

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCETHORPE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Weoley Castle, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103244

Headteacher: Mr R. J. Reynolds

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson
23742

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th July 2000

Inspection number: 189160

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princethorpe Road Weoley Castle Birmingham
Postcode:	B29 5QB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson	Registered inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education	How high are standards? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Angela Fraser	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
John Williams	Team inspector	English Religious education Music Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Princethorpe Junior School serves the Weoley Castle district in the south of the city of Birmingham. This district is mainly rented accommodation and is part of an area of high social deprivation. Unemployment levels are high and 47 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is very high compared with the national average. It is a smaller than average junior school which currently has 231 pupils on roll (120 boys and 111 girls). The pupils are mainly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background; only three per cent coming from ethnic minority groups and two per cent from homes where English is an additional language. Ninety-two pupils are on the register of special educational needs (40 per cent), which is well above average. Their needs include a wide range of learning, emotional, behavioural and other difficulties, although most have moderate or specific learning difficulties. Ten pupils (four per cent) have specific statements of need, which is well above the national average. Attainment on entry, as confirmed by the 1999 Key Stage 1 test results, is well below the national average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. The school aims to provide the highest quality education and value equally all members of the school community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Princethorpe Junior School is an improving school. Attainment in the core subjects, though still below the national average, is improving. The school has a caring, supportive ethos and relationships are good. The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and this encourages pupils to have a positive attitude to their learning. A positive direction is given to the work of the school by the headteacher. Teaching is sound overall with frequent examples of good teaching, particularly in Year 3. This is an effective school and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have a positive and enthusiastic approach to school.
- The headteacher, supported by an influential governing body, provides positive leadership focused effectively on raising standards.
- Procedures for pupils' care and welfare and their personal development are good.
- Links with parents are very good.
- The range of learning activities is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school makes good use of financial and development planning to focus on improvement.

What could be improved

- The standards of attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The roles of the deputy headteacher and of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- The use of ongoing assessment information to ensure that teachers consistently match learning activities to pupils' needs and abilities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in September 1996. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Good improvements have been made in curriculum planning and in the use of assessment information to set targets for improvement. Good links have been developed with parents. Resources have been increased, especially in literacy and numeracy. The governors meet their statutory requirements and are increasingly involved in promoting school improvement. Progress is less satisfactory on using assessment information more effectively to provide work which consistently leads to real gains in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	E*	E
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	E*	E

Key

well above average A
above average B
average C
below average D
well below average E
very low E
*

(Similar schools are those which have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals. E* indicates that the school's standards are in the lowest five per cent nationally.) Assessment information shows that the 1999 group of Year 6 pupils contained a higher number of pupils with special educational needs than previous years. The school has set annual targets for the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English and mathematics. These, together with the school's sound implementation of its strategies for literacy and numeracy, are being used well to raise standards. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that standards have improved significantly since last year. The school almost achieved its challenging target of 58 per cent in English and exceeded its realistic target of 60 per cent in mathematics.

Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving. Attainment in mathematics is just below average at the end of the key stage. Standards in English and science have improved from well below to below the national average. Weaknesses in pupils' writing and speaking and listening skills restrict standards. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems in mathematics and science. This limits the number of pupils who achieve higher than average standards. Attainment in information and communication technology is below nationally expected levels at the age of 11. Literacy weaknesses and too few opportunities for pupils to extend their skills regularly do not promote higher standards. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make sound progress towards their learning targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to school. Most are keen to succeed and respond well to interesting and challenging activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well, although a small number behave inappropriately in some lessons and disrupt other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and promote good personal development. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and show respect for adults and for each other.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils arrive on time and there is a prompt and effective start to the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Sound overall. Good in Year 3.

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

Teaching is sound overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection. There were examples of good teaching in each year group. Teaching was good in 42 per cent of lessons. It was very good in a further nine per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in five per cent of lessons with a further two per cent being of poor quality. Good teaching in Year 3 enables pupils to settle well into the school and make good progress, especially in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers plan well throughout the school giving a clear focus to lessons. Where teachers use a good range of interesting and challenging activities this encourages pupils' involvement and promotes higher standards. The teaching of English is good and it is sound in mathematics and science. Effective teaching is improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These are used to raise standards in some other subjects, for example, history, but not consistently in all lessons. The unsatisfactory teaching was mainly focused where year group teachers were released for planning. The teacher covering the class did not know or manage the pupils well and pupils made unsatisfactory progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning activities are good. A suitable focus on literacy and numeracy is enhanced well by a very good range of opportunities in other subjects, for example history and design and technology. There are insufficient opportunities in investigative aspects of science and mathematics and for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Pupils are supported well to enable them to make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is good overall. The very good moral provision promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong. The good social provision promotes good relationships. The good cultural provision enhances pupils' understanding of their own and other cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils' academic progress and personal development are monitored well. Good procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' behaviour are in place as are very good procedures for promoting attendance.
How well the school works with parents	The school has developed very good links with parents since the last inspection. Very good information keeps them well informed about what is happening in school and how well their child is progressing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is soundly managed overall. The headteacher gives positive leadership, clearly focused on raising standards of attainment. Subject co-ordinators are not consistently monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and contributing to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A supportive and influential governing body is effectively involved in working with the headteacher and staff on school improvement. Regular meetings and visits keep them well informed and they plan effectively for further development. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses a good range of attainment information to monitor pupil performance, identify pupils for ability groups and for extra support and predict attainment levels. Target setting is being used well to focus on improvement. There are procedures for evaluating standards of teaching and learning, although these do not effectively involve key staff.
The strategic use of resources	A good development plan is used well to target improvement and to ensure the effective use of finances. Good financial procedures and sound use of the principles of best value enable the school to give good value for money. Staffing levels are satisfactory to meet curriculum needs, although the level of support staff is low. Resources are adequate overall and have improved since the last inspection. Although the accommodation is kept clean and attractive, a lack of space and appropriate maintenance, for example the playgrounds, affect attainment and behaviour standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school is caring and supportive. • Staff are approachable. • The rewards system recognises achievement. • The school has high expectations. • Partnership with parents has improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increased number of extra-curricular activities. • More consistent use and right amount of homework. • Reading books being sent home regularly.

Parental responses from 31 questionnaires returned (13 per cent) and from the three parents (one per cent) who attended the meeting were largely supportive. Inspection evidence confirms most of the positive views, particularly the caring, supportive approach and the improved links with parents. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, although less this year due to staff illness. Teachers use homework effectively to support or extend school work in line with the school policy. Reading books are generally sent home regularly, although there is some inconsistency between classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average, particularly in writing. This was confirmed by the results of the 1999 national tests for seven year olds carried out in the infant school.
2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds standards in English were very low in comparison with schools nationally. They were well below the average of similar schools. Results over the last four years show that, although standards were well below the national average, they are improving from the time of the last inspection. Attainment information from the school shows that the 1999 group of Year 6 pupils had an increased number of pupils with special educational needs and pupils of lower attainment. The results of the recent 2000 National Curriculum tests show a significant improvement on last year's results. Fifty-seven per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or above (compared with 41 per cent last year) and the school almost achieved its challenging target of 58 per cent. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 in this year's tests rose from seven to 16 per cent. Inspection findings confirm that standards are improving and are now below, rather than well below the national average.
3. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy soundly and this is promoting improvement in pupils' literacy skills. Reading skills are developed soundly and standards are in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage. Pupils' writing and speaking and listening skills are weak, although they have improved since the last inspection. The school has increased the range of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. However, many still lack confidence and a sufficiently broad vocabulary to express their ideas fully. Many pupils do not listen carefully to instructions and require repeated explanations before they fully understand what they have to do. Writing skills are still well below average. Although handwriting skills are generally in line with expectations, these are not used consistently in pupils' written work to ensure good presentation. Pupils have increasing opportunities, particularly towards the end of the key stage, to develop a range of writing styles. They do not receive sufficient support in all classes, for example in the regular use of word banks or writing frames, to enable their skills to be developed consistently.
4. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests in mathematics show standards were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Test results over the last four years show that standards have improved since the last inspection and the results of the recent 2000 national tests show that standards have improved on last year. The number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above rose from 54 per cent in 1999 to 67 per cent this year. The school exceeded its realistic target of 60 per cent and achieved levels which are just below last year's national average of 69 per cent. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 fell from 14 per cent last year to nine per cent this year. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment, overall, is just below the national average. The number of pupils achieving Level 4 is close to nationally expected standards. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 or above is well below the national average. The school has soundly implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this is promoting higher standards, particularly pupils' mental mathematical skills. The use of ability sets has enabled teachers to match learning activities more closely to pupils' needs. However, pupils, particularly those of higher

attainment, are not challenged sufficiently to apply their skills and knowledge to solve problems or complete investigations. Too few consistently achieve higher than average standards.

5. In last year's National Curriculum tests in science for 11 year olds results were very low when compared nationally. They were well below average compared with similar schools. Test results over the last four years have improved since the time of the last inspection in 1996. They were lower in 1999 when the group of Year 6 pupils contained a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. The results of the 2000 national tests show that the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above has increased considerably from 59 per cent last year to 79 per cent. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 also increased from three to 11 per cent, although this is still well below the 1999 national average of 27 per cent. Inspection evidence confirms that standards have improved on last year's very low standards, although they remain below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' writing weaknesses, together with weaknesses in their skills to plan and carry out practical scientific investigations, limit attainment.
6. Attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve average standards in the use of control technology, but standards are below expectations for communication and handling information. Pupils' weaknesses in literacy skills restrict standards, particularly in word processing.
7. Attainment in religious education meets standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and of Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. They show a sound understanding of similarities and differences in religious beliefs and practices and of the lives of such religious leaders as Jesus, Muhammed and Guru Nanak.
8. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills have improved since the last inspection. Standards have improved in design and technology. Attainment in other subjects is similar to the standards reported in the last inspection, that is in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed soundly overall. They make good progress in their learning in Year 3, promoted by a consistently high standard of teaching. Both girls and boys attain standards in English, mathematics and science which are below the national average. Girls achieve slightly better than boys. This has varied from year to year and there is no significant difference in standards. Pupils with special educational needs continue to be given good support. This enables them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. They make sound progress overall in lessons. Pupils of higher attainment are not consistently challenged to apply their knowledge and skills, for example, in mathematics and science and they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable often enough.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils generally demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in the school. Where the work is interesting, challenging and well managed pupils are enthusiastic and motivated. They listen attentively to the teacher and apply themselves well to their tasks. However, in the small number of lessons which are less than satisfactory and involve long introductions or inappropriate activities pupils become restless and inattentive. A small minority of pupils across the school have poor attitudes to

learning. When they are not well managed these pupils become a disruptive influence in the class.

10. Behaviour is satisfactory. The school has an appropriate focus on promoting good behaviour in and around the school. Pupils are generally courteous and polite. They speak well of their school and are happy to talk about what they are doing and show their work to visitors. However, there are a small minority of pupils who behave badly when not managed effectively by teachers. Parents thought that the school dealt with behavioural issues well. Pupils are aware of the school rules and generally respect them. There is some evidence of conflict between some pupils in the school. However any incidents which do occur are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively. There have been no exclusions in the school.
11. Relationships are good. Pupils generally form very constructive relationships between teachers and other adults. The splitting of classes across the school to have mixed age groups in each playground promotes good interaction across the age ranges. However, there are some tensions and disagreements between individual pupils in class and around the school. Pupils generally work well together in both pair and group situations and teachers use group objectives effectively to support pupils' independent learning when they work together in teams. Pupils were seen to work co-operatively during science investigations, within design and technology lessons and during swimming. More able pupils are paired with or sit next to others to help them during information and communication technology lessons.
12. Personal development is good. The strong focus on moral development enables pupils to understand the effect of their actions on others. There are opportunities for them to respect others' feelings, values and beliefs in religious education classes such as when pupils considered the place of Muslim prayers. Pupils' personal development and initiative are promoted through positions of responsibility undertaken around the school. Pupils willingly act as class monitors, responding well whilst helping out in classrooms. Year 6 pupils have additional responsibilities such as ringing the bell, operating the music system and overhead projector in assembly and running the tuck shop at break-times – selling toast, fruit and drinks. Year 4 pupils undertook these functions efficiently when the older pupils were out of school.
13. Levels of attendance in the school overall are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. Attendance levels, at 93.1 per cent, are below the national average; however, unauthorised absences are in line with national figures. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer to follow up frequent absences and ensure pupils attend school regularly. Lower attendance figures in Year 3 (92.86 per cent) and Year 6 (92.71 per cent) mostly relate to a few individuals who have frequent illnesses.
14. Parents are generally bringing pupils to school on time in the mornings. However, there are a small minority of pupils who are frequently late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is considerably more sound, good and very good teaching. Teaching was good in 42 per cent of lessons, with a further nine per cent being very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in five per cent of lessons with a further two per cent being poor. Teachers' planning is better and so is their subject knowledge. There are still some inconsistencies in class management and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly those of higher ability. The quality of teaching in English is good. It is sound in mathematics, with frequent examples of good and very good practice. This improved teaching is improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching is sound in science, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education. It is good in history. No judgements were possible in religious education, art, geography or music.
16. Strengths in teaching were identified in all year groups. The quality of teaching in Year 3 is of a consistently high standard. It is a significant factor in settling pupils into the school and enabling them to make good progress, particularly in improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Although year teachers benefit from being released to plan together, the quality of the cover teaching is not consistently good enough. In some of these lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and on occasions poor. It does not enable pupils in these classes to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.
17. Teachers plan well throughout the school. They make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks to identify the key skills to be developed as pupils move from year to year. Teaching plans show clear lesson objectives, which many teachers share with their pupils to ensure that they know what they have to do. This gives a good focus to each lesson and enables teachers to assess and monitor pupils' progress towards these objectives. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and frequently use them well to promote pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson the teacher's good knowledge of the reading text enthused pupils to listen carefully and promoted a good discussion of aspects of the book and its main characters. In most classes teachers know their pupils well and have very good relationships with them. This enables them to manage their classes effectively. Many teachers use a good range of strategies to encourage pupils to behave well and sustain their concentration. For example, in a Year 3 handwriting activity the teacher used different approaches to meet the behavioural needs of individual pupils and her good control ensured that all pupils completed their writing activities.
18. Where teaching is very good teachers maintain a brisk pace by the effective use of time targets, regular changes of activity and frequent questions to ensure that pupils make full use of the time available and are constantly thinking about their ideas. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher challenged pupils to use their existing knowledge of co-ordinates to solve problems. She regularly reminded pupils what she expected them to achieve in the time remaining and effectively intervened with individuals or groups to ensure that they were successfully applying their knowledge. She also made very good use of time towards the end of the lesson by requiring the groups to prepare themselves to report back to the others in the plenary activity. Pupils responded well to this and the effective sharing of ideas improved understanding.
19. The use of ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory. There are inconsistencies in the way in which teachers use assessment information to ensure that activities are

matched well to pupils' learning needs. Where it is done well all pupils in the class, including those with special educational needs, make sound and often good progress in their learning. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson looking at unfamiliar words the teacher gave a clear explanation of the task and organised four activities in which the range of words to be used closely matched the prior learning of the different ability groups. All pupils increased the range of words they knew and later used them in follow-up questions. Where assessment information is not used to ensure that learning is closely matched to pupils' needs progress is unsatisfactory. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on data handling the same task (interpreting the bias on different graphs) was given to all pupils in the class. It proved too difficult for many pupils, especially those with weak literacy skills, and they could not understand what was required of them. This significantly restricted pupils' learning in the lesson.

20. Most of the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor were when a teacher covered classes to release other teachers to work together on planning. The teacher did not know the pupils well and he had difficulties managing the class to ensure that they behaved well and stayed focused on the learning activity. The task was not matched well to pupils' needs so the pupils showed lapses in attention and some disruptive behaviour. For example, in a Year 3 religious education lesson the teacher spent a considerable amount of time trying to ensure that pupils listened carefully to instructions and to information. The learning activity consisted mainly of colouring a pattern on a worksheet. It did not challenge pupils to use their knowledge and understanding in a meaningful way and did not encourage them to settle to work and think carefully about what they were doing. The pupils achieved very little in the lesson. There was no improvement in their knowledge and understanding of how Muslims pray as indicated in the lesson objective.
21. Pupils with special educational needs learn satisfactorily. The teaching of these pupils has significantly improved since the last inspection when the quality of individual education plans was unsatisfactory. The two part-time special needs teachers draw up the individual educational plans for pupils in collaboration with the class teachers. The plans are good and contain clear learning objectives. The special educational needs teachers make regular assessments of pupils' individual targets and use this information when planning the next stage of learning. Pupils' progress is good when given support in small groups or one to one teaching. When the pupils do not know what they have to do progress is slower.
22. Marking of work is satisfactory overall. Some teachers mark pupils' work constructively and give good guidance over ways in which the quality could be improved. However, this is not consistently achieved in all classes. Where teachers do not give pupils sufficiently clear feedback on their performance and let them know what they must do to improve then higher standards are not achieved. Although some parents, through their returned questionnaires, felt that homework is not used well, inspection evidence shows that teachers use homework soundly, in line with the school policy. It promotes and extends pupils' knowledge and skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities the school provides is good. The school provides a broad curriculum that covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All statutory requirements are met. Although the school has not yet developed a policy for the teaching of personal and social education, aspects of health education are taught appropriately as part of the science curriculum. There is a separate teaching programme of sex education. The school at present lacks a policy to guide teaching about the dangers of drug misuse. The school has changed the amount of time spent on teaching the foundation subjects in order to increase its provision for teaching literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy Strategy is taught satisfactorily and a positive start has been made in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning for religious education is firmly based on the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers plan much of their work in themes which involves work in more than one subject.
24. At the time of the previous inspection a key issue indicated that the school should take steps to develop an effective well-planned curriculum and this issue has been successfully addressed. The present school management plan outlines a programme for the development of curriculum subjects, making good use of the schemes of work and national guidance. The implementation of these developments ensures that the school's curriculum provision is broad and balanced. Many co-ordinators have begun to develop their roles as subject leaders and to influence the teaching and learning in their subjects. Some of them are currently involved in the monitoring of teachers' planning. Presently, however, their roles in co-ordinating the work in their subjects is underdeveloped.
25. The school effectively ensures equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. It has good procedures for assessing and identifying those pupils who have special educational needs. Under the direction of the special needs co-ordinator the two special needs teachers, in co-operation with the class teachers, plan individual work programmes which contain targets for improvement. When the work is matched closely to their specific needs the plans contribute to the good progress made by these pupils.
26. A broad range of varied educational visits to places of interest enhance the curriculum very well. During the inspection, for instance, pupils in Year 5 visited Kenilworth Castle for a Tudor Day. They participated in an impressive range of Tudor activities and this considerably improved their learning about life in that period. The school also provides an exchange visit to a village school and visits to support geographical studies. Visits to the school by musicians, authors and theatre groups also make a strong contribution to the breadth of the school curriculum. The school organises some extra-curricular sporting activities, for example, soccer and cricket, although staff illness has recently limited their range.
27. The school enjoys very good very good links with the adjacent infant school and also the range of local secondary school that pupils will attend. This ensures an effective transfer of information. The close contact with the infants school, for instance, means that the school is made aware of any pupils who might have learning difficulties well in advance of admission. Links with the secondary school are very good and are praised by parents. Pupils begin their contact with their new school early in Year 6. This helps to alleviate their anxiety and leads to a smooth transition between the key stages.

28. The school provides well for the personal development of its pupils. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall. This broadly matches the findings of the last inspection.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school's acts of worship meet statutory requirements and make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers use assemblies and studies of different world religions to offer pupils insight into values and beliefs and to offer periods of reflection. Assembly themes such as "teamwork, "co-operation", "excelling yourself" and "competition", linked with illustrative stories from the Bible help children to reflect on the importance of building good relationships with each other, their families and the people they meet. Lessons provide pupils with opportunities for spontaneous expressions of awe and delight such as when pupils discover tiny creatures when pond dipping or at their first sight of the great size of Kenilworth Castle. They were fascinated when their teacher removed the front of the piano so they could watch the hammers striking the strings and intrigued when they speculated on what type of creature the headteacher keeps in his hamster cage!
30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has developed a code of conduct to guide behaviour in class and around the school, which pupils understand well. Classes devise their own rules for behaviour in the classroom. Members of staff encourage good behaviour and achievement by an impressive range of positive rewards including certificates and various commendations. Staff members offer very positive role models which give pupils an effective example of good behaviour and insight into what is right and wrong. Aggressive behaviour is not tolerated and the school deals immediately with any problems of this nature. Assembly themes often contain guidance on behaviour and the importance of rules for the common good.
31. The school makes good provision for the social development of its pupils. During many lessons teachers offer pupils the opportunity to work together, sometimes in groups and sometimes in pairs. In an information and communication technology lesson pupils displayed high levels of co-operation when working at the computer. Pupils were observed readily sharing ideas and equipment when offered opportunities to do so in design and technology and English lessons. Older pupils form good relationships with younger ones by visiting them to read them stories or by helping them to cope in the dining hall. Pupils are generally caring and supportive of each other. The pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the life of the school. The teachers value them and their work and this has a beneficial effect on their self-esteem. Pupils take part in fund-raising events for local and world charities and their participation in team games helps to generate a sense of pride and common purpose. They develop an awareness of their local community through a range of events as well as their studies of local geography and history.
32. The provision the school makes for its pupils' cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of western culture via art, music and literature are good. Pupils study a wide variety of literature during lessons and learn much about their own cultural heritage through lessons in history and on visits to places of interest. Field study visits to a farm or to the Lickey Hills develop an understanding of environmental issues. Visitors come into school to lead workshops in music, drama and dance. The school also gives its pupils opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures through lessons in history, geography and physical education. They study a range of world religions and listen to illustrated talks about a variety of religious practices. During the week of the inspection a group of pupils from the local

secondary school gave a dance demonstration to a background of African music. The school's curriculum includes the opportunity to study music and stories which derive from other cultures. These activities help to prepare its pupils satisfactorily for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a strong caring, supportive and friendly environment. The procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are effective, making a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Parents felt that the school tries hard to encourage pupils to improve whatever their level. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are a strength of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and will act quickly if a need is observed.
34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are generally effective. They are reflected in the orderly atmosphere in the school. The school has a very comprehensive behaviour policy, which includes various strategies for promoting an atmosphere free from harassment and bullying and promoting good behaviour. There is a good mix of rewards and sanctions and where teachers are applying behaviour strategies consistently this has a significant effect on managing disruptive behaviour. Pupils know the rules and are enthusiastic about the Golden Book awards and the other reward strategies. Parents were enthusiastic about the certificate system and appreciated being informed about their children's behaviour and awards.
35. Effective systems are in place to monitor pupils' attendance and close liaison has been established with the Educational Welfare Officer who visits once a month. The school actively seeks to promote prompt and regular attendance. Parents are kept informed of their responsibilities for ensuring their children attend regularly or informing the school of the reason for absences. To promote better attendance levels the school presents certificates to those achieving more than 94 per cent attendance – 143 pupils were awarded a certificate at the end of last term.
36. The school has good child protection procedures, with the headteacher as the designated person. He has undertaken appropriate training and updating information and awareness-raising sessions regarding these procedures keep staff well informed. The school has well-established procedures to care for pupils who may have accidents and need medical attention. Three members of staff are qualified to provide first aid and effective systems are in place to inform parents if their children are ill or suffer accidents.
37. There are comprehensive health and safety guidelines and procedures. The building site supervisor and members of the governing body undertake regular checks to monitor health and safety issues around the school. However, no recent external health and safety report or risk assessment have been undertaken. The local authority identified the surface of the playground as a potential health and safety hazard some years ago. However, despite the school's best efforts the uneven playground surface still presents a serious problem for physical education lessons and is potentially very dangerous when children are running around.
38. The school knows individual pupils very well. Form teachers are sensitive to the personal needs of each pupil. Learning assistants take equal responsibility for monitoring their welfare and are vigilant in communicating any concerns to the class teacher. The headteacher is immediately informed of problems for pupils who are known to have particular health or emotional difficulties. An example of such care

was noted as impressive during the inspection, all adults dealt sensitively with the situation. The headteacher monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs as they work with adults who demonstrate good techniques for reassuring pupils with particular difficulties. This helps these pupils to adjust to the working practices of the school. "Circle Time" is used well when pupils need time to talk about behavioural and emotional matters that concern them and are affecting the class as a whole.

39. Good procedures are now in place for monitoring the academic progress of pupils, but the information is not used well enough. The school has improved assessment since the last inspection. Standardised national tests at the end of each key stage and interim national tests provide good quality information of pupils' progress each year in spelling, reading, writing and mathematics. Information has been used well to set school targets and the school takes appropriate action to ensure pupils who are underachieving receive additional teaching support. In cases where monitoring identifies gaps in skills for a number of children changes to teachers' plans are put in place. For example, the school is currently working with all pupils to improve writing as a result of information gained from national tests. Although information is used to group pupils in English and mathematics lessons, work is not always well matched to their abilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson higher attaining pupils take too long to complete routine tasks. Consequently they do not complete the more difficult work planned for them.
40. Internal assessments are used to record the progress of pupils each half term against key learning objectives in English, mathematics and science. Although this provides additional information for identifying pupils who are underachieving, it does not identify those who are achieving well and cannot therefore be used to accelerate the learning of higher attaining pupils. Arrangements are good for meeting the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, enabling teachers and learning assistants to support them successfully. The school is planning to use assessment information to help other pupils to improve their written work by setting individual targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents have very positive views about the school, reporting that their children are very happy and enjoy school. The school's links with parents are very good. It actively seeks to foster strong links with parents and has focused effectively on this since the last inspection to make it a strength of the school. Parents generally feel that relationships have improved since the last inspection, with the school more open and responsive to their questions and enquiries.
42. Information the school provides for parents is very good. They receive regular information regarding forthcoming events and activities through frequent newsletters. Details of the curriculum and outlines of project areas to be covered are circulated each term, with imaginative ideas of how parents can help their children with work at home. Regular workshops covering areas such as spelling, reading and numeracy are run through the 'INSPIRE' scheme. These are well attended, with opportunities for parents to work with their children and discover ways in which they can progress the work at home. Parents are very enthusiastic about these sessions, requesting more in other areas. Termly consultations and the 'open door' policy keeps parents informed about their child's progress and provides opportunities for them to raise any issues or concerns with class teachers. The teachers' annual reports to parents provide detailed outlines regarding pupils' attainment and progress and include targets for improvement. These have been effectively redesigned this term.

43. Parents were consulted during the development of the home/school agreement and most parents have signed and returned the document. Although parents are very supportive of the school and the opportunities it provides for their children, the school has difficulty recruiting volunteers to help out with classroom activities or listen to readers. However, parents are willing to help out on school trips, with a number of enthusiastic parents dressing up in Tudor costumes for the recent visit to Kenilworth Castle. A large number of parents attend 'sharing assemblies' to see their children receive certificates and awards, with the school providing crèche facilities to facilitate parents with young children.
44. The Friends Association of both the junior and infant schools (FOPs) jointly runs a number of successful fund raising and social events and provides valuable additional support for the school by raising significant sums of money. Any money raised is split evenly between the two schools. It has helped recently with the updating of computers to provide a broader range of learning opportunities in information and communication technology.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The school is soundly managed overall. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are improving, although writing skills are still well below average. The quality of curriculum planning has improved. Teaching has improved considerably and is promoting higher standards. The school's partnership with parents, which was identified as a weakness at the last inspection, has improved greatly and contributes well to improving pupils' learning. A good range of assessment information is used well to set school targets for improvement, although it is not yet consistently used by class teachers to ensure that learning activities are matched closely to pupils' needs. Some aspects of management have improved, for example the quality and use of development planning, although the roles of key staff, for example the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators, in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are not developed effectively.
46. The headteacher gives a good, clear and positive direction to the work of the school, clearly focused on raising standards of attainment. Monitoring of the school's performance is satisfactory. The headteacher works closely with staff, parents and governors to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses and to plan for school development. They use an increasing range of assessment information to monitor the attainment and progress of different year groups and use this data to set improvement targets in English and mathematics. This has been successful in beginning to raise standards in those subjects. The headteacher meets with each class teacher to set attainment targets for the year based on assessment information and to identify any individual or groups of pupils who need additional support, for example, in literacy. This gives a clear target for improvement, although the data is not consistently used to inform curriculum planning or to indicate ways in which pupils' weaknesses will be improved. The headteacher has a good overview of the school and with some support from the local education authority's adviser has evaluated the quality of teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Good quality feedback has contributed to improvements in teaching quality. The headteacher, working closely with his deputy and literacy co-ordinator, evaluates the standards of pupils' work by analysing books and folders. However, the contributions of some of the senior management team, for example, the deputy headteacher and some subject co-ordinators, in monitoring and rigorously evaluating teaching and learning is not effective enough. They do not consistently focus on identifying what works well

and what needs further development.

47. The school's mission statement, together with its aims and values, provide a clear sense of purpose to its work. The values which promote pupils' personal development are strongly reflected in the everyday work of the school, particularly those which promote good relationships. Most parents are appreciative of the school's pleasant working atmosphere which enables their children to like school and helps them become more mature and responsible. The school promotes positive attitudes, although the aims to encourage the highest standards of teaching and learning have yet to be fully developed.
48. The governing body is supportive and makes an influential and significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory requirements and make a positive, valuable and constructive contribution to school improvement. They are more fully involved in planning and promoting school improvement than at the time of the last inspection. Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff to gain a good knowledge and understanding of school priorities and developments. They work effectively through their committees, for example the Curriculum and Development committee, to agree, plan for and monitor school development priorities. Many governors have benefited from good quality training from the local authority's support services to make them increasingly aware of their roles and responsibilities. Some governors visit school regularly and give a verbal report at the next governors' meeting to keep others informed. These enable governors to maintain a good overview of the school's effectiveness. Governors have agreed annual performance targets for the headteacher, closely linked to school improvement targets, and these are being used well to raise standards.
49. The governing body, mainly through its finance committee working closely with the headteacher and school secretary, has established good procedures for financial planning and management. The budget process is efficiently managed and regular monitoring by the finance committee ensures that finances are effectively targeted on development priorities. The school development plan, which has improved in quality since the last inspection, provides a clear focus for the school's work this year and identifies likely issues for longer term planning. Priorities are linked well to anticipated costs, although the specific source of the funds is not always identified. Specific grants, for example those for literacy and numeracy, have been efficiently used to improve resources and target support for particular groups of pupils. These have contributed well to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school makes sound use of the principles of best value, for example, by evaluating the effectiveness of support services before buying them back for another year. Information and communication technology is being soundly used to contribute to school efficiency and is beginning to be used to promote standards of attainment. The school plans to provide additional funds to extend its range of technology resources, although procedures to evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of these decisions are not clearly established. The good quality day to day financial administration and regular monitoring of spending levels contribute to the efficient running of the school and give good value for money.
50. The governors have established an appropriate policy for special educational needs provision and maintain a good overview of its effectiveness through a named governor. The special needs co-ordinator liaises very well with the two special needs teachers, class teachers and outside agencies. They keep careful records of their work and ensure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs.

51. There is a good level of teaching staff and a generally good range of experience and expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum and to ensure that all pupils are taught effectively. The number of support staff is adequate overall to meet pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs. However, it is insufficient in some classes to enable teachers to fully meet the broad range of behavioural concerns and learning weaknesses. Where additional support is not available to meet pupils' needs many are not able to settle quickly or sustain their concentration and this does not promote their learning. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good. The headteacher has an annual professional development discussion with each teacher to review and set targets linked to improving teaching and learning. Procedures for the induction of new staff are sound and the school plans to develop further its involvement in initial teacher training.
52. Although the school and governors work hard at maintaining the buildings and keeping them as a clean and attractive learning environment, many aspects are inadequate and present difficulties for the school in ensuring that they fully meet curriculum requirements. Facilities for physical education are limited, particularly the hall, which is too small, and the uneven and badly maintained playgrounds. The school has indicated to the local education authority their concerns about the safety of the surface but this has yet to be improved. Most classrooms are small and this leads to difficulties in class movement, for example, when pupils are expected to move to and from the carpet areas in literacy and numeracy. Restrictions in working space also limit the development of information and communication technology. Most classrooms are too small to accommodate computers on trolleys safely. They are situated in corridors during different parts of the day which makes it difficult for pupils to get access to them and for pupils to move to and from different rooms.
53. Learning resources are adequate. Levels have improved since the last inspection, particularly in literacy and numeracy. These have been used well by teachers to focus on improving pupils' skills. Resources are good in design and technology and are used well to promote some good quality work. Resources in other subjects are generally adequate to meet pupils' needs. The school is improving the range and quality of resources in information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) raise attainment in English by:
 - consistently developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in all lessons;
 - providing a broader range of strategies to support pupils in their writing and more frequent opportunities to extend the range and quality of written work across the curriculum;(paragraphs 2, 3, 55, 57 and 61-62)
 - (2) raise attainment in mathematics and science by an increased emphasis on investigation, enquiry and problem-solving to extend the range and use of pupils' knowledge and skills;(paragraphs 4, 5, 66, 68 and 73-74)
 - (3) raise attainment in information and communication technology by:
 - improving the range and frequency of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across their curriculum;
 - improving facilities and resources in line with the school development plan;(paragraphs 6, 100 and 104-105)
 - (4) improve the roles of the deputy headteacher and of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning;(paragraphs 24, 45, 46 and 72)
 - (5) ensure that teachers consistently use ongoing assessment information to match closely the learning activities to the range of pupils' needs, particularly those of higher attainment.(paragraphs 19, 39 and 45)

In addition to the issues listed above the following less important issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraphs 37, 52 and 116.

- ensure that the playground is safe for physical education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9	42	42	5	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	231
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	107
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	92
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.91
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.05
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	32	25	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	23	24
	Girls	17	15	21
	Total	32	38	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (41)	67 (54)	79 (59)
	National	70 (70)	69 (69)	78 (78)

Teachers' Assessments (data for 1999)		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above (Year 1999 – boys 31; girls 28; Total – 59)	Boys	7	13	13
	Girls	13	10	12
	Total	20	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	34 (49)	39 (47)	42 (53)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	205
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	461,372
Total expenditure	467,384
Expenditure per pupil	2,033
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,810
Balance carried forward to next year	23,798

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 13.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	231
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	29	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	33	3	6	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	39	10	10	2
The teaching is good.	55	39	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	36	3	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	7	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	23	10	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	23	6	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	20	3	6	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	32	13	13	10

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

ENGLISH

55. In the 1999 national tests at the end of the Key Stage 2 41 per cent of pupils achieved or exceeded the required standard (Level 4). This was very low in comparison with the national average. The number of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 (seven per cent) was well below the national average. Overall standards in English were very low in comparison with all schools and well below the average of similar schools. However, this particular year group contained a larger than usual number of pupils who had special educational needs. Inspection findings show that in the present Year 6 overall standards are below the national average. This is an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection and is confirmed by the results of the recent 2000 Key Stage 2 national tests. The school significantly increased the number of pupils achieving Level 4. It also improved the number achieving Level 5.
56. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily and this is beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Pupils' writing shows some benefit from the emphasis on skills such as sentence structure and punctuation. Opportunities to use a widening range of reading materials extend their reading skills. The emphasis in the strategy on the development of oral skills makes pupils more confident and has some benefit on standards of speaking and listening. As teachers become more confident in applying the scheme they see the need for more flexibility in its use. Not all teachers currently adjust the range of learning activities consistently to meet the needs of their own particular pupils: for instance there is general agreement that pupils who find concentration difficult should not be required to sit for as long as other pupils. Extra opportunities for pupils to write at length are planned into the timetable for older pupils.
57. Overall standards of speaking and listening skills are well below average. Many pupils in all year groups lack the oral skills to participate effectively in discussions, such as giving their opinions on a story or analysing the actions of a character in a text. They have difficulty listening for sustained periods although they enjoy listening to stories which stir their imagination. Many do not listen well to instructions, which have to be repeated. Older pupils show increasing confidence to act out plays and perform action poems in front of the class. The plenary sessions at the end of literacy lessons are beneficial in developing speaking skills as pupils report on what they have learned during the lesson. By the time pupils leave the school the standards in speaking and listening are well below national expectations. By then, although some pupils have developed their speaking and listening skills satisfactorily, many pupils still lack the confidence to stand up and speak to a range of listeners. The majority still do not have sufficiently well-developed oral skills to ask questions, to express themselves with clarity or to respond constructively to a story. Pupils read out completed work at the end of some literacy lessons and this helps to develop their confidence. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, read out persuasive arguments for devoting playground time for football activities. However, this is not consistently developed in all classes to ensure that all pupils are frequently encouraged to extend their speaking and listening skills.
58. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Most teachers use appropriate vocabulary and try to ensure that they speak clearly. Teachers broaden their pupils' vocabulary by offering them a wide range of vocabulary experiences in literacy lessons. They come into contact with technical

terms such as author, illustrator, contents, title and text and many use them with growing facility. The school recognises the need to improve pupils' progress in these essential skills and timetables extra lessons.

59. Standards in reading are in line with expectations at the end of the key stage. Throughout the school pupils are enthusiastic about reading. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils read fluently and accurately. They recall stories they have read and they describe the main characters and events. They read and follow written instructions for tasks in lessons. During literacy sessions, particularly when sharing reading texts, they learn to use a full range of reading cues which they then use effectively when reading independently. Many pupils read for pleasure and with understanding. They use skills such as inference and deduction in their reading. Many have favourite titles and authors which they discuss with enthusiasm. They readily identify differences in style between books and authors and the majority use dictionaries and thesauri to help their understanding. Research skills are adequately developed and many pupils are members of the local library with which the school has developed commendable links. The school library is used for teaching purposes for a large proportion of the day and at present does not provide a suitable focus for independent research.
60. Pupils make sound progress in reading. They make particularly good progress when they receive strong support from home. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they benefit from good quality individual support targeted on reading weaknesses. The very strong focus on the development of reading skills in the Literacy Hour helps pupils to make enhanced progress. The school has worked very hard to improve its home/school reading partnership and this is beginning to raise standards. The school's stock of reading materials has recently been greatly improved and provides pupils with access to a good range of reading materials.
61. Standards of writing are well below national expectations. Although pupils learn the relevant skills in literacy sessions, some teachers offer too few opportunities to use such resources as word banks and writing frames to support pupils' progress sufficiently in literacy and other lessons. Writing tasks are frequently too difficult for many pupils and without structured support this affects the progress they make. Standards in spelling are generally unsatisfactory. The school has recognised this and has structured the way that spelling is taught. This has yet to have an impact on standards. Handwriting skills are generally satisfactory. The school has a consistent style of handwriting so that pupils can be encouraged to form their letters in the same way throughout the school. Standards of presentation particularly in pupils' independent work are inconsistent between classes and year groups. Although some work is well presented, some teachers do not always insist on consistently high standards.
62. By the age of 11 writing standards overall are well below those expected nationally, although pupils are given the opportunity to write in a wide range of styles and for a variety of purposes including stories, poems, instructions and reports. The school is now placing a greater emphasis on extended writing and timetables extra sessions. Pupils organise and communicate their ideas, for example, in their book reviews. However, many of them do not develop their ideas well and they use a very restricted vocabulary. Many cannot use complex sentences, although a growing number link their paragraphs effectively. Pupils' spelling of regular and irregular words is usually unreliable. Written work in other subjects is usually not well developed. There are some good examples of pupils extending their writing skills in science and history, but literacy skills are not consistently used in a range of other subjects. Pupils who lack writing skills find word processing difficult.

63. Pupils' work has improved since the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, supported by their generally positive attitude to developing their literacy skills. However, they are offered too few writing opportunities through which to apply and extend these skills. As they move through the school they are not always offered appropriate tasks to match their ability. Many group tasks in literacy lessons are either too difficult or lack challenge. Teachers tend to miss opportunities to ensure greater progress by focusing on pupils' interest in a wide variety of lessons. However, good examples are seen in writing up science experiments and in writing about life in Tudor times.
64. The quality of teaching is good overall and is at least satisfactory in all lessons. Over 60 per cent of teaching is good. Teaching is most effective where lesson plans have a sharp learning focus for groups of differing abilities. Pupils learn well when given work that is matched well to their level. In lessons where teachers manage their pupils well and have a good relationship with their class this creates an orderly and constructive learning environment. In most lessons teachers give clear directions and explanations so that pupils know exactly what they have to do. In the best lessons teachers display good subject knowledge and this enables them to answer pupils' questions quickly and accurately. They enjoy the subject and this obvious enthusiasm conveys itself to the pupils. Where planning is less secure and instructions less clearly given teaching is less successful. Pupils become confused over what they are expected to do and the quality of their learning is affected. Teachers generally make good use of time and resources. It is notable that when classroom assistants support pupils who find the subject difficult, they make greater progress. Teaching is most effective and promotes pupils' learning when teachers mark pupils' work in such a way that it shows them exactly what they need to do to improve.
65. The co-ordinator is effective, she has worked hard to support her colleagues during the implementation of the Literacy Hour. The school has begun to analyse the results of its testing programme to indicate trends and to highlight areas of potential weakness. In its programme of curriculum review it is planning to review the effectiveness of the National Literacy Strategy in the light of teachers' experience and the continuing needs of the pupils. Resources for the teaching of English are good. The reference library is at present used for a variety of different purposes so it does not provide a focus for pupils' individual research.

MATHEMATICS

66. Attainment is just below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are improving and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests showed that standards were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. The results of the recent 2000 national tests show that standards have improved significantly since last year. The number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above increased from 54 to 67 per cent and enabled the school to exceed its realistic target of 60 per cent. The number of pupils achieving Level 5 in 2000, nine per cent, was lower than the 14 per cent achieved last year. Inspection evidence confirms that the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 is close to the national average. The number achieving higher levels is well below average. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy soundly, especially in developing pupils' mental mathematical skills and this is promoting higher standards. Teachers use assessment information soundly to group pupils by ability and to try to ensure a close match between learning activities and the needs of pupils of different abilities. However, these groups still contain a

broad range of abilities and learning is unsatisfactory, pupils do not consistently extend their prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils, particularly those of above average ability, are not required to use their skills and knowledge to solve challenging problems or complete mathematical investigations sufficiently frequently to achieve high standards. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons and where the work is matched well to their learning needs make good progress.

67. Year 3 pupils make good progress in their learning. They enter the school with very weak numeracy and literacy skills. These weaknesses make it difficult for many pupils to understand what the mathematics questions require them to do and how to answer them accurately. Consistently good teaching in this year group, focused on improving these basic skills, enable pupils to improve their skills and confidence. For example, pupils improve both literacy and numeracy skills through effective 'word problem' sheets which require pupils to write out a description of the problem and then show the calculation needed to work out the answer. Year 3 pupils improve their number skills through regular practice worksheets. They extend their knowledge and use of addition, subtraction and multiplication effectively to solve problems, for example, on metric measurements and money. Some higher attainers have a secure mental recall of the five and 10 times multiplication tables and quickly and accurately apply their knowledge to answer questions involving numbers up to 100.
68. Pupils' knowledge and skills develop soundly overall in the other years, although there is some inconsistency between different classes and ability sets in the amount covered and presentation of work. Most Year 4 pupils double and halve large numbers successfully and begin to use simple fractions and decimals accurately. They accurately locate number co-ordinates on a grid. Some higher attainers have above average knowledge and understanding of aspects of their work on different mathematical shape, for example how to construct a three-dimensional cube from its net and identify the line of reflective symmetry. Although some aspects of pupils' knowledge and skills are extended well in Years 5 and 6, for example their use of co-ordinates and handling data, this is not consistently done in all required aspects, particularly in applying number skills. By the end of the key stage in Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of number, for example of fractions and percentages, and use them well to work out both mental and written calculations. They use their knowledge with increasing confidence to complete a significant amount of work, for example on developing strategies for the multiplication and division of decimals. However, they are not subsequently challenged effectively to apply these strategies to try to solve more difficult problems. Weaknesses in pupils' language skills on occasions limit the quality of their work, for example, when explaining how they worked out the intervals for their data before completing a graph of their results from a class survey.
69. The quality of teaching is at least sound in all lessons. It was good in 30 per cent of lessons observed and very good in a further 10 per cent. Where teachers have a lively, enthusiastic approach this encourages pupils to respond in a similar positive way. They listen carefully and are eager to answer questions. For example, in the mental mathematics activities in a Year 3 and in a Year 5 lesson the positive attitude of the teacher encouraged pupils to improve the speed and quality of their responses. The teacher very effectively used target times to focus pupils' interest and concentration. Teachers plan well using the National Numeracy Framework and this clearly identifies what pupils are to do and what it is intended they should learn. Most teachers helpfully share lesson objectives with their pupils to help them

understand what they are learning and why. This gives a good focus to pupils' learning and enables teachers to assess progress in pupils' learning.

70. Teachers generally manage their classes effectively and use a good range of strategies to ensure that pupils remain interested and focused on their work. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher maintained a brisk pace by regular change of activity, effective use of "Why?" questions to challenge pupils' thinking and good use of pupil demonstrations to focus attention and extend pupils' knowledge on using co-ordinates. Teachers use homework sheets effectively to consolidate knowledge, particularly in number work.
71. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not ensure that the work is matched closely to the abilities of the pupils. This leads to pupils not maintaining their interest and concentration and, particularly for higher attainers, not being sufficiently challenged to achieve the standard of which they are capable. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on interpreting graphs the task was too difficult for many pupils, particularly those with literacy weaknesses. They were not able to get on with their work without help and this led to lapses in concentration and restricted the amount of work achieved. In another Year 6 lesson all pupils were required to enter all the data from class lists onto a spreadsheet before using it for graph work. The teacher did not allow opportunities for individuals or groups of pupils to focus on specific aspects of the data and extend their data handling skills. This restricted the development of pupils' learning and applying their skills and knowledge.
72. The school's numeracy strategy has been soundly implemented. The co-ordinator works with class teachers to agree medium term plans and monitors weekly plans. He works closely with the headteacher to evaluate standards of pupils' work and has worked with other teachers to support them on implementing different aspects of the strategy. The headteacher and the adviser from the local education authority have evaluated teaching of numeracy and have identified points for improvement. This has contributed to improving the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator has effectively analysed test results to indicate areas for development. He has yet to contribute sufficiently to evaluating teaching and learning and to target areas for improvement. Resources have been improved significantly since the last inspection and are used well by staff, particularly those for developing mental mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

73. By the end of Key Stage 2 the 1999 national test results showed performance in science was very low. The numbers of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 were both well below average. When compared with similar schools results were well below average. The fall in results was attributable to the high number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. Results for the current year show a significant improvement in the number of pupils achieving Level 4, although the number reaching the higher levels is well below expected national figures.
74. The inspection findings indicate that attainment is below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are better than the 1999 test results and reflect those achieved in the 2000 tests. Two factors influence the number of pupils reaching appropriate standards. Firstly, pupils do not have good writing abilities. This makes it difficult for them to analyse experimental evidence and communicate well argued explanations for why things happen. Pupils generally find it difficult to use language to explain scientific ideas. Secondly their practical and investigation skills are under developed. Cramped conditions in classrooms necessitate teachers preparing

materials rather than pupils being given opportunities to prepare their own investigations. Pupils do not gain good experience of making their own decisions about equipment to use or organising it for themselves. Their understanding of the process of planning an investigation then considering and evaluating experimental evidence is well below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils reach appropriate standards in using numeracy skills, but others find it difficult to apply these skills to experimental results. Although pupils have some opportunities to use information and communication technology to widen their scientific knowledge and understanding, they do not reach expected standards in recording and analysing information. However, the use of information and communication technology for science is developing and pupils are improving their skills.

75. At the end of the key stage pupils gain good quality information in lessons. A very well prepared lesson on sound gave them good insights into the nature of sound as vibration. The teacher used a variety of resources, including a good range of musical instruments, and showed pupils how interesting changes are made in sound quality. However, when given the opportunity to speak formally only a small number of pupils use scientific vocabulary appropriately to explain their observations. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to improve practical skills. A lesson on air resistance resulted in good gains in knowledge because the teacher prepared the work well. They appreciated the importance of the size and shape of a piece of card on its rate of fall to the ground, but the teacher missed the opportunity for them to improve their investigation skills. Scrutiny of work shows Year 6 have suitable notes to support their knowledge and understanding but have less written work in science investigations.
76. Progress is satisfactory overall. By testing bricks they have made in a good range of materials Year 3 pupils gain good insights into the skills of Egyptian builders. They develop good analytical skills by thinking how to conduct the test. Year 4 pupils make satisfactory gains in understanding the importance of the human ear, but they do not link new knowledge to other aspects of sound vibration. This limits their achievement. They make predictions about which materials will provide good sound-proofing. One lively pupil made a very good contribution to making the test fair, but most did not engage in discussion well enough. Evidence from pupils' work earlier in the year shows Year 5 pupils improved their knowledge and understanding of the human body through good use of the computer to research information. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when well supported by adults. Teachers and support assistants give additional help of good quality.
77. Teaching is satisfactory. It is more consistent than at the last inspection because planning has improved. Teachers set appropriate learning objectives, giving pupils a clear understanding of the task. However, they do not usually identify the skills that pupils need to develop because these elements are not made explicit in the scheme. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to extend their skills in speaking and listening. In the most successful lessons they promote thinking effectively by asking good questions such as "What would happen if we added more water?" This is successful in stimulating ideas but is not common practice. Similarly, they do not always review lessons by asking pupils to explain key learning points. The best lessons create good links with language by preparation of good writing frames for those pupils who need support in writing a good science report. This is not consistent practice and limits the standards pupils reach.
78. Teachers assess pupils' progress using the school's system of identifying pupils who do not meet key learning objectives. The weakness is that teachers do not identify those pupils who are achieving well, nor do they show evidence of closely matching

learning activities to the needs of different groups within the class. Consequently there are insufficient opportunities for the higher attainers to reach higher standards.

- 79. Relationships are generally good. Teachers foster positive attitudes, planning enjoyable lessons, but do not always develop a strong sense of responsibility. They direct pupils rather than challenging them to investigate scientific ideas for themselves. Expectations are too low for pupils to take the initiative. Teachers generally use other adults well and learning resources effectively. Homework is set on a regular basis, giving pupils a continuing sense of purpose.
- 80. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and most behave well in lessons. They are attentive, usually listening to the teacher well, but are often not willing to answer, reducing the quality of discussion. Occasionally small groups of pupils lose interest and chatter. This results in them being unclear of the purpose of tasks and not achieving expected standards and amount of work. When pupils engage in practical tasks they are enthusiastic, enjoying practical experiences and working well in teams. They are keen to explain their work to the rest of the class, but are not confident speakers. They are developing a sense of responsibility and show a greater maturity in their approach to work by Year 6.

ART

- 81. It was not possible to see any art teaching during the inspection. Standards and progress of pupils are judged from the work on display. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection that are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment in drawing is above expected standards.
- 82. Year 6 pupils have produced good crayon drawings inspired by William Morris designs, showing above average skills in interpretation of colour and pattern. One class has drawn good ink caricatures of famous footballers, showing good line and texture and good character interpretation. They have drawn good pencil drawings of three-dimensional shapes from natural forms, improving skills of using pencil lines to create good effects.
- 83. Progress is good. Year 3 pupils have produced good pastel drawings, contrasting cold and warm colours effectively. In making Egyptian sandals they have transformed a common shape into individual designs through attractive patterns and colour. They painted attractive posters of past, present and future for a painting competition. In fabric painting a tee-shirt design they successfully followed a commercial process through to completion, appreciating the implications for manufacturing a product. Year 4 pupils have appreciated the work of Michaelangelo and replicated some of the features of his sculptured work in pencil drawings. They improved their skills in perspective by painting a tree-lined road, the best of which are of a good standard. Charcoal drawings show they have improved skills by interpreting detail of foreground and background. They have used art to improve their understanding of mathematical terms such as diameter and quadrants of circles and have examined the mathematical ideas in art through appreciation of the work of Escher. They have painted attractive textile prints and have conveyed the symmetrical and varied patterns in butterfly wings by colourful paintings. Attractive Rangoli patterns show that pupils have considered the influence of other cultures on art. Year 5 pupils have used their art skills effectively to display the wives of Henry VIII in a large collage, making very good links with history.
- 84. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, the art scheme gives appropriate opportunities for pupils to experience an appropriate range of

styles and techniques in art each year. National guidance on art and design is currently being trialled in Year 3 and has had a good effect on improving pupils' skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Pupils reach similar standards to those expected nationally, although standards are higher in making than in understanding the design process. Only two lessons were seen. Work on display contributes to the overall judgement on the standards pupils reach as a result of the quality of teaching.
86. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall and they achieve well in making good models in Year 6. Work on display shows Year 3 pupils achieve well in designing tee-shirts. They use Egyptian life and customs effectively to create patterns and contrast them with modern designs. However, in a lesson they made unsatisfactory progress because they were not sufficiently well motivated by an unchallenging task. Year 5 pupils make good gains in applying existing skills to the making of Tudor houses. They improve skills of measuring by using the carpenter's quote of "measure twice, cut once; save wood".
87. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is significant variation which is reflected in the standards of pupils' work. Of the two lessons seen one was very good and the other poor. Teachers have sound subject knowledge but put too little emphasis on the design process so that it is not sufficiently strong throughout the school. There are inconsistencies in the quality of work. When the teachers have low expectations the focused tasks they set are not sufficiently demanding and pupils quickly lose motivation. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher set an appropriate objective to examine rotating patterns but the task, which was colouring, was set at too low a level. As a result the lesson lost its impact and the pupils' behaviour deteriorated. In contrast where teaching is very good, even though pupils have not all produced good design drawings, the teacher ensured that they made very good modifications as they proceed with making. In Year 6 pupils made good adjustments to their models as they realised some of the problems involved. They produced work of good quality as a result of such modification. The teacher used very good discussion techniques to help pupils think about the purpose for which structures were made and had appropriate expectations for pupils working independently.
88. Better and more careful planning by the teachers is beginning to ensure pupils make better progress over time. Curriculum plans incorporate a national scheme which provides teachers with good guidance. Good links with history in Years 3 and 5 motivate pupils and good links with science in Year 6 encourage pupils to apply their knowledge of electricity. This improves and extends their understanding of scientific principles. Teachers have not been assessing pupils' progress and they do not consistently match work to pupils' abilities. Year 6 pupils gain insights into the standards and quality of their own work through planned evaluation. Time and resources are used well to give pupils sufficient inspiration for their own work.
89. Pupils usually enjoy design and technology and their positive attitudes encourage them to try to achieve high standards. When challenged effectively pupils gain a good sense of purpose and work very well. They enjoy good relationships with adults and sustain concentration because of good support. They are very motivated, taking care in construction and showing pride in their achievements. The older pupils recognise that efforts made in developing skills improve the quality of their work. They take full responsibility for working safely with tools and show good co-operation with each other in clearing away equipment. Younger pupils, however, become

unresponsive when teaching is poor. Some pupils become deliberately disruptive and cause the better behaviour of the minority to deteriorate. As a consequence teaching objectives are not met and pupils achieve lower than expected standards.

GEOGRAPHY

90. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was gained from analysing a range of pupils' work in folders, books and on display and talking to staff and pupils. Standards are in line with those expected nationally, particularly in the development of geographical skills and in pupils' knowledge and understanding of places which contrast to the area of Birmingham in which they live. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection, although weaknesses in literacy skills restrict the accuracy and presentation of pupils' written work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall in their learning. Progress is good in the development of pupils' mapping skills which are extended well as pupils move from one year to the next. They use an increasing range of maps and develop a sound knowledge and understanding of different scales and how to use symbols and references to locate specific features on the map.
91. Pupils enjoy learning about people's lives in different places in this country and in other parts of the world. Many Year 4 pupils have a good knowledge of the Weoley Castle area in which the school is situated. They talk about the range and siting of shops and other facilities. They use this information well when preparing for a visit to a rural village and to its school with whom they have established an effective link. Year 4 pupils use their observation and research skills well when using photographs, maps, plans and other sources of information to identify specific differences between living in their own local area and living in a rural village. They gain an increased understanding of how villagers rely on their cars more than in the city area due to the limited public transport which is available to them.
92. Year 4 pupils also use this information when they study village life in India. Higher attaining pupils show a sound knowledge of the differences when they complete a detailed chart comparing their lives with children living in an Indian village. The standard of pupils' written descriptions of life in an Indian village are restricted by the limited range of vocabulary and use of suitable descriptive phrases. By the end of the key stage in Year 6 pupils use weather data well to produce a series of graphs showing weather conditions in different parts of the world. Many know the names of the main continents and some of the main climate zones such as 'desert' and 'tropical', although few were confident in identifying where these areas could be located on the world map.
93. There was not sufficient evidence to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. It was good and sound in the two lessons observed. Where teaching was good so was the learning. The teacher was very well organised and used a good range of resources. This gained pupils' interest and attention. The teacher used aerial photographs and a good range of questions to ensure that pupils used their observational skills very carefully to improve their awareness of some of the differences between living in a city and a village. "What can you see near...?" and "What do you think this large area is used for?" challenged pupils both to look closely and think carefully before replying. The teacher managed the class very well and maintained a brisk lesson pace by setting appropriate time targets for each activity. This ensured that pupils sustained their concentration and gained the information they needed in the time available. The teacher linked the different parts of the lesson very effectively, for example, by requiring different groups to have information ready to feedback to the rest of the class in the plenary session at the end of the lesson.

This ensured that pupils were thinking about how they would present their information and the details of their answers.

94. Teachers provide good support to pupils with special educational needs, for example, by providing a simplified activity sheet which focuses their attention on key geographical words and terms. On occasions teachers effectively reinforce pupils' language knowledge and use, for example, by reminding them of the correct use of such terms as 'population', 'city' and 'rural'. However, they do not consistently take opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of geographical vocabulary and terms, for example 'location' and 'environmental pollution'.

HISTORY

95. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their skills and knowledge. Discussions with pupils show that they clearly enjoy learning about life in past times and have a sound knowledge of topics which they have studied or are currently studying. They show a generally secure understanding of the timing of different events, a weakness identified in the previous inspection. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of "ancient times" and talk about the lives of Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. They show a good understanding of how historical information is gained from the work of archaeologists and from looking carefully at ancient artefacts. Year 3 pupils study ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics in a textbook and work out the meaning of some of the drawings. Analysis of work in topic books and folders shows that pupils' weaknesses in their literacy skills restrict the amount, accuracy and presentation of their written work.
96. Pupils' positive and enthusiastic attitudes are promoted by teachers organising interesting and stimulating learning activities. Year 3 pupils are given the opportunity of 'becoming' archaeologists and working in teams to dig in sand for historical artefacts. They work well together to search for objects and then discuss their findings with each other to try to agree how to present their information to the rest of the class. Pupils gain a clearer understanding of gaining evidence from primary and secondary sources. Year 5 pupils benefit greatly from a 'Tudor day' at Kenilworth Castle which is organised very well by staff, parents and other adult helpers. Pupils gain excellent first-hand practical experience of appreciating what the life was like for apprentices and scholars in the court of Elizabeth I. They enthusiastically participated in a range of activities led by teachers and other adult helpers, including writing with a quill pen, dancing and embroidery. Their knowledge of the castle was improved by being given a guided tour by a teacher in the role of Queen Elizabeth. Her very good knowledge of the building and its grounds promoted pupils' understanding of life in Tudor times.
97. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' enthusiasm for their history topic, supported by good subject knowledge, encourages pupils' interest and active involvement. Teachers use resources very effectively to focus pupils' attention and they manage their classes well to ensure that they concentrate fully on the learning activity. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on the Ancient Egyptians the teacher created an archaeological dig by placing historical artefacts in sand. This was used very well to ensure that pupils worked well in teams to take care of the artefacts found. The teacher had high expectations of the way in which pupils were required to feedback to the rest of the class to describe what they had found and how it had informed them about life in Ancient Egypt. Pupils responded well and spoke in detail about their findings. The teacher used questions effectively to challenge pupils to

explain how they thought particular artefacts had been used.

98. Some teachers use writing guidelines effectively to ensure that pupils focus their attention on how they present their historical information. For example, some teachers in Years 3 and 4 use writing frames and prompt questions to develop pupils' written answers in a structured way. This enables pupils to develop their literacy skills and results in some detailed, accurate work and a more consistent presentation style. There was limited evidence of such strategies being consistently used throughout the school and the presentation and accuracy of pupils' written work varied considerably between classes.
99. The subject co-ordinator has responded well to issues identified in the last report. Improvements have been made to curriculum planning and to teaching resources and these have improved the range of learning activities. Pupils make some use of information and communication technology, for example gaining information on the Tudors from a CD Rom. However, opportunities to use the Internet for researching historical information are not effectively established. The co-ordinator does not have opportunities for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and this limits his understanding of the standards being achieved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. Attainment is below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in control technology are in line with national expectations. They are below expectations for communicating and handling information.
101. An analysis of Year 6 folders show pupils have developed appropriate skills using a control program and have had opportunities to find information about the weather from the Internet. Higher attaining pupils show skills in presenting temperature recordings using bar charts. They have presented work on the Victorians using desktop publishing techniques, but the amount of work for the year is limited by problems of organisation and management. The low level of writing skills results in pupils not producing writing of a sufficient standard in information and communication technology and data handling.
102. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils are improving skills, but have not had frequent enough use of computers to make suitable progress year by year. However, during the inspection pupils made good progress in lessons. Year 3 pupils quickly acquire new skills in using a data base. They understand the principle of the program, finding information and sorting it quickly. Work on display shows they have learnt to improve layout and use attractive designs as borders. Year 4 pupils make good progress in using a programmable robot and a control program, making good connections between the control activity and work on angles in mathematics. Work on display shows they have learnt to label axes of bar charts and sectors of pie charts, illustrating good presentation. Year 5 pupils have produced kitchen diaries as part of their work on Tudor England, showing skills in using different fonts. Pupils with special educational needs improve their skills in writing sentences as a result of very good support.
103. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are committed to making the present system work as well as possible but lack of a permanent base for the computers hampers pupils' progress because organisation of teaching is complex. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge overall, although there is significant variation which effects the standards achieved. Those teachers who are most confident lead whole class teaching well and this promotes pupils' skills and understanding. For example,

the principle of using a database was explained well in Year 3 with clear use of good vocabulary. The teacher gave a good explanation of the power of the computer in storing information and pupils gained skills quickly. Those teachers who are less confident in their subject knowledge improve their own skills and understanding through supporting the co-ordinator. This support pattern is beginning to promote a more consistently higher level of staff subject knowledge.

104. Planning is satisfactory but the implementation of medium term plans is not yet making a sufficient impact on standards reached in other subjects across the curriculum. There are some good examples of using computers in mathematics, English, science, history and geography. However, subject schemes do not show how information and communication technology will be used or which skills will be developed. Staff work hard to monitor the progress pupils make during the lesson and this has a positive effect on pupils' rate of learning. There is currently no system for assessing skills, making it difficult to ensure each pupil makes good progress each year. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well.
105. Pupils have positive attitudes and are well motivated to improve their skills. They are attentive to instructions and enjoy their work, appreciating the equipment. They generally work hard to finish tasks in the given time and are proud of their work when they succeed. The youngest are very keen to learn and listen to the teacher well during a whole class demonstration. The pupils' consistently enthusiastic and positive approach to using information and communication technology is a significant factor in enabling the school to promote higher standards. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently independent because they have not had frequent opportunities and regular use of resources to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.

MUSIC

106. Due to timetabling difficulties very little direct teaching of music was observed during the week of the inspection. However, observation of pupils singing in assemblies, of one music lesson and a close examination of the school's schemes of work and lesson planning indicate that pupils reach nationally expected standards by the end of the key stage. The school has maintained the standards reported at the last inspection.
107. The co-ordinator has adopted a commercial scheme to ensure full National Curriculum coverage. Acknowledging that some teachers lack confidence in the teaching of music the school has enhanced its provision with extra inputs from the local education authority's music teaching staff. The use of the scheme, supported by additional specialist teaching, enables all pupils to soundly develop their musical skills and knowledge. Pupils receive an introduction to brass, woodwind and stringed instruments as well as specialist vocal tuition.
108. Wherever possible the school integrates music into its curriculum themes. Pupils learn to appreciate the music of other times and cultures. For example, Year 5 pupils have a sound understanding of aspects of Tudor music from their topic on life in Tudor times. They know and sing songs of the time like "Raggle-Taggle Gypsies" and "The Gallant, Gallant Ship". Using a CD-Rom they investigate what instruments were used at the time and know what they sounded like. Pupils replicate the sounds they hear on their own modern day instruments. Pupils in Year 3 whilst studying Ancient Egypt compose ghostly music to signify the entry by Howard Carter into Tutankhamun's tomb. They also listen to and appreciate songs from "Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat". Pupils in Year 4 listen to and appreciate the musical composition of well-chosen examples of Greek folk music as part of their

topic on Ancient Greece. They also know and sing a wide variety of songs from different cultures and times. Year 6 pupils know some Victorian street cries and prepare an “Old Tyme Music Hall” to perform to other classes. They know aspects of musical notation. They compose a range of different sounds, some ghostly, some frightening and the mechanical sounds you might hear in a factory or mill. They also accurately express various weather conditions in sound such as lightening, thunder and tropical rainstorms.

109. Pupils enjoy musical activities and their positive attitudes encourage them to be actively involved in their learning and to extend their musical skills and knowledge. They sing enthusiastically and enjoy performing before an audience, such as when a group of pupils sing African songs in assembly or when they sing carols for elderly citizens at Christmas. During lessons they co-operate satisfactorily with others when sharing instruments and when performing. However, they do not always listen sufficiently carefully to their teachers’ instructions or when being asked to evaluate a piece of music.
110. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, it is evident from teachers’ planning that they plan a wide range of activities very carefully. These usually fit into the theme the class is studying. Teachers have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils so that the work will extend them. They plan carefully to ensure the effective use of the school’s satisfactory range of musical resources. Teachers develop successfully the links between different subjects such as in a Year 6 science lesson on the topic “Sound” where they explore a wide range of musical instruments working out precisely how they produce their different sounds.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. During the inspection the focus was on games and swimming. Attainment is in line with standards expected nationally at the end of this key stage. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make sound progress in these areas of activity. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The well structured scheme of work, supported by the use of national guidance, provides a generally well balanced programme of activities, although the areas of dance and athletics are not yet fully developed.
112. The teachers develop pupils’ games skills soundly overall although not always consistently throughout the school. Where teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in teaching specific skills this enables pupils to focus on aspects of their technique and improving the quality. For example, in a Year 5 lesson regular reminders from the teacher to ensure that pupils’ eyes stay focused on the ball when hitting it to a partner improves their technique. Pupils send and receive the ball well both when practising with a partner and in larger, competitive group activities. When the teachers do not emphasise or demonstrate the correct technique clearly, for example when aiming to roll a ball accurately, pupils develop their own technique which does not consistently promote accuracy and reliability. Pupils clearly enjoy games and are keen to work hard, particularly in competitive activities. They generally work well together in team or group activities. Some pupils find sustained concentration difficult when required to practise the same skill for a long period of time rather than being challenged to use it in a competitive activity.
113. Pupils’ skills in swimming are developed well. Each year group receives weekly sessions for half of the school year in local swimming baths. The sessions are well organised with pupils being taught in ability groups in either the learner or the main

pool. The small number of Year 3 pupils who lack confidence in the water are given good encouragement and support. They respond well and although one or two are still rather apprehensive they listen carefully to instructions and try hard to succeed. For example, almost all the pupils in the group successfully lift their feet off the floor and using the bar to support them 'walk' along the side of the pool. Most of these pupils use a float with increasing confidence to practise their leg-kick and learn to move across the water. Pupils with higher levels of skills develop and improve their stroke techniques well, for example, in front crawl and receive good instruction either from teachers or local authority swimming instructors.

114. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It is good when the teacher organises the lesson well and maintains a good, brisk pace by regularly changing activities and setting pupils targets for achievement. This ensures that the limited activity time in each lesson is fully used and pupils have opportunities to consolidate then extend their skills. For example, in a Year 3 swimming lesson the teacher frequently changed the type of activity to ensure that pupils remained interested and fully involved. The teacher's enthusiastic style encouraged pupils, particularly those lacking in confidence, to try hard. She then built on their achievements well by challenging them to extend their improving skills in a different activity. This promoted both pupils' active involvement and improving skills and confidence.
115. Teaching is satisfactory when teachers manage their classes well to enable pupils to understand exactly what they are trying to achieve. It enables them to get quickly involved in the activity but standards are not improved when the teacher does not consistently take opportunities to extend skills and look for ways in which they can be improved. For example, in a Year 3 games lesson the teacher used a very good control strategy, a short tap on a tambour, to ensure that she had the immediate attention of the class. She used this very effectively to enable the skill practices to progress well. However, the teacher did not develop these practices to enable pupils to extend their skills, for example, in a competitive activity and pupils' interest and active involvement lessened. This did not improve pupils' skills. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the teacher's management of the class is not sufficiently consistent to ensure that all pupils know what is required of them. Where the teacher does not regularly evaluate pupils' skills and look for ways in which their quality can be improved this does not promote higher standards. For example, in a games lesson the teacher gave out instructions before ensuring that all pupils were listening. This led to some confusion and pupils not knowing what they were required to do. They practised different hitting skills. As there was no clearly understood learning objective and the teacher did not remind pupils what skill they were practising or demonstrate how to improve its quality little improvement was made in pupils' learning.
116. The school has developed some extra-curricular sporting activities, for example, in soccer and cricket to enhance the range of learning activities, although some staff illness has limited the range during this school year. Aspects of physical education are limited by inadequacies in the accommodation. Space in the hall is small particularly when equipment is stored at the sides and this limits the range of activities in gymnastics and games. The outdoor play areas have surfaces which are uneven and badly maintained. They do not promote the development of skills in a safe and reliable way as pupils are not always sure of their footing or of the position of the ball when hitting or fielding.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. Pupils attain expected standards for their age and Year 6 pupils meet the targets of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of the key stage.
118. Due to timetabling difficulties little direct teaching was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the observation of two lessons, a thorough scrutiny of school documentation, teachers' lesson plans and a representative samples of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.
119. The school's scheme of work ensures that pupils learn about a variety of different religions including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism. They learn effectively to find similarities and differences in a wide range of religious observance. Pupils in Year 3 consider stories about how life began. They know about the various creation myths in a variety of faiths and look for similarities and differences. They know the events leading up to the birth of Jesus and understand the significance of Advent and Christmas. They know and talk about the leading events of Jesus' life and his teaching. Year 3 pupils have a sound understanding of the nature of prayer and they know the significance of the Qur'an to Moslems. Pupils in Year 4 know about the importance of Harvest Festival and compare it effectively with the Jewish celebration of Succoth. They know and talk about the lives of Muhammad and Martin Luther King and how their faith motivated their beliefs and actions. They study pilgrimages and understand about their importance in religions such as Christianity and Islam. Year 4 pupils know about the importance of the five K's to Sikhs. They explore some of the Sikhs main beliefs and know about the 10 Gurus. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the rituals involved in worship in the Christian church. They also show a sound knowledge of the life of Guru Nanak. They study the use of images in worship and are aware of the Hindu belief in Brahman. At the end of Year 5 pupils learn about Judaism and know about the Jewish celebration of Pesach. Pupils in Year 6 know the importance of rituals in a wide variety of religions, for example Christian baptism and confirmation and the Sikh ceremonies of commitment. They are aware of the virtues of fasting in some religions and know that Christmas is a time for giving. Year 6 pupils make a detailed study and show a sound understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Buddhism and the celebration of Pentecost.
120. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They know exactly what they want the pupils to learn and build effectively on prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan their use of the school's satisfactory range of religious education resources very carefully so that no time is wasted during lessons. Most teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure a sound knowledge and understanding of different religious practices and beliefs. However, on occasions some teachers do not consistently manage their classes well and this does not promote high standards. For example, in one unsatisfactory lesson the teacher did not control the class effectively. This resulted in pupils becoming distracted and they did not make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding.