

INSPECTION REPORT

KING CHARLES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bentley, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104175

Headteacher: Miss H. Pashby

Reporting inspector: Miss F. M. Robinson
OIN: 22182

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th February 2000

Inspection number: 189497

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wilkes Avenue Bentley Walsall
Postcode:	WS2 0JN
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E. Ince
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd – 26 th September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Miss F M Robinson	Registered inspector	Science Information Technology Music Special educational needs	Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements; Teaching; What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs A Willatts	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr R Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs S Brown	Team inspector	English Art	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs S Lees	Team Inspector	Physical education Under fives	
Mrs B Thomas	Team Inspector	History Religious education English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

King Charles Primary School is situated on a large estate in Bentley, to the west of Walsall. 99 boys and 107 girls attend the school and there are 21 children who attend the nursery on a part time basis. Most

pupils are white and about five percent of pupils speak English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils leave or join the school part way through their primary education. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average, as is the proportion that are entitled to free school meals. Children's attainment is very low compared to the average. The school is led by an acting headteacher who has been in post for 6 months.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

King Charles Primary School is an improving school where pupils make a good start and receive a sound quality of education. Standards are not as high as they could be by the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, but pupils make the expected rate of progress overall, and in parts of the school progress is good. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, and the high rate of pupil turnover, all affect the standards achieved. Senior managers and the governors are focused well on the improvement of standards and they have made significant changes to teaching and the curriculum to bring better achievement. The quality of teaching is good, the lessons are challenging and pupils are interested and keen to learn. Managers make effective use of the available finance and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The high quality of teaching, especially of literacy and numeracy, throughout the school is a strength.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- Children under five are given a good start to their education and they make good progress.
- Standards in English and mathematics are rising because of the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
- The acting headteacher, staff and governors are committed to better standards and have been successful in creating a caring and supportive environment.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in English (especially writing), mathematics, science, physical education and religious education.
- There are insufficient opportunities for coordinators to monitor their subjects.
- The partnership with parents and the community is not well developed
- The spiritual and cultural development of pupils has shortcomings.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In 1996 there were five key issues in the inspection report. These were:

- Improve teachers' expectations of what the pupils could do
- Share good practice in teaching to make it of even quality across the school
- Introduce effective procedures to monitor and evaluate standards of achievement
- Make planning and assessment better matched to the needs of different attainment groups
- Introduce a well-structured school development plan that builds on the school aims and identifies who must do what.

Four years later, the school has made satisfactory progress with improvement. Teaching is of better quality, monitoring procedures have been introduced and planning and assessment are better than they were. The school development plan and school aims have been revised so that everyone knows what the chief priorities are. Governors are developing a strategic over-view of the school and, together with the acting headteacher and senior managers, they have worked hard to improve standards.

STANDARDS

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

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

Standards are not high enough in school and the governors, acting headteacher and key managers know this. There is good determination amongst them to raise standards and a good start has been made to boost the level of attainment. The above table shows the challenge that they face. In 1999, eleven-year-old pupils did badly in mathematics and science, and only a little better in English. Standards were well below both the national average and that of similar schools in English. It was amongst the lowest achieving five percent of schools in mathematics and science when compared with all schools and those of a similar background.¹

Children start in the nursery with very low levels of achievement. Pupils make good progress as under-fives and in Key Stage 1 and standards improve greatly, though they are below the expected level by the age of seven. Pupils progress at steady rates through Key Stage 2, though this year, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high turn-over rate of pupils means that standards are well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. This is an improvement since the last inspection, though managers know that more needs to be done. In 1999 the school's targets for attainment were achieved, though few pupils gained level 5. At present, the school's targets are not high enough.

During the inspection, it was evident that the acting head teacher has taken decisive action to halt the slide in standards and that all staff support her in this challenging task.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they work cheerfully and productively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave as expected and the school is an orderly place.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils grow to be mature and responsible people. Ways to encourage independence in learning require improvement.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

¹ Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The quality of teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection. During the current inspection, about two-thirds of all lessons were of good or better teaching quality. This is a strength of the school. Four percent of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, the rest was satisfactory.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Basic skills of reading and mental mathematics are taught well, however writing requires improvement. Teachers are skilled at managing their pupils and they use resources well. They have appropriate subject knowledge, and expectations are high when teaching is good or better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and it is well planned. . The school works soundly to involve parents though not all of them respond effectively. The school has yet to find ways of involving more parents in their children’s education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are well supported and they make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils are supported well by the school and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils’ moral and social education is well fostered. Spiritual development and the knowledge and understanding of other cultures are satisfactory but would stand improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Pupils are looked after well. They are safe, happy and enjoy school. Assessment is satisfactory and the information it produces is put to sound use in setting targets for future attainment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The acting head teacher and the governors have a clear vision for the school. They are committed to better standards and are working effectively to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum. There are some positive signs that standards are rising as a result of this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are committed to the success of the school. They are increasingly acting as critical friends of the school, but have yet to apply fully the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The acting headteacher has introduced more rigorous procedures to track standards and rates of progress. Other staff have a growing role in this process and there is shared determination to make standards better. However, coordinators do not have enough chances to monitor teaching and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Finance is put to effective use and spending is controlled carefully. Staff, accommodation and learning resources are put to effective use.

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 enjoy coming to school • The school expects pupils to do their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of leadership and management is weak • The quality of teaching • The progress pupils make at school • The behaviour of pupils in school • Developing the maturity and responsibility of pupils. • The range of activities outside lessons is narrow • They would like better quality information about how well their child is doing • The school does not work closely enough with parents • The amount of homework

The inspection team agrees that pupils enjoy coming to school and that the school expects pupils do their best.

Inspectors judge that the acting headteacher is providing a good clear vision and direction for the school helped by the supportive deputy headteacher and staff.

The high quality of teaching especially of literacy and numeracy, throughout the school is a strength.

The good attendance is making a very positive contribution to the good progress most pupils are making. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in school.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and they take responsibility for various tasks in the school.

The recent introduction of a school's council provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to show initiative.

However, they are not given enough opportunities to organise their own work or select resources.

The provision for extra curricular activities is limited to lunchtime clubs as the school attempts to revive out of school activities have lacked pupil and parental support.

The quality of information to parents could be better than it is.

The school is working hard to improve links with parents and the community.

The home school agreement recently introduced includes an appropriate homework policy enabling parents to be more actively involved in helping their children to learn.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children start the nursery with very low levels of attainment in all areas of learning. They settle quickly to school routines and make good progress. When the children start the reception class, baseline assessment shows that levels of attainment are well below average. Thus, pupils have made good strides in their learning as standards, whilst still quite low, have moved upward. By the age of five, skills and knowledge in language, literacy and numeracy are still very weak.
2. The 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests showed that pupils achieved standards in reading that were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Few pupils achieved level 3 in reading last year. Standards in writing were below both the national and similar schools averages. Results were better in mathematics, being above the average of all schools and well above that of similar ones.
3. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are lower still. In mathematics and science they were well below both the average of all schools and that of similar schools in the 1999 National Curriculum tests. Indeed, for the two years 1998 and 1999, standards in these two subjects were amongst the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. The situation in English was not much better. Standards were well below the national and similar schools averages last year, but in the two years before that, standards in English were also amongst the lowest 5 per cent in the land.
4. The pattern of standards at King Charles School is very much influenced by three factors. Firstly, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. This includes a high number of pupils with behavioural problems. In Year 6 this year, for example, the proportion is particularly great. Secondly, there is an above average proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The school works well with these pupils and they make good progress in their learning. Nonetheless, both special needs pupils and those with English as an additional language find it difficult to put their thoughts, knowledge and ideas into spoken or written form. Finally, many pupils move in and out of school during their primary education. This discontinuity of education affects the progress that these pupils make. All three factors have significant impact on standards by the end of school.
5. During the inspection it was judged that standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. However, pupils are taught well and they make significant advances in their learning during the first key stage. Skills and knowledge are built well from a very low base level and the literacy strategy is having good impact on lifting standards of reading. The emphasis on guided reading and shared text work is contributing effectively to improvements in reading. Standards in mathematics are closer to the expected level by the age of seven. The numeracy strategy has been introduced well and there are already positive signs of the impact it is having on attainment at this key stage. Science standards are at the expected level and are much improved over previous years because of changes to teaching and the curriculum.
6. On first sight, it looks as though standards fall away in Key Stage 2. Evidence from the inspection shows that progress continues at a sound rate through this key stage. The literacy strategy shows positive impact in lower Key Stage 2 and standards of English are rising. Reading with meaning and expression is improving in Years 3 to 5. The numeracy strategy is also showing positive impact on standards. The impact is greater for the younger pupils because they have not progressed so far with their learning. Year 6 pupils have not had such a proportionate amount of time to benefit from the numeracy hour. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of the key stage and standards in science are also below average by the age of eleven.
7. Standards in information technology are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were below average throughout the school. Pupils now have more opportunity to use computers and the use of CD ROM to search for information is an increasing part of history and geography lessons.

8. Religious education standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Key Stage 1 but fall below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. There has been an improvement in the knowledge and understanding of pupils since the last inspection but the three factors outlined above mean that pupils in Year 6 have yet to attain the level of knowledge that is expected.
9. In other subjects, standards are at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are also average in the foundation subjects with the exception of physical education. In this subject, standards are below those expected because learning is not strenuous enough and teachers take too long explaining the work.
10. Overall, the pupils meet a plateau in learning by Year 5. Progress is slower in Year 6 due to the combination of factors identified above. More pupils are affected in Year 6 than in previous years. School managers are alert to the situation and have made important changes to teaching and learning. There is good evidence of the effectiveness of these strategies, particular with respect to the impact of good teaching, which is now more uniform through the school. The targets set to date have been met, though they remain at a low level in relation to other schools. Managers are reviewing the current targets and intend to increase them in a bid to boost standards even further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. There has been considerable improvement in pupils' attitudes to study since the time of the previous inspection and this is supporting positively the good progress most are now making in learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most work cheerfully and productively. School management has introduced new approaches to promoting positive behaviours and this has resulted in an overall improvement in the standards of behaviour and in the orderliness of the school. The rate of exclusion has fallen. Four pupils were temporarily excluded last year. The majority of parents are generally satisfied with standards of behaviour in the school, although the questionnaire analysis highlights that a significant percentage have concerns. The team are of the opinion that the school should give parents more information about behaviour management to allay any worries they may have.
12. Children in the nursery are encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards learning and this contributes successfully to the good progress they make in their early years. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory throughout the school, and are good or better in some years. Pupils show a positive attitude towards their learning where the teaching is good and they are engaged upon their tasks. Pupils are generally keen to join in with lessons and the other activities offered by the school. Pupils have demonstrated a positive attitude towards the recently established literacy and numeracy strategies. Pupils relate well with the teaching staff, and reasonably well with one another. The older pupils are conscious of the need to care for the younger pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their learning and are very well supported by staff. Pupils with English as an additional language have very good attitudes to work and are making good progress as a result. .
13. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in school. Most behave appropriately in lessons, for example in the mathematics lessons observed in Years 3 and 4. Here pupils are eager to contribute to class discussions and work with good application and enjoyment as they collaborate in solving problems. There are occasional lapses in behaviour, for example in Year 6 when the challenging behaviour of some boys impedes the flow of the lesson and stops others from learning. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion and play reasonably well together. Most are polite and helpful to staff and visitors. Bullying is not generally perceived to be a problem. The few incidents that do occur are successfully dealt with.
14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils take responsibility for various tasks in the school, especially those in Year 6. Older pupils help to supervise the pupils in Reception and Year 1 at lunchtimes, and to organise furniture and equipment for assemblies. They are responsible for ringing the bell at the beginning and end of breaks and at the end of the school day. Most pupils work co-operatively in groups but are not given enough opportunities to organise their own work or to select resources and this limits their capacity to show initiative and personal flair. A school council has recently been established to enable pupils in Key Stage 2 to explore school issues. They are currently considering ways to improve the range of extra curricular activities.

15. Attendance at the school during the year before the inspection was below the national average. However a recent initiative to promote good attendance has been extremely successful. Attendance in the last term has risen dramatically to around 95 per cent with a significant drop in the unauthorised absence rate. This good attendance is making a very positive contribution to the good progress most pupils are making. Late arrival is still a problem, but the school is tackling this to ensure that pupils get off to a prompt start to their day of learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. At the time of the previous inspection, two key issues related to teaching namely, to improve teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and to share good practice in teaching to make it of even quality across the school. Further, in 1996, about a third of all lessons were of unsatisfactory teaching quality. This was a significant weakness.
17. This year, teaching is much improved. This is due much to the acting headteacher's determination to lift standards and the way in which she has drawn staff into the process of improvement. During the current inspection, 96 per cent of lessons were of satisfactory or better teaching quality with just 4 per cent unsatisfactory teaching. The weakest teaching is in physical education where teachers spend too long explaining things and do not work the pupils hard enough. A higher than usual proportion of teaching was very good or excellent. In all, the good quality of teaching is a strength of the school and impacts well on standards and rates of progress. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects, particularly in English and mathematics in both key stages.
18. Teaching is also good for children under five and this has a positive influence on the progress made. The best teaching for the under-fives is in personal and social development. The teachers, nursery nurses and other support staff form a strong team and they have detailed knowledge of the needs of these young children. There is a good level of expectation, good use is made of time and assessment is put to good use in planning work that matches the needs of the children in the six areas of learning.
19. Good teaching is evident in Key Stage 1. Because this is the case, standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. Pupils want to work in lessons, they are well motivated and put in good effort. Teachers build on these things by making learning interesting, brisk and demanding.
20. Key Stage 2 teaching is not as successful. Whilst still good overall, the pace of learning slows in Year 6. This is due to a number of factors, not least the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. In general, teachers in Key Stage 2 share the same strengths of teaching as their colleagues in Key Stage 1 though expectation could be lifted.
21. In both key stages, teachers have good subject knowledge and planning, organisation and the use of all forms of resources are all good. Teachers make good use of the information gained from day-to-day assessment in order to plan work that is appropriate for the pupils. Control and discipline are generally good, although some older pupils are not as well behaved and this affects the progress they make in building skills and knowledge. Teachers deal effectively with these challenging pupils. Satisfactory use is made of homework in all classes.
22. The quality of marking could be better. Teachers are conscientious in marking work but comments do not often identify ways in which the pupils can improve.
23. In the best lessons, teachers work from clear objectives and they give clear and effective explanations. In an excellent science lesson in Year 2, the pupils had to make a buzzer for use in a quiz. The teacher gave a very clear explanation of the task and invited pupils to explain what makes a good circuit. Skilful use of questioning resulted in some bright ideas as to what happened when the circuit was broken. Teachers use praise effectively to build self-esteem and to encourage greater effort and achievement. Lessons are generally brisk and learning builds at a good pace.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In the best lessons, the teacher sets high standards and pupils are managed with great sensitivity. Planning meets the individual requirements of the pupils and is well matched to the requirements of their individual education plans. Pupils with special needs make good progress. In an excellent lesson which involved a Year

3 / Year 4 special educational needs group the teacher made exciting use of the story 'Pandora's Box' to help the pupils to understand nouns. Suddenly the group saw a chest in the classroom, 'Should Pandora have opened the box?'. There was an excellent response, 'Don't open it!' they shouted 'There might be a big, hairy, spider monster inside it.'

25. Pupils with English as an additional language are also taught well. There is good understanding of the needs of these pupils and their work is well structured to help them build more fluency and expression in spoken and written English. These pupils make good progress through the school but their level of English is not as high as most other pupils by the end of school and this impacts on standards.
26. It is clear that teaching has improved much and that teachers are successful practitioners. The impact of improvement is detectable in school in the form of rising standards.

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

27. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the quality of curricular provision and has successfully introduced national literacy and numeracy strategies whilst improving the balance of the curriculum. A significant number of parents are concerned about the narrow range of activities provided outside lessons. The school is aware that in preparing for the introduction of Curriculum 2000 in September, plans will need to take account of the key skills and concepts it wants pupils to have and enable sufficient time for them to be developed. Good provision has been maintained for pupils' moral and social development. The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development whilst satisfactory overall, remains under-developed in some respects.
28. The strategy for literacy is good and careful emphasis is given to building skills and knowledge in speaking, listening and reading. The numeracy strategy is also well developed across the curriculum with co-ordinates, scales and compass bearings in geography, dates and time lines in history, temperatures and graphs in science, and measurement in design and technology. Information technology, including the use of CD-ROM and the Internet, is underused where software fails to support learning as in mathematics.
29. The curriculum provided for children who are under five and for pupils in both key stages is of good quality, appropriately meets individual needs and all statutory requirements. Good curricular provision is made for pupils who speak English as an additional language who make good progress as a result. The curriculum attends well to the pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development, although higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged by the work set for them for example by extending opportunities for Year 6 pupils to debate and to discuss their work in English.
30. Appropriate attention is paid to sex education and information is given to pupils to raise their awareness about drugs and their misuse. Circle times are a positive feature in promoting pupils' personal and social development. The provision made for religious education is in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
31. Foundation subjects have been re-planned to enable satisfactory coverage. There are good links between the subjects, and generally detailed planning indicates continuity in learning and skill development as pupils move through the school. Policies and schemes of work are at various stages of development according to the priorities of the school development plan with schemes of work for art, design and technology, music and physical education intended in the next phase. Curriculum guidelines give sufficient detail for teachers to plan for the different needs of pupils and advice for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do and then how to use this information to plan for improvement. Curriculum guidelines reflect the revised aims of the school, which determine respect for the contribution of the individual, and equal opportunities for all to acquire skills and be successful. All pupils have access to the full curriculum and no pupils are disapplied from any subject.
32. The small amount of time at the school's discretion is used to enrich the curriculum. Events such as the recent key stage productions, the '60's Day' and the celebration of the 'Chinese New Year',

led by the Nursery, provide good opportunities for the development of the pupils' personal and social education. Although the enrichment of the curriculum is of a high priority, visits of educational interest are limited due to cost. The school uses the community satisfactorily with for example Year 1 investigating buildings within the locality, a visit to a local church at Christmas time, and an investigation of the history of toys by a Key Stage 1 visit to Shugborough. Where parents are available to assist with these visits, their contributions are greatly valued by staff. Visitors to the school are encouraged with the fire-service to the Nursery, and regular visits from a local vicar and members of staff from a local secondary school. There are no links with local industry.

33. The provision for extra-curricular activities is barely adequate with choir, recorder and computer clubs meeting during the school lunchtime. During the inspection, there were no opportunities for after school sports' clubs nor competition between schools. Attempts to revive athletics and netball have faltered due to lack of pupil and parental support. Many parents have concerns about the limited extra-curricular opportunities available after school. The home school agreement recently introduced, includes an appropriate homework policy, enabling parents to be more actively involved in helping their children to learn.
34. There are strong links between the nursery and the reception classes to ensure a smooth transition as there is between Key Stage 2 and the local secondary school. Year 6 pupils make a visit to their new school where they follow an organised timetable. Staff from the secondary school make regular visits during achievement assemblies for example, all of this helps the pupils to prepare well for the next phase of education.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Occasionally, a brief time is given in assemblies for pupils to think deeply, often about a moral issue or personal development. An example of this was seen during a Key Stage 2 assembly when the acting headteacher asked pupils to reflect quietly on what they were good at, following an input from a visiting teacher from the local secondary school on 'working hard and being successful'. The most spiritual assemblies have a Christian theme and pupils have time to reflect on the messages they hear and in this way consider the views and beliefs of others. The feelings engendered in whole-school assemblies are of a caring and supportive nature with an increasing feel of togetherness. The end of half term achievement assemblies, praise and value pupils' efforts both in academic terms and in their contribution to school life. Within some lessons spiritual development is promoted well, giving pupils the opportunity to marvel at the world around them. In a Year 3/4 special needs class, linked to English work on 'Pandora's Box', pupils were filled with awe and wonder as they pondered on the contents of a box, describing a monster as 'a red eyed green vicious, dribbling monster!' In Year 1 pupils observed the stole worn by the vicar for Christenings and expressed delight at its beauty.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The principles of right and wrong are clearly taught through a well-understood code of conduct, which is consistently upheld by all staff. Adults provide good role models by positively promoting fairness, honesty and respect. The introduction of 'circle time' enables teachers to focus on developing positive attitudes, which are then extended into other aspects of school life. Teachers manage pupils well, having high expectations of their behaviour and providing appropriate sanctions and encouragement, through the assertive discipline developed in the school. Even when presented with very challenging behaviour the teachers deal with this calmly and sensitivity. Rules are displayed in classrooms and shared with the pupils regularly. Pupils understand their purpose and most respond to them positively. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves through charitable fund-raising.
37. Provision for pupils' social development is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their social skills and to develop good working relationships. From the youngest class, they are taught to respect each other and value the contributions made by others. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy hour promotes good collaborative work. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for helping younger pupils, for example at lunch times. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into classes. Pupils are expected to take responsibility within class, at lunch times and at the end of the day. The school has a programme of personal and social education, using 'circle time' to prepare pupils for citizenship. The recent introduction of a 'school's council' provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to show initiative and is a useful innovation in promoting pupils' personal development.

38. Cultural development in the school is satisfactory. The opportunity for pupils to learn about different cultures, faiths and traditions is successfully developed through religious education and music. There is limited evidence in the school of the work of famous artists or framed artwork valuing pupils' efforts. Limited progress has been made since the last inspection, to develop pupils' multicultural awareness. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions, enhanced by visits to the local area and museums such as the art museum, as well as visits further afield such as Llangollen to support geography studies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Since the last inspection procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have had enormous impact on raising the level of attendance to above the national average. The behaviour policy, including the initiative to promote assertive discipline, has been applied consistently by staff and has had a positive effect upon pupils' behaviour. The standard of behaviour in the school has improved, although some parents still have concerns about this. Good attention has been paid to using assessment to guide planning so that appropriate work is given to pupils to enable them to learn effectively. The school provides effective support for all its pupils, informed by the monitoring of their standards and progress, health and safety, behaviour and attendance. Most parents agree that they could approach the school if they had a concern or problem to discuss.
40. Procedures for ensuring the health, safety, care and protection of pupils are satisfactory. The school building is a secure welcoming environment. Personal support of pupils is satisfactory. There is a good ethos of developing the pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence, for example through circle times. There are strong links between the nursery and the reception classes to ensure a smooth transition as there is between Key Stage 2 and the local secondary school. Year 6 pupils make a visit to their new school where they follow an organised timetable. Staff from the secondary school make regular visits during achievement assemblies for example, all of this helps pupils prepare well for the next phase of education
41. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and are motivating pupils to attend school more regularly. The school is aware of the need to encourage some pupils to arrive for lessons more promptly. The behaviour policy, including the initiative to promote assertive discipline, has been applied consistently by staff and has had a positive effect upon pupils' behaviour. The system of praise and reward raises pupils' self esteem and makes them more confident to take good advantage of the educational opportunities available. The anti-bullying policy is used effectively against any bullying incidents, and pupils say they feel safe and secure as a result. Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place.
42. A governing body sub-committee is carefully monitoring the health and safety policy. A risk assessment has been undertaken and is being acted upon. Procedures for fire protection and first aid are appropriately in place. The governing body has been made aware of some safety issues that have given concern during this inspection.
43. Pupils in both key stages are given effective educational support and guidance. The procedure for monitoring and supporting the academic achievement of special educational needs pupils is very good. Annual reviews, as well as monthly reviews are carried out well. Procedures for supporting pupils for whom English is a second language are in place. These pupils are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Assessment systems operate efficiently and enable staff to maintain useful records that log individual achievement. The best practice in using assessment to track progress is in the reception class where a very detailed analysis ensures that work is geared to ensuring the best rates of progress for all.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school works soundly with parents and has encouraged support from a small but very effective loyal group of helpers who are greatly valued by staff. The level of involvement of parents in their children's education is not as effective as it might be and is still to be developed. Building on the partnership with parents and the wider community is a key issue for the school to address.

45. Those parents who help with the various aspects of school life give generously of their time and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Communication between school and home is satisfactory, although a high proportion of parents responding to the questionnaire that the inspection team sent home, disagree that close partnership with school exists. Parents are informed about school events through letters home and occasional newsletters. Parents receive a detailed annual report, which informs them about their child's academic progress. There are important omissions from the school prospectus and it does not fully meet requirements. Parent/teacher evenings are held each year and parents are invited to attend the termly achievement assemblies. These assemblies are usually well attended. The awards can be for activities that pupils take part in outside school, and parents can nominate their children in this instance. The Parents and Friends Association has raised money for the school in the past but is now inactive because of lack of support.
46. Home/school agreements have been approved by the governing body and have been issued to parents. Some homework is set, such as shared reading, spellings and some topic work. Homework is not always marked in a consistent manner, which parents find unsatisfactory. Parents are encouraged to contact the school about any concerns they may have about their children
47. The school considers the development of a good partnership between parents, support agencies, the child and teachers to be the most effective means of successfully helping all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, to achieve their potential. Parents are kept informed and involved at all stages in the gathering of information, giving help and support at home, in review procedures.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. A key issue in the previous inspection was to establish effective and efficient management structures and procedures for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and pupils' standards of attainment. The need for greater accountability and clear educational direction was identified as another key issue.
49. The issues raised in respect of management in the last inspection have begun to be addressed. A significant number of parents hold negative views about how well the school has been led and managed. In some respects their views harp back to past times. The instability of leadership, caused by the repeated absence of the former headteacher, has been a major concern. Although a new appointment has not yet been made, the acting headteacher is providing a good clear vision and direction for the school, helped by the supportive staff. Standards of financial planning have been improved since the previous inspection. The cost-effectiveness of decisions in the development plan is evaluated, and the plan presents a more strategic overview than previously.
50. Following the last inspection, the school aims were revised to address academic achievement. These aims are beginning to translate into practice in the school, through the formulation of policies, a shared vision and 'whole-school' approach to curriculum development.
51. The school has built on previous strengths, in particular the management of pupil behaviour and pupil support through an assertive discipline approach, which is clearly understood by all and is consistently followed by all staff.
52. A positive approach to leadership, where all contributions are valued, has helped to ensure that the issues previously raised have begun to be addressed more rigorously. The acting headteacher's experience and practice as a teacher in Key Stage 2, and regular involvement in the teaching, means that she is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school provides a caring and supportive environment and pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential by teachers, reflecting the aims and values now identified by the school. The acting headteacher's style of management is sensitive to the views of others, and enables all staff to contribute to developments. At the same time she recognises the need to provide firm direction when it is required. The senior management team meets weekly. Although recently formed it supports the school well, forming a good partnership with the acting headteacher. The main duties are, in consultation with the acting headteacher, to review and refine matters of change within the school. The role of the deputy headteacher in the management of the school is beginning to be

developed. Her recent appointment to the role has not yet enabled her leadership qualities to be fully utilised. Similarly the roles of some co-ordinators are not fully developed although there is a growing responsibility, with some monitoring of planning and work. The leadership has made a sound response to tackling weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Most policies and schemes of work have been revised, following the action plan and prioritising curricular areas. Planning is undertaken co-operatively through a whole staff approach, helped by the recently introduced guidance documents, which have enabled the school to move forward. The literacy strategy has been successfully implemented, followed more recently, by the numeracy strategy. Policy Areas yet to be considered include the foundation subjects of art, music and physical education. The acting headteacher, deputy headteacher and co-ordinators have had some opportunity to monitor teaching in the literacy and numeracy hours, but monitoring of standards and teaching is recognised by the acting headteacher as a main area for development. She has welcomed the support of the local authority advisers in monitoring teaching in the school. Analysis of test data has helped to inform planning and to set targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy, but again the process of evaluation is an area for further development, in order to relate information more closely to classroom practice, particularly for higher attaining pupils in order to raise standards. The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is doing an excellent job. She is very well qualified and experienced, keeping abreast of all recent developments. She provides very good advice and support for all staff. The Nurture room used for providing for pupils with special educational needs is colourful with very good learning displays and resources. Individual educational plans are well written and in place. A very effective new policy has just been completed which sets out very useful guidance for teachers and the co-ordinator has very good ideas for the future development of all pupils.

57. The requirements for collective worship are generally met, with a daily assembly for all pupils. There is a lack of attention to prayer or reflection in some assemblies and in such cases opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development are missed. There is a whole-school approach to school development planning listing the updated action plan as a basis. Priorities are clearly identified, including some costings and reflecting the views of those included. School development planning is clearly linked to improving standards. It is a more detailed plan than existed before but is limited in its longer-term view.
59. Governors have established appropriate committees to support the management of the school and undertake their role with commitment. They are at one with the senior management team and uphold the same-shared vision for the future direction of the school. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. The governing body, through its finance committee, receives regular financial information and monitors expenditure carefully. Educational developments are soundly supported through financial planning. Governors are involved in helping to set priorities and areas of the development plan are clearly linked to available financial support. Criteria for success are clearly identified, however there is a lack of outline for longer-term development and budget management. There are clear procedures for financial management and budget monitoring. Financial control is sound and the acting headteacher and Governing Body monitor spending carefully. The recommendations of the school's latest audit report have been satisfactorily attended to. Governors support staff well in their efforts to promote high standards but have yet to fully apply the principles of best value in their decision taking.
60. The school is appropriately staffed. All the staff are suitably qualified and have been trained for the primary stage. The current staff profiles reflect a mix of experience and service. The good use of the expertise of some staff, for example in supporting pupils with special educational needs and is a strength, which positively affects the attainment and progress of pupils. There is a good deployment of staff.
61. Two nursery nurses lead the nursery under the guidance of the early years co-ordinator. They provide the youngest children with a firm foundation for future learning. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and make a significant contribution to the children's learning. The non-teaching staff involve themselves fully in the life of the school, which is greatly appreciated by children and staff alike. The school administrator is very efficient and contributes well to the day-to-day running of the school. The caretaker is an excellent role model and is kind and considerate to all the children. All the teaching staff have been involved in staff development interviews and have relevant job descriptions that appropriately reflect their roles and responsibilities. Some staff have attended national strategy training in literacy and numeracy to good effect. However, arrangements

to meet more general professional needs through in-service training are yet to be developed. The accommodation is sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils. The classrooms are bright, have storage areas, and are in good decorative order. The Nurture room used for providing for pupils with special educational needs is colourful with very good learning displays and resources. This together with, the music room are valuable assets. The nursery unit provides a rich environment for very young children. The school has one large hard play area for Key Stage 2 and a smaller area for Key Stage 1. A fenced off hard surface area for nursery children is shared with reception during the afternoons and is successfully supporting their physical development.

65. The school has sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum in most areas. The class library books, with the exception of the under fives class library, together with the school library are in a poor state of repair. The quantity and range of the books is limited. A review of the resource areas would enable equipment to be more accessible, particularly in the computer storage area. Very good resources are provided for teaching pupils with special educational needs. The shortage of appropriate equipment for information and communication technology limits work in some areas of the school.
66. Taking into account the low starting point of the children when they first enter school, the amount of good or better quality teaching and the improving educational standards achieved by the pupils, the school is currently judged to provide satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, acting headteacher and staff should give immediate attention to:

1. Raise the standards, especially at Key Stage 2, in English, mathematics, science and religious education. (paragraph 3, 4, 6, 8, 81, 83, 88, 91, 96, 97)
 - The following key issue is the chief route to success:
2. Improve monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that all pupils make good and sustained progress
 - Set realistic targets for all pupils.
 - Involve co-ordinators more in this monitoring.
 - Evaluate teaching and learning against agreed criteria.
 - Involve all co-ordinators in classroom observation.
 - Governors should have an appropriate overview of these strategies.
 - Present the findings in a clear and usable form.
 - Evaluate the outcomes and identify the subsequent action.(paragraph 54, 55)
3. Extend the partnership with parents and the wider community
 - Increase the parents involvement in pupils' learning.
 - Review the quality and range of information provided for parents.(paragraph 44, 45)
4. Enhance pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the school
 - Develop links across the curriculum to give pupils the opportunity to reflect on things that are special to their learning.(paragraph 38, 57)
5. Make more worthwhile experiences to ensure progress is improved in art and physical education.
 - Involve of professional role models in pupils' school life.(paragraph 38, 103, 138, 140)

Minor issues for the school to address

Improve presentation of work and more diagnostic and evaluative marking. (paragraph 22)
Improve book provision. (paragraph 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11%	31%	25%	29%	2%	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	195
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.8	School data	1.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	22	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	11	12
	Girls	18	18	20
	Total	26	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (67)	81 (75)	86 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	12	9
	Girls	18	20	17
	Total	26	32	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (72)	87 (77)	70 (64)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	14	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	5	9
	Girls	8	3	6
	Total	16	8	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (36)	22 (32)	41 (40)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	7	6
	Girls	7	4	5
	Total	16	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (36)	30 (36)	30 (36)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	8
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	147
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	1	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9:1
Average class size	20.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	11

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.0:1

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	416,041
Total expenditure	448,537
Expenditure per pupil	1,766
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,130
Balance carried forward to next year	5,343

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

204

Number of questionnaires returned

102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	35	11	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	31	41	20	5	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	39	16	11	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	49	11	13	6
The teaching is good.	31	38	20	6	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	32	27	18	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	33	16	8	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	37	13	5	7
The school works closely with parents.	20	39	18	17	7
The school is well led and managed.	18	31	22	20	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	43	18	13	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	19	24	33	13

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The inspection team agrees that pupils enjoy coming to school and that the school expects pupils do their best. Inspectors judge that the acting headteacher is providing a good clear vision and direction for the school helped by the supportive deputy headteacher and staff. The high quality of teaching especially of literacy and numeracy, throughout the school is a strength. The good attendance is making a very positive contribution to the good progress most pupils are making. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in school. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and they take responsibility for various tasks in the school. The recent introduction of a school's council provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to show initiative. However, they are not given enough opportunities to organise their own work or select resources. The provision for extra-curricular activities is limited to lunchtime clubs as the school attempts to revive out of school activities have lacked pupil and parental support. The quality of information to parents could be better than it is. The school is working hard to improve links with parents and the community.

The home school agreement recently introduced includes an appropriate homework policy enabling parents to be more actively involved in helping their children to learn.

PART D:

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. Good attention has been given to improving provision for children under five since the time of the last inspection. The quality of education in the nursery provides children with a good start, which is continued in the reception classes. Early years provision is a strength of the school and leads to the children making good progress.
68. At the time of the inspection 21 children were in nursery classes on a part time basis. They transfer to the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Of the 32 children in the reception classes 16 were still under five. The children follow the Desirable Learning Outcomes, which the nursery staff, together with the teaching staff, plan thoroughly to meet the needs of the children.
69. When children enter the nursery the majority have skills, knowledge and understanding that are very low compared to most children. Some children have poor speech and listening skills. The standardised baseline assessment, taken at the start of the reception year, indicates that children's attainment is well below that in other Walsall schools. The school has identified areas from a very detailed analysis of their data and a working hard promoting listening skills, linked to letter sounds. Whilst the children make good progress, the standards when the children are five, are still well below those expected for their age.
70. The teaching of personal and social development is very good. Many children have only limited social skills, so the staff place appropriate emphasis on social development. Children learn to respond with courtesy and consideration to adult and their classmates, to take turns and share. For example, during circle time there was a discussion about sharing. Children took turn to contribute, expressing their thoughts and listened to others. This was building on prior learning from the reception class where the children hold a very precious bear in turn during circle time. Children in both nursery and reception classes have a clear understanding of acceptable social behaviour and all behave well inside the classroom and in the wider school community. They have an increasingly sensitive understanding of each other's needs. They show positive attitudes towards their learning, enjoy school and are happy and secure.
71. On entry to nursery many children have limited literacy skills and lack confidence in speaking to each other and to adults. The development of literacy skills is emphasised through good teaching and the children are taught to listen carefully, talk in a group and join in stories and rhymes. In the nursery they are beginning to understand that print conveys a meaning, and many are able to trace over their names. Writing areas, equipped with a range of pencils and pens, provide the children with an opportunity to develop their writing skills. Imaginative play areas in both nursery and reception classes, linked to topics and current reading books further support the children's ability to develop their vocabularies. For example an area equipped with real bottles of tomato ketchup, cornflakes and sugar, a big mixing bowl and spoons reinforce the story of "A Party For The Toys". The appropriate big book placed in the area brought the story alive for the children. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce the written word through captions on displays, labels around the classroom area and big books strategically positioned around the classroom. During literacy work in reception the use of a puppet, known as 'Crunchy Crow', was used to assist the children with their spellings. Good use of questioning supported this work effectively. A very good selection of books is available in the classroom, which the children access freely. Children take a reading book home each night, complete with an information leaflet encouraging parents to help their children's reading. A class library book is also taken home. By the time they are five speaking and listening skills are developing but are still below those expected for children of this age. Some children are able to recognise simple words, and letter formation is beginning to develop, amongst a small minority of children. Most pupils do not meet the standards expected of five year olds.
72. When they enter the nursery only a few children have any knowledge of number. Mathematical skills are promoted through a wide range of practical activities and teaching is good. Every opportunity is

taken to reinforce early counting skills. All children are involved in counting the number present at registration and working out absentees. They are developing their mathematical vocabulary, for example, in describing how large things are and when following directions. There are displays thought-out the area based on number, which have large number captions the children can touch and count. Children have shape mats to sit on during circle-time, which help them learn both shape names and colours. Work in the reception classes, develops nursery experience and early number work. Using one pence coins reinforced basic number skills as the children worked subtracting number from ten to establish what was left. By the age of five children have made good progress in all areas of mathematics but are still below the level expected for the age group.

73. Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world through the topics they study and as a result of good teaching. Work on sound involved the children in listening to a variety of sounds and musical instruments, identification of instruments, observational drawings of instruments from Africa and making their own instruments. The children made musical patterns, which they were able to follow using red cards for stop, and green cards for go. The topic work was further enhanced by a visit from three musicians, one of them being the caretaker. The children thoroughly enjoyed the live music. The caretaker explained to them the difference between string and wind instruments and gave examples of high and low sounds. The children were very attentive and enthusiastic about the work and were given the opportunity to join in with their class instruments. By inviting visitors into school the children's experience is enhanced and developed. A recent celebration of the Chinese New Year, with a very colourful dragon which is now on display in the school's entrance hall, extended the children's knowledge of other cultures appropriate to their level of understanding. The skilful support given by staff and students enable the children to grow in confidence and further their understanding. The children have a wide range of materials to use, which are carefully planned for. Sand, dough, paints and collage materials together with constructional equipment and Lego provide the children with a wide variety. They confidently use computers, and understand simple programs such as those designed to develop spatial awareness, which are used effectively to reinforce learning. Children's knowledge and understanding remain well below that of other children of the same age.
74. Nursery and reception children have the opportunity to draw, paint and model using a wide range of material and media, which they are taught to handle well. Standards are low when children enter the nursery, but good progress is made and skills are developing well when the children are five although standards are below average. The children have experience of both 2D and 3D modelling, which is well planned in line with the suggested curriculum.
75. Pupils' attainment in the physical area of learning is below the expectations for five year olds. An appropriate outdoor area is used by both nursery and reception children. The wide range of activities, which include bikes for one and two children, help to develop their control and assists in social interaction. They are taught well to co-operate and to take turns. Standards are lower than expected for children of this age and many need support from adults to play creatively. Good progress is made and in the nursery and reception classes and children are able to use space appropriately and control their movements well.
76. The quality of teaching overall is good. The nursery and reception staff are capably led by the co-ordinator who has a clear vision for the provision of the under fives. A mother and toddler group has been established and every opportunity is taken to involve the parents in the life of the school. Staff plan as a team, focusing on the skills that they want throughout the nursery and reception classes. Staff keep detailed assessments of what the children know and can do, and use this information very effectively to plan the next stages of learning. This good planning has a positive impact upon standards. Relationships throughout the nursery and reception classes are very good. The early years team have worked very hard to create an appropriate learning environment for the under fives.

ENGLISH

77. In the previous inspection, standards in English were low. A significant number of pupils did not reach the expected standards by the age of seven and the majority failed to reach the national averages by the age of eleven. Few pupils achieved the higher levels. In addition, the quality of

teaching varied from satisfactory or better to unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in the schemes of work were identified, as well as in planning and assessment, with superficial coverage of the programme of study, particularly in writing.

78. In 1999, there is evidence of some improvement in Key Stage 1 but weaknesses remain particularly in standards in upper Key Stage 2. There has been satisfactory progress overall in the provision for English. The successful implementation of the national literacy strategy is having a positive impact. Managers are aware of the need to boost standards in English. This is a key issue for the school to address.
79. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, overall standards were well below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and well below when compared to the standards achieved in similar schools. The pattern in 1998 was similar at this key stage.
80. Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 1999 showed standards in reading were well below the national average and below average when compared to similar schools. In writing, standards were below the national averages and also below when compared to similar schools.
81. Evidence from these tests show that few pupils achieve Level 3 in Key Stage 1 in reading and very few achieve the highest levels in writing in Key Stage 1 or 2. Trends over the last three years show a slight improvement in English. However, the small cohort size results in wide variations from year to year. The inspection findings bear out the test results in Key Stage 2. Evidence from a close scrutiny of pupils' work shows standards to be well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 inspection findings show that standards are below average but that pupils' level of attainment is improving. From a low starting base progress is good over time in Key Stage 1, but is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. The implementation of the literacy strategy is beginning to have a positive effect on standards particularly in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The good focus on teaching basic skills and emphasis on guided reading and shared text work is contributing effectively to improvements in spelling and fluency and expression in reading in particular. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given effective support, with work matched to their needs, helping them to make good progress against targets in their individual education plans. In some lessons more demands could be made of higher attaining pupils. This progress continues into Key Stage 2 but reaches a plateau by Year 5 with a fall in progress in Year 6, due largely to the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a significant number of whom have additional behavioural problems as well as learning difficulties. Other factors affecting progression at the upper end of Key Stage 2 are linked to several staff changes, mobility changes in the year group over time, and a lack of clear direction for the school in the recent past resulting in low expectation and underachievement.
82. The successful implementation of the literacy hour focuses clearly on the shared text and word work, strengthening pupils' understanding of spelling strings and root words, and increasing their knowledge and understanding of punctuation. Learning is good and, as a result, reading with meaning and expression is improving. This is not sufficiently built upon in Key Stage 2, particularly with the oldest pupils, and learning is unsatisfactory when this happens. For instance, the range of authors and texts for reading is limited and there is insufficient guidance for pupils when selecting reading books. A lack of monitoring of reading diaries results in poorly maintained records with little contribution from teacher or parent to pupils' diaries, undervaluing their efforts. Speaking and listening remains below average at both key stages. By the age of seven, pupils' range of vocabulary remains limited with few pupils using adventurous or imaginative vocabulary. Standards in speaking and listening are below average at the end of Key Stage 2 with a significant minority having poor listening skills, and being unable to express themselves clearly and confidently. Although the literacy hour provides opportunities for pupils to respond to questions, there are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to engage in debate and argument to discuss their work or to develop speaking skills through drama and role-play.
83. Writing at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. Pupils are beginning to write for a wider audience but this is at an early stage of development, with the focus mainly on retelling stories, letter writing and news. They are beginning to be aware of the drafting process. Writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is well below average. Pupils do not write for a wide enough range of purposes. There is limited evidence of extended writing in English or across other areas of the curriculum. Drafting skills are not systematically developed through Key Stage 2. There are weaknesses in spelling and

punctuation for a significant majority. Handwriting and presentation skills are unsatisfactory in both key stages. Cursive writing is introduced too late, with a lack of specific teaching to ensure correct formation and joins. By the end of Key Stage 2, a high proportion of pupils do not write in a neat cursive style and a significant number lack pride in their work. Choice of vocabulary in writing is limited to less adventurous words.

84. Most pupils respond positively to English and a good number particularly enjoy the literacy hour. Many are eager to contribute ideas although a significant majority find it difficult to express their thoughts clearly. Although most pupils behave in a satisfactory manner a significant minority, of boys in Year 6, demonstrate unsatisfactory, challenging behaviour, which often affects the progress made in lessons. Recent curriculum tests show that overall the boys do not always make the same progress as the girls, especially in writing. With few exceptions, the quality of relationships is good in English lessons and the structure of literacy lessons contributes effectively to pupils' personal development, requiring them to work collaboratively and independently at times.
85. Throughout the school the teaching has improved since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The quality of learning follows a similar pattern. However, looking at past work in Key Stage 2 the quality of learning is unsatisfactory. At both key stages good teaching was observed with the best teaching demonstrating very good subject knowledge, detailed planning with clearly identified learning objectives and high expectations. The use of time targets in some classes ensures the lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Pupils are well managed and well motivated by interesting tasks. The recent introduction of target setting, whilst in its early stage of development, focuses clearly on where pupils need to improve, and, in the best teaching, attention is drawn to the personal target set. This is an aspect for further improvement in order to raise standards in English. An example of very good teaching was seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson where the teacher began by sharing the learning objectives with pupils. Together they looked at a child's letter from the wolf to Red Riding Hood's mother, with the teacher using good questioning skills to test pupils' understanding of the letter. The brisk pace to the lesson was effective in taking learning forward. The teacher insisted on high standards of behaviour and quality input from pupils. Pupils' learning was good and they were able to evaluate and improve a piece of writing with good gains in understanding. The use of a puppet by the teacher served as a stimulus to increase their work rate. She made the learning fun. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy stories, read simple texts in their reading book and shared text work, and are beginning to develop a wider range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. The good lessons end with a skilful drawing together of the main teaching points, to check learning and understanding.
86. The English curriculum is very well managed by the subject co-ordinator. Recent introductions in target setting and monitoring are the important areas for further development in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and priorities for improvement. There is now a commitment among teachers to raising standards with a good working ethos in most lessons. There are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work, with the best marking identifying how the child can improve. Too often marking is merely ticks, and on occasions work in some classes is unmarked. This is unsatisfactory.
87. Resources make an effective contribution to the success of the literacy strategy. Book provision in the library and class libraries is in need of improvement either outdated and worn books in classrooms and a shortage of quality fiction and non-fiction books, particularly to extend higher attaining pupils.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection. At Key Stage 1 standards have improved so that by the end of the key stage standards are at least in line with national averages in each attainment target, whereas during the last inspection standards were below for the majority of pupils. Although standards in mathematics are still below the national average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, there is evidence that standards have been maintained since the last inspection when one in four pupils reached average standards. The end of key stage description does not highlight the significant gains in skills, knowledge, and understanding in Year 5 and particularly in Years 3 and 4. These gains have been influenced by the introduction of the numeracy strategy; teaching methods which match the needs of individuals; the setting of targets

which are shared with pupils and parents; and the use of assessment information which plans for the next stages of learning.

89. National testing in 1999 indicates that by the end of Key Stage 1, results were above the national averages for pupils at the age of seven, and well above when compared with pupils from similar schools. When looking at improvement over the last four years pupils at the age of seven are above the national trend. Results in 1999 for pupils at the end of the Key Stage 2, were very low when compared with the national average and with similar schools. For the period 1996–1999, results indicate a gradual decline in standards below the national trend. Inspection evidence suggests that teachers have an excellent opportunity to reverse this trend in the next few years.
90. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are at least satisfactory and good in the acquisition of number skills. Although there is still an emphasis upon number skills, there is evidence that that pupils' knowledge and understanding of space, shape and measures has been given greater emphasis with pupils naming two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects and understanding simple fractions such as quarters and halves. Most pupils, after having a sound understanding of number to 10 in the reception classes, have a sound knowledge of number to 20. They can add $8 + 7$, using their knowledge of number bonds by adding 10 to 7 and then subtracting 2. Knowledge of number above 20 is evident, with pupils of average attainment being aware of the strategies for adding on 19 and 21 to two digit numbers. Pupils are given frequent and regular opportunities to use and apply their gains in skills and knowledge. They explain what they are doing and are developing strategies for solving problems.
91. During the inspection standards were found to be below the national average by the end of Key Stage 2, with only the higher attaining pupils achieving at the required level. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has provided greater balance to the curriculum with a former emphasis on number skills being extended to include space, shapes and measures, and data handling. During the week pupils showed good progress understanding symmetry and regular shapes by explaining the effects of reflection with two lines of symmetry at right angles, before moving on to translation. This activity was well supported by using CD-ROM and the program 'Colour Magic'. By the end of the key stage most pupils understand place value of number to 1000, investigate decimals to two places in addition and subtraction; are introduced to fractions including percentages; use negative and positive numbers; and measure and construct angles. They interpret data collected from surveys such as eye colour and favourite foods recorded as pie charts and column graphs. Higher attaining pupils multiply three digits by two digits to two decimal places, calculate the area of triangles and work with mixed numbers and comparison of fractions.
92. Overall attitudes to learning are good with some very good attitudes in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are eager to contribute to class discussions by answering questions. They apply themselves well in group and class activities and are developing the responsibility of working independently when teachers focus on other groups, as in Year 2 where pupils worked in pairs to add numbers to 20. They enjoy their mathematics, relate well to the teacher and worked collaboratively to solve problems. At the end of Key Stage 2 their level of enjoyment and interest was good with behaviour satisfactory. The high rate of absence did not lend itself to regular gains in knowledge and understanding.
93. Throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2, pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, have very good attitudes to learning and good self-esteem. They make good progress when after investigating the properties of simple shapes such as circles and triangles they moved on to more complex shapes such as pentagons and hexagons. Activities are challenging and pupils respond positively. Teaching throughout the school is good, and no ineffective teaching was observed. There is some very good teaching in both key stages with some excellent practice in the younger classes of Key Stage 2. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Staff provide effective role models for their pupils, and their good subject knowledge coupled with enthusiasm is having a significant impact on the quality of learning. Pupils gain in confidence when they know that their contributions are valued. Lesson plans include activities for all levels of ability and have clear learning objectives. The detailed planning leads to good progression from year to year. Number bonds to 10 in Year 1 are increased to 20 and above in Year 2, extended to hundreds in Year 3 and eventually to thousands and tens of thousands by the end of the key stage. Pupils in Year 3 showed good understanding when explaining the skills needed to add three sets of 2 digit numbers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 explore the properties of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes and calculate perimeters, before investigating right angles, parallel and perpendicular lines in Year 5.

By the end of the key stage, time is used effectively, and the good pace observed in most lessons motivates pupils and stimulates their interest levels. Occasionally, changes in activities are too frequent and this does not allow the higher attainers to carry out extended investigations. Support staff, including parents are used effectively. Questioning is very good with teachers constantly checking for gains in what pupils know, understand and can do. They later record this information before using it to plan for the next stages of teaching and learning. They know their pupils well and appropriate termly targets are set to move pupils on. These targets are shared with both pupils and parents, and when achieved are revised and extended.

94. Procedures for assessment in mathematics are good. Analysis of national results, and optional testing at the age of eight, nine and ten, has taken place and weaknesses have been targeted. Results are recorded and then information is shared with parents at the end of each year. However, marking is not always used to best effect. Although most work is marked and comments are included to praise pupils, comments rarely indicate weaknesses and how improvements can be made. Generally teachers have high expectations of their classes, although this is not reflected in pupils' books. Generally the appearance of work is unsatisfactory and there is need for consistent strategies to impress upon pupils that the quality of presentation is important.
95. Leadership for mathematics is good, there is a clear vision for the subject, and the numeracy strategy has been well implemented. Co-ordinators check planning every half term and there has been some monitoring of teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory but information and communication technology is underused to support the subject, mainly due to the lack of hardware and software. Weaknesses identified in data need to be analysed so that more specific short-term targets are identified for different ability groups which are constantly being reinforced. Teaching methods need to be evaluated so that the most effective use of time is made to raise standards. The strategy of working higher attaining pupils with older pupils, and withdrawing targeted groups for more intensive activities is effective.

SCIENCE

96. National testing in 1999 indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2 the number of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was very low in comparison with the national average and standards were in the lowest five per cent of schools. No pupils reached Level 5. When looking over the period 1996 – 1999 pupils' performance was well below the national average. Results based on teacher assessments were below the national average at Key Stage 1.
97. Inspection evidence suggests that teachers have a very good opportunity to reverse this trend in the next few years. Standards in science have improved significantly since the last inspection at Key Stage 1. They have improved slightly at Key Stage 2. They are much improved over previous years because of changes in the curriculum. At Key Stage 1 standards have improved so that by the end of the key stage they are in line with the national average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below national expectations. The end of key stage does not highlight the significant gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in Years 3, 4 and 5. These gains have been influenced by the implementation of the policy and schemes of work. Teaching methods match the needs of individuals and the use of assessment plans the next stage of learning effectively.
98. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations. The difference between the results of teacher assessments and national tests and inspection evidence is due to the good standards the pupils reach in lessons, particularly in investigating science. Pupils can recognise different materials and distinguish between manufactured and natural materials. They compare materials for suitability of purpose. They can distinguish between living and non-living things and have a good understanding of the senses. They construct a simple electrical circuit and make a buzzer for a quiz. They construct experiments with a regard for 'fair' testing and can successfully name the leaf, root and flower. When growing seeds they can talk about the conditions for growth.
99. At Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a sound knowledge of most aspects of science. They are able to construct electrical circuits and understand the workings of cells, switches, bulbs and circuits. They understand local habitats and have identified local food chains. They can conduct a 'fair' test and are able to dissect and correctly label a selection of flowers. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills with increasing confidence. They write accounts of their work and findings and record their results on graphs and charts.

100. Pupils have a positive attitude towards science and are willing to put forward their thoughts and ideas. They are keen, enthusiastic, show sustained interest and listen carefully. Year 2, are very keen to explain what makes a good circuit and co-operate well as they assemble the buzzers.
101. Throughout the school the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection in 1996. It was found to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the time of the current inspection it was good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Learning follows a similar pattern. Teachers are secure in their understanding of science and very good use is made of the correct technical vocabulary such as switch, light, buzzer and circuit. In a Year 2 lesson on circuits the pupils' learning was very successful. They were presented with a suitable challenge, 'You are to make a buzzer for use in a quiz'. They were able to explain what makes a good circuit, for example, "If you join the crocodile clip to the metal it works", said one pupil to another. They also understand what happens when the circuit is broken. Planning is satisfactory and carefully matched to the needs of the higher attaining pupils. There is a good balance between discussion and practical activities and teachers are questions well to extend pupils' thinking. In the lessons seen pupils are well managed and resources are prepared carefully beforehand. Pupils' work is assessed well and this is used to inform future planning.
102. The co-ordinator provides clear leadership for this area and a clear and comprehensive policy and scheme of work are in place. The quality and use of assessment to raise standards is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

ART

103. At the last inspection, standards in drawing and painting were in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage, but other aspects of pupils' art such as textiles and three-dimensional work, were underdeveloped. Standards in drawing and painting have been maintained. There has been some progression in developing skills using clay but other aspects of art remain underdeveloped. There is limited evidence of improvement in the range and quality of experiences offered to pupils, including the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists and their work. Overall, pupils are provided with worthwhile experiences in art.
104. Within the constraints of the curriculum, pupils including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils experiment with different materials in their collage work. They explored texture, for instance as they completed collage bears linked to the story 'Sebastian's Trumpet'. They experiment with colour, shape, texture and pattern in their large frieze work of nursery rhymes and use a variety of media to create repeat patterns. They use clay to make hedgehogs with some success. In Year 1 pupils use polystyrene blocks to create their own prints. However, the same task was also undertaken in Year 2, resulting in a lack of skill progression in this technique. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on the pattern and design skills acquired in Key Stage 1 creating stained glass windows and patterns based on circles. In Year 5 the pupils experiment with paint effects to create textures observed in stones and rocks. They use their sketchbooks well, mixing shades of colour, before applying their chosen effect onto sculptures they have produced. Pupils in Year 6 use observational skills to reproduce pattern, designing wallpaper and fabric. Sketchbooks are used effectively by many pupils to explore techniques before transferring the design to fabric. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory acquisition of skills in observational drawing and painting techniques, with sound learning taking place. There is evidence of improvement in the use of sketchbooks although this is not consistent across the key stage. Observational drawing skills show good progress, with the pupils using charcoal and pencil effectively. Pupils' learning is secure as they demonstrate an increasing ability to reproduce what they see, accurately. Although there is some awareness of the work of famous artists understanding of techniques used is limited as are the opportunities to practise these techniques in the artists' style. Pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of art from different cultures.
105. In both key stages most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy art and their enthusiasm is apparent in lessons. They do not always take sufficient pride or care in their work, for example clay tiles were handled carelessly resulting in damaged work. Most pupils work together co-operatively, share resources and ideas. In all lessons pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and make satisfactory progress.

106. Teaching of art is satisfactory at both key stages, with some teachers demonstrating good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. This results in well-motivated pupils working with sustained concentration such as in a Year 5 lesson observed. These pupils were confident in their ability to mix colour, select resources and observe carefully. They worked hard because the tasks were interesting and the teacher had prepared the lesson thoroughly. Teachers manage pupils well. The range of materials and stimuli is not always sufficient to excite pupils' curiosity and imagination. This is particularly so where pupils are required to repeat a task covered in a previous year. In the better lessons the teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, expectations are high and there is attention to specific skills and techniques. Lessons are generally well organised but the pace of some lessons is too slow. This is particularly the case where the behaviour of a significant minority of older boys impedes the progress of the lesson.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. There have been improvements in design and technology since the last inspection, and appropriate standards in Key Stage 1 have now been extended into Key Stage 2, with satisfactory designing now being carried forward to the making stage.
108. The standards in design and technology are as expected nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and 11, including those with special educational needs, and English as a second language. Learning is satisfactory, as is progress. Although no lessons were observed in either key stage, a judgement on standards by the end of each key stage has been reached by talking to pupils and the subject co-ordinator, observing planning, viewing displays, and after scrutinising pupils' work.
109. Evidence of long term planning, supported by photographs, indicates that the pupils experience a range of skills, techniques and materials, which combine designing and making. These are then linked to other areas of the curriculum making learning relevant for the pupils. Pupils in the reception classes have made robots that have been assembled using a variety of joining techniques such as string, adhesives and tapes. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have designed simple buggies in their study of the environment, whereas in Key Stage 2, the study of structures in science is enhanced by investigating 'bridges'.
110. No teaching was observed during the period of the inspection. Detailed termly planning indicates building on previous skills. Hand puppets made in Year 2 are extended to rod puppets in Year 5, and then used to promote speaking and listening skills. When designing money containers, Year 4 pupils evaluate the choice of materials for a purse or wallet before choosing a material that is strong enough for the purpose. They measure accurately in the design before making. In discussion with pupils they described how they had made their money containers and indicated that they had enjoyed their activities.
111. Although a scheme of work is not planned until the next stage of the school development plan new guidance is based on recently published national curriculum guidelines. The strategy to concentrate teaching and learning into blocks of three weeks each term gives only satisfactory time for coverage of the necessary programmes of study. The co-ordinator gives good leadership, monitors termly planning, orders a satisfactory range of resources, and has a clear overview of the subject. She has not had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate standards in teaching and learning across the school and this limits her impact on raising standards.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Standards, which have been maintained since the previous inspection, are in line with what is expected nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Although no lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, a judgement on standards has been made after talking to pupils and the subject co-ordinator, observing detailed annual and termly planning, viewing displays and scrutinising pupils' work.
113. Pupils in Year 1 undertake fieldwork in the immediate locality by observing buildings and local amenities using correct terminology such as 'church, library, play area, and old people's home'. Their learning is good. Then, with assistance, they locate these features on sketch maps. By the end

of Key Stage 1 pupils have developed their vocabulary and mapping skills to compare and contrast the features of Bentley with the imaginary island of Struay. They discuss leisure facilities, landscape differences such as the sea and mountains and roads and transport, contrasting with the local motorway links. They also compare the lifestyles of the people living in the contrasting areas. The pupils are proud of Barnaby Bear and his travels, which they track on maps of the British Isles and the World. All of this means that learning is effective, and pupils can use and apply their skills effectively.

114. In Year 3 pupils know the oceans and continents and have located cities on maps of the British Isles. They discuss local environmental issues in Year 5, including ways in which they can improve safety in the immediate locality by introducing traffic calming. Settlement is extended in Year 4 by comparing and contrasting village and town development between Walsall and the Caribbean Island of St Lucia. Themes such as the environment weather, water and rivers, and mountains, are studied in blocks of time to ensure adequate coverage of the national requirements.
115. In Key Stage 1, behaviour is good both in the classroom and when exploring the immediate environment in Year 1. In a scrutiny of pupil's work in Key Stage 2, a high proportion of poorly presented work, often unfinished by average and below average pupils does not reflect positively the overall quality in teaching nor the good attitudes or values reflected elsewhere. Opportunities are missed to extend writing.
116. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge with detailed lesson planning which includes clear objectives for pupils of differing abilities. Very good questioning regularly checks what pupils know, understand and can do as in the Year 2 lesson where the pupils demonstrated good recall of the features of Struay before designing a poster to advertise its attractive qualities. In this instance learning was good. A variety of teaching strategies motivates pupils and maintains a good pace to the lesson. Of note is the way targets are shared with pupils and the way their contributions are valued and encouraged. In a Year 2 lesson, the word 'explore' was volunteered and then used by others to explore the benefits of the Isle of Struay.
117. Curriculum enrichment has been limited by a lack of residential experience and a reduction in visits due to cost, although the locality is used well. Parent and voluntary helpers in the study of the local community in Year 1 provided invaluable experiences for these pupils as when they wondered as a large flock of starlings took off when disturbed. This partnership is much appreciated and valued by the school. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and monitors termly planning and handles the budget for resources, which are adequate. The co-ordinator is not able to contribute to the raising of standards by monitoring teaching and learning. Information technology is underused mainly because of the limited hardware and software resources. Whilst planning for a new scheme of work, the staff have produced detailed termly planning which includes clear learning objectives, skills to be rehearsed, how to assess what pupils know, understand and can do. They then use this information to plan for the next stages of learning and to report to parents. This aids progress all round.

HISTORY

118. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and it was only possible to see two lessons in Key Stage 2. Evidence to judge teaching and learning in history was collected from lessons, teachers' plans, discussions with teachers and pupils, and by looking at work in books and on display. This evidence shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 and the lower classes in Key Stage 2 make good strides in learning history and achievement is in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, achievement is below what is expected of pupils of this age.
119. Key Stage 1 pupils are able to place events in order and explain some differences and similarities between the toys they own and the toys children had over a hundred years ago. Year 3 pupils know about the discovery of Sutton Hoo and are beginning to understand what life was like in Anglo Saxon times. Year 4 pupils enjoyed the work on Ancient Egypt and can describe in great detail the way a body was mummified after death and the death mask of King Tutankhamun. These pupils know Henry VIII had six wives and can give reasons for this. Year 5 pupils can talk about some of the effects of World War II and are aware of what life was like for the evacuees. In all these activities the pupils make good gains in their learning and understanding.

120. Year 6 pupils remember the sixties day they celebrated in school but they do not have a good sense of chronology and are not able to recall many historical facts. Since the previous inspection the school is using the new national guidance, and the knowledge, understanding and historical skills developed in these units is having a significant impact on learning. Achievement has improved overall but the writing and reading skills still hinder progress towards the end of Key Stage 2. Teaching no longer relies on a series of worksheets and more pupils are able to use a range of techniques and resources to enquire for themselves. Assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills is still not refined.
121. Teaching seen is very good, and is matched by the quality of learning. The good use of story telling helps teachers deal with the facts sensitively and the difficult issues raised in the study of the Tudors and keeps the pupils motivated and interested. It gives the opportunity to discuss the views of people and helps pupils to try to see the other point of view. Teachers build on the pupils' previous knowledge of the work of an archaeologist to explain why Howard Carter is so famous. This helps pupils to understand how he must have felt when he opened the tomb and found it crammed with possessions of the dead king. The use of good group activities, matching the tasks to the abilities of the pupils, helps all pupils to learn. A wide range of sources and a visit to Shugborough help the pupils become little historians. Good use is made of the Internet to find information about the people in Tudor times.
122. The co-ordinator is very supportive of colleagues. She has a good policy and scheme of work. She looks after the very good resources stored in her room and in the resource area.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Attainment in information technology is in line with what is expected for pupils nationally by the end of both key stages, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
124. By the age of seven pupils are developing satisfactory skills and they make sound progress in their learning. They have explored text and can locate the size of scripts and fonts on the tool bar. They enter brief sentences and successfully correct mistakes. They have developed satisfactory keyboard and mouse skills and understand commands such as shift, spacebar, return and backspace. Their communication skills with text are satisfactory. These skills are used across the curriculum. By Year 2 they are able to highlight and amend text about 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.
125. In Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with what is expected for pupils at this age. By the end of the key stage, pupils are confident using keyboard and mouse skills. By Year 5 they are able to work independently and complete a comprehensive exercise based on the story of Cinderella. They use computers to draft and re-draft their writing, change the size and type of font, add a border, replace and construct graphs. They are confident in using the CDRom to search information sources and to select and print relevant information. Computers are used effectively to enhance work in other areas of the curriculum such as English, mathematics, history and science. Learning is sound, and all pupils are familiar with loading and saving their work, while older pupils are able to switch successfully between programs. The pupils' are able to construct databases and collect, analyse and evaluate data in science.
126. Pupils are keen to improve their skills. They enjoy their work, are attentive to instructions and apply themselves well. They are willing to share equipment and co-operate well when working in pairs. This was evident where two Year 5 pupils showed an activity on adjectives during the literacy hour.
127. Since the last inspection information technology has become a core subject and good use has been made of the policy and scheme of work. Teachers have planned and developed the skills and understanding necessary to provide pupils with appropriate and challenging work. Standards of attainment and the quality of learning have improved across the school as a result of consistent and effective teaching methods.
128. There was one opportunity to observe direct teaching by a class teacher. However regular opportunities are provided for groups of pupils to use the computers in the classroom. Pupils are given good support and this is making a significant impact on the quality of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Good questioning is used to ascertain pupils' knowledge and understanding for example, 'Open up your

own files and amend and save your work'. Planning is satisfactory with a balance between communicating, investigating, data handling and control.

129. Progress is satisfactory across the key stages for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Lower attainers achieve well in literacy and numeracy lessons and pupils are encouraged to draft direct to screen.
130. The co-ordinator provides very clear direction. Her subject knowledge is very good and she supports colleagues well by monitoring planning and pupils' learning. Opportunities for her to monitor teaching are more limited and this hinders the impact she can have on teaching and standards.

MUSIC

131. The previous inspection report identified that there was a need for teachers to plan and develop the skills and understanding necessary to provide pupils with appropriate and challenging work. This has been addressed successfully, resulting in an improvement in standards, teaching and learning.
132. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils use percussion instruments with satisfactory levels of competence for their ages, and their learning is progressing soundly. Younger pupils in reception are beginning to clap a simple rhythm and sing 'Humpty Dumpty' rhythmically. Percussion instruments are used to accompany singing and pupils know the names of most percussion instruments. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing effectively, with sound expression and accurate rhythm. They enjoy singing 'Hold my Mule' and respond well to the pictures including fast and slow movement. Links are made with the Chinese New Year story about the race between the animals. Pupils co-operate well and move with the upper body to the slow pace of the music 'Ases Death'. Pupils in Year 2 sing tunefully and play a steady beat on a percussion instrument to 'Giddy Up Little Horses'. In all these activities the pupils' skills are extended and they always try hard to do their best.
133. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils sing tunefully in unison and in rounds. They understand the meaning of crotchets and minims and clap accurately to the tune. They demonstrate satisfactory breath control as they sing 'Make me a Channel of Your Peace' and 'We are climbing Jesus' Ladder'. Pupils learn from an early age to listen appreciatively to music from a variety of traditions.
134. Throughout both key stages all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in developing skills in listening, appraising, composing and performing. Learning is sound.
135. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy music lessons and co-operate sensibly in hymn practice. Pupils throughout the school enjoy playing percussion instruments. They are well behaved and work hard to improve their performance.
136. The quality of teaching music is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Planning is good with clear objectives and very good use made of resources. A clear scheme of work enhances teachers' planning and teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance. Pupils perform in concerts and production such as 'New Millennium Heroes' and 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'. There is effective use of assessment to inform planning. The co-ordinator provides very good clear leadership for this area of the curriculum and this has a positive impact on standards and the quality of learning all round.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Overall standards of attainment are below that expected in a primary school. However, only two lessons were seen at the time of the inspection, one at each key stage.
138. Planning is in place and follows a published scheme of work. It is monitored by the co-ordinator regularly. However, some staff are not confident in the subject or in meeting the objectives for their lessons and therefore pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

139. In Key Stage 1 there was a clear structure to the lesson. The objective was explained and understood by the children. The teacher was secure in her knowledge and what she wanted to achieve. The lesson had a good pace and the children were on task throughout. Reference was made to the effect the warm up had on the body and safety issues were raised when children were trying to use inappropriate parts of the body for balance. At Key Stage 2 however, whilst work was well planned there was insufficient pace to the lesson. Too much time was spent explaining the work, instructions were not always clear or understood by the children. Children were insufficiently challenged and there were no references to the impact of exercise on the body. In one lesson the inactivity of the children led to some inappropriate behaviour.
140. The children have a limited time for physical education and do not use the outdoor area during the autumn and spring terms. Some children lack interest in the subject and do not bring appropriate clothing in order to be excused, particularly in Key Stage 2. There are no sports teams and no involvement in sports with other schools. A male teacher from the local comprehensive school has been involved in this subject area recently. There is a lack of interest in physical education particularly with the upper Key Stage 2 pupils.
141. Since the last inspection there has been little development in this subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Judgements on religious education are based on the observations of a small number of lessons, the scrutiny of a limited amount of pupils' work, and discussion with the coordinator. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected locally, but attainment is below that expected at the end of Key Stage 2.
143. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can talk about and understand the meaning of Christmas, Baptism and Diwali. In Year 3, pupils know the significance of Mecca to Muslims and know the reasons behind the clothes Muslim men and women wear.
144. Year 4 pupils can recall a number of the Bible stories they have heard in class and in assembly. Year 5 pupils can identify the similarities and differences between a Christian marriage and a Sikh wedding and know that a Sikh naming ceremony takes place in a gurdwara or at home. In Year 6, pupils are able to discuss in groups the things that humans have done for the good of the world and how people have harmed it. They use God, Jesus and Amen in the prayers they write.
145. Since the previous report attainment has improved. Pupils' knowledge of the Christian religion is good but that of different faiths is still not fully understood towards the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning is in line with the agreed syllabus, and expectations are high. Effective use is now made of information books and religious stories however; resources are used but not as effectively as they might be. Pupils' response to religious education has greatly improved in most classes. Older pupils are not as attentive and they do not settle well to writing tasks, they much prefer to talk, question and answer.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at the end of both key stages. It ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teachers promote an awareness of Christ and other world faiths successfully through story and this makes the pupils' learning meaningful. The teaching of Christianity and the facts of other religions is satisfactory, however, teachers are not secure with the purposes and symbolism of other faiths. Effective teaching strategies are used to help the understanding of what it was like on earth before people and animals, and to help pupils record their ideas of how the world has changed since this period. The use of art work, story, pictures, poems and writing sentences give a clear sequence of events and understanding to the seven days of creation, for instance one child wrote, "On day seven he had a lovely rest." At both key stages artefacts, pictures and books are used well to make learning effective. Pupils learn about religious objects and dress worn, for example the five Ks for Sikhs, a cassock, surplice and stole for Christians. This helps them to extend their knowledge about religious traditions. Teachers build on the pupils' previous knowledge of holy books when introducing the Sikh holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, and this helps their learning. There is little evidence of learning by enhancing pupils' spiritual development through exploring and responding to the fundamental questions of life.
147. The co-ordinator has taken over the role fairly recently as well as that of acting headteacher, and she has had to set priorities. Little development or in-service training for staff has taken place in religious education since the previous inspection. The newly written scheme of work meets the requirements

of the locally agreed syllabus and there is a satisfactory overview of the areas of study. The coordinator is aware of the difficulties staff have in teaching other faiths, and religious education is included on the development plan for the summer term. She is an excellent role model, works well with the staff and aware of the importance of values, beliefs and respect for others, in, as well as out of school.