

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JAMES' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Rednal, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103450

Headteacher: Mrs J McMahon

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara Crane  
21227

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 188928

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Leach Heath Lane Rednal Birmingham
Postcode:	B45 9BN
Telephone number:	0121 4532638
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Andrews
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English, areas of learning for children under 5, art.	Standards, teaching, care of pupils, leadership and management.
Mr Trevor Hall	Lay inspector		Attendance, partnership with parents, care of pupils.
Mr John Brooke	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, geography, design and technology, equal opportunities.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
Mrs Sue West	Team inspector	Science, information technology, music, physical education, special educational needs.	Curriculum

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL</b>	

The school is an average size, with 199 pupils on roll. It is situated in the Longbridge ward and serves a very mixed area. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average at 21%. There are very few pupils who do not come from a white ethnic background. Two pupils have statements of special educational need and 18% of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average. All of the pupils have English as their first language. Children enter the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. When they join this class, their skills in language and literacy are generally below average.

## **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. The teaching is good and the pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics. The school is very well led by the headteacher and the staff work hard to raise standards. The school provides good value for money.

### **What the school does well**

- The pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics, information technology, history and art.
- The pupils have a very good attitude to their work. They behave well and enjoy very good relationships.
- There is some high quality teaching. The teachers know the pupils very well and plan work to meet their needs.
- The school takes very good care of the pupils and puts them first.
- The pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- The headteacher provides an excellent lead for the school and the staff share her commitment to raise standards through improving their teaching.

### **What could be improved**

- The older pupils' spelling and handwriting could be better.
- Too much space is taken up by the storage of resources in classrooms and this restricts the space available for the pupils to work.
- The library area is too small for the pupils to use independently.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1996. The quality of teaching has improved markedly. The teachers have a better understanding of their subjects. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, science, information technology, history and art. The curriculum is better planned for children under five. The school has made very good progress in its use of assessment to plan work to match the needs of more able pupils. Satisfactory progress has been made in extending the curriculum in music, although the pupils still have too few opportunities to compose. The school is in a good position to continue its drive to raise standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	A	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	B	C	B	
Science	C	C	D	C	

These results relate to the pupils who took the tests last year. The pupils' performance in English and science in 1999 was below that seen in most schools, but the same as that in similar schools. An average proportion of pupils achieved the expected level for their age in English and science compared to most schools, but fewer pupils achieved at the higher level. In mathematics, the pupils' results were the same as in most schools nationally, and above those in similar schools. The school's trend in results for eleven year olds has been broadly in line with the national trend over the past three years. The school exceeded its targets for last year and is on course to meet the suitably challenging targets it has set for this year.

The evidence of the inspection indicates that the Year 6 pupils are reaching above average standards in English and mathematics. This good picture of standards is also evident in the work by seven year olds. The improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 is due to the school's analysis of the pupils' performance in the tests which has been used to bring about improvements in teaching. This has supported a better rate of learning in writing, mathematics and science by more able pupils. The pupils read very competently and write well, although spelling and handwriting could be better at Key Stage 2. The pupils of all ages use their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Their speed of mental calculation is a strength. Standards in information technology, history and art are good at both key stages. The pupils use computers well to support their learning. In all other subjects except for design and technology, the pupils achieve the standards expected for their ages.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils behave very well in lessons and on the playground.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils get on very well together. They willingly take on responsibilities and show a good level of maturity for their age.
Attendance	Similar to that in most schools.

The pupils arrive punctually and are ready to work. They are interested in the lessons and try hard to please the teachers. They are helpful, polite and keen to talk about their work. The pupils are proud of their achievements. Pupils of all ages and abilities relate well to each other.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. It is good or better in 80% of lessons and very good or better in 30% of lessons. There is excellent teaching in 10% of the lessons. The outstanding teaching is mainly in Year 2.

The teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school and the basic skills are well taught. Strengths in teaching include the very good quality of teachers' planning to meet the needs of all pupils, high expectations of work and behaviour and careful day-to-day assessment of what the pupils can do and need to do next. A weakness in Key Stage 2 is that the teachers do not always encourage the pupils to check their work for spelling or insist on better standards in handwriting.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The teachers plan an interesting and varied range of activities. Good links are made between subjects. The curriculum for design and technology and music is weaker.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils' needs are carefully assessed and the planning to meet their needs is specific and well delivered by teachers and classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision overall. The school encourages the pupils to think deeply about important issues and to reflect on their feelings. A strong framework supports the pupils' moral development. The pupils develop very well socially and show a good level of maturity for their age. Good provision is made for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A very good level of care is provided. The staff know the pupils well as individuals and give a high priority to their well-being and progress in work.

The school has built a good partnership with parents and provides them with good information. The parents have confidence in the school and find the staff approachable.

## **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides an excellent direction for the school and her influence is evident in its daily life. The deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators have a clear idea of the part they play in the school's drive to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and work hard to support the school. They fulfil all of their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school looks closely at how it can improve teaching and learning and plans effectively to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its finances well to support its planning for improvement. The space in classrooms is less well used.

The school's staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate, but there is no library area in which the pupils can select information from the full range of books. There are too few musical instruments. Too many resources are stored in classrooms and this restricts the space for pupils to work.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy school and make good progress.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li><li>• The staff are approachable.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More consistent provision for homework.</li><li>• More extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• Behaviour at lunchtime.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. From inspection evidence, the parents' high level of confidence in the school is well founded. Homework is given in each class and is sufficient, but the form it takes varies from teacher to teacher. There are very few extra-curricular activities and these are restricted to sport. The pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is similar to the very good behaviour found at other times.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The pupils' performance in English and science in 1999 was below that seen in most schools, but the same as that in similar schools. An average proportion of pupils achieved the expected level for their age in English and science compared to most schools, but fewer pupils achieved at the higher level. In mathematics, the pupils' results were the same as in most schools nationally, and above those in similar schools. The school's trend in results for eleven year olds has been broadly in line with the national trend over the past three years. The school exceeded its targets for last year and is on course to meet the suitably challenging targets it has set for this year.
2. The results of the tests in reading, writing and mathematics for 7 year olds in 1999 indicate good standards, both in comparison to all schools nationally and similar schools. The results in reading and writing were particularly impressive, with a high proportion of the pupils attaining at Level 3, which is better than expected for their age.
3. The evidence of the inspection indicates that the Year 6 pupils are reaching above average standards in English and mathematics. This good picture of standards is also evident in the work by seven year olds. The improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 is due to the school's analysis of the pupils' performance in the tests, which has been used to bring about improvements in teaching. This has supported a better rate of learning in writing, mathematics and science by more able pupils. Standards in information technology, history and art are good at both key stages. In all other subjects except for design and technology, the pupils achieve the standards expected for their ages.
4. The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual targets. They are well supported by the good quality of the teachers' planning to meet their needs and the high quality of support provided by the classroom assistants.
5. The children under five in the Reception class achieve well in all of the areas of learning and most are likely to reach the standards expected by the age of five. They quickly learn to form letters and learn their sounds. They enjoy reading and recognise familiar words. They make good progress in learning about numbers and shapes. Their mathematical vocabulary develops well.
6. The pupils at both key stages achieve well in English. They read competently from a good range of books, both for information and pleasure. They express opinions readily, using a wide vocabulary. In writing, they construct stories carefully and choose words for effect. The pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects, when they write accounts in history and record their findings in science. The accuracy of spelling and quality of pupils' handwriting at Key Stage 1 is better than at Key Stage 2. The older pupils often spell more complex words correctly but make mistakes in common words. They do not routinely check their spellings. Some pupils are not using a joined style of handwriting by the time they leave the school.
7. Good progress is made in mathematics at both key stages. The pupils develop a good facility with numbers and can explain how they have arrived at their answers. Their speed of mental calculation is good. When solving problems, the pupils can suggest different ways of approaching the task. They handle data competently and present their findings in a range of charts and graphs.

8. Good achievement is evident in science at both key stages. The pupils observe carefully and make predictions based on what they know. They learn to devise ways of testing their ideas and record their findings in a range of appropriate ways.
9. The pupils use information technology well to support their learning in most subjects. They access information from CD-ROMs, use word processing to present their work and combine pictures and text. By the time they leave the school, they use spreadsheets and present data in a good range of charts, graphs and tables.
10. The pupils' work in history and art reaches a good standard. In both subjects, they are encouraged to use their own ideas. Standards in design and technology are below average. Too little time is devoted to the subject and the pupils do not build on their previous skills as there is no scheme of work. The pupils' have too few opportunities to compose and this restricts their progress in this aspect of music.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. The children under five develop positive attitudes to work and they grow in independence and confidence. They learn to work and play together and behave very well.
12. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they enjoy coming to school. They work well together and listen carefully to the teachers. They respond particularly well to each other when sharing equipment and conducting experiments during practical sessions. They are motivated in their work, persevere to improve and remain on task. The home-school agreement adds much to the pupils' positive attitudes and is well supported by them and their parents. The pupils are tolerant of each other's weaknesses and are pleased to praise the success of their classmates, as was shown in one lesson when a Year 2 pupil was so delighted that the class had worked out how to spell 'tentacles' that she spontaneously suggested that all should be applauded for their efforts. These positive attitudes have a good impact on the pupils' learning.
13. The pupils' behaviour is very good and they have a clear idea about what they should and should not do. They enter and leave both the classrooms and the building at break times and at the beginning and end of the school day in an orderly manner. They play well together in the playground and although play at lunchtime is exuberant at times, it is not aggressive. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection. Boys and girls relate well to each other and pupils respect the school's property and that of each other. Parents support the school's 'Golden Rules' policy and there have been no exclusions during the past year.
14. The personal development of the pupils is good. They settle quickly to work at the start of sessions, and the warm relationships with the teachers are a feature of the classrooms. They are courteous and helpful towards each other and to visitors. During lunchtime the older pupils are given the opportunity to help younger pupils with reading, and prepare resources for the afternoon's lessons. They enjoy acting as servers or reading prayers at Mass, and take these duties very seriously. They welcome the opportunity to raise funds for charities and particularly enjoy collecting and selling conkers for the charity CAFOD. They do, however, have limited opportunities to organise their own learning and to use research skills, owing chiefly to the limitations of the school library.
15. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The pupils are punctual and very eager to start lessons. Registration is very prompt.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The consistently good quality of teaching is a strength of the school and supports the good standards achieved in most subjects. Teaching is good in eight out of ten lessons and very good or better in nearly a third of the lessons. Some outstanding teaching is seen in at the end of both key stages and this has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and share an enthusiasm and commitment to improvement that underpins their work.
17. The teaching of children under five is good. The teacher and classroom assistants are sensitive to the needs of young children and plan a good range of activities that stimulate the children to explore, think and develop self-esteem.
18. The strengths in teaching are similar in all classes. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and know the pupils well. They have high expectations of what the pupils will achieve in most aspects of their work. They use their assessments of the pupils to plan work that meets the needs of different groups of pupils effectively. The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported through detailed individual education plans that focus on precise areas for improvement. The classroom assistants work closely with the teachers and have a clear idea of what to do to support individuals and groups of pupils. This results in these pupils making very good progress. The classrooms have a calm, hard working atmosphere because of the teachers' clear expectation of a high standard of effort and behaviour. The lessons are lively and well resourced and this leads to the pupils' interest and good level of concentration. Humour is used effectively and there are very good relationships. The pupils willingly offer their opinions because they know that these will be valued.
19. The teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is very good in Key Stage 1. The pupils are given a firm foundation for their future learning. The Key Stage 2 teachers extend the pupils' learning through good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but they do not always ensure that pupils check their work for spellings or produce handwriting of a high enough standard. The teachers in all classes provide homework that supports the pupils' learning, but the format is different in each class. This causes some confusion in the parents' perception of what to expect.
20. In the outstanding lessons at both key stages, the pupils are highly motivated because of the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and lively presentation of challenging work. The very good pace and structure of these lessons are notable features and the pupils are proud of what they achieve.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

21. At the last inspection the school was found to provide a sound foundation for the next stage of education. The school now provides a good, broad curriculum for its pupils. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum for children under five is well planned and provides a firm foundation for entry to the National Curriculum. The National Numeracy and National Literacy Strategies have been implemented confidently. The school was a pilot school for the National Numeracy Strategy and its implementation is having a marked effect on raising standards. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. The school has ensured that better challenge is provided for pupils of higher ability. The provision of small group support is especially good for those pupils who are slower learners or who have special educational needs.

22. There are schemes of work for all subjects except design and technology. Consequently, the pupils do not build effectively on their skills in designing and making. Too little time is devoted to the subject. The school is reviewing its provision in the light of the new requirements from September. In music, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to compose and record their compositions.
23. Provision for extra-curricular activities is limited and only addresses sport. There are teams for netball, football and rugby. The curriculum is, however, particularly enriched through carefully chosen educational visits and visitors. For example, members of the Birmingham Royal Ballet have visited the school for a workshop on the 'Nutcracker Suite' and this has resulted in valuable work in music, physical education and English. Book fairs and health awareness mornings are arranged and visitors make learning about history both fascinating and fun. Poets and authors hold regular workshops. Very good use is made of the local area and pupils make regular visits to places such as a local bakery, farm and park, and Birmingham Museum, gaining first hand experience in a wide variety of curriculum areas.
24. The school makes suitable arrangements for the provision of opportunities for personal development. Sex education is taught within the religious education programme 'God's gift of life'. Discussion on the misuse of drugs is incorporated within science lessons.
25. Equal opportunity for all pupils is assured and boys and girls have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active role.
26. The school's provision for spiritual development is very good. Pupils are frequently enthralled by the wonders of nature, for example the fragility and yet the strength of a spider's web, and the movement of snails reacting to noise or food. Older pupils reflect on the powerful and lasting emotional effect of Wordsworth's poetry. The atmosphere of the weekly whole school candlelit prayer session provides a particularly moving occasion. The pupils enter quietly and choose to stand with friends or brothers and sisters, reflecting in silent prayer to a background of suitably chosen music. The pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong through the school's strong moral framework. The 'Golden Rules' for behaviour are displayed in prominent positions around the school and are well understood by the pupils.
27. Very good provision is made for the pupils' social development. There are many occasions when older pupils support younger ones, either through the curriculum or in their play activities. The pupils regularly organise events to raise money for charities and 'appeals'. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to think about society and their place in it. For example, the pupils in Key Stage 1 have discussed in detail how their community environment could be improved. Pupils in Key Stage 2, in a literacy lesson, explore the social and cultural issues facing an Indian boy starting a new school and how they could help him.
28. Provision for cultural development is good and often encompasses social and moral issues. Pupils have opportunities to understand the plight of immigrants and have considered how they might have felt as a black community in Birmingham. In music, the pupils have worked with an African drumming group. In art, a Japanese student has explained origami techniques, and rangoli patterns feature in work by Year 3 pupils who study a village in India. The pupils discuss composers and painters and, with a Catholic music group, enjoy music from around the world. Their own heritage is celebrated through visits to museums, theatres and galleries.
29. The school has very good links with the pre-school group before children start school and with the secondary stage of education.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

30. The school provides a warmly supportive and secure environment for the pupils. Good policies and procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare throughout the school day and on visits. Child protection procedures are properly in place.
31. The teachers know the pupils very well and provide very good role models. The staff work hard to build up the pupils' self-esteem and have a natural rapport with them. A high level of care is evident in the school's daily life and this a strength of the school. The parents appreciate the school's high expectations of their children's work and behaviour and feel that children are encouraged to be mature and responsible. Parents indicate that staff are very approachable and that parents and their children can confidently share their thoughts and concerns with them. Suggestions are listened to and acted upon where appropriate.
32. Relationships between pupils and teaching staff are very good. Raised voices are rarely heard about the school and discipline is almost imperceptibly maintained. Parents strongly support this work, reflecting the very good ethos of the school that prevails. Occasional incidents of bad behaviour and bullying are viewed with disappointment. They are dealt with swiftly and effectively involving pupils and their parents. A few parents expressed concern regarding the behaviour of some pupils over lunch and the supporting supervision. The inspection team found there was no noticeable difference in the behaviour of pupils over all breaks, during the day or at lunchtimes. A few pupils are boisterous at times, but overall, play is good humoured with a good mix of games enjoyed by boys and girls playing happily together.
33. The school works purposefully to promote good attendance and punctuality and monitors absence carefully.
34. The pupils' progress in their work and personal development is carefully assessed. The staff know the pupils very well. The pupils readily approach the adults in school for help or guidance and receive good support. Teachers use their assessments very effectively to plan work to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The brighter pupils are suitably challenged. The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported through individual plans that are used by the teachers to ensure that work is appropriate. The classroom assistants provide very good support for these pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. Parents feel the school has good and effective links with them. They are encouraged to feel part of the family of the school. They are well informed through the school prospectus, the governors' annual report and by regular newsletters. Good information on curricular and topic activity is provided each term. The meetings to explain the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies were very well attended by parents. There are good, detailed written reports in addition to the termly meetings for parents to discuss their children's progress. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and involved in their child's learning.
36. The school has recently introduced a home-school agreement, negotiated between governors, staff and parents. The majority of parents view this step positively and have already signed up to the agreement. Pupils have also shared in the formation of their section and the Year 6 pupils, spoken to, have a good idea about the content and purpose of this document.

37. The school takes account of parents' views and welcomes their support for their children's work at home and in school. Consequently, parents have confidence in the headteacher and staff. This partnership has a good effect on pupils' growing independence and is clearly demonstrated by the pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Most parents feel there is the right amount of homework although the school recognises the concern of a few regarding some inconsistencies in the way in which this is organised.
38. A good number of parents help in class during the school day. Many more help with visits and events. The annual Sports Day is well attended by families and the wider community. The Parents' and Teachers' Association works hard to support the school, raising significant funds for extra resources.
39. This school is very much at the heart of its parish and recently, in celebration of its fortieth anniversary, opened its doors to pupils and families, past and present. It used this time wisely, not only in festivity, but also in reflection and review. It now looks forward positively to the future.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

40. A strength of the school is the way in which it looks at its performance and identifies what it can do improve teaching and standards. The headteacher provides a very effective lead in this work. Her influence is very evident in the school's daily life, both in its calm and caring atmosphere and in the commitment to raise standards. The results of tests are carefully checked to pinpoint weaknesses in the pupils' learning and appropriate adaptations are made to teaching to bring about improvement. A good example of this is seen in the better standards achieved in Key Stage 2 in writing this year, as a result of the headteacher's and literacy co-ordinator's detailed analysis of the previous years' results.
41. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. They have a clear idea of the part they play in the drive to raise standards. The staff work very effectively as a team. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented confidently by the staff as a result of well-planned in-service training. The monitoring of curriculum planning and teaching is used to feedback points for improvement.
42. The school has identified the right priorities in its planning for development and works steadfastly towards its targets. Financial planning supports its initiatives and the school takes a longer term view of how major expenditure can be achieved. For example, the current high level of carry forward is earmarked to create a computer suite and will reduce to half its current level this year.
43. The governing body provide good support for the school's work and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are well informed and work efficiently through their structure of committees. The school uses its resources well. The governors seek to find the best value from expenditure on staffing and resources.
44. The accommodation is adequate, but there is no library area. The area in which reference books are stored is very restricted and its position in a corridor prevents the pupils from browsing comfortably. There are good collections of books related to topics, chosen by the teachers, in the classrooms but the pupils lack opportunities to find information from books from the full range. The classrooms are of an adequate size, but the storage of resources restricts the space available for pupils to work. Resources are at least adequate, but there are too few musical instruments.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In the context of its many strengths, the school now needs to improve in the following areas:

- (1) Improve the standard of spelling and handwriting at Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that the pupils check their work for mistakes;
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting.(Paragraphs 6, 19, 55)
  
- (2) Improve the space available for the pupils to work in classrooms by:
  - reviewing the usefulness of the resources stored;
  - considering alternative storage of resources outside these rooms.(Paragraphs 44, 57)
  
- (3) Improve the opportunities that the pupils have to find information for themselves by considering the establishment of a library area.  
(Paragraphs 14, 44, 81)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider the inclusion of the following points in its action planning:

- reviewing the time allocated to design and technology and establishing a scheme of work (paragraphs 10, 22, 71);
- providing more musical instruments and opportunities for the pupils to compose music (paragraphs 10, 22, 91);
- extending the range of extra-curricular activities (paragraph 23).



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed

40

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

17

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10%	20%	50%	20%	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	199
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	40
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	17	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (90)	97 (97)	97 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (93)	97 (93)	97 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	14	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	7	6	9
	Total	18	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (78)	72 (69)	84 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	8	6	9
	Total	20	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (75)	72 (75)	84 (75)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	183
Any other minority ethnic group	8

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	380477
Total expenditure	365959
Expenditure per pupil	1760
Balance brought forward from previous year	36490
Balance carried forward to next year	51008

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	105

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	28	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	33	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	35	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	38	16	2	2
The teaching is good.	69	30	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	35	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	18	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	16	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	40	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	2	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	31	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	30	28	10	13

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents at the meeting felt that behaviour at lunchtime was not as good as at other times of the day because of the quality of the supervision. On the basis of the inspection evidence, the children maintain a very good standard of behaviour at all times of the day and are supervised appropriately.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

45. Children enter the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. Eight children were under five at the time of the inspection. The children's attainment on entry to the school is below average in language and literacy. The children achieve well and most are likely to meet the national expectations by the age of five, in all of the areas of learning.

#### **Personal and social development**

46. The good routines and clear, consistent expectations of work and behaviour ensure that the children know what is required and, consequently, they respond very well. The teaching is good and the staff take every opportunity to promote the children's understanding of how their actions affect others and the need to get on together. The children learn to work and play together. The warm and supportive relationships evident give the children a sense of security and confidence. The children generally move calmly from one activity to another and settle quickly to their work.

#### **Language and literacy**

47. The children enjoy listening to stories and looking at the pictures in books. Their language develops very well through the good opportunities to talk about their ideas. The teaching is good and the staff are clear about the children's needs and what will be learned in each session. The staff read stories in a lively manner that grips the children's interest and so they pay close attention. The adults talk to the children about their work and encourage them to express their ideas. The children quickly pick up the rich vocabulary used by the teacher. The children are encouraged to write and quickly learn to form letters and spell simple words. They understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end. The children recognise the rhyming pattern of groups of words and recognise familiar words in books and the classroom. The classroom displays are designed to help the children to read words that are linked to topics.

#### **Mathematical**

48. The teaching is good and the emphasis on familiarity with numbers results in a good rate of learning. A good range of practical activities deepens the children's understanding of number and shape. The Reception teacher provides good opportunities to develop the children's mental facility with numbers. She is sensitive to the needs of higher attaining children and uses well-directed questions to extend their understanding. The children develop a good mathematical vocabulary and can add two numbers under ten. They know that 100 is a 'big number', but that a thousand is even greater. Most children recognise a cube and know that it has square faces. More able children recognise a cylinder.

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

49. The teaching in this area of learning is good and interesting activities extend the children's understanding of their environment and why things happen. The children know that plants grow from seeds and that they need water. From their work on deserts, they know that a cactus stores water and has prickles that protect it from being eaten. They have visited a local bakery and carefully observe the changes to the ingredients when they mix bread dough in the classroom. The children understand that things in the past were different. They can explain that Victorian children sat on benches at long desks and used slates and chalk instead

of pencils and paper. They have good opportunities to use the computer to support their learning and use the keyboard confidently.

### **Creative development**

50. The children are given opportunities to explore a good range of media and create pictures with paint and collage. Teaching is good. The children make butterflies by painting and folding paper and extend this idea by printing with string to make symmetrical patterns. They know that the primary colours are used to mix other colours. In role play, in the 'Victorian schoolroom' or 'baker's shop' the children readily take on different roles and adapt their language and actions to suit the character. The children sing tunefully and learn a good repertoire of songs by heart.

### **Physical development**

51. The children develop a satisfactory awareness of space. In dancing they move rhythmically to music and some can express their feelings through gesture and body shape. They use tools in painting, modelling and writing with satisfactory control and show an appropriate level of manipulative skill in fastening and joining materials. The teaching is good, with a range of activities planned to support improvement in physical skills. In physical education lessons, the teacher's enthusiastic participation provides a good example and the classroom assistant provides very good support for children with special educational needs.

## **ENGLISH**

52. The results of the tests for eleven year olds in 1999 show that standards are below average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 was similar to that nationally, but fewer pupils reached the higher level. The pupils' results were in line with those in similar schools.
53. Standards have improved since the last inspection. On the basis of the work seen, the pupils aged seven and eleven are attaining good standards in reading and writing. The pupils achieve well because of the consistently good quality of teaching that builds effectively on what they already know and can do. The teachers' planning takes very good account of the pupils' different abilities and needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and often make very good progress as a result.
54. The pupils achieve well in reading because of the good teaching of the basic skills. They enjoy reading and older pupils discuss their preferences for different types of story. The teachers read aloud to the pupils using very good expression. This is reflected in the pupils' use of expression when they read. The quality of reading by Year 1 pupils, for example, was considerably enhanced in one lesson by the teacher's emphasis on punctuation and rhyme. By the end of the session, the pupils knew why the poet had used exclamation and question marks in certain lines and how these affected their reading of the poem. The teachers give the pupils good opportunities to discuss what they read and explore the language used. In a good lesson with Year 4 pupils, for example, the teacher had chosen a story that dealt with social and cultural issues raised by an Indian boy starting a new school and asked the class to identify which words in the story described how he felt. The Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how language is used to create effect. In a lesson comparing two poems, one Year 6 boy wrote: 'My favourite line in the poem is a simile, the images are very real, I can see the pictures.' The pupils read for information as well as pleasure. There are collections of non-fiction books connected to their topic work in each classroom, but they have very few opportunities to select from a wider range of books as there is no library.

55. The school has analysed the results of tests to pinpoint weaknesses in the pupils' writing and used the information successfully to adapt teaching. This has been a major factor in raising standards at Key Stage 2. The pupils write confidently, changing the style to meet different purposes. The pupils' stories and poems are interesting and well constructed. They choose words carefully to create effect. The pupils extend their skills through the good opportunities to write in other subjects. The standards of spelling and handwriting at Key Stage 1 are very good. In Key Stage 2, the pupils usually spell more complex words accurately but often make mistakes in common words. They do not routinely check through what they have written. Handwriting is less well developed in Key Stage 2 and not all pupils achieve a joined up style by Year 6. The teachers do not always insist on higher standards in handwriting or that pupils check through their work for spelling.
56. The teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and this leads to a good rate of learning. The pupils know what they have to do because of the teachers' good explanations. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher focused a group of pupils' thinking closely on the writer's use of short sentences to create an effect in a story. Her skilful teaching of the sounds of words and spelling patterns when teaching the whole class enabled the pupils to identify several ways of spelling the same sound in words. The teacher's lively manner enthused the pupils, who were delighted when they could spell the words correctly. During the final part of the lesson the teacher carefully assessed what the pupils had learned and encouraged them to evaluate each other's work. One boy volunteered that he liked the way that a classmate had 'used two sections and bullet points,' to make his instructions for making a model easier to follow.
57. The co-ordinator has worked hard to address the weaknesses in teaching and learning and has ensured that the Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented. The teachers are confident and have benefited from well-planned in-service training. The space available for the pupils to come together comfortably as a class is restricted by the volume of resources that are stored in classrooms. This leads to some pupils having a restricted view of shared books and limits their ability to take part in discussions.

## **MATHEMATICS**

58. The results of the 1999 tests for eleven year olds indicate that standards in mathematics are average compared to national results. They are above average in comparison to similar schools. Inspection evidence supports the view that standards of work are above average at both key stages. This is due to the school's careful analysis of the pupils' performance in tests and consequent adaptations to strengthen the curriculum and teaching. The school was a pilot school for the National Numeracy Project and all teachers have had extensive training that has sharpened their skills. This has led to well organised lessons with clear learning objectives and work that is planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
59. Pupils achieve well as a result of the good quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers make lessons interesting and many add touches of humour that further capture the pupils' attention. Relationships are very good and consequently pupils are eager to do well. Work is prepared thoroughly and all strands of mathematics are well covered. This results in the pupils reaching good standards in all aspects of their work. The organisation and pace of mental arithmetic sessions are a particular strength within lessons and the pupils' eager participation reflects the lively teaching.
60. The Key Stage 1 pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics because of the enthusiastic teaching and challenging work. They work confidently with tens and units and understand the value of 0 in numbers over a hundred. Higher ability pupils are able to add

digits correctly and work with numbers in thousands. The teachers introduce a good mathematical vocabulary and this is reflected in the pupils' explanations of what they are doing. They enjoy solving problems and develop an interest in how number patterns work. In Year 2, the pupils are kept alert in mental mathematics sessions as they attempt to beat records that have previously been set for speed in calculation. The teacher is careful to involve all abilities of pupils through well-directed questions and praise for effort. The teachers use the plenary sessions to assess what has been learned and use the information about the progress of individuals and groups to plan the next lesson.

61. The Key Stage 2 pupils have a good facility with numbers. They look at different ways of adding or subtracting numbers. They compile a bank of several strategies, for example, counting on or back, adjusting or rounding numbers up or down. They then apply these to grid and problem work. The pupils are encouraged to present work well and the teachers' marking helps the pupils to understand how to improve. Lessons are very well planned. All of the pupils work on similar strategies but the complexity of the tasks is varied. For example, less able pupils apply two digits and more able pupils four digit numbers. There is some outstanding teaching in Year 6. In the lesson seen, the teacher's very clear explanation enabled the pupils to suggest how they could calculate 17½% of a given amount. The pupils' ideas were valued and explored and so they gained in confidence and insight. By the end of the lesson the pupils were able to solve problems involving a 'tax', levied by the teacher, of 20% of their pocket money.
62. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator is well-informed and very well organised. Assessment procedures are firmly in place and individual and class targets are set from Year 2 to Year 6. Progress is monitored and, where necessary, booster sessions are put in place to improve performance.

## SCIENCE

63. The results of the 1999 tests for 11 year olds show that the pupils achieve standards that are slightly below the national average but in line with similar schools. Standards have risen since the last inspection, with more challenging work planned for more able pupils, mainly as a result of the greater emphasis placed on investigative work. The pupils achieve well in science and their work reaches an average standard. The science curriculum has been reviewed and now has an effective balance of knowledge and scientific enquiry.
64. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers display good subject knowledge, prepare their lessons well and set high expectations. In the best lessons seen the teachers followed a crisp opening session with an opportunity for pupils to work individually or in groups on a range of practical tasks. This ensures that pupils of all abilities benefit from the task, and further thinking is prompted when teachers ask 'What do you think might happen if ?' The warm relationships throughout the school also encourage pupils to enquire further by asking teachers questions. In Year 3, for example, pupils were observed having the confidence to ask a range of questions appropriate to their work on circuits. On a number of occasions pupils throughout the school were astounded, astonished or enthralled by what they discovered in their science lessons.
65. During the inspection week pupils in Key Stage 1 were involved in a range of practical work and learned at a good rate through well planned lessons and the teachers' thought provoking questions. In Year 1, for example, the pupils made sensible suggestions about why the snails chose to eat soft banana and tomato rather than hard carrot, prompted by the teacher's well-directed questions, and then tested their theories. By the end of the lesson they knew why snails leave a trail of slime and that their shells are their protective homes. In Year 2 pupils had the opportunity to devise a test to measure the distance certain sounds travelled and



recorded that ‘sounds grow fainter as you move away from them’. They appreciated why it is you hear better down wind from a sound or facing the direction that the sound is coming from, and that sound takes time to travel. They considered which sounds are pleasant and those that are annoying, and recorded the results of all their findings accurately. Following a visit to the park they appreciated how the force they exert causes the roundabout to move and how they are able to push and pull because they have joints.

66. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils record the evidence of their experiments accurately and in greater detail and are given increasing opportunities to develop their own ideas. They know how to separate solids from liquids by filtering, that earth is the only planet with liquid water, that light travels in a straight line and they understand how a pin-hole camera works. When studying the eye they record that, when they see, ‘the optic nerve takes the image to the brain and sorts it out.’ Pupils appreciate that although diseases such as chicken pox are caused by micro organisms, these can also be useful in the production of food such as bread. A good rate of learning is evident when teachers organise the groups well, set challenging tasks and give pupils the opportunity to think for themselves and organise their own experiments. This results in original work that is supported by careful illustrations and diagrams.

## **ART**

67. Standards are good at both key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils learn to look carefully at images and express their ideas in a good range of media. They study the work of artists and art from different times and learn a good range of techniques. The good quality teaching at both key stages enables the pupils to work confidently and try out their own ideas.
68. The Year 1 pupils’ drawing and collage work based on the pattern and form of snails’ shells, reaches a very good standard for their age. Their tie-dyed spiders’ webs are enhanced by fine stitching to emphasise the structure of the web. A strength of the work in Year 1 is the way in which an idea is extended into several different media. A good standard is also seen in the printed rangoli patterns by Year 3 pupils and the designs for tiles, based on William Morris’ work, created by Year 4 pupils.
69. Older pupils can talk knowledgeably about differences in style because the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and draw out the characteristics of artists’ work in discussions. Year 4 pupils, for example, know that portraits from the Tudor period are carefully posed and contain much intricate detail that tells a great deal about the person. Year 6 pupils know that Andy Warhol’s portraits represent popular icons and look carefully at his technique of photographic silk screening to create blocks of colour. The teachers stress the need to look critically at work, to see where it is successful and how it can be improved. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher encouraged the pupils to analyse each other’s figure drawing based on art from Ancient Greece. The pupils identified strengths and weaknesses in the proportion of the figures and how movement was better represented in some than others because of the quality of line.
70. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the subject and has devised a good scheme of work to support the teachers’ planning. A good range of visits enhances the pupils’ learning and artists occasionally work in school to enable the pupils to create large scale work, such as the ‘Millennium Trees’ in the school hall.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

71. The pupils' attainment in design and technology does not reach the standards expected for their age. The subject has received insufficient attention and the rate of pupils' learning is restricted by the lack of a scheme of work and limited time devoted to the subject.
72. The pupils display enthusiasm and an interest in the subject but have too little experience in designing and making to achieve better standards. Year 2 pupils have developed a range of cutting, stapling and hole punching skills and use these to design and make a Viking shield. In Year 3 pupils analyse the design of paper bags and in Year 4 pupils make models of the living quarters of a canal boat. Year 5 pupils produce detailed plans and designs of Tudor buildings, and in Year 6 the pupils make their own slipper patterns after dissecting commercial versions.
73. In the three lessons observed, the teaching was at least satisfactory but the pupils displayed limited skills. There is limited evidence of the pupils, over time, being given the opportunity to use a variety of tools or to formulate their own ideas by drawing detailed and step-by-step designs. The staff are enthusiastic and produce a range of material to support the subject but the lack of a scheme of work means that lessons do not build on what the pupils already know.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

74. Only one geography lesson was seen during the inspection. However it is clear from scrutiny of work and discussions with both staff and pupils, that the pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards expected for their age. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Teachers encourage pupils to think about the issues raised in their studies of local, national and world geography and ensure that alongside the knowledge, the pupils develop a range of geographical skills.
75. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound knowledge of their own community following walks around the immediate environs of the school and visits to the local shopping centre. Teachers raise the pupils' awareness of the area by focusing on local streets, housing and services and by encouraging them to consider ways of improving the local environment. This is particularly noticeable in Year 2 where pupils produce thoughtful writing and detailed plans for the improvement of a local close.
76. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use atlases with confidence to find cities, countries and a range of geographical features. They know the derivation of the names of local towns and that a settlement is 'a place where people go to live'. Pupils understand that the importance of the river Severn and know that it starts as a boggy pond. They have a clear appreciation of the effects of pollution on rivers and express their concerns in pieces of sensitive writing. Pupils in Year 3 are able to identify the main physical features in India and read tables to answer questions related to climate here and in India. The more able pupils work independently to discover that India has only three seasons. Year 5 pupils produce perceptive publicity material related to the attractions of Rubery Great Park and plot these accurately on a map.
77. The subject is well co-ordinated and the teachers are given good support.

## **HISTORY**

78. Pupils achieve good standards in history and the teaching is very good. Both pupils and staff have great enthusiasm for the subject and good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. This was particularly evident during the inspection week when a 'Time

Traveller' visited the school. Pupils in Year 2 were able to use deduction skills when handling a range of artefacts and in Year 4 they gasped in amazement at the realisation of the poor people's way of life over 100 years ago. The teachers plan lively and interesting activities. Their knowledge of the subject is very good. The pupils are given very good opportunity, to use their knowledge and to express opinions in their personal writing and this adds much to the quality of work seen.

79. In Year 2, the pupils use a good range of research skills when they act as archaeologists. They are able to answer questions from their own 'dig' because of the teacher's very good questions that prompt them to think more deeply. They know that an archaeologist has to be calm, careful and delicate and that their work has much to do with our understanding of the past. They appreciate how hard the lives of working children were in the nineteenth century especially those who were chimney sweeps, and hurriers and trappers in the mines. They write factually and imaginatively about famous people in history and a letter to Guy Fawkes informs him that he was wrong to try and blow up the Houses of Parliament as it would have killed people.
80. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the local industrial development, particularly the Jewellery Quarter. They know why Disraeli called Birmingham the 'Workshop of the World'. Pupils write detailed 'first hand' accounts of their discovery of Egyptian treasures. When studying Britain during the Second World War they are able to put themselves in the position of the evacuees and explore the feelings of loneliness and excitement that these children may have experienced. When writing imaginary letters home from Ugthorpe near Whitby as evacuees, they inform their parents that all is well and include detail such as 'Mrs White makes wonderful ginger biscuits.'
81. The pupils in both key stages use CD-ROMs to research information. The teachers put good collections of books in classrooms to support the pupils' learning on specific topics. However, the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to select from a wider range of books as the school's library area is very restricted and does not enable them to browse comfortably.
82. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and ensures that the subject has a high profile in the school. The good range of visits and artefacts enrich the pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

83. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards are well above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above expectation by the end of Key Stage 2. Better progress in Key Stage 2 is currently restricted by the dated hard ware in use and the pupils' limited access to it. However a new computer suite is soon to be installed, with updated computers and this will enable the pupils to develop sound and control based programs to a higher standard.
84. The teachers integrate information technology into many aspects of the curriculum and consequently pupils are used to using computers and are familiar with many applications. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are adept with keyboard skills and by the end of the key stage use information technology in writing and in creating pictures. They classify information, sorting it into categories and are able to produce pictographs and simple tables of results. They confidently write short programs to draw diagrams and test each other's work to see if it is correct. Small groups take turns to control a toy robot, programming it to complete set routines and mapping its path. Their concentration and perseverance in the session seen was of a high standard.

85. In Key Stage 2 information technology is used well as a tool to enhance the pupils' learning across the whole curriculum. The pupils use word processing to record their work complementing text with drawings, icons or pictures of increasing complexity as they move through the key stage. They select interesting layout and typeface which they vary to suit different purposes. They collect information and present it in pie, bar, line, three-dimensional graphs and spreadsheets. They are quickly able to research information for history and geography topics from CD-ROMs and by accessing the Internet. By the end of the key stage they are able to create a program with instructions to create simulations of crystals.
86. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, the quality of teaching was excellent. The pupils were well prepared, challenged, and quickly took responsibility for their own learning, attempting to solve problems before seeking adult help. In other lessons where incidental teaching was observed, teachers gave pupils very good support, for example one teacher created a simple tutorial pamphlet on spreadsheets. This was to be used after the main lead lesson and enabled pupils to help themselves when completing work individually or in small groups. Pupils assess their own progress by recording when they have successfully mastered an application. The teachers' planning is detailed and is checked to ensure that it builds upon what the pupils already know and can do. The subject is very well managed and both teachers and pupils are well supported.

## MUSIC

87. Singing was judged to be of high quality at the last inspection and this remains the case. At both key stages pupils are able to sing with very good tone, holding a two part ostinato and main theme well. The pupils show obvious pleasure in singing together and use good expression.
88. Too little evidence was available to form a judgement on other aspects of the pupils' achievement but many improvements have taken place in the curriculum. Although there is no member of staff with particular musical expertise, all have had in-service training for music. A published music scheme has been introduced to guide teachers with audiotapes for listening and evaluating. Teachers also benefit from the expertise of a peripatetic pianist who supports lessons.
89. The school has made a particular effort to enrich the pupils' musical experiences by participating in workshops with Birmingham Royal Ballet Symphonia, an African-Caribbean music workshop and joining with a Catholic music group to celebrate music from around the world. By specific invitation they have taken part in a BBC 'Songs of Praise' programme.
90. Only three lessons were observed. The lesson in Year 2 was of outstanding quality. The teacher's quick, clear recap of the previous lesson focused the pupils' thinking on different qualities of sounds. The teacher's clear guidance on diction, changes in rhythm and pauses resulted in a high quality performance in singing. The pupils' attention was captured by the teacher's energetic approach and the lesson combined fun and a very good rate of learning about timbre, pitch and phrasing.
91. Teachers' planning indicates that all aspects of music are covered, however there are too few opportunities for pupils to compose and record their own work. There is an adequate range of instruments but the numbers are limited and this restricts the pupils' participation in lessons.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

92. At the last inspection there was insufficient evidence to make a sound judgement on standards at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards were in line with national expectations. During the current inspection only one lesson of dance was seen at Key Stage 1 and one each of dance, gymnastics and athletics at Key Stage 2. Standards in these lessons met expectation at both key stages.
93. The Key Stage 1 pupils are developing a good rhythmic response to music and adapt their movements to reflect the speed and beat. All are able to perform a simple dance pattern and are aware of the moods of the music and appropriate movement. In Key Stage 2, the pupils refine a sequence of movements in pairs, which includes travelling and turning together, with quiet and neat landings. The pupils make a good effort to complete and perfect their routines and enjoy demonstrating to the rest of the class. In athletics training, the pupils are aiming to improve their own times in a range of activities and persevere in order to do so. All of the pupils in Key Stage 2 have an opportunity to swim. At the time of the inspection most of the pupils in Year 6 had gained their 25 metre distance award.
94. Teaching at both key stages is good. The pupils are managed effectively and good relationships often lead to the pupils' positive enjoyment of lessons. The teachers are enthusiastic and give good guidance to the pupils on how they can improve. The teachers' planning indicates that all aspects of physical education are covered over the year. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator checks planning and has introduced assessment targets in order that the pupils' progress can be evaluated.