

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Barnabas Church of England First and Middle  
School**  
Persnore

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique Reference Number: 116862

Inspection Number: 188993

Headteacher: Mrs. Sue Hughes

Reporting inspector: Mr. David Carrington  
15414

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707413

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and middle
Type of control:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stonebow Road Drakes Broughton Persnore Worcestershire WR10 2AW
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Hazel Bugbird
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr. David Carrington, Rgl	Mathematics	Attainment and progress
	French	Leadership and management
	Equality of opportunity	Teaching
Mrs. Christine Field, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Mr. Alan Blank	Information and communication technology	Curriculum and assessment
	Design and technology	
	Physical education	
Mrs. Trudy Cotton	Art	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Geography	
	History	
	Special educational needs	
Mrs. Jennifer Dickins	Science	The efficiency of the school
	Religious education	
	Areas of learning for children under five	
Mr. David Parfitt	English	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Music	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- There are good standards in English, mathematics, information and communications technology and in most of the non-core subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, information and communications technology, art, geography, history, music and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and sometimes attain standards that are better than might be expected.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school
- There is good provision for pupils under five and the good standards they achieve.
- The pupils show good attitudes and enjoy good relationships and they are very well behaved.
- There is a rich and varied curriculum.
- Pupils' moral and social development is good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Monitoring of the quality of teaching, the curriculum and standards does not involve enough people.
- II. Some aspects of staff development are not focused clearly enough on areas that are known to require improvement.
- III. The identification of exactly what knowledge and skills will be taught and learned in planning is inconsistent.
- IV. Pupils' personal development has some weaknesses
- V. The pace of some teaching is slow and some lessons start late or finish early.

**St Barnabas School provides pupils with an effective education in a happy, caring atmosphere. The school has many more strengths than weaknesses, though the governors will produce an action plan to tackle the weaknesses. Parents and guardians of all pupils in school will receive a copy of the action plan.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

In the three years since the last inspection, the school has made sound improvements to the standard of reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and has provided very much more adult support for pupils in this key stage and elsewhere in the school. Assessment procedures have been modified to form a manageable system and the information produced by assessment is now better used in the next stage of planning. The provision for information technology is now much improved and standards are good. Work to develop rigorous procedures for monitoring standards, teaching and the curriculum are at an early stage of development and remain a key issue. In all, the school has made sound progress with improvement and should maintain this level of improvement in the future.

## Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key</b></p> <p><i>well above average</i>    A</p> <p><i>above average</i></p>
English	B	C	
Mathematics	B	C	
Science	B	C	

In 1999 attainment in the standardised tests was above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels (5 and 6) was above the national average in mathematics and science and average in English. Against similar schools, a below average proportion gained the higher levels in English and an average proportion did this in mathematics and science. Inspectors judge that standards are good by the end of Year 7.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years	12 – 13 years
English	good	satisfactory	good	good
Mathematics	good	good	good	good
Science	-	good	satisfactory	satisfactory
Information technology	-	satisfactory	good	good
Religious education	-	<i>none seen</i>	good	good
Other subjects	good	good	good	good

Inspectors watched 111 sessions and judged that teaching is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and about two thirds was of good or very good quality. There is some very good specialist teaching of information technology and music. Strengths of teaching include subject knowledge, methods and organisation, control and discipline and the use of homework. Aspects for development are the slow pace in some lessons and the inconsistent identification in planning of what skills and knowledge will be learned.

*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**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils settle very well to their work and lessons are very orderly sessions. Behaviour inside and outside the buildings is very good too.
Attendance	Good. Attendance rates are better than the national average. Pupils are punctual to school.
Ethos*	Good. There is a pleasant working atmosphere in lessons and attainment levels are above average overall.
Leadership and management	Sound. The head teacher gives strong and effective personal leadership, she has made many major changes to policy and practice and is working hard to develop other members of staff in their management roles. The governors are involved actively in the work of the school. They have good oversight of the budget and know which decisions have brought the best value for money. Senior managers and subject coordinators are not involved enough in monitoring standards, teaching and the curriculum.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well balanced and gives pupils a rich range of experiences. Assessment procedures are good and are used soundly to assist the next stage of planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well supported and they make good progress. They sometimes attain at better than the expected level.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual development and pupils' knowledge of other cultures are fostered soundly. Moral development and their knowledge of their own culture are both good and social development is very well promoted.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. Teaching and non-teaching staff are well trained and have good experience although some forms of staff development are not well focused on school priorities. The accommodation is very good and there is a good level of resources.
Value for money	The school spends more on each pupil than most schools. Standards are good, progress is sound and the quality of teaching is good. This adds up to sound, and improving, 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
VI. Staff are very approachable and easy to talk to. VII. The part parents play in the education of their child. VIII. The positive attitudes and values promoted by the school. IX. The high standards of behaviour. X. Their children like coming to school.	XI. The quality and regularity of homework. XII. The information they receive about their XIII. The way complaints are sometimes

In talking to inspectors, several parents said that the current admissions policy and the mixed age classes in Year 3/4 were not popular. Several said that there could be greater challenge in the work. On the other hand, the provision for pupils with special educational needs was generally praised and several parents said their children receive a good education in a caring school. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents and found homework to be well provided, and judge that the information sent to parents is very good. In addition, the team agrees that complaints are dealt with appropriately and that the admissions policy is clear and followed properly. However, they agree that there could be more consistent challenge for all pupils because the pace of lessons is slow on some occasions.

### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to continue to improve standards, rates of progress and the quality of teaching, particularly in English and science, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Widen the programme of monitoring of standards, teaching and the curriculum to involve all members of staff and set this against rigorous criteria.

Also, involve governors more in monitoring the overall qualities of the school.

Paragraphs relating to this key issue are 20, 42, 46, 65, 70, 82-84, 119-121, 123, 129, 144, 150, 166, 172

2. Improve staff development to build on the many strengths in school and to give staff a greater involvement in the management of their subjects and aspects.

Paragraphs relating to this key issue are 57, 74, 75, 129, 137, 144

3. Refine planning to show exactly what knowledge and skills will be taught and learned in lessons. Then use this to set and share rigorous and appropriate targets for groups of pupils and individuals.

Make sure also, that the targets are used consistently and that planning is evaluated on a regular basis for its effectiveness.

Paragraphs relating to this key issue are 37, 42, 46, 48, 58, 63, 68, 98, 104, 118, 129, 130, 144

4. Give pupils more opportunities, in all subjects, to choose resources themselves, plan their own investigations, develop personal study and problem solving skills and write in detail about their work.

Paragraphs relating to this key issue are 12, 15, 23, 36, 38, 101, 106, 107, 112, 126, 129, 130, 148, 164, 167

5. Evaluate carefully the use of time to ensure that lessons run their full course and the pace of learning is brisk enough.

Paragraphs relating to this key issue are 12, 15, 28, 36, 67, 84, 99, 101, 103, 104, 118

## 5. INTRODUCTION

### 5. Characteristics of the school

6. St Barnabas Church of England First and Middle School is a large voluntarily controlled primary school that is situated in the village of Drakes Broughton between Worcester and Pershore. The school serves the villages of Drakes Broughton, Littleton, Norton, Pirton and Stoulton and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection, there were 179 boys and 165 girls aged between four and twelve on roll. Included in this total are nineteen pupils who attended the reception class on a part time basis.

7. Pupils are admitted to the reception class at a time judged as appropriate by parents and the school during the school year in which they will be five. At the start of Year 5, pupils from two other first schools join those continuing at St Barnabas school and they remain until the end of Year 7, when they transfer to the local high school. When pupils start school at four years of age, their attainment level is above average.

8. About 17% of pupils have special educational needs, including four with statements. This proportion is about average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much below average and the figure for pupils entitled to free school meals, at almost 4%, is below average. The average class size is 25.

9. The aims of school are to provide the highest quality education and ensure all pupils are given equal opportunities in order to enhance self-esteem and mutual respect.

10. Recent targets of the school include the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, the development of a stimulating learning environment, improvements to the management structure, better staffing and the successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours.

## 11.Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	16	20
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	27	27	32
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (82)	82 (85)	97 (88)
	National	79 (80)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	20	20
	Girls	11	12	11
	Total	26	32	31
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (85)	97 (91)	94 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	33	18	51

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	25	26	28
	Girls	16	16	18
	Total	41	42	46
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (48)	82 (59)	90 (64)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	21	27	27
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	37	44	43
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (70)	86 (75)	84 (88)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.8
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorise d Absence	School	0.1
	National comparative data	0.5

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	3
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	12
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## 6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 6. Attainment and progress

12. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be variable. Pupils made a good start to their schooling in the reception class, but progress then faltered in Key Stage 1 so that in English standards were unsatisfactory at the age of seven. Progress then improved through Key Stage 2 and standards recovered. Overall levels of attainment were above average at the age of eleven and remained this way at the end of Year 7. Best overall standards were in art, mathematics, music, physical education and religious education. The weakest standards were in information technology. Two of the five key issues related to standards: the raising of standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and more consistent use of information technology to boost standards in the subject. The school has sustained the best standards in subjects and has improved attainment in information and communications technology, so that they are now above average overall.

13. At Key Stage 1, results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests placed pupils at St Barnabas school above the national average in mathematics, below the national average in writing and close to average in reading. Against similar schools, these results show well below average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics.

14. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, standards at the expected level 4 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison to similar schools, the results were average for all three subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving levels 5 or 6 was above the national average in mathematics and science and average in English. When compared with similar schools, a below average percentage gained the higher levels in English but an average percentage reached these levels in mathematics and science. Standards in these tests in the three years before 1999 show standards are generally above average, but there was a sharp fall in 1998.

15. Over the four years from 1996-1999, boys and girls generally achieved standards that were not significantly different. Where there was a difference it was usually slight, though overall, girls did a little better than the boys. During the inspection, it was observed that in a few Key Stage 2 lessons boys were not as well motivated as the girls and they made less progress. In general though, boys and girls worked as well as each other and their progress was similar.

16. During the inspection it was judged that overall standards are good in school. Attainment is above average for children who are under five and by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. Inspectors judge that standards are also good by the end of Year 7. In the separate subjects, standards are above average in English, mathematics and information and communications technology and are average in religious education and science. There is good evidence to show that standards remain a strength in geography, history, music and physical education.

17. Rates of progress which pupils make in their work are satisfactory overall. The best progress is in mathematics, information and communications technology, art, geography, history, music and physical education. Progress is good in these subjects and is satisfactory in the others. In general, progress could be rather better than it is. There are examples of lessons where time is not well used and the pace of learning is slack. In some lessons, also, groups of pupils, including the higher achievers, are not given work that is demanding enough. In too many lessons, there is over-dependence on the use of worksheets which tends to restrict knowledge and understanding, rather than promote learning at a good rate.

18. There is good provision for pupils with special needs which enables them to make good progress. The support of pupils with statements is good. Pupils work from clearly set targets for their learning in the individual education plans. They are well motivated and make good progress. The school monitors their progress successfully. The pupils are supported effectively within the classroom and in small withdrawal groups. The work is well matched to their individual needs and good links are made with learning in literacy and numeracy. The school makes good use of outside experts, and this contributes to the good level of provision. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and development.

19. When they start school, children generally have good levels of knowledge and skill, though there is a significant minority whose attainment is below the expected level. The under fives make good progress in their work because it is well planned and well matched to their needs. There is good diversity in the experiences provided and pupils learn well because of the structured programme provided and also have good chances to react spontaneously to the things they meet.

20. Overall standards in English are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 and pupils in Year 7 are on course to attain above average levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Standards in reading are satisfactory overall and in writing, speaking and listening they are good. It is evident that the teaching of English has improved and this has resulted in better standards. By Year 6 pupils read fluently and demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of different types of books and authors. Most Year 7 pupils read expressively and responsively and have a clear understanding of how to use a wide range of research skills. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including, poetry, extended prose, exercises in complex comprehension, punctuation and grammar and character analysis. However, the slow pace of some lessons sometimes restricts the progress made in the development of extended writing.

21. In mathematics, standards are also good through the school. The curriculum is well thought-out and pupils have the necessary experiences in all four attainment targets. They make good progress in developing problem solving and investigation skills and the work to build numeracy skills is good, and often very good, as in a Year 5 lesson on multiplication in which the pupils were able to suggest several equally valid ways of calculating problems such as  $16 \times 6$ . Pupils in Key Stage 1 show particularly good insights into 2 dimensional shapes and are able to identify that some descriptions of shapes apply to more than one type. All pupils are building data handling skills very well. The school has made a good start to its numeracy strategy, but is working hard to speed up pupils' responses in order to keep skills sharp.

22. Standards in science are not as good as in the other core subjects. This is largely due to the fact that teachers make too many choices for the pupils. The equipment to be used, methods to follow, ways of recording and forms of discussion are set by the teacher most of the time and so pupils do not develop the experiment and investigation skills demanded by the National Curriculum beyond a mechanical degree. Pupils have good general knowledge of science, including materials, living things and physical processes. Attainment in science could easily match the best that is found in other subjects. The school acknowledges this and managers are determined to take the necessary steps to boost standards and rates of progress.

23. Improvement has been most marked in information and communications technology over the last three years. Standards are now above the expected level in all strands, including data processing, modelling and computer control. This improvement is most evident in Key Stages 2 and 3 where the provision of a networked computer system has brought many advantages. This has been capitalised upon because there is good, and sometimes very good teaching of skills in Years 5 to 7. The subject is soundly promoted in Key Stage 1 and standards here are



at the expected level for seven year old pupils.

24. Attainment in religious education is average overall because it meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There are also some examples of high standards and good progress. Pupils build sound knowledge of Christian religious traditions and well-known Bible stories. They also have satisfactory knowledge of other major religions. Their spiritual development is well promoted in assemblies and religious education lessons.

25. Despite the rise in attainment level in the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the school knows it can do better and is resolved to do so. There are several aspects of learning that can be improved in order to lift standards. The school has some good, and very good, practice to build on which better monitoring and this report will reveal.

## 20. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

26. The findings of this inspection are similar to those of the previous inspection report of 1996.

27. The school has high expectations of how pupils work and learn together and so standards of behaviour are very good. This, in turn, influences the good relationships and happy atmosphere found in and around the school. Pupils are caring, and respect other people's feelings and beliefs. They are beginning to develop a greater awareness of life in a wider, multicultural society. Links with European countries and the study of other cultures is widening horizons. Pupils are polite and by Year 6 and 7, they can enter into discussions with visitors in a confident and mature way. Parents appreciate the school's values, which promote good attitudes towards learning and greater self-confidence. They are pleased their children enjoy coming to school.

28. Children who are under five make a happy and settled start to school life. They quickly form friendships and begin to work in different social groups. They develop good social skills, start to take turns, and listen and respond to others more confidently. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn. For instance, younger pupils tackle new work confidently as they produce maps of the school. In Key Stage 2, for example, older pupils are motivated by their work in history, contribute well in lessons and want to learn more about the plight of evacuees. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to use their initiative to develop their learning. For instance, taking greater responsibility for organising their own work and setting some of their own tasks in discussions with teachers. Examples are work in art and science, where there are limited opportunities for pupils to make choices about resources and materials. However, good progress is made in Year 7, when pupils organise their own ideas in personal study in 'topic' and show a keenness to improve their work. Overall, their personal development is satisfactory.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are well motivated and eager to learn. They have good relationships with the specialist non-teaching staff. Teachers know pupils well and because there are clear targets in pupils' individual education plans, there is a good match of work to need. These pupils work well in small groups or in whole class and their behaviour is very good.

30. Pupils respond well to the school's code of conduct. This includes the high number of pupils who enter the school in Year 5 from smaller schools within the community. There has been one exclusion within the past twelve months. Pupils with special educational needs are motivated, work well alongside others and make good progress with their learning. Boys and girls work equally well, settle to the tasks set and are keen to do their best. Pupils' behaviour at break time and lunch-time is sensible and friendly and helped by the good quality of supervision.

31.Throughout the school pupils undertake a range of monitor roles, such a organising registers and supervising younger pupils at assembly time. This enables pupils to show initiative, take on responsibilities and develop greater confidence. In particular, managing the school 'stationery shop' encourages older pupils to use a range of personal skills as well as to develop greater expertise with the computer. Opportunities to contribute creatively through music, dance and drama, for a range of audiences, offer a wider perspective for the pupils' personal development.

26.

### **Attendance**

32.The level of attendance is good and typically higher than that of most primary schools nationally. Parents are very prompt in letting the school know if their child is absent.

33.Most pupils are good timekeepers and arrive punctually to lessons, although some of these are a little late in starting.

34.The level of unauthorised absence is low, but some teachers are not recording holidays that exceed ten days of term-time as required by regulations. Governors are appropriately keeping parents informed about attendance matters, and parents hold positive views about the good levels of attendance.

35.Pupils' good attendance is having a beneficial impact on the good academic standards achieved.

### **30. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### **Teaching**

36.The previous inspection report stated that teaching was mostly of sound or better quality but that there was also some unsatisfactory teaching. Three key issues related directly to teaching, the improvement of reading and writing in Key Stage 1, the provision of more adult support in Key Stage 1 lessons and the better use of information technology across the school. The school has succeeded in making improvements to teaching, especially since there are now nine learning support assistants who work throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 1, and there is good use made of information and communications technology in lessons.

37.Today, the quality of teaching is good at St Barnabas school. During the inspection, 111 lessons or part-lessons were observed and of these, all were of satisfactory or better teaching quality and virtually two thirds were good or very good. On the whole, the best teaching was observed in Years 5 to 7 and there is a good amount of effective specialist teaching of information and communications technology, French and music.

38.Teaching in the separate subjects is never less than satisfactory. The best teaching is seen in Year 7 music, where it is very good. Teaching is good throughout the school in mathematics, art, geography, history, music and physical education. It is also good in science at Key Stage 1 and English and information and communications technology in Key Stages 2 and 3. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education and French at each key stage, in English at Key Stage 1 and in subjects and key stages not otherwise listed.

39.In addition, the teaching of children under the age of five is good. The teacher is has a good level of knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children and has high expectations. Teaching in the reception class is confident and the staff have good rapport with the children. Lesson planning is based mainly on the Desirable Learning Outcomes but some activities from the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are included in order to

make sure that all areas of learning are covered properly. The teacher and learning support assistant work in good partnership and, between them, they provide interesting and imaginative learning experiences for the children.

40. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs is good. Planning of work for these pupils is linked to individual learning targets and the special needs coordinator and other staff monitor progress through careful evaluation of learning. Class teachers are fully aware of the needs of such pupils. When they are withdrawn from lessons good care is taken to ensure that the work matches that back in the classroom. There has been some effective monitoring and evaluation of possible disruption that withdrawal may cause to pupils' entitlement to a full curriculum. The special educational needs coordinator has good expertise and commitment, she guides learning well and keeps all staff up to date with information and reviews of individual education plans.

41. Because teaching is of good quality, there are relatively few aspects that require improvement. However, the pace in some lessons is too slow. When this is the case, pupils often cruise in their learning and their attainment peaks at a comparatively low level. In some lessons, it takes 20 minutes or more to cover work which should be completed in 15 minutes or less. The completion of worksheets is often time consuming, but does not always extend learning enough. There are also some lessons that start late or finish early. In other lessons, the pace is well judged and this places demands on pupils that they rise to meet. The school does not have to look far to find good practice in the efficient use of time.

42. A second aspect for improvement relates to lesson planning. Too frequently this lacks clear identification of exactly what will be learned in lessons. Again, there is some good practice for the school to build on in the development of a system of lesson planning that allows the setting and sharing of targets for learning for groups of pupils and individuals.

43. There is satisfactory use of all forms of resources. Computers are in frequent use in Key Stage 2 and 3 and there is sound use made of books, equipment and materials in most subjects. Teachers sometimes select resources too often for pupils, rather than allow them to make their own choices. This affects the personal development of pupils because they do not develop the necessary independence and responsibility for their own learning and do not have enough chances to show initiative.

44. In the other aspects of teaching there are considerable strengths. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good for all subjects and very good for the Desirable Learning Outcomes in reception. Teachers' expectations of pupils are sound overall, being best for the under fives and Year 7 pupils. Teaching methods and organisational strategies are good throughout the school and lessons generally have a good variety of activities. Standards of discipline are very good and a significant strength of teaching. The level of control is seemingly understated because teachers make sure that lessons are productive and positive sessions and they promote self-discipline well.

45. Day to day assessment of pupils' work is good for the under fives and satisfactory elsewhere. Marking could use written comments more productively to show ways for pupils to improve. The use of homework is good throughout school. Pupils are proud of their homework, they complete it regularly and remind each other to take it home! Teachers set tasks for homework that build well on the work in lessons. The home-school link via homework is good, though there are no shared reading diaries.

46. These strengths of teaching were seen in many lessons during the inspection. A good example is to be found in a Year 7 information and communications technology lesson. Here, the teacher had very good subject knowledge and had planned the lesson well and identified clearly what skills and knowledge were to be taught and learned. The lesson started with a

good review of previous work and was followed by careful and successful teaching of new skills. Pupils were then given specific tasks in designing the school's Internet site and were expected to work independently and responsibly. There was a very good element of problem solving in this lesson. Much of this arose from the nature of the work and, for example, groups of pupils were attempting to find ways of printing just one column of their page whilst others were trying to change the font in use. This last was more taxing because the very experienced teacher had yet to find a way of doing this himself! The pupils showed good understanding of the work and several were able to define the differences between bitmap and jpeg graphics files in simple, but accurate ways. All the strengths of teaching and learning seen in this lesson were captured by pupils using a digital camera to gather images for their own web page. Pupils showed some amazement at the speed with which these images were transferred to the screen. Overall, the technology was used very well as a vehicle for powerful communication.

#### **41. The curriculum and assessment**

47. In the previous inspection report it was judged that the curriculum was broad, balanced and stimulating. The curriculum for the under fives was seen to be appropriate and well based in practical activity. The system of whole-school planning was described as satisfactory. However, the monitoring of planning and its implementation was a weakness and information technology was used insufficiently to develop skills and knowledge in other subjects. The school has sustained the strengths of the curriculum and some improvement has been made since that time. Information and communications technology use is more widespread, especially in Key Stages 2 and 3, and standards have risen. Planning still has some weaknesses and its monitoring has not advanced enough.

48. The curriculum provided by the school is balanced and broader than is commonly found in similar schools. As well as the statutory requirements the school provides modern languages in year six and has a strong personal and social education programme. The richness of the curriculum is enhanced through a good range of extra curricular activities, musical opportunities and a well-planned homework strategy. The physical development of pupils is particularly well promoted through a generous allocation of time to physical education. The statutory requirements for religious education and sex education are met in full and equal access to the full curriculum is enjoyed by all pupils.

49. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils have equal access to all elements of the National Curriculum and their teaching is well balanced between in-class and withdrawal group tuition. Special needs pupils are withdrawn mainly for literacy support and for some work in mathematics. The school has identified a need for targeted additional support in Year 3/ 4 and has provided it since September. The individual education plans are well thought out and successfully matched to the particular needs of the pupils.

50. The curriculum for the under fives is good. Curriculum planning is developed out of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, but there is also reference to the National Curriculum to ensure a balanced programme that gives good emphasis to all six areas of learning. The curriculum provides many interesting and imaginative learning experiences for these young pupils and the necessary emphasis is given to language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. There are also ample planned opportunities for children to learn about the world around them and to develop their physical and creative skills.

51. The curriculum is generally well designed to ensure that all pupils study the right things in the right order. The long term planning of the curriculum in the form of schemes of work is well written and provides a good overall structure for teaching and learning. Both medium-term planning, for half term blocks of work, and short-term weekly plans sometimes lack specific

learning objectives and do not reflect the different ages and attainment levels found in some classes. Where this detail is missing it sometimes results in a lack of challenge for some pupils. Some parents stated that they felt there was some needless repetition of work, though the inspection did not find actual examples of this it was noted that a lack of clarity and detail in the planning could lead to repetition in some topics. Where planning is carried out in year groups, there is little evidence of this planning being regularly informed by curriculum coordinators, or of it being evaluated in the light of teaching and learning.

52.The school has made a sound start to its literacy strategy. There is a satisfactory system of curriculum planning for literacy and lessons are effectively organised and managed. Literacy planning follows closely the recommended outline for each year group and shows proper development of skills and knowledge over the year. Although it is early days, the school's numeracy strategy is bedding in well. Lessons have a sharp focus on basic arithmetic and number, pupils are accurate when answering problems and the school is giving good effort to speeding their response.

53.Procedures for the assessment of pupils and the recording of their academic progress are good, the school uses a range of ongoing and periodic assessment instruments and tests. Records of pupils' attainment in core subjects and progress in other subjects are well devised and regularly amended. The school has begun to use information from assessments, and termly interviews with individual pupils, to set targets for future learning. Whilst this is successful, the use of assessment information is still not used sufficiently to inform teachers' planning or to share targets with the pupils in lessons.

54.The school makes good use of the information provided by the annual baseline assessment of children in the reception class. In addition, the good records kept indicate clearly the rate of progress made by the children. Curriculum planning builds well on this information and the activities provided encourage pupils to explore, investigate and learn about the world around them in a structured but also, at times, spontaneous way.

55.Pupils with special educational needs are assessed effectively through the use of the school's own tests, commercial material and by the National Curriculum standardised tests. There is also good evaluation to be found in the individual education plans. The local authority support service is drawn into the assessment process when needed.

#### **50. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

56.Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when provision was judged to be sound. Provision for pupils' social development is very good; for moral it is good and for spiritual and cultural education it is satisfactory. Children under five and those with special educational needs have similar provision to the rest of the school.

57.The school has a clear set of values. Spiritual development takes place mainly in assemblies and religious education lessons. The quality of acts of worship is satisfactory. They are mainly Christian in character with adequate opportunities for pupils to consider the existence of God. There are, however, only very limited opportunities for reflection when pupils can reflect on themselves, the issues of the day and their personal relationships. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness and respect for the beliefs and customs of others in, for example, religious education and geography lessons. There was no significant evidence during the inspection of planned opportunities for pupils to express awe and wonder in, for example, science and art.

58.A high moral stance pervades the school. Moral issues are well promoted from the start in the Reception class. Class discussions, personal and social education lessons and golden

time are used well to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong. These are well supported by a system that rewards them for both academic and practical achievement. All adults in the school provide good role models and continuously reinforce expectations of a high moral tone. Teachers well encourage pupils to recognise the consequences for others of unacceptable behaviour. Comments from parents show a positive appreciation of the moral values taught by the school.

59. Very careful attention is given to the development of pupils' social skills. Very good opportunities are given for pupils to work together in differing sized groups, pairs and sometimes independently. All these formations give pupils support when they consider the social nature of society. A wide range and large number of activities take place outside of school time and visits to places as class groups provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn to get on together. Other opportunities include competition against other schools in sport. Pupils take responsibility seriously and very willingly take opportunities to carry out duties around the school, for example, collecting registers, helping with classroom management and escorting visitors. Pupils are given very good opportunities to express their concern for others by initiating fund raising for local and national charities.

60. The school's approach to the cultural education of its pupils is satisfactory. Pupils' own culture and historical culture have a secure place in the curriculum through studies in history, literature and art. Visits to places of cultural interest such as museums, art galleries and educational resource centres are arranged as appropriate to support topic learning. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the provision of opportunities for pupils to study the cultures of other lands which was judged, then, to be in need of extension. The school arranges multicultural weeks and has recently had a Mardi Gras music day. Strong links have been forged with schools in Spain, Finland and France that has resulted in pupil interaction and teacher exchanges. The school is busy setting up links with places of worship used by a range of different faiths to enhance pupils' understanding of cultural differences and similarities in religious practice.

55.

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

61. Strengths in this aspect of the school's provision at the time of the previous inspection have been well maintained.

62. The school provides a happy, caring and secure environment in which all children are valued. Parents are of the view that the school looks after their children well. The induction arrangements in reception enable pupils to settle happily and make a good start. Welfare matters are given a high profile and staff show genuine concern for the well-being of pupils. Those with special needs are given appropriate support and guidance to enable them to access a full curriculum, and they make good progress in their learning. Staff are alert and aware in matters concerning child protection, but there has been no recent training or update about the latest good practice guidance. There are no written procedures for adults to follow if they have a concern, Liaison with a range of educational, medical and social support agencies is supportive and used well. The recording of accidents is extremely thorough. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory.

63. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting behaviour. The special awards of ties, certificates and house points given out in assemblies, are a positive feature. Staff show consistency in their approach to matters of behaviour and positive praise is being used successfully to raise pupil's self-esteem, and to understand the set boundaries and agreed codes. The quality of the procedures in place to monitor pupils' academic and social development is good, but the use of information gathered is more variable. Teachers keep both records of achievements, set targets for improvements and log academic successes in core and some foundation subjects. There is incomplete record-keeping of attainment and

progress in some foundation subjects however. Teachers meet to share information about pupils when they move from one class to the next, but more rigour is needed in how pupil profiles are compiled and used to inform planning.

64. Good attention is paid to pupil's personal, social and health education. A cohesive and effectively coordinated programme supports learning throughout the school. Younger pupils think about rules for a fair society and devise a plan of action for making the class a happy place of learning. Through practical enquiry older pupils develop skills of self-analysis for example in considering attributes of friendship and how important it is to show trust and respect for others.

65. A health and safety policy is appropriately implemented and risks are being regularly assessed. Governors and school managers are doing all that is reasonably possible to provide a safe environment for teaching and learning.

#### **60. Partnership with parents and the community**

66. The strengths in the partnership between the school and parents and the community identified at the time of the previous inspection remain strong today, and this is testament to the successful planned development the school has embarked upon. Links with parents, community and other local schools are well forged, and the school is very much at the heart of village life. Local people give time to pupils, for example through shared reading, and by attending the assemblies given by local ministers. Many visitors are invited into school, for example artists, musicians and dancers during the multi-cultural week held last term. Through the Comenius project the school has developed mutually beneficial links with schools in Spain, France, Finland and Germany.

67. The school encourages a good number of parents to become involved in their child's education through homework, supporting reading and through attendance at school events. The Friends Association is very active and through well-organised social and fund-raising events gives good support to the school. There is very good involvement of parents in the daily life of the school, and turn out at whole school meetings is high.

68. Parents feel well informed through regular newsletters about school events and parents-teacher consultation opportunities at the start, during and end of the year. Although parents feel they are well informed about general school matters, some have indicated that they would like to know more about their child's progress. The team have looked at this carefully and judge the level of detail about progress to be detailed, but agree that the sharing of the individual targets set for pupils would be useful additional information for parents to have each term.

69. Links with the community are strong, and the school very much sees itself as a local resource base. Pupils interact with their neighbours through local studies work, when they take harvest gift to senior citizens and through shared celebrations in the church. A number of people visit the school to share their experiences and expertise: the nurse, police officer, health workers, fire officers and local clergy are regularly in school. There are good pastoral links with the schools from which Year 5 pupils transfer, and with the main High school to which most Year 7 pupils transfer at the end of their middle phase of education. There are also good links with the feeder first schools and with the high school concerning continuing provision for pupils with special educational needs. Business links identified in 1996 as in need of development, have only been given cursory attention as the school's focus has been on introducing literacy and numeracy strategies, and in attending to the key issues for action. There are links with the wider community through a well-organised visits programme to such places as Chedworth and Corinium, Worcester cathedral and Ironbridge power station. Visits are organised further afield, for example to Plymouth and London, all of which have a tangible



impact in supporting topic work and adding richness to the curriculum.

#### **64. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

##### **64. Leadership and management**

70. At the time of the last inspection, school management was judged to be effective with calm leadership and governors who took a good role in overseeing the work of the school. The third key issue related to management. It was stated that monitoring was largely the responsibility of the headteacher and that other staff had little role in this process. There were also weaknesses in school development planning because priorities were imperfectly costed. Since that time, the school has a new headteacher and although monitoring remains a key issue, much has been accomplished in revamping management systems, procedures and practice.

71. The headteacher was absent during the inspection, but it is clear that she gives effective leadership to the school and that she has made many major changes to management procedures. The effects of these are apparent in the many strengths of the school, but in some cases, more time is required for the full potential of new or revised procedures to be demonstrated. The deputy head teacher led the school capably during the inspection week and ensured that the school was able to show its strengths.

72. Overall, there is clear educational direction for the work of the school. The staff are now united into a whole-school team and they work in good partnership with learning support assistants, administrative staff and the governors. Morale is good in school and all adults show good concern for the well being of the pupils and for the standards they achieve. In some instances, improvement is required in relating this drive for improvement to particular aspects of teaching, such as the pace of lessons and the setting of taxing work for pupils, but, on the whole, the school is lifting standards because expectation is sharper than formerly.

73. The school successfully realises its aims and policies are generally translated into consistent practice. A good set of values is also promoted. Whilst best standards, as such, are not identified as part of the aims, the school is working hard to promote improvement in standards and has analysed assessment data thoroughly to identify ways and means of boosting attainment. It has set agreed targets for attainment in English and mathematics for the years to 2002 and is moving closer towards them each year. It has also achieved much success in working with pupils and parents to identify targets for individual pupils, but as of yet, these targets are not used consistently in lessons.

74. School development planning has shown improvement since the last inspection and the plan itself shows the many priorities of the school. There is, however, scope for refinement in the process. Governors and staff could be more usefully involved in setting, and ranking, the priorities to give even greater impetus to the drive for better standards. The role and responsibilities of staff and governors in development planning is not formally defined. This said, school development planning is successful because senior managers have good perception of what needs doing next.

75. Monitoring of all forms is still in course of development. At present, the inspection team judges that monitoring is the chief weakness of the school, and, as such, is the subject of the first key issue. The headteacher has a fundamental role in existing monitoring procedures and has already released some members of staff to take a more active role in the process. Thus, for example, in literacy and numeracy there is better and more widespread knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in provision across the school. As yet, this has not been extended much to other subjects. Coordinators do not have much of a role in monitoring planning, pupils work or, indeed, in the classroom of colleagues. They are able to manage their subjects effectively at one level but their wider role as promoters of best practice is hampered by lack

of information. Governors have good insight into the work of the school but there is no regular and rigorous system that enables them to meet coordinators, formally or informally, to discuss the merits and weaknesses of subject against agreed criteria.

76.The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is well executed by the coordinator. She organises the curriculum and support staff effectively. All staff share in the planning process and there is good knowledge of pupils' individual needs. This results in good educational provision and good progress by pupils.

77.There is also good management of provision for children who are under five. The teacher and learning support staff work well together to provide appropriate experiences for the pupils and the Early Years coordinator has effective involvement in planning and procedural matters.

78.The school promotes equal opportunities successfully for both pupils and staff and relationships are good throughout the school. Lessons have good sense of purpose on the whole, the school is a pleasant, friendly and caring place and pupils are pleased to be there. Standards are good and there is a strong will to improve. Overall, the ethos of St Barnabas school is good and the pupils' friendly, interested and enthusiastic response to visitors is very good testament to this.

### **73. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

79.In 1996 there was enough staff, accommodation and learning resources for the school to do its job. This position has been maintained, and in some respects improved, since the previous inspection. There is a good team ethos in the school, staff are committed to doing their best for all pupils. Relationships showed themselves to be very well cemented during the week of inspection in what were difficult circumstances caused by the unexpected absence of the headteacher. Issues concerning the very low number of support staff employed at the time of the previous inspection have been attended to well. The number of support staff has risen very considerably, and the quality of their work in supporting learning is good. Appraisal although planned is not yet up to speed, and its impact in staff development is minimal.

80.Staff take advantage of training opportunities but there is little opportunity to share and exchange best practice beyond weekly staff meetings and via informal contact. There is insufficient focus in training to support management development at both the individual and institutional level, and this is a key issue for school managers to address.

81.There are a good number of staff who between them deliver a good quality of education. some teachers play to subject strengths and teach music, information and physical education to a number of classes. This arrangement works well and usually results in good quality learning taking place. The non-teaching staff give good quality support to both teaching and learning, are effectively deployed and well briefed in their support roles. The secretary is highly efficient, and contributes extremely effectively to the smooth running of the school.

82.The quality of the accommodation is very good and sound use is made of all the available space. Specialist facilities for technology, science, art and outdoor environmental work are good assets. The standard of building maintenance, cleaning and decoration is very good. The caretaker takes great pride in her work and this shows in the high quality of care taken, especially the hall floors which "gleam" each morning and the extensive school grounds are totally litter-free.

83.Resources are sufficient, accessible, and of good quality in most subjects to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum. Resources are very good in information technology and music. The school has increased its book stock since the time of the previous inspection, and two libraries provide good quality resource bases for learning. Staff share resources well to

support teaching and learning. Good use is made of the local community and visits to places of interest further afield to extend and enrich the opportunities available to the pupils.

#### **78. The efficiency of the school**

84.The previous inspection identified a small number of shortcomings. The legal responsibilities for Collective Worship were not fully met, curricular costs were not linked with other targets and information technology resources were not efficiently used. Overall these issues have been addressed and are no longer causes for concern. Improvement since the previous inspection has been effective and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

85.The quality of financial planning is satisfactory and there are some areas of strength. The finance committee has appropriate terms of reference and meets regularly. They receive regular financial information from the headteacher and the Local Education Authority which is examined thoroughly. Actual expenditure is monitored against planned expenditure and variation investigated carefully. There have been some good improvements as a result of careful financial planning. For example, the school now employs its own caretaker and the quality of service has improved considerably. The governing body has also established a hot meals service at lunch time. This is monitored regularly by the governors and is providing good value for money.

86.Governors spend enough money on staffing to ensure each member of staff has some non-contact time but do not require reports on how this time is being used to raise standards. However governors are aware of the importance of raising standards and included this as a criterion to be used in deciding the headteacher's pay. Priorities for improvement in standards are not clearly ranked in the school development plan. The governors review the draft school development plan and have suggested changes but by and large accept the priorities presented to them.

87.Governors are frequently in school and are attached to the school teams but apart from literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are not linked to subjects. This limits their ability to question and comment on the reports they receive and means that most post-holders have no governor to discuss subject issues with. As a result subject leaders have little direct relationship with the governing body, they are not required to discuss their spending plans with governors and so the opportunity to consider finance and improvement simultaneously is lost.

88.The school is unusual in admitting significant numbers of pupils into Year 5 each year from two other first schools. The school makes careful provision for the induction of these pupils and monitors their welfare thoroughly. However, currently there is only a little evidence of monitoring the overall impact standards either at the point of entry or in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

89.Day to day financial control and school administration are very good. The school office is well managed and the secretary provides very effective and unobtrusive support for the work of the school. The work of the bursar is very good. All matters raised in the most recent audit, 1996, have been addressed but the inventory has yet to be completed for last year. Governors publish all the information they should in the prospectus and annual report to parents. They are rigorous in their examination of health and safety issues. All statutory requirements are met. The use and deployment of teachers and support staff is satisfactory but there is some loss of time because the pace and amount of work covered in some lessons and the use of specialist teaching on a large campus leads to a loss of teaching time. The experience of teachers is well matched to the age of pupils taught. There is good co-operation among staff over planning which ensures all pupils in each year group have equal access to the curriculum. The lack of monitoring of planning by postholders does however mean that the

systematic and sequential development of the curriculum across the school is less secure. All forms of resources, including staffing, made available to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well deployed. The resulting good support enables these pupils to access the curriculum well and make good progress.

90. This is an effective school. Expenditure per pupil is above average. Teaching overall is good throughout the school. The overall attainment of pupils in English and mathematics is good and in science it is satisfactory. Progress made by most pupils in improving their knowledge, skills and understanding is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are under-five make good progress. Learning resources are generally well used by teachers and pupils to enhance learning particularly in English mathematics and science. More use could be made of information technology, particularly in science, to raise standards still further. Pupils are well behaved and work hard. The quality of provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school gives sound value for money and there is ample evidence to show that this is improving.

## 85. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### 85. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

91. During the previous inspection evidence was found to show that standards were good on the whole for pupils aged under fives. The chief weakness identified was the low number of adults working with the children and the distance between the two reception classes which did not help pupils settle to their work in the early years. Since then, the school has much improved the level of adult support and has maintained the strengths of provision for the under fives. Today, the quality of provision for the under-fives is good overall and they make good progress towards achieving the expected levels for five-year olds.

92. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher is knowledgeable and has high expectations. Her confidence shows clearly in her positive interactions with pupils. Planning is primarily based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes but activities are cross-referenced to the National Curriculum to ensure all areas of learning are appropriately covered. Many interesting and imaginative learning activities are provided to help children learn. Appropriate priority is given to personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. The good records maintained make it clear how well children are progressing. There are also good opportunities for children to find out about the world around them, exercise their bodies and be creative. A particular strength is the good working relationship between the class teacher and the classroom assistant. Working closely together, their roles complement each other well and this adds considerably to the quality of provision for the pupils. There are also good working relationships with a nearby class teacher which enables the best use to be made of time and resources.

93. Attainment on entry to school shows a wide range but is mostly above average. Most children make good progress and by the age of five almost all children have achieved the expected levels in all areas of learning. Each year a few children are identified as having special educational needs. They are well supported by the class teacher and make satisfactory progress.

#### 88. ***Personal and social development***

94. The personal and social development of pupils is good. By the time they are five, most pupils behave very well and have made good progress in their acquisition of social skills. Children are confident, show appropriate self respect and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and with adults. Children can work as part of a group. They know how to take turns and share fairly. Most children are able to concentrate and persevere in their learning for an impressive amount of time. They are eager to explore new learning, for example, they are very interested in identifying and sampling fruit and deciding which they like and do not like. They know how to fetch and tidy away resources when they have finished with them. They manage their own clothes well when changing for physical education or getting ready to play outside or go home. Children are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and respond appropriately to the concerns of others. Children are very well behaved and they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.

89. ***Language and literacy***

95. Speaking and listening skills are good. Play in the role-play area provides children with good opportunities to make up stories to share with their friends. They enjoy dressing up as Red Riding Hood and take a basket of goodies to Grandma. Children talk with increasing confidence about their investigations, writing or their paintings. Children like books. They are very keen to choose a new book and share it with the teacher, visitor or parent. Early book skills are developing well. Children know that English is read from left to right and they are learning to recognise letter sounds and names. Some are beginning to read frequent words, they recognise rhyming words and pay some attention to punctuation. They have a good understanding of the structure of stories and can make sensible guesses about what happens next. Writing and spelling skills are developing well. Most children can write their name correctly forming the letters with care and good control.

90. ***Mathematics***

96. Attainment in mathematics is good. By the age of five most children know how to count to ten and beyond. Mental agility is developing appropriately. Some children quickly identify a given number on the water bottle and a few can identify the number that is one more or which number is missing. They recognise and make sets. They can sort items into same and different groups using colour or type. Some can add two numbers together by joining sets together. They learn to identify and name simple regular shapes such as circle and triangle. They learn the language of mathematics as they use *full* or *empty* and more and less correctly. They begin to record their work and learn how to form the numbers correctly. Higher attainers can write numbers and make sets to ten but most can recognise numbers to five and make corresponding sets.

91. ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

97. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children are developing a good understanding of the natural world as they study fruit, identify where it comes from and what it tastes like. They look closely at similarities and differences between toys to examine where they are made and what force is used to make them move. Their good observation skills are evident when growing cress and recording what they see. They talk about their observations, sometimes recording them, and ask questions to gain information about why things happen and how things work. Children can talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They show some awareness of time and use yesterday, today and tomorrow appropriately. Through stories, music and celebrations they begin to be aware of other cultures and people. They learn songs about people who help us and are beginning to learn about the community they live in. Their designing and making skills are appropriate for their age. They select materials and equipment and use skills such as cutting, joining, folding, and building when making shadow puppet theatres. Children use technology, where appropriate, to support their learning. They use computers with increasing confidence and control the mouse well. They enjoy making designs and controlling the use of colour.

92. ***Physical development***

98. Attainment is good and children attain the recommended targets for physical development by the time they become five. They use a range of small and large equipment, and balancing and climbing apparatus with increasing skill. Their co-ordination and confidence improve and they gain increasing control over their bodies. Children have a good sense of health and safety issues. They show good awareness of space, the needs of others and control speed and direction well as they manoeuvre around the hall. They play chasing games and ball games and co-operate well with each other. They handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials, safely and with increasing control. Their control of pencils, paint brushes and scissors is developing well.

93. ***Creative development***

99. Creative development is good. Children mix their own paints with care and confidence, They paint well-proportioned pictures of Red Riding Hood and the Three Bears. They work confidently in clay, fabric and paper to make collages and models. They talk about their work and explain their pictures well and this contributes to the development of their spoken language. Their knowledge about music is increasing and their music appreciation skills are developing well. Children listen carefully in music lessons and follow instructions well. Many can clap and recognise a simple rhythm correctly. Singing activities feature regularly and most children join in enthusiastically with the many songs and rhymes that they know. Their knowledge of songs and rhymes is appropriate.

100.Resources for the under-fives are satisfactory. However provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory because pupils have no access to large play equipment such as wheeled toys and climbing, stretching and balancing apparatus.

## 95. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### 95. **English**

101.At the time of the previous inspection in 1996, attainment in English was variable. Pupils made a good start to reading and writing in the reception class, but progress was then slow and standards were unsatisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils made rapid progress and this resulted in standards that were very good by the age of eleven. Teaching quality was judged to be sound with weaknesses at Key Stage 1 and strengths at Key Stage 2. Improvement in standards of reading and writing at Key Stage 1 was a key issue of the inspection. Since 1996, the school has made satisfactory progress with improvement. Standards in reading are now satisfactory and in writing, speaking and listening they are good. There is also a higher proportion of good teaching than formerly.

102.Results in the 1999 National Tests at Key Stage 1 show that standards in reading were broadly in line with the national average but below in writing, and well below in reading and writing when compared to similar schools. Results at Key Stage 2 show that standards overall were well above the national average and average in comparison with similar schools. The school's results, taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, were close to the national average. On the evidence of the inspection standards reached by pupils at the age of seven and eleven in speaking and listening and writing are above average and in reading they are average. Pupils in Year 7 are making good progress and the proportion expected to reach the national average by the end of Key Stage 3 is good.

103.The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactory. Suitable curriculum planning is in place and all teachers have used their professional judgement wisely to devise effective methods of organising and managing lessons. All are planning faithfully to the requirements for year group and time of year. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was judged to be inadequate guidance to help teachers plan for effective progression. Objectives set for learning are not always clear and where this occurs pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Overall the effectiveness of the school's strategy for literacy is satisfactory. There is evidence in the generally improving National Curriculum test results, and in the work seen during the inspection, that it is having a positive impact in raising standards. The school is making good progress in achieving its appropriate targets for attainment in English to 2002.

104.The majority of the youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 make a good start in speaking and listening. They listen carefully and respond to questions with appropriate detail. Most pupils make satisfactory progress so that by the age of seven are showing a high level of confidence when speaking. In one lesson they listened carefully to a story about a big bear and spoke animatedly with good dramatic expression when the teacher suddenly produced a very large teddy from behind the flip chart. Younger juniors make satisfactory progress but the slow pace of some lessons is preventing progress from being better. By the age of eleven more than half the pupils demonstrate the ability to vary their speech to suit different purposes. For example, in one lesson they produced extended dialogue that included humour, drama, slang and exclamatory responses. In another, similar lesson, though, the slow pace of teaching meant that pupils had to wait for opportunities to speak while the teacher wrote down each piece of dialogue. Pupils in Year 7 are making satisfactory progress in widening their knowledge of descriptive phraseology when, for example, analysing poetry.



105.About two thirds of the pupils in the Reception class make a good start in reading. They use letter sounds and pictures to predict the story and are making good progress in developing an awareness of how texts are sequenced and organised. By the age of seven the above average pupils are well launched into reading and average pupils are tackling known and predictable texts without difficulty. Below average readers make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. However, although they do not know enough ways of tackling print without a good deal of adult support they are, by Year 2, beginning to predict meanings using pictures to help identify the relevant print. Above average pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven they tackle demanding texts with confidence, use inference and deduction effectively to predict and library skills competently to support research. Average pupils make satisfactory progress. By Year 6 they read fluently and demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of different types of books and authors. Below average readers read straightforward stories independently but lack fluency and appropriate expression. They make only slow progress in how most effectively to use reference books. The majority of pupils in Year 7 are making satisfactory progress in reading. Most read expressively and responsively and have a clear understanding of how to use a wide range of research skills.

106.The youngest pupils in Year 1 progress quickly from copywriting to independent writing. By Year 2 about half sequence sentences correctly. Letters are shaped clearly and grouped into words with some accurate use of capital letters and full stops. All pupils are making satisfactory progress in writing for a widening range of purposes. In previous work scrutinised the higher and average attainers, about two thirds, produced good, imaginative descriptions of what they might expect to see on a train ride. Progress through Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. By the age of eleven almost all pupils write for a wide range of purposes, for example, poetry and extended prose, exercises in complex comprehension, punctuation and grammar and character analysis. In a lesson about writing a playscript a significant number of pupils produced lively dialogue which emphasised well the humour and frustration experienced by the characters. The slow pace of some lessons sometimes hampers the progress made in the development of extended writing. Pupils in Year 7 make satisfactory progress in the development of writing skills through a wide range of activities.

107.Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. They receive good support in lessons and much of their work is matched closely to the language development targets set out in their individual education plans. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision for reading and writing was judged to be inadequate at Key Stage 1.

108.Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons mainly are good. At Key Stage 1 most pupils are keenly attentive when listening, join in discussions willingly and settle purposefully to reading and writing activities. At Key Stage 2 the younger pupils are well motivated and create an effective working atmosphere in lessons. In Year 6 and Year 7 though, the slow pace of some teaching and lack of clear learning objectives fails to generate enthusiasm. Pupils work compliantly but a significant number do not contribute positively to discussions which prevents their progress from being good.

109.Overall the quality of teaching is good through the school. It is best in Years 5 to 7. In the best lessons teachers use their subject expertise and the Literacy material well to stimulate and retain a high level of interest. This allows pupils to make good progress through sustained concentration. There are high expectations in a significant number of lessons of pupils' response to questioning. In one lesson for older pupils they were challenged repeatedly to find yet another word to describe a jungle pool. This widened significantly their known range of descriptive words. Planning contains clear learning objectives and assessment opportunities which are used well at the ends of lessons for pupils to say what they have learnt. In one lesson the planning clearly set out the purpose and intended development that enabled most pupils to make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the use of past and present

tense. All teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils and this is a major factor in the very good way in which they manage pupils' behaviour. Where teaching is satisfactory the main weaknesses are lack of pace and of clear learning objectives in planning. Introductions are over long in some lessons and pupils begin to lose interest that prevents progress from being better than satisfactory. The quality of marking is good in the upper juniors and in Year 7. Many of the comments are well designed to help pupils improve.

110. There is satisfactory provision for younger pupils of a dialogue between parents and teachers through the home to school reading record book. Good opportunities are provided for older pupils to enhance reading and writing skills by compiling regular book reviews.

111. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practice and develop literacy skills in other subjects. Speaking and listening are encouraged in most lessons. Opportunities for writing in, for example, history, geography, science and religious education are satisfactory but prevented from being good by too many worksheets that effectively restrict opportunities for pupils to write for themselves.

112. The co-ordinators have worked hard to provide up to date, well resourced library facilities for both older and younger pupils. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when library resources were described as limited. All classes make regular visits to change books and there are timetabled sessions for private study, but little use of the libraries was observed for independent private study during the inspection.

107.

### **Mathematics**

113. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics were average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Levels of numeracy were good through the school in 1996 and teaching quality was satisfactory, though there were some lessons where teaching was better than this.

114. In the years since the previous inspection, attainment in the standardised assessment tests has fluctuated considerably, particularly at Key Stage 2. In 1998, attainment in the Key Stage 2 tests was average and the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was the lowest for three years. In comparison to similar schools, attainment at Key Stage 2 in 1998 was well below average. The 1999 results show a leap in standards with over 80% reaching level 4 or more. The proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or higher was average in 1998, but doubled in 1999. Attainment in the 1998 tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above average, both in national terms and when compared to similar schools and has climbed in 1999.

115. During the inspection, much evidence was available to indicate that standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. The attainment of pupils in Year 7 matches their achievements in the 1999 standardised tests and the proportion of pupils working at level five and six in Year 7 is well above what is usually expected. Standards in numeracy are good across the school and pupils are generally accurate in answering problems, though they could be faster. The school has made a good start to its numeracy strategy and staff are committed to making skills sharper. Standards are well influenced at all stages by the cross-curricular use of mathematics skills and knowledge. Some good use was seen in science, information and communications technology, design and technology, geography and history.

116. When pupils start school, their attainment level is rather above average in mathematics, though there is a significant proportion who have less understanding of the early stages of counting and number. Progress is good in the reception class and through Key Stage 1, so that by the age of seven, standards are securely above average. Progress varies in Key Stage

2. The pattern is of relatively slow progress in the early part of the key stage, but accelerating progress towards the end. Progress is thus, satisfactory from Years 3 to 6. The good rate of progress found at the top of Key Stage 2 is continued into Year 7.

117. Over the years 1996 to 1998 there was a little variation in the performance of boys and girls at both key stages. Girls generally did better than the boys in each of those three years, though the actual difference was not significant much of the time. During the inspection, boys and girls both made good progress, though in a small proportion of lessons, one or two boys were restless and less well motivated, so their progress was less than for all other pupils.

118. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support in mathematics lessons, both within their own class and when they are withdrawn for small group teaching. The setting of pupils for work in mathematics is having a beneficial effect on all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, as the work is generally well targeted to the individual needs of all pupils.

119. In general, pupils build knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics at a good rate. This is uniform across all four attainment targets. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop accurate counting, ordering and basic arithmetic skills and they have good knowledge of shape. In a Year 1/2 lesson observed, the pupils were consolidating their knowledge of common 2-dimensional shapes and extending this at a good rate to include the pentagon, hexagon and octagon. Most pupils knew that the size of the shape did not affect other important properties and the higher achievers realised that some descriptions of shapes and their properties applied to more than one type. Key Stage 1 pupils are able to solve problems capably and they handle data with comparative ease.

120. At Key Stage 2, the firm foundations built at Key Stage 1 are extended. Pupils' knowledge and accuracy in arithmetic are strengthened. Most lessons observed had a good ten-minute opening session that focused on building confidence and speed in calculation and also had a very strong, and effective, emphasis on pattern, relationships and how the results were achieved. In a Year 5 numeracy session the pupils were using doubling to help solve, for them, a complex multiplication problem, though different pupils approached it in different ways, with some using, for example,  $(8 \times 6) \times 2$  and others  $(2 \times 8) \times 6$ . The higher achievers could state clearly why both methods worked. In the scrutiny of work for Years 5 and 6, there are examples of even more complex problems being worked with such flexibility. The novel use of "monkey time", when pupils ponder on their calculations, is a strength of mathematics teaching as it brings better insights into the network of facts which links the four rules of number. This level of understanding is repeated in the other aspects of mathematics at this key stage.

121. Year 7 pupils show equally good mathematical aptitude. For example, in one lesson on fractions, the pupils themselves were testing their own knowledge by relating  $\frac{1}{3}$  of 24 to  $\frac{1}{8}$ . They answered the teacher's questions promptly, but went on to expand the answer, building their own knowledge and understanding as they did so. There was much anticipation of the answer to the next question in this lesson and progress was good because the pupils demanded harder examples and began to look for links between the elements of problems, such as  $\frac{4}{5}$  of 40. Again, attainment is equally good in all four attainment targets. Some work in Year 7 sets is already level five and a few pupils are working at level six. It is likely that standards will be good amongst Year 7 pupils by the end of Key Stage 3.

122. Pupils' response to mathematics lessons is good. They are interested in the work, often eager to answer questions and to take an active part in the lesson and relationships are good. Standards of behaviour are very good and lessons are very orderly working sessions on the whole. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. In most lessons, pupils compete in a good-natured way to answer questions and to show their good knowledge. This competitive edge spurs them to better attainment, particularly in numeracy sessions.

123.The quality of teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school with the best teaching in Years 5 to 7. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expectation levels are generally good. Teachers use a good variety of methods and provide a good range of activities to promote learning and they make good use of resources. Discipline and control are very good. The use of homework to develop pupils' knowledge and skills is good. Two aspects of teaching, whilst satisfactory, are not the equal of the rest. Firstly, lesson planning is adequate, but the identification of exactly what will be learned is inconsistent and the setting and sharing of targets for individuals and groups of pupils is, therefore, uncommon. Secondly, the pace to some lessons is too slow and this means that some pupils do not achieve enough in lessons, either in quantity or in the level of knowledge and skill reached. This is compounded because a number of lessons start late or finish early.

124.The management of mathematics is sound overall. The coordinator is hard working and has a keen sense of the priorities for the subject. She does not, however, have much opportunity to monitor planning or completed work and has not monitored teaching and standards in the classroom to any great degree. However, an opportunity for just such monitoring has been earmarked for late Autumn as part of the implementation of the school's numeracy strategy. Whilst the headteacher has good oversight of these things, the coordinator cannot, yet, manage the subject fully, as she is lacking essential knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of mathematics through the school. The school has set appropriate targets for attainment in mathematics to 2002 and, following the 1999 results, is well on the way to achieving these.

125.The pace of improvement in mathematics has been sound and is poised to continue at this rate. A priority for the subject is improved monitoring, with this, the potential for improvement is good.

#### 120. **Science**

126.At the time of the previous inspection, standards in science were average at the end of both key stages and by the end of Year 7. Most teaching was satisfactory although monitoring of the subject was weak. Today, standards are similar, though teaching has improved, particularly in Key Stage 1 where it is now good. Monitoring has been developed satisfactorily, though there are still things to do in order that school managers know fully the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

127.The standards achieved in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average and matched the average obtained by pupils attending similar schools. Using a wider range of evidence, in particular completed work from the previous school year, inspectors judged that the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are close to those seen in most primary schools. Evidence in school showed that pupils do not have enough opportunities to make choices themselves in their science work and this accounts for the difference in the average standards found in school and the above average standards in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2.

128.Most pupils at the beginning of Year 7 were judged to be working confidently at level 4 with a few working towards level 5. Girls are achieving slightly higher standards than boys by the age of eleven years. It is not possible to make a direct comparison between the results obtained at the ages of seven and eleven. This is because the school admits considerable numbers of pupils into Year 5, an increase on roll of approximately 50% between Year 4 and Year 5, from two different lower schools and there is no monitoring of the performance of the different groups of pupils.

129. Throughout the school most pupils make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Progress in the development of investigation skills is more erratic, though satisfactory overall, as some teachers tend to over-direct experimental work. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations. This was also a weakness during the previous inspection. Progress in presenting work is broadly satisfactory but this is an area for improvement. Progress in the use of mathematics, for example, to measure accurately, is satisfactory but the use of information technology needs to be improved. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers although at times they make good progress where the extra support they receive is particularly effective.

130. The inspection took place in October at the start of the school year. At this time pupils in Year 2 were working at level 1 and 2. Pupils know the basic conditions for life for example, water, light, warmth and food. They know that the sun causes shadows and that the length and direction of the shadow varies with the time of day. Pupils know that some materials let light through and can use this information to make a shadow puppet theatre. In Year 2 most pupils know that the sun is the source of light and some are beginning to understand that the earth travels round the sun. Evidence from their books shows that pupils have undertaken experiments to test the impact friction has on momentum, they make predictions and draw sensible conclusions from their observations.

131. At Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 and 4 conduct experiments to test which materials allow light to penetrate and they can predict likely outcome based on previous experience. They begin to use transparent, translucent and opaque correctly. They have some understanding of the need for fair testing and some groups control variables such as the distance between the light source and the material being tested. However while their knowledge is developing appropriately, their skills as investigators are not, as the experiment was over-directed. Pupils in Year 5 conduct experiments to find the effects of exercise on the heart. They demonstrate they know how to set up a fair test and have satisfactory subject vocabulary. They show reasonable understanding of probable results when predicting results. Pupils in Year 6 are working at level 3 and towards level 4. They know how to make parallel and series circuits and can explain the differences between them. They know how to install switches into their circuits and can experiment to see what effect the position of the switch has. They explain why the number of bulbs affects the brightness of the bulb. Evidence from completed work indicates the care and perseverance of pupils in undertaking an in-depth pond study. Some high quality work results from close observation of adaptation to habitat.

132. Pupils in Year 7 are working securely at level 4. They can identify different types of joints and understand how they enable different types of body movements to take place. They have appropriate subject vocabulary, can name the major bones in the body and have a good understanding of the blood circulation system. Completed work from the previous year includes some level 5 work. For example, pupils begin to use models to explain effects, such as length of day or year, caused by Earth's movements; they compare the conductivity of materials and apply this information practically, they present information in a variety of ways, line graphs, begin to draw conclusions from results.

133. Pupils enjoy their work in science particularly when given responsibility for their own work. Pupils share resources effectively and work well in groups. They are often excited by the work and are keen to discuss their findings. They listen attentively and respond well to questioning. There were gasps of amazement in Year 7 at the strength of a skull.

134. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and it is good in Key Stage 1. There is also good and very good teaching in a minority of lessons throughout Key Stages 2 and 3. Planning is satisfactory overall. Year group planning follows the scheme of work and this ensures that the required things are taught in the proper sequence, but the lack of bench

marks for each year group means it is not always clear what levels of knowledge and understanding are being planned for. This sometimes means that not enough work is covered in the lesson. In the best lessons there are good gains in knowledge and understanding and skills are soundly built during the lesson. Teachers are generally confident and secure in their subject knowledge. They consistently use correct terminology and do not simplify unnecessarily. The teaching of experimental and investigative science is broadly satisfactory but this is an area for staff development as some work is over-directed. There needs to be more emphasis on the use of information technology in science. The work of pupils in the mixed age classes, particularly at Key Stage 2 needs to be closely monitored to make sure the oldest pupils make sufficient progress.

135.Resources have improved since the previous inspection but pupils are not consistently expected to select their own materials and this restricts their personal development. The curriculum for science is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum effectively. Procedures for assessment are good and pupil records are updated regularly. The marking of day to day work is satisfactory and there is a lot of useful discussion between teachers and children about work during lessons. However the results of assessment do not influence the planning of new work sufficiently. There has been some monitoring and evaluation of the work in science and the postholder has identified some difficulties over levels and expressed concern about the depth of coverage.

#### 130. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

##### 130. **Information and communication technology**

136.At the time of the previous inspection in 1996, Information technology was a key issue for the school to address because standards were variable. This was due to inconsistent use of computers and little linking of information technology to other subjects. Teaching was insecure in some classes. The school has made good improvements to information technology and today, standards are strong and the subject is a strength of the school.

137.The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. Pupils are able to write sentences and paragraphs using computers, store information in the form of simple data bases and control vehicles by typing in instructions to go forwards and backwards.

138.Progress for all pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, pupils in year one are able to enter information on where they live into computer programs, manipulate computer images using a mouse and record their experiences in information and communication technology on class lists. Pupils are given opportunities to help each other and to share their expertise and knowledge.

139.Attainment in Key Stage 2 is above national expectations. Pupils build databases using findings gathered from questionnaires pupils have carried out on life in the second world war using grandparents as sources of information. Attainment in Key Stage 3 is also good and above national expectations. Pupils use the Internet to gather information in their study of the West Midlands, investigating records of local authorities and bus companies for information on life styles and travel. Pupils also use a digital camera in designing and building their own web pages for the school's Internet site. Pupils use E-mail to communicate with other schools in Europe and write prose about aspects of school life for display at the millennium dome.

140.Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good throughout Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils have specific information and communication technology lessons that focus on the development of knowledge and skills which reflect changes and increasing potential of this area of technology to modern life. Pupils in year five are able to interrogate a data base to solve a mystery, they use screen icons, know about fields within data bases and

how to search for information demonstrating very good levels of knowledge and competency. Computers are used to store information on daily weather conditions gathered using probes and electronic sensing devices. The school uses a digital camera to record work in history and design technology and encourages pupils to use computers to complete homework tasks.

141. Pupils clearly enjoy the experiences they are provided with, they demonstrate positive attitudes and confidence in using new technology that they see as a normal part of life. Pupils are trustworthy, patient and persevering when using information and communication technology and frequently cooperate and collaborate on tasks such as designing web pages.

142. The quality of teaching is good overall. Separately, it is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stages 2 and 3, where specialist teaching is used, the quality of teaching is good. There is some very good teaching in Years 5 to 7. Teachers' levels of understanding and knowledge are high, the management of resources is very good and tasks chosen present pupils with high levels of challenge and motivation. The small suite of computers is well used. However in other classrooms individual computers are not used effectively and opportunities to bring information and communication technology into other subjects such as English and mathematics are sometimes missed by teachers. In service training in how to make the best use of class based computers, has begun and needs to continue. In Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of computers as part of the normal daily routines ensuring that pupils have regular access to a well-chosen and appropriate range of experiences.

143. The school has made good progress in developing information and communication technology across the curriculum since the last inspection. This has been achieved through the production of good quality documentation to support teachers in planning pupils' progress, steady improvements in resources and enthusiastic and energetic leadership.

#### 138. **Religious education**

144. During the 1996 inspection standards and progress were judged to be good and the quality of teaching sound at all key stages. Findings in 1999 are similar. Attainment and progress in religious education are satisfactory because they meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Where teaching is good or very good, there are also some examples of high standards and good progress. No direct teaching was observed at Key Stage 1, but class books used to record pupils' work indicate coverage of the locally agreed syllabus and provide examples of pupils' growing knowledge and understanding.

145. Children in Key Stage 1 are learning a set of moral values and caring attitudes which guide their daily lives. They recognise the virtues of a good friend and are learning about the importance of prayer. They write prayers for many occasions and give thanks for harvest, friendship and fun. They begin to develop some understanding of non-Christian faiths as they learn about Hinduism. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 learn about prayer as they study the Lord's Prayer. They show good understanding of the words and the relevance to their own lives. In Year 5 pupils are beginning to understand what worship is and why it is an important act for believers. Pupils in Year 6 learn about Islam and can identify the key features of a mosque. They know the Qur'an is a Holy Book which has to be cared for and treated with respect. Pupils in Year 7 learn about Judaism and surprise themselves when they record how much they have learned during the topic. During their time at the school pupils have the opportunity to learn about all the major faiths and gain insight into what it means to be a member of a faith community. They are helped to understand this, for example, through contact with the local ministers and members of different faith groups. Although the range of people they meet could be usefully extended.

146. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy their lessons in religious education and respond well to the opportunity to think about important issues. Pupils responded thoughtfully to questions about the purpose and preparation for worship. Younger pupils respond very well when thinking about prayer. Pupils show concern and respect for the beliefs of others.

147. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 it is good, and some very good teaching was seen in school. In the best lessons teachers have a clear grasp of the subject material, pose interesting and challenging questions and engage the active participation of all pupils. Teaching is weaker when teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge and confidence, particularly of non-Christian religions. The teaching style in most lessons provides pupils with good opportunities to talk, explain, argue, reason, infer and offer opinions and because of this, lessons in religious education contribute positively to the development of literacy skills.

148. Assessment procedures are currently being developed and two ideas are being trialled by members of staff. At Key Stage 1 teachers are recording comments made by pupils during discussion sessions and mounting samples of work in large books. These records would be improved by including more direct quotations by pupils and dating their comments so that progress can be assessed more easily. At upper Key Stage 2 questionnaires which ask pupils to reflect and record what they have learned have been introduced and early results indicate this is potentially a very interesting development. Asking pupils what they know about a topic, and what they would like to learn about, before a topic is taught and introducing the questionnaires to much younger pupils would strengthen assessment further.

149. The leadership provided by the post-holder is good and she has provided some effective guidance for her colleagues that underpins the work of the school well. However there is currently no monitoring of teaching and learning and weaknesses in planning and subject knowledge have not been identified. The school has access to an adequate range of good quality resources and makes use of visits to local places of worship. However more visits and visitors would be beneficial. Less use was made of artefacts in lessons than might be expected and some in-service training for teachers in teaching through objects would be useful.

#### 144. **Art**

150. The findings of this inspection reflect those of the previous inspection in 1996.

151. At both key stages and in Year 7, pupils make good progress in art. They express their ideas and feelings through a wide range of experiences, such as painting, collage and printing. Skills and techniques with mixing and experimenting with colour build upon previous experiences and are well developed.

152. A limited number of lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and so judgements have drawn from evidence from displays, planning and pupils' previous work. Pupils' work is reflected in the high quality of displays around the school. The use of texture and colour features strongly and experiments with handprinting, painting and weaving. Good links are made with other art and learning in other subjects. For instance, with literacy and technology, when younger pupils design bags for 'Little Red Riding Hood' and decide on their construction and decoration. At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to develop finer detail in their observational and drawing skills. For example, work in sketch books shows that skills with line and tone are built upon progressively. Experiments with landscape and pattern are also successfully developed. However, in lessons observed, the work and techniques of famous artists is less well used as a stimulus and model for learning.



153. Pupils enjoy art and share resources amicably. They are keen to experiment and confidently undertake tasks set. However, opportunities to make choices of resources and, at times, the inappropriate use of templates, can inhibit creativity. Behaviour in lessons is very good.

154. Teaching in art is good. Lessons are well resourced with a range of good quality resources that add to the quality of learning. A focus on 'Multicultural Week' included a strong emphasis on the arts. This enabled pupils to experiment with art forms from different cultures, such as African and Aboriginal and produce work of a high standard.

155. The coordinator is new to the role but has a clear plan for the way forward. As yet monitoring and evaluation in the subject is inconsistent. Resources are now readily accessible, well used and effective in support of the pupils' learning.

#### 150. **Design and technology**

156. At the last inspection standards and progress in design and technology were satisfactory. During the current inspection, only a limited number of lessons were observed. Scrutiny of the school's portfolio of pupils' achievements and documentary evidence of past work in the subject indicates that pupils make sound progress in design technology throughout the school.

157. In Key Stage 1, pupils make toy theatres from boxes and experiment with shadows linking their work with studies in science. At other times pupils make hand puppets from various textiles based on designs they have drawn themselves. The finished products are of good quality and reflect the design drawings closely. Pupils also design and make birthday cards having first of all studied commercially produced examples.

158. In Key Stage 2, pupils design and make card picture frames that involves careful measuring and cutting skills. Pupils experiment with decoration to give the frames a Victorian appearance linking their work in DT with history. The school has kept photographic evidence using a digital camera of pupils' work in food technology. Pupils build buggies from wood and work with fabrics sewing and printing. In Key Stage 3, pupils create meals from vegetables or salads from other countries and then evaluate them systematically in terms of taste, texture and appearance.

159. The school has entered several competitions, winning prizes for its "delightful desserts" and having its textile display of "Kenya" accepted into the local show. More opportunities for pupils to work with rigid materials need to be provided at the top end of the school to reinforce good habits and develop associated practical skills such as sawing.

160. The observation of lessons although limited indicates that pupils enjoy design technology lessons that are frequently used to enhance other areas of the curriculum. In the lessons seen pupils cooperated well sharing equipment demonstrating good levels of concentration and a pride in the products they make.

161. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made, but in the lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory and some was very good. Teachers are aware of the fundamental requirements of this subject, the need to design, make and evaluate products. Teachers manage pupils well and use resources effectively.

162.The newly appointed coordinator has carried out an analysis of existing provision and has acknowledged that there is a need for a review of the current scheme of work for DT. The accommodation for the subject is good, along with class bases there is a specific art and technology classroom and a specialised food technology area which is very well equipped. The school has sufficient resources.

#### 157. **French**

163.At the previous inspection, standards in French were average and sometimes better than this. The school has sustained this pattern and today, pupils make satisfactory progress in French and, by the end of Year 7, standards are at the expected level for twelve-year old pupils.

164.French is taught only in Years 6 and 7. Most pupils are interested in French, they respond well and standards of behaviour are good. Teaching quality is sound overall, and is often good. Much of the work is conducted entirely in French and this enables the pupils to develop a good basic vocabulary. In lessons where teaching is good, it is evident that pupils are beginning to think in French and here, standards of dialogue are good. In a few lessons, some pupils have difficulty adjusting to total immersion French and they make less progress.

165.Teaching staff have very good subject knowledge and expectation levels are sound. French lessons are well organised, good use is made of resources, many of them from France, and the activities are varied and generally well motivating. The curriculum for French is good and the subject is managed soundly. Pupils work productively in most French lessons and there is a pleasant atmosphere to learning.

#### 160. **Geography**

166.Standards in geography were average at the time of the previous inspection. This time, only a limited number of geography lessons were observed and so discussions with pupils, scrutiny of planning and pupils' previous work have helped to inform judgements.

167.Progress in geography across the school is good. In particular, the study of the local environment in Key Stage 1 and 2, and the West Midland area with older pupils, is well used. Pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of places and environments successfully. They are encouraged to study a range of resources, including photographic evidence, and to ask relevant geographical questions.

168.In Key Stage 1, pupils study their school locality, work with directions and make simple maps and plans of the journeys they have undertaken. They study different maps of the school and local village, and begin to identify different buildings and geographical features. By the end of the key stage appropriate geographical terminology is well used as pupils refer to woods, stream and town. At Key Stage 2, pupils successfully build upon their previous work. They study local towns, such as Pershore, in greater depth than earlier in school, prepare questionnaires and use data from their field trips to make charts of services and land use. By Year 6, scrutiny of pupils' previous work, shows a growing ability to use information technology, for example using the Internet to identify patterns in commuter travel in contrasting regions.

169.Pupils concentrate well in lessons and their behaviour is good. They are confident communicators who are keen to share their findings with others. When given the opportunity to do so pupils show initiative and make decisions about their own learning. However, worksheets can be over used at times and inhibit personal recording and communication. Resources are shared amicably and pupils collaborate well in different working groups.

170. In the limited number of lessons observed teaching is good. When a 'topic' approach is used, teachers ensure that learning tasks for geography are clear in lesson plans. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and with additional support from schemes of work, provide a broad and balanced curriculum. These strengths of teaching are supporting good levels of progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs who work well alongside others. As yet, formal assessment is used less well to guide the next step in learning.

171. The subject is effectively managed, but monitoring of quality and standards is not clearly defined in the coordinator's role. Resources, and field trips, are well used and add to the pupils' learning.

## 166. **History**

172. Today, good progress is made in history at both key stages and in Year 7. At the time of the last inspection progress and standards were not so good, though they were satisfactory overall. A strength now, is the way pupils use their good speaking and listening skills well in discussions and confidently ask and answer questions and communicate their ideas clearly. This enables pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2 and Year 7, to develop good knowledge and understanding of the periods of time they are studying. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to write in a personal way in history. Often the use of worksheets can limit recording of the knowledge and understanding gained.

173. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the passing of time. They study 'old' and 'new' and begin to sequence events and artefacts according to age. For instance, they make simple time lines and decide which 'light sources' are the oldest. They study how everyday life has changed over the years and draw from family experiences to add meaning to their learning. Older pupils study famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and begin to use simple historical terminology, such as 'a *hundred years ago*', as they make judgements about time and events in the past.

174. Discussions with pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 show that they are developing a good sense of chronology and can use appropriate dates successfully. A strength is their knowledge and understanding of particular periods in time. For instance, when studying the Romans, pupils build upon their previous learning and begin to use a range of historical resources as they focus on specific aspects. Good use is made of visits to places of historical interest, such as Cirencester, which stimulate ideas for personal study in Year 7.

175. Pupils enjoy history and are motivated by the interesting range of artefacts and resources available. Older pupils in Year 7 make decisions about their personal study with the guidance from the teacher and undertake some research at home. Behaviour is very good and this promotes a hard working atmosphere in lessons.

176. Teaching in history is good and lessons are well managed and prepared. Teachers' good understanding of the subject is evident in clear lesson plans and effective links with first-hand experiences. Questions are well used in lessons, enabling pupils to think about their learning in greater depth. For instance, in the study of World War 1, pupils are asked 'why and how' questions about evacuation. Assessment of achievement in history is mainly through questioning and feedback in lessons: as yet formal assessment is inconsistent.

177. The coordinator manages the subject well and schemes of work provide a rich curriculum for study. As yet monitoring is underdeveloped. Resources are effective in their support of learning and visits and visitors in history lessons enhance pupils' experiences.

## 172. **Music**

178. Music was a strength of the school at the time of the previous inspection. Today, this strength has been built on and the progress made by the majority of pupils by the age of eleven, and by the time they leave the school in Year 7, is very good. Progress made by most pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 is good.

179. Almost all pupils in the Reception class make a good start in learning to play percussion instruments. They make good progress in holding them correctly and striking them effectively to control the volume in response to instructions. The majority listen carefully to music and a good number identify accurately the sounds of different orchestral instruments. In one lesson for Year 1 almost all pupils could mime the playing actions of the stringed, brass and percussion instruments they were hearing. By the age of seven most pupils sing confidently and tunefully with a satisfactory awareness of pulse and expression. The progress made by almost all pupils as they move through Key Stage 2 is good. By the age of eleven the vast majority compose their own music and perform it in several different parts on a wide range of percussion, stringed, brass and woodwind instruments. In some lessons many pupils make very good progress in assessing each other's performances and in recognising where improvements can be made. In one lesson for Year 6, pupils practised modifications to their compositions and performed them accurately for further appraisal.

180. Almost all pupils demonstrate very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Younger pupils co-operate very well with teachers when managing instruments and take the performing activities very seriously. Older pupils are very highly committed and compose, play and listen with a very high level of concentration. All pupils observed appeared very much to enjoy lessons and other activities.

181. The quality of teaching overall is good and there are examples of where it is very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and have high expectations of pupils' response and performance. The best lessons are planned to include very clear learning objectives and very challenging tasks are set to achieve them. The organisation of these lessons gives equitable opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Assessment is used very effectively to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding and develop their skills.

182. The subject is very well managed and is continuously being developed by the very enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides very good support for colleagues in the form of a very thorough and detailed scheme of work. She co-ordinates, very effectively, the work of a large team of peripatetic teachers who provide a wide range of instrumental tuition. There is a good number of activities that take place in and outside of school time including orchestra, choir, recorders and instrumental lessons. There are visits to concerts and workshops and pupils regularly participate in community musical activities. These have a significant impact on the progress and performance, for example, in score reading for about a quarter of the pupils in the school who take part.

## 177. **Physical education**

183. As at the last inspection, pupils make good progress today in all aspects of physical education throughout the school.

184. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop early gymnastic skills learning how to make shapes with their bodies, use space and to travel along small apparatus in a variety of ways. Pupils learn basic ball skills in games lessons improving their ability to throw, catch and kick. In dance pupils learn how to respond sensitively to music and stories.

185. Pupils extend their work in gymnastics at Key Stage 2 to include more demanding movements, balances and jumps, performing on larger apparatus such as climbing frames, ropes and gymnastic boxes. In dance lessons pupils work in pairs mimicking the movement of animals in the context of a musical piece. Care is taken to improve the quality movement, developing pupils' awareness of poise, control, space and speed. In games lessons pupils have access to a very good range of sports related activities concentrating on handling and passing skills in the context of competitive practices and small games. In swimming pupils make good progress where lessons take account of the different levels of ability within the teaching group and include activities designed to improve stroke techniques and water competence. In Key Stage 3, pupils build on the foundations laid earlier and are encouraged to take a more reflective approach to their achievement in all areas of physical education evaluating their own and other pupils' performance.

186. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate keenness in lessons, enjoying the physical nature of the subject. The behaviour of pupils getting ready for and travelling to lessons is very good. Time is well used and pupils dress appropriately. Within lessons behaviour is very good, as are the attitudes of pupils who are cooperative, industrious and sporting in their activities.

187. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are well prepared, have a good structure involving a warm up and a good range of activities to promote good progress. Teachers demonstrate an infectious enthusiasm and good skills in managing and controlling pupils. Lessons have a good pace, time is well used and equipment is gathered in good time to ensure smooth introductions. The use of specialist and cooperative teaching in games and swimming is very successful in promoting good progress.

188. The school devotes an above average amount of curriculum time to physical education, this time is well used and the overall quality of experience for pupils is enhanced through a good programme of extra curricula activities which sometimes uses specialist coaches from outside the school. Pupils have opportunities to experience competitive sport and the school has been successful in local competitions in netball and football.

189. The school benefits from good resources that are plentiful, of good quality and are easily accessed. The accommodation for physical education is good, the two halls are particularly useful and the hard and grass playing areas are both of good size and quality.

## 184. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 184. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

190. Hours spent observing lessons:	69 hours 20 minutes
Hours spent sampling work:	9 hours 45 minutes
Hours spent listening to pupils read:	8 hours 25 minutes

The team observed 111 lessons or part lessons, 6 assemblies and 17 registration sessions. All classes, subjects and teachers were observed and the work of support staff for special educational was evaluated.

Especial study was made of literacy and numeracy lessons.

Discussions were held with most members of staff and visiting specialists and the whole governing body.

A comprehensive sample of pupils' work from all age and ability ranges was analysed.

Time was spent reviewing photographic, cassette and video evidence and work on display.

There was a complete and thorough analysis of pupil records and reports and the statements, individual education plans and reviews of pupils with special educational needs.

Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and life in school. This took place in class, with groups and individuals and at lunch times and break, in the playground and around the school.

The documentation supplied by the school before and during the inspection was carefully studied and comparisons made with the last inspection report.

Registers and registration periods were examined.

25 parents attended the pre inspection parents' meeting and the results of 123 parental questionnaires were analysed.

## 191.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 – Y7	353	4	47	13

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y7)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

#### Education support staff (YR – Y7)

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week	120

Average class size:	25
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### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	560 690
Total Expenditure	570 045
Expenditure per pupil	1 687
Balance brought forward from previous year	37 137
Balance carried forward to next year	27 782

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	363
Number of questionnaires returned:	123

### 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	18	71	8	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	35	57	3	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	12	65	16	7	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	7	79	9	3	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	12	67	12	8	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	14	67	10	7	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	23	61	10	6	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	8	67	13	9	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	17	72	8	1	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	17	70	10	2	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	31	61	5	0	3

### Other issues raised by parents

In comments on the questionnaire and at the meeting for parents, the mixed age classes in Years 3 and 4 and the current admissions policy were not popular and several said that there could be greater challenge in the work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs was generally commended and several parents said that their children received a good education in a caring school. Parents agreed overwhelmingly that their children like coming to the school.