealistically high and pupils become frustrated. Activities are thoughtfully varied to maintain the interest of the pupils. Time is well used and lessons are well paced. Pupils are managed very well. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and use praise appropriately to reward effort and to give encouragement. At both key stages pupils are introduced to a good range of literature, novels, poetry and plays. In the early part of Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy listening to a range of humorous poems.
- 99 The National Literacy Strategy has been very successfully introduced. Lessons are very well planned and resources in terms of books and other materials are of a very good quality. Teachers have had appropriate training and have a very good knowledge. Pupils and staff show enthusiasm for the approach. It is having a positive impact upon pupils' attainments in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs respond positively and have work set at an appropriate level. The school's strategy is very effective.

- 100 Assessment procedures are good. Pupils' attainment in reading and spelling is regularly assessed and completed written work is carefully marked in accordance with the school's marking policy. Teachers give pupils very clear guidance on what they have done well and where they need to improve. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are given a clear indication of the National Curriculum levels they are achieving. Teachers give pupils clear pointers towards attaining higher levels. There is an agreed homework timetable. Pupils are given regular reading and spelling assignments. The thorough assessment procedures make a positive contribution to pupils' progress.
- 101 The coordination of English is very good. The present subject manager took over responsibility for the subject recently. The curriculum documentation is extensive and includes a policy statement and schemes of work. All lesson plans are submitted for evaluation. Literacy lessons are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, by senior members of staff. Schemes of work are reviewed over a two year rolling programme. The Literacy Strategy is reviewed regularly together with the achievements of pupils in the end of key stage assessments. As a result of this appraisal, as a focus of development, additional curriculum time has been allocated to the teaching of English specifically to improve attainments in extended writing at Key Stage 2. The most recent assessment results show that this strategy has been very successful. Pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs are reviewed regularly and are allocated additional support as necessary.
- 102 There is a separate curriculum leader for drama. Whilst there is no policy statement written specifically for drama, guidelines have been linked to the speaking and listening element of the English curriculum. There are schemes of work. Drama is an integral element in a range of other subjects including religious education and history. It is used in collective worship. Resources are adequate. The drama coordinator gives support to other teachers and has led school based in service training. A residential visit to Ingestre Arts Centre is organised on an annual basis. Pupils are given opportunities to take part in local dance and drama festivals including performing at the Birmingham Repertory Company. Drama and English generally offer many opportunities to pupils to develop cultural links. Poets and authors from a range of backgrounds make visits to school on a regular basis. English and drama make a very valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils throughout the school.
- 103 Resources for the teaching of English are very good. They are very well used. A considerable amount of money has been spent to provide resources for the Literacy Hour. Large books have been purchased to facilitate whole class teaching. Reading schemes are of a very good quality. Resources for the teaching of English include a range of software packages such as a CD-ROM encyclopaedia, to ensure that there is a link between the subjects. Each classroom has a resource of books. Whilst, there is a small central resource of books, the library has yet to be re-established in the new building.

104 **Mathematics**

- 104 At the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or above was well above the national average in the National Curriculum tests in 1999. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the performance of seven year olds was above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentages of pupils who attained the recommended Level 4 and those who gained the higher Level 5, were both above average. When compared with similar schools, the performance of 11 year olds was above average. This is an improvement on the scores in 1998, which were well below average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Over the last four years there has been a slight rise in scores at the end of Key Stage 1, with a decline between 1996 and 1998 and a sharp increase in 1999. At the end of Key Stage 2 results rose sharply between 1996 and 1997, but fell back in 1998. The school concentrated on improving standards in mathematics and there was a significant rise in scores in 1999 to levels that are above average for both the average levels and for the higher levels of attainment. This also represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection, when standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were higher than the national average, but at the end of Key Stage 2, were average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 105 Inspection evidence confirms that the standards that pupils attain are above average at the end of both key stages and that the progress which pupils make, including those with special educational needs, is good at both key stages.
- 106 At Key Stage 1, younger pupils competently count to 20 and some beyond. They read, write and order these numbers accurately. Pupils extend their knowledge well by counting forwards and backwards in twos and threes, recognising that there is a pattern created. Pupils accurately record their sums, using - and + signs. In doing this they quickly and accurately recall the answers to addition bonds with numbers up to 20. Most pupils are able to apply this knowledge to subtraction sums to calculate what must be added to a number to make another. Higher attaining pupils recognise place value in numbers to a hundred and effectively and quickly use a hundred square to add ten to numbers. They readily recognise the patterns established. Pupils use their knowledge of number patterns to accurately identify

missing numbers in sequences. They have a good knowledge of both two and three dimensional shapes. They recognise and name these around them and more specifically in a mathematical situation. They have a good concept of shape and space. Pupils have a good idea of time. They realistically quote what they are able to do in a set time, for example it takes them about 15 minutes to eat their lunch. They know what they will be doing at set times in the day or night and can tell the time accurately. Pupils can generally calculate the difference between two times by counting on or back. Pupils make good use of the opportunities provided for them to investigate in a good range of mathematical situations. They calculate the different ways that £1.50 can be made up using different coins for example. They effectively build good skills in using and applying their mathematical understanding and knowledge.

- 107 At Key Stage 2, younger pupils work with number confidently. Most accurately and quickly perform mental calculations to double numbers up to 20. They also halve numbers in the same way. Above average attaining pupils extend this work to finding a quarter or a sixth of numbers, some numbers not dividing evenly by the denominator. Pupils have a good understanding of place value. They know that to multiply a number by ten, they move each digit one place to the left and do not just add a zero. Older pupils apply different ways of calculating the answers to multiplication problems where the two numbers are greater than ten. They reduce the problem to an easier form, for example $19 \times 18 = 19 \times 6 \times 3$ and calculate the answer quickly in this way. They show a good knowledge of factors and quick recall of multiplication tables. They use their knowledge of number to accurately calculate answers to division questions. Pupils understand the ideas of metric measures of length. They have a sound idea of the size of a metre and use this well to accurately estimate the height of the classroom door or the length and width of their classroom. They have a good idea of what a centimetre is and estimate smaller lengths accurately. Pupils accurately say which measurement, centimetre, metre or kilometre is appropriate for measuring different distances. While they are working with metric measures, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of place value and of the decimal number system. They have a secure knowledge of a wide range of aspects of number. They work competently with fractions, knowing which different ones have equivalent value and the appropriate percentage equivalents. Pupils know a good range of facts about solid shapes. They know the names of a wide range of solids and identify the edges, vertices and faces, counting them accurately. They identify which lines are parallel to each other and can describe the properties of parallel lines accurately. Their knowledge and understanding of graphs is good. They use their knowledge of percentages to draw pie charts accurately and to interpret the information. Pupils use tally marks well to accurately classify data and draw appropriate graphs. They are able to calculate the mean and the range of samples of data. Pupils have a good knowledge of probability and work with likely and less likely events, using the 0 to 1 probability scale. Pupils in both Years 5 and 6 investigate problems at an appropriate speed and level. Working within sets organised by prior attainment, they effectively investigate the cheapest way of constructing a rabbit run with a perimeter of 48 square metres. Some pupils work with paper, drawing different rectangles with the given area and counting units of the perimeter. Older and higher attaining pupils calculate areas and perimeters, some mentally. They organise their work in a clear and organised way.
- 108 Progress at both key stages is well supported by the attention which pupils give to their teachers. Pupils behave very well. They watch demonstrations and listen carefully. They are eager to answer questions and try to explain themselves clearly. They enjoy investigations in mathematics and number games, which improve their mental skills and establish their understanding. They settle quickly to the tasks set for them and work well independently when appropriate or collaboratively in small groups.
- 109 The quality of teaching is good with almost all lessons observed as being good or very good. This is a significant factor that enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and have a good knowledge of the subject. They know their pupils well and plan for groups of pupils of differing ability, giving special attention to pupils from different year groups or ability in the same class. Teachers deliver their lessons in a lively and interactive way, using questioning effectively to ascertain pupil understanding and giving clear explanations both verbally and through the good use of illustrative resources. They time the changes of activity generally well to maintain pupils' interest and the balance in lessons is good, with appropriate time for teacher exposition and leaving sufficient time for pupils to complete their tasks. However the pace of lessons is brisk and teachers make pupils aware of time scales.
- 110 The school has prepared the transition of the curriculum to the National Numeracy strategy well in terms of training for staff in the management of its teaching, development of resources and the introduction of planning to match pupils' levels of attainment. The coordinator provides good leadership both through the provision of a well constructed policy to help teachers plan lessons and through monitoring of teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and when possible, supporting teachers by working with them in class. Medium term planning to support on going development mathematics is well established. Progressively good use is made of analysis of assessments to monitor pupils' performance and to guide future planning. This has led to a significant rise in the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level in statutory tests in 1999 when compared with over 1998. The school has good well organised resources to support teaching.

111 Science

- 111 Attainment in science is above the national average at both key stages. The schools' Standard Attainment Test results at Key Stage 2 were not as good this year as last year due to the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, observation in lessons and discussion with pupils shows that knowledge and understanding are still above average. Work in pupils' books is sometimes not well presented and this gives the impression that work is not quite as good as it is. Pupils understand the experimental process well and are clearly used to asking the question "what if?" and experimenting to find out. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that chocolate melts when it becomes hot and that water turns into steam. They understand that some changes like this can be reversed and that some cannot. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good grasp of what friction is and how it has sometimes to be overcome. They had good ideas for helping to move the heavy box. Some showed more advanced ideas by designing footwear for slippery surfaces. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good knowledge of electrical circuits. They understand how to make electricity flow through a given circuit and some of the most able could apply this knowledge to other situations. Pupils no longer have difficulty remembering scientific terminology as previously reported. They now have a good science vocabulary.
- 112 Progress is now more consistent than at the time of the previous report. It is good at both key stages although some work was seen in which progress was sound. Pupils' involvement in the Year 1/2 experiment to make chocolate crunchies was limited and consequently, their progress in this activity was limited. A third class however was better involved and progress was secure and rapid. Both topics at Key Stage 2 are bringing good progress. Pupils make good gains in understanding the experimental process as well as in knowledge of friction as a force and electricity. Pupils with special educational needs are able to take a full part in the lessons and also make good progress against their capabilities.
- 113 Attitudes towards science are good. Pupils at both key stages are eager to experiment and find out. They set about the challenging task set in Years 5 and 6 very well and concentrated for an extended period to make a circuit. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were keen to devise ways of moving an imaginary heavy box. At Key Stage 2 pupils work cooperatively and collaboratively. They discuss work in their groups well. Key Stage 1 pupils watched eagerly as chocolate crunchies were made and were keen to answer questions. Behaviour at both key stages is very good.
- 114 Key Stage 2 pupils write up experiments enthusiastically but sometimes rather too rapidly, and the appearance of the work suffers. The lack of precision and detail, noted by the previous inspection team, has not been fully addressed although there is often more accuracy and detail in the work than there appears to be. Similarly, books and work sheets at Key Stage 1 are sometimes untidy.
- 115 Teaching is never less than sound and almost half the lessons seen were good or very good. It is good overall. Teachers prepare and organise lessons well. Tasks are suitable to pupils' interests and in line with the demands of the National Curriculum. Pupils are well involved in lessons and experiment eagerly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, of the way they work and of what they learn. They question well leading pupils to think and to find out. They manage pupils very well.
- 116 The school has addressed well the need identified at the last inspection to develop pupils' investigative skills. This aspect of the science curriculum is now strong. Resourcing for science is adequate but there is still a need for more reference materials. Pupils experience the thrill of scientific exploration and science makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. There was real excitement in one Key Stage 1 class as the teacher melted ingredients for chocolate crispies. A group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 became very involved as they tried to invent a circuit for a burglar alarm.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

117 Information Technology

- 117 During the period of the inspection it was only possible to observe one timetabled lesson of information technology. Judgements are therefore based on an examination of teachers' planning, displays of work, pupils' portfolios of work, their record and assessment folders. Information technology was also used to assist teaching in a wide range of other subjects and the use pupils made of computers and software in these lessons and their responses were recorded. It is, however, not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching.
- 118 The attainment of pupils at seven and 11 is average when compared with that of other pupils of the same age. There

has been an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. Whilst the progress made by the school since the last inspection is satisfactory, the potential for further improvement is very good.

- 119 The attainment of seven year olds in information technology is average. At the end of Key Stage 1, high attaining pupils can use a mouse to choose from a menu and are able to use the keyboard to type words. They have sound knowledge of the use of upper and lower case letters. They compose simple sentences and some know how to begin a new paragraph. They can make simple adjustments to edit the text, for example they can delete words. Pupils take care with spelling. They can print out their work independently. Pupils' are able to use drawing programs satisfactorily. Lower attaining pupils are able select an item on the screen and move it to another place. They learn to write their names and to compose short sentences. Pupils know how to make a floor robot move forwards and backwards. Most pupils use a cassette recorder with confidence.
- 120 The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is average and is in line with expectations for 11 year olds. They can use the computer's word processing facilities satisfactorily and some can insert graphic into the text to make the work more appealing to the reader. The higher achieving pupils can start a program from a disk and are able to record their work using a range of software. They can save their work and retrieve it at a later date. They are able to use a spell checker when word processing and can rearrange paragraphs to edit their work. Their keyboard skills improve to enhance the speed of word-processing. In mathematics they are able to collect data to represent the information in a range of graphs. For example, they can complete a survey on the most popular pets complete a bar chart to record their results and print this out in colour. Some pupils need assistance to complete the task. Other high attaining pupils can use their computer skills to draw bar charts, for example, to show at which time in matches most goals are scored in the Premier League. Lower attaining pupils learn to use text with pictures and are learning to cut and paste text. Pupils have had experience of using the Internet and higher attaining pupils can use it independently. Electronic notebooks are well used to record work in English.
- 121 Pupils' progress is satisfactory at both key stages. All pupils are currently taught in areas adjacent to their own classrooms. Most quickly grasp what they have to do and how to do it. Pupils' progress is related to the confidence they gain in using the equipment. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress and are confident in experimenting. Lower attaining pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are well assisted by class support staff. The progress made by those pupils who speak English as an additional language follows a similar pattern to that of other pupils. However there are a few occasions when pupils working independently of their teacher make insufficient progress. For example, when pupils used a CD-ROM to research information on famous authors, they lacked the knowledge of how to control the program efficiently. When they located the correct section, the reference text was too difficult for them to read.
- 122 Pupils' response to using information technology is good. They like using computers, they are keen to learn. They are well behaved and are careful when using the equipment. They work well in pairs, sharing tasks and making joint decisions amicably. Behaviour only deteriorates when the task set by the teacher is beyond the attainment and abilities of the pupils, for example, when using reference material, the text was too difficult to read and pupils lacked knowledge of how to use the program.
- 123 Leadership is good. The previous coordinator has been seconded full time to a post with the local authority. The coordinator became responsible for the subject at the beginning of the current term. There is a policy statement, which has recently been reviewed. There is a scheme of work and the use of information technology is incorporated into the schemes of work of other subjects. An audit of needs has been completed to prioritise a programme of staff development. There has been a satisfactory improvement in teacher's knowledge since the last inspection and capacity for further improvement is very good. The school is connected to the Internet. The coordinator has time to support the delivery of information technology in both key stages and to give support to other teachers. Each workstation has a help booklet and a font guide sheet. Assessment is good. A new system of assessing and recording pupils' achievement has recently been introduced. The coordinator holds a delegated budget through which to buy additional resources. A service contract has been agreed to give technical support to the school. Resources are good and are well used. The need to protect the equipment means that most computers are located in secure metal cupboards immediately outside classrooms.
- 124 The school has ambitious plans to develop the delivery of the subject within the school. The major initiative is linked to the Birmingham Grid for Learning. The project incorporates the development of a computer suite within the school. It is a part of the National Grid for Learning; a process designed to get the school into the world wide web, to improve opportunities for independent learning. All schools within Birmingham will be linked to each other and to libraries and leisure facilities. Literacy and numeracy will be supported through the same system. Information technology makes a very positive contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of pupils.

125 **Religious education**

- 125 Attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils express themselves easily and set down their thoughts well. Religious education is well used as a vehicle for developing pupils' skills in speaking and writing. There is some good work at Key Stage 1 but standards vary. A difficult topic was in progress during the inspection but some pupils tackled it well. They know that Jesus was a moral teacher and make perceptive suggestions as to what He would have said and taught about some of today's problems. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have a good grasp of the symbolism of light. They know many religions use the symbol of light and that, during Advent, Christians celebrate the idea of Jesus as the light coming into the world. One Year 5/6 class chose pictures from old Christmas cards to show this symbolism. They have drawn imaginative symbols themselves.
- 126 Progress is good at both key stages. Key Stages 1 pupils are developing their ideas about moral issues, many of them thinking beneath the surface meaning of the stories told. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have a growing understanding of symbolism and of the idea of looking beyond obvious meanings. They are beginning to understand something of the meaning of Christmas.
- 127 At both key stages attitudes towards religious education are good. Pupils listen to teachers and to one another in discussion and are keen to get on with their written work. They enjoy stories, one Y1/2 class, having found discussion difficult, settled immediately when the story began. Pupils at Years 5 and 6 confidently offer ideas in discussion. Pupils relate well to one another and to teachers and discussion, progress, and ultimately standards, benefit from this.
- 128 Teaching is good. At both key stages teachers prepare well and make stories and explanations interesting. They question well and challenge pupils to think. They organise lessons and manage pupils well. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies including discussion, story telling, musical activities and drama although this was not seen during the inspection. Through religious education teachers make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

129 **Art**

- 129 The progress that pupils make in art, including those with special educational needs is good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Standards in art are above what would be expected for pupils of a similar age. Occasionally they are above at Key Stage 2 where the very experienced coordinator teaches for the greater proportion of her time.
- 130 All pupils develop good practical, creative and imaginative skills in a range of techniques. Knowledge of the work of other artists is good and there are impressive displays in the main entrance and along the corridors of pastels and water colours in the style of Turner and pointillism in the style of Seurat. Some paintings create mood, movement and atmosphere as depicted in the crowd scenes at bonfires. Pupils build a sound knowledge of work from other cultures, for example, Greece, Egypt, India, Japan and North America and art is associated with religious festivals such as Diwali. Pupils have impressively designed Victorian dresses. They enjoy studying expressions and some pupils are able to produce these very accurately. Pupils experiment with print patterns and the quality of some of the clay work towards the end of Key Stage 2 is impressive. Paintings and drawings of animals and human figures are very detailed, preserve form and are often painted for display. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to describe a triptych and they are presently involved in building one for a local church to celebrate the Millennium. Such is the quality of some pupils' work that the school has had work accepted for display around the city.
- 131 Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and respond well to challenge. They listen well and follow instructions carefully. They show a high level of interest, particularly in the efforts of others and they are eager to contribute to discussions. Behaviour is always very good.
- 132 Teaching is good throughout the school and is occasionally very good. The part time coordinator makes excellent use of team teaching with class teachers. They complement each other well. Teachers motivate pupils through their own enthusiasm which good leadership has built up over the years. Teachers are knowledgeable and have high expectations of pupils. Planning is very clear and well written. Very good preparations are made before any outside visit takes place, for example, to the Barber Institute. In this way pupils are made aware of what they need to look for and what they can expect to find. Some teachers encourage pupils to use sketch books but in some instances pupils are not sufficiently free with their sketches which are often small and very meticulously done.

133 The curriculum is good and fulfils all necessary requirements. Good use is made of an increased range of resources. These include resources produced by the coordinator, examples of her own work, which gives pupils an insight into what they might be able to achieve. As an identified weakness at the last inspection considerable progress has been made here. Very good display enhances the learning environment both in and out of the classroom. An excellent record of pupils' work is displayed through photographic evidence.

134 **Design and technology**

134 All pupils make good progress in both elements of designing and making and attain standards that are good for pupils of this age. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where standards and progress were judged to be satisfactory. A limited number of activities were able to be seen during the week and these judgements have been made not only as a result of these observations but also from looking at pupils' work, from teachers' documentation and from talking to pupils and teachers.

135 Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop good ability to make levers through their understanding of different mechanisms. Joining card together with split pins they are able to understand how levers work. This knowledge is transferred effectively to large construction kits where pupils are able to create their own levers. Most pupils are sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to describe clearly a hinge, spring and sliding mechanism. And they understand how fulcrum, pivot, effort and load function. When working with textiles upper Key Stage 2 pupils are able to join materials accurately, completing straight lines of running stitches. Boys in particular encounter all manner of problems when trying to thread needles and knot the thread but they persevere well and are eventually successful. Their designs for creating a toy for a visually impaired child show that they have considered their tasks well and they recognise the importance of using different textures. When making a vehicle with a cam-wheel, pupils are familiar with terms such as axle, chassis and cam. They are also able to measure accurately. Photographic evidence of pupils' work includes designing and making monster masks, constructing models that light up and designing and making puppets. In food technology younger pupils successfully make sandwiches and gingerbread "men" while older pupils create a vegetarian curry. Pupils demonstrate that they have acquired knowledge and understanding by their answers to questions. Once skills have been acquired they are put into practice. Sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress alongside their peers.

136 Pupils' responses to design technology are good at both key stages. They show a keen interest in their tasks and willingly share experiences with each other. They listen carefully to instructions and carry them out enthusiastically. Good perseverance when tasks are difficult enables pupils to eventually succeed

137 There is good and very good teaching at each key stage. It is good overall. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge due to good curriculum leadership of a coordinator who has since left the school. Two experienced teachers who will continue in this role until another appointment is made, have successfully overseen this role. Teachers maintain good levels of discipline, enabling pupils to operate in safety. They have high expectations and encourage pupils to think for themselves. The teaching of design technology has shown considerable improvement since the last inspection. There has also been an improvement in the level of resources for the subject. An acceptable scheme of work is now in place.

138 **Geography**

138 Pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and they achieve standards that are generally appropriate at Key Stage 1 and above those expected for their age at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be generally in line with national expectations.

139 At Key Stage 1, pupils know what a "bird's eye view" is and know that maps are plans seen from above. They accurately identify some of the features of the local area, post box, cemetery, shops etc. and can locate them, describing the route by which each can be reached from the school. They use appropriate language such as "right at the top of the road" or "left at the end of the street by the post box". They know that the major road passing through their area is the Coventry Road and that it leads into Birmingham City centre. They have a sound knowledge of different sizes of settlements and that a characteristic of the city centre is the large number of shops that attract crowds of people. Pupils study similar and contrasting localities, and compare a Scottish island with their area. They look at and understand such aspects as peoples' life styles and the weather.

140 At Key Stage 2, pupils effectively extend their knowledge of simple maps. They learn to use Ordnance Survey maps and, on field courses, they effectively use their knowledge to read maps in orienteering exercises. Pupils understand

about the different climates that create different weather patterns in areas of the world. They prepare their own weather forecasts, using symbols and the appropriate language. They know that rain can be “heavy” or come in “showers”. They talk confidently about “strong” winds or “gusts” and know about the effects of different temperatures. Older pupils have a sound knowledge of the Beaufort Scale to measure wind speed. Some pupils use reference books to effectively research the different types of weather in different parts of the world and by the end of the key stage most pupils have a sound understanding of world climate. They have an appropriate knowledge of the water cycle and thus how rainy weather conditions are created. Pupils at the top of the key stage learn effectively about the features of a river and know the stage at which a river is by the features that they observe. They have a good knowledge of such features as deltas and estuaries and understand the effects of erosion in the course of a river. Pupils learn about the effects that humans can have on a town and realistically balance the positive and negative points associated with the building of a by pass around towns and villages or the effects that people have had on regions such as the rain forests. Pupils effectively contrast their own locality with a distant settlement in India and appreciate the differences that climate and the locality of a settlement has on the lives of the people that live there.

141 Pupils’ response in lessons ranges from satisfactory to very good. It is good overall. Pupils behave consistently well in their lessons and they concentrate. They pay attention to instructions and join in appropriately, sustaining their interest to good effect. Where there is opportunity they share their ideas and listen to those of other pupils. They organise themselves well within groups and demonstrate care of resources. This behaviour supports their general progress well.

142 The standard of teaching is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the period of inspection. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and they give accurate information to their pupils confidently. They pay good attention to detail. Initial introductions to lessons are interesting and effectively capture pupils’ interest and enthusiasm. Teachers’ expectations are high and these are made clear in the tasks that are well planned for pupils. These are appropriate to what each group should learn and clearly state what the learning objective of the lesson is. These are generally shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons and make clear to pupils what they should know at the end of each lesson. Tasks planned are planned at appropriate levels for individual and groups of pupils. Teachers assess what pupils have learned in lessons and this often provides a starting point for subsequent lessons. Teachers manage pupils well and they establish and maintain good standards of behaviour in their lessons.

143 The subject is well led by the coordinator who has worked hard to create a scheme of work in response to the last inspection report, which contained criticism of the lack of a scheme of work and progression of skills development between classes being weak. There is now a good scheme of work that is clear and helpful to teachers in their planning. Resources have also been improved with more maps and reference materials now available. Provision is well supported and enriched through residential visits, during which pupils are given opportunities to contrast other types of settlements with their own area and to put into practise their map reading skills during orienteering exercises.

144 **History**

144 All pupils make good progress at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and attain standards that are generally above those expected from pupils of a comparable age. This is consistent with the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection at Key Stage 2, where standards were judged to be above average and pupils made good progress. This is an improvement at Key Stage 1, where standards were in line with expectations and progress was satisfactory.

145 At Key Stage 1, pupils study life in Victorian times. They accurately identify some differences in the clothes that children of that age wore and those of today. They further identify differences in the clothes worn by rich and poor children in this period. To do this they study photographs and use their developing powers of observation to study relevant details in the photographs. In their Victorian study, they develop good levels of knowledge of the Princess Victoria and they are aware that this period in history is named after her when she became Queen. They learn about family life in these times and some of the changes to society that took place during this period. They know about transport in these times and how people occupied themselves in leisure times. They gain a good knowledge of some of the famous people of the times, such as Mary Seale and Louis Braille and what they did to become famous. Implicit in their learning is the successful development of chronology, with pupils developing a good sense of order and the length of time since certain events took place and when major civilisations were at their peak.

146 At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of a range of civilisations in history. In the lower part of the key stage, pupils study the ancient Greeks. They compare this civilisation with life in ancient Britain. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the civilisation, and they learn about the culture of these times, patterns that are representative of this age and the alphabet. They know about Greek food and they effectively learn about life in the home. Pupils understand that some families had slaves and they are aware of the role of these people.

Later in the key stage pupils learn about the Egyptians and they build a good knowledge of aspects of this civilisation. Older pupils study life in Britain since the 1930s. They have a sound understanding of the main events of the Second World War and some of the main battles that took place. Pupils effectively learn about evacuation through the presentation given by a gentleman who was a child at the time of the war and was evacuated to Cheltenham. Later he returned to Birmingham and pupils gained a great deal of information through asking relevant and meaningful questions. They showed high levels of empathy with the visitor's experiences as a child.

- 147 The response of pupils ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. They listen carefully to their teachers and pay full attention during discussions, showing an eagerness to participate. They are confident and give their ideas readily and with enthusiasm. Pupils have good relationships with each other and listen respectfully to each other's views, asking well thought out questions that demonstrate understanding and respect. Both behaviour and attitudes are good.
- 148 The quality of teaching is good overall, although it is consistently very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are able to inform pupils accurately and clearly. In a lesson using artefacts from the war period, for example, the teacher was able to talk confidently and competently about the different items such as hair curlers. Expectations are high, and pupils were expected to identify the use and purpose of these through discussion with each other. The level of questioning is good. Planning is effective and the tasks that are provided for groups of pupils are appropriate. A strong feature in the provision in history is that teachers explain reasons why events happened. For example, pupils learning about the Second World War pupils were given in-depth details about life in the war. This helps to build, in the pupils, an understanding of the actions of others and their reasons for acting as they did.
- 149 The development in history is well managed by a knowledgeable coordinator. The scheme provides for the progressive development of skills of historical enquiry within a structured programme. Literacy is well supported through a range of activities including research, discussions, use of vocabulary and posing questions to teachers and visiting speakers. Resources are satisfactory, but are well supplemented by loans from the local education authority's loan service.

150 **Music**

- 150 It was not possible to see lessons at Key Stage 1 and there was insufficient written work in the work sample. Standards, progress and teaching cannot be clearly judged. Pupils' singing in assembly showed that they are used to singing, in contrast to the situation at the time of the previous report. Standards at Key Stage 2 are often better than those expected for pupils of this age and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Some good music making was heard in Years 3 and 4. These pupils sing well and made a very fair attempt at a two part song in their lesson. The current Water Music compositions show a good grasp of rhythm and sense of timbre. Year 5/6 classes are less confident about singing although two classes sing in their classrooms in temporary accommodation which does not help vocal sound. The third class sang in the hall, which is very resonant, and the sound, especially of the soft singing, was good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have put together some good instrumental pieces to accompany the songs. These show a developing sense of pulse, texture and dynamics to make the piece appropriate to its setting.
- 151 At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. Years 3 and 4 made substantial advances in listening skills through singing, and in their knowledge of the elements of music through their playing. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are becoming more skilful in using instruments for a particular effect. The lessons brought only modest gains in singing skill although the songs become more familiar and confident with repetition.
- 152 Attitudes to music are good. Key Stage 1 pupils sang energetically and enthusiastically in their assembly. Key Stage 2 pupils also are very willing to sing, in class and in assembly. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 obviously enjoy the instrumental work. They work rapidly and eagerly. Through the key stage pupils are able to organise themselves and work well together cooperatively and collaboratively. One group, aware of the high noise level as many groups tried to compose their pieces in the hall, moved so as to be able hear more easily what they were doing. Throughout this work in all three classes pupils concentrated well. Pupils in the recorder group showed the same enthusiasm when they were actually playing their instruments.
- 153 Several teachers have specific music skills and put them to good use to help pupils' music learning. In one assembly, for example, the singing was very competently accompanied by guitar and piano. Overall, at Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, with some good and very good teaching being seen. Teachers prepare well for lessons, and organise them efficiently. Too many groups of instruments sometimes play together and this makes it difficult to hear what is happening, especially in the school hall. The composition tasks are open ended and this allows pupils of all abilities,

including those with special educational needs, to join in happily and profitably. Lessons are brisk, teachers use lesson time well. They keep pupils busy and manage them very well.

154 The school is adequately resourced for music and the new building has a beautifully resonant hall that helps all music making, especially singing. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and pupils work across both attainment targets. The school has addressed the criticisms made in the previous report and is well prepared to take music forward. The school has a number of extra curricular groups taught by visiting teachers although currently no choir. A recorder group played at a level appropriate to pupils' age and level of experience.

155 **Physical education**

155 Standards in physical education in relation to pupils of a similar age are mainly above at Key Stage 1 and in line at Key Stage 2. This is the reverse of what was found in the previous inspection where standards at Key Stage 2 were higher. Progress overall is satisfactory to good with pupils at Key Stage 1 making the best progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally good.

156 From an early age pupils understand the necessity for warming up and cooling down, although there are occasions when warming up activities are not sufficiently vigorous. Skills in gymnastics are well developed and by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they produce intricate sequences of movement, sometimes alone and sometimes with a partner. Despite being able to balance on a variety of body parts both on and off the apparatus, there is an overall lack of quality in their movement. Most pupils are capable of working at different levels and speeds and even pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to put controlled effort into their movements. Pupils experience a range of dance, which is usually linked to their topic work. Following the adverse comments from the previous inspection this aspect of physical education is becoming well developed due to the hard work of the coordinator and the commitment of teachers to "have a go". As well as country dance, pupils are involved in dance and drama where they successfully interpret the movements and moods of homeless people. Pupils are taught at an early age to handle apparatus safely and this they do throughout the school. Standards in games are good despite the lack of a playing field. Pupils can throw, catch and strike balls of varying sizes and many, including girls, from the upper end of Key Stage 2 can dribble a ball well in soccer, keeping it under control.

157 Attitudes to work are generally good throughout the school and occasionally very good at Key Stage 1. This is largely due to pupils' good behaviour, despite some being very noisy at times. Pupils work well on their own and continue to cooperate well within groups. The majority of pupils make a really good effort to be smartly dressed for their physical education. This needs to continue to be promoted at the upper end of the school where some pupils wear inappropriately loose clothing for gymnastics. Such practice is unsafe.

158 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally good and is occasionally excellent. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their work effectively, ensuring that the planning, performing and evaluating elements of the attainment target are carried out. Good links are made with topic work. Most teachers motivate pupils well by their own enthusiasm and they use the often short time at their disposal effectively. Tasks are sufficiently open ended to enable all pupils to succeed to the best of their ability. At all times associated key vocabulary is emphasised and used.

159 The curriculum is appropriately balanced but the school does not yet offer a full range of extra curricular sporting activities. Lack of a playing field restricts pupils' overall progress in games. The new hall provides an excellent facility for pupils to work in bare feet in dance and gymnastics, although a few still do not choose to do this. Apparatus, both large and small, is good but storage for larger equipment sometimes restricts access. The school should seriously consider the safety implications of putting out apparatus prior to the start of the lesson when pupils are expected to warm up around it.

160 **Swimming**

160 This inspection included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below.

The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 are generally satisfactory when compared with the requirements of physical education National Curriculum for swimming. By the time they are eleven, most pupils are able to swim the required 25 metres unaided. They generally maintain a good body position in the water and show sound levels of control of their breathing whilst in motion. Most pupils swim with an appropriate variety of styles. Most swim crawl and breaststroke and the majority swim competently on their backs. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good skills in personal survival in the water. Younger pupils at the key stage develop confidence in the water at an early stage and most are developing the confidence to be able to float unaided for appropriate lengths of

time. Many pupils are able to surface dive in deep water to retrieve a heavy object from the pool bottom. A few pupils have not yet developed the confidence to take their feet from the bottom of the pool for sustained lengths of time, but there are early signs of growing confidence in this respect.

The quality of teaching is consistently good. Professional swimming coaches are effectively supported by teachers from the school. Teachers control the pupils well and take due regard for the health and safety of their pupils while travelling to and from the pool and whilst in the pool. Clear and appropriate demonstrations are provided which explain well what the pupils need to do to improve their standards and which are based on the instructors' good subject knowledge. Lessons progress at a brisk pace and effective use is made of the limited time available that pupils are in the water. Both teachers and instructors support sympathetically the small number of pupils that seem to be nervous in the water and do their very best to help these pupils overcome their fears and nervousness.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets the requirements of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum for swimming.

Pupils receive swimming tuition for two terms in each of Years 3 and 4, although the four terms may not be consecutive. There is no provision beyond this for pupils who do not learn to swim by the end of Year 4, nor is there extra-curricular provision. Planning is sound and pupils' skills are developed within a progressive structure, building on pupils' prior attainment well. The progress of pupils is carefully noted and their achievements are properly recorded.

The pool is off site and is of appropriate size and depth for this age of pupils. The school has exclusive use of the pool during swimming tuition times. Travelling arrangements are good and the safety of the pupils takes a high profile throughout each session. Changing is appropriately supervised by pool staff and teachers.

161 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

161 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

161 A team of five inspectors completed a total of 20 inspector days over a period of four days. For the majority of their time, the inspectors visited classes, talked to individuals and groups of pupils and evaluated their work, including listening to 21 pupils read. Inspectors observed 95 lessons. A total of 70 hours was spent on these activities. In addition, interviews were held with the headteacher, curriculum coordinators, all staff, governors and parents.

162 In addition:

- a range of work from a representative sample of pupils from each year group was examined, together with their records;
- in addition to the 21 pupils who were formally heard to read, others were heard informally;
- pupils were interviewed, to establish a view of life in the school and to gain an understanding of relative levels of academic progress and attainment;
- informal discussions took place with many pupils as part of classroom observations;
- the documentation provided by the school, including teachers' planning, was carefully analysed;
- attendance registers and the school's discipline records were examined;
- 10 parents attended a parents' meeting. Completed questionnaires were received from 51 parents. The issues raised at the meeting and in the questionnaires helped to inform the inspection;
- the previous inspection report was examined.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	306	3	54	34

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	14.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6

Education support staff (YR- Y6)

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	132.75

Average class size:	27.8
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Financial data

Financial year:	98/99
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	£
Total Income	522,790
Total Expenditure	521,034
Expenditure per pupil	1,742
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,580
Balance carried forward to next year	51,336

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

250
45

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	11	53	11	20	4
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	27	55	2	9	6
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	35	29	15	7
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	11	56	13	15	4
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	15	55	13	11	4
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	53	11	6	4
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	4	64	18	9	4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	11	60	9	15	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	15	71	4	6	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	18	62	6	7	7
My child(ren) like(s) school	31	53	11	4	0

Other issues raised by parents

Some criticism of the limits placed on lunchtime activities.
Some criticism about the attitudes of staff when approached.
They feel there is a lack of parents' functions.
Young pupils have too much homework.