

INSPECTION REPORT

ALUMWELL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall West

Unique reference number: 104142

Headteacher: Mr Bentley

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Dawson
11608

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 7th April 2000

Inspection number: 190121

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Primley Avenue Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS2 9UP
Telephone number:	01922 721391
Fax number:	01922 721371
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Hadley
Date of previous inspection:	28 th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anna Dawson	Registered inspector	Art.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
David Russell	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
Alan Hardwicke	Team inspector	Information technology; Science; music.	How well are pupils taught?
Anne Brangan	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education, physical education.	
Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs; equal opportunities; design and technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Michael Theobalds	Team inspector	English as an additional language; English; history; geography.	

The inspection contractor was:

Chase Russell Limited
85 Shores Green Drive
Wincham
Northwich
Cheshire CW9 6EJ

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The Registrar
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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a larger than average sized junior school for boys and girls aged 7-11. It draws most of its pupils from the local council-owned properties that surround the school. There is little industry in the area and unemployment is high. Almost all the pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school. There are 359 pupils on roll, 182 girls and 177 boys. There are 60 pupils, 17 per cent of pupils, on the register for special educational needs. This is below the national average of 20 per cent. Eleven pupils have statements of special educational need. This is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 33 per cent. This is above average. The national average is 19 per cent. There are 124 pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and 119 pupils who have English as an additional language. Overall the attainment on entry is just below that found nationally. The characteristics are similar to those previously reported in 1996.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school because the quality of teaching is good overall, the school is well led and managed and there is determination to raise standards and to meet pupils' needs. Pupils consequently make good progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. Compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, the pupils in this school achieve above average standards in mathematics and across the board, their achievements compare favourably with similar schools, apart from information and communication technology. This is an exception. Here the standards are well below average because the subject is underdeveloped. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics, compared to all schools and schools of a similar type, by the time they are 11 years of age.
- The quality of teaching is good and members of staff work well together to improve their work. They have effectively implemented the national numeracy and literacy strategies
- Most pupils enjoy school and are interested in their lessons. They make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and very good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.
- The school is well led and managed and there are good relationships between the pupils and the staff.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and strong community links.
- The school takes care to support all groups of children and has good procedures in place for monitoring personal and academic progress.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are well below average.
- The planning, assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and the use made of assessments to identify where improvements can be made, are insufficiently developed in geography, history, art, design and technology.
- There is insufficient depth and breadth in the curriculum subjects when art, design and technology, history and geography are taught as topics.
- The dining room is overcrowded at lunchtime. This is a risk to pupils' safety; for instance in an emergency.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in 1996, the school has made good improvement overall. Standards in English and mathematics have improved significantly. There has been improvement in the provision of religious education and physical education. There is now a policy and good provision for pupils' personal development. The quality of teaching has improved and the staff are effectively implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. However, information and communication technology has deteriorated. The school is in a sound position to move forward positively.

STANDARDS

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

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

The inspection finds an improvement in English, mathematics and science. Pupils do well to achieve average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. The school has set challenging targets for further improvement. Over the past 3 years the improvement in the school test results has kept pace with the national trend, and has exceeded the national trend this year, especially in English and mathematics. In other subjects, art, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education standards are average. In information and communication technology standards are well below average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their set targets. Those pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress. A significant number of pupils have English as an additional language or special educational needs which has an adverse effect on the overall average attainment of the class and causes fluctuations in results between year groups. The girls generally outperform the boys in English and science. The school has put appropriate strategies into place to raise further the attainment of the boys.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' are generally interested in their work and are keen to learn, particularly in their literacy and numeracy lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils behave well but there are isolated incidences of inappropriate behaviour in the playground and some pupils do not always stay on task in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and adults are good. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills.
Attendance	Attendance continues to be unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to holidays taken during term time and illness. The school is working effectively towards targets to improve attendance.

The positive behaviour programme adopted by the school is central to the good relationships within the school. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and encourages them to have respect for others. The attendance as reported previously is below average. The school has good procedures for encouraging parents and pupils to achieve good attendance but these have been unsuccessful regarding holidays taken in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

The quality of teaching is good and a major strength of the school. It is very good in 17 per cent of lessons and good in a further 40 per cent. In 40 per cent of lessons it is satisfactory. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were seen, this is mainly due to insufficient knowledge of the needs of the pupils by temporary staff. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is strong and the teaching of mental mathematics is well established, which is having a positive impact on standards. Although only groups of pupils were observed using the computers, the staff lack confidence and expertise in the teaching of information and communication technology. Teaching is not as effective where links have been made with other subjects and topics for art, design and technology, history and geography. Here the teaching is less focused on systematically developing pupils' specific subject knowledge and skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. However, there is insufficient breadth and depth to art, design and technology, history and geography.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are supported well and make good progress. The school involves their parents from the earliest stage in meeting the children's needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is very good provision for these pupils from specialist and voluntary Members of staff. The pupils are supported well in lessons and as a result make very good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' personal development. The school makes satisfactory provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school. Pupils are well supported and there is a safe and secure working environment.

The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents are welcomed into school and the school has an open door policy for responding quickly to their needs. The vast majority of parents are appreciative of the work of the school, particularly the individual care they give to their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. There is a sense of common purpose to the school. The headteacher and the staff work effectively together to meet the aims of the school. They are successfully improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and supportive of the school. They receive good information from the headteacher and work appropriately with the headteacher to meet the school targets.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. The headteacher and the staff evaluate teaching effectively to improve the quality of education provided.
The strategic use of resources	The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The temporary classrooms are small. This limits the curriculum in subjects such as art and design and technology because the children are unable to move round easily to select their own resources. There are good resources to support the curriculum. The school makes good use of these to help children learn, apart from information and communication technology that is. The dining hall is overcrowded at lunchtimes. This is a safety hazard.

The school is well-staffed to meet the demands of the curriculum. The leadership is good in promoting the aims and values of the school and in monitoring the teaching and learning of English and mathematics. The staff work effectively together as a team to improve standards. However the school is at an early stage in monitoring the teaching and learning of information and communication technology, art, design and technology and history and geography. These are weaknesses that the school has recognised for development. The temporary classrooms are to be replaced with an additional building in the near future. Most pupils are interested in their work and are taught and achieve well. They make good progress to achieve national standards in most subjects and above average standards in mathematics by the time they are 11 years old. There is good management of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. These pupils make very good progress. Given that the pupils enter school with attainment just below average and unit costs are high, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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 good quality of teaching; • the good progress children make; • the personal support given to pupils; • the effective leadership and the values promoted by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of parents would like more information about homework. • Some parents would like a greater range of extra curricular clubs and activities. • A few parents feel that behaviour within the school could be improved.

The inspectors agree with the positive views that parents have of the school. The range of extra-curricular activities is within what is normally expected for a school of this kind. However, although most pupils behave well, there are some incidents of poor behaviour in the playground and this is an area where the school can make improvement. Additional information given to parents about homework would put them in a better position to be able to help their children at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The majority of pupils enter school with attainment that is just below that expected nationally. Most make good progress during school and work at or near their capacity to achieve well in terms of their prior attainment by the time they are 11. There are strengths in standards in mathematics where pupils attain standards above average. In religious education they meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In English and science standards are average. In other subjects standards are average apart from information and communication technology where they are well below average.
2. The results of National Curriculum tests and assessments in 1999 show that pupils' attainment in English was well below the national averages for Level 4 and the higher Level 5. The pupils' attainment was average in comparison with pupils' attainments in similar schools. In mathematics, pupils' attainment was below the national average for Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Pupils' attainment was above average when compared with pupils' attainments in similar schools. In science, pupils' attainment was well below the national average for Level 4 and below the national average at the higher Level 5. In comparison to similar schools, pupils' results were average. Pupils tend to achieve better in mathematics than English and science. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs have an adverse effect on the overall average results for the school. These pupils particularly have difficulty in interpreting language beyond the literal meanings or in drawing hypotheses in science.
3. The school has analysed the reasons for the well below average standards in English in 1999 and has identified that many pupils have difficulty with writing. In mathematics, pupils do better, mental mathematics and number work has been a priority for development before the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and pupils have made good progress. With the introduction of the strategy, standards have risen still further, pupils' work at a brisk pace and enjoy their work. Those for whom English is an additional language, are not as disadvantaged in mathematics by language. In science, pupils attained well below average standards and some found difficulty in interpreting questions and in drawing hypotheses. The pupils did well to achieve average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics in comparison with similar schools.
4. Staff continually strive to raise attainment and strengthen the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The recent focus has been on improving standards in English and mathematics with the introduction of the national strategies into the curriculum. This year the teaching of mental mathematics in the numeracy hour and the provision 'booster' classes for the older pupils has helped to raise standards. The setting of pupils for English and mathematics is having a further positive effect on pupils' attainment. Science has not had the same priority as English and mathematics but the pupils' attainment has improved during the last two years. Information and communication technology is underused and does not have a significant impact on standards in these and other subjects.
5. The inspection findings show that by the time pupils are 11, they achieve standards in line with the national expectations in English and science and above the national expectation in mathematics. This shows an improved picture from the test results of 1999 mainly because of the improvements made in the quality of teaching. Standards have risen slightly in science but not to the same extent as they have in English and mathematics. In English and mathematics standards have risen at a faster pace than most other schools this year.

6. Pupils do better where the school has prioritised curriculum initiatives and there is detailed guidance. For example, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have detailed guidance for teachers for each year group, which is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of reading, writing and their attainments in mental mathematics. In science, the co-ordinator has had little time to develop the subject across the school.
7. By the age of 11, pupils speak fluently and confidently in discussions to attain average standards. Most read accurately and discuss their favourite authors and preferences in reading. Higher attaining pupils read with expression. Pupils' writing is a weakness. Punctuation is not always correct and spelling is weak. Pupils find difficulty in writing more complex sentences and sustaining writing at length. In mathematics, pupils are developing effective mental strategies to double numbers and to add and subtract two and three digits quickly and effectively. They have a good understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages. In science, pupils understand fair testing and investigate how sound is made and how to make light bulbs brighter and dimmer in their study of electricity. Some pupils find difficulty in interpreting questions and making hypotheses. In all subjects, pupils do not use information and communication technology effectively enough to draft, revise and research their work. It does not have the impact it should to assist pupils in their work, for example, in their understanding of data and the application of writing skills.
8. In the previous report, the attainments of the pupils in English, mathematics and science were broadly in line with the national averages. Trends over the last three years indicate that the improvement in pupils' national test results keep pace with the national rate. The school has improved its curricular provision and teaching from the last inspection, particularly this year and is clearly moving forward. There is a clear focus on meeting individual needs and setting targets for improvement. There are good procedures for assessment for all pupils in these subjects, and good use of assessment is made in lessons to inform teachers' planning. As a result the pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school.
9. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well through effective teaching and make good progress towards their set targets. They contribute well to class discussion and learn from listening to others. Observations of lessons and pupils' work, as well as in discussions with pupils, show that pupils are generally working at below average attainment levels, though not considerably below them. Due to appropriate challenges being given to them, they are making similar progress to most other pupils. Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported very well and make very good progress. The voluntary support given by friends of the school makes a considerable contribution to the progress these pupils make. The progress pupils make in their subjects and personal and social education prepares them well for their next stage of learning.
10. In information and communication technology, pupils' standards are well below average when compared with national expectations. Pupils do not have frequent enough access to the computers, some staff lack confidence and expertise and the entire curriculum is not covered. Standards in the last report were average but the school has not kept pace with the rapid changes in the subject over the last two years. There has been an improvement in resources and pupils have increased their skills in using e-mail for example but there has not been enough work carried out to raise attainment.
11. In religious education, pupils' attainment by the end of the key stage meets the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement from the previous report. By Year 6, pupils know a range of stories from the Bible and are aware of the major Christian beliefs. They compare aspects of Christianity with some important beliefs of the other world faiths. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss religion to develop a good awareness of other cultural traditions and beliefs within our society.

12. In other subjects, the inspection finds that pupils achieve average standards by the end of the key stage. At the time of the previous report standards were below average in physical education and above average in music. There has been good improvement in physical education and standards are average. In music, pupils now attain average standards, which have declined from the previous inspection. Otherwise in other subjects, pupils attain standards normally expected from pupils aged eleven.
13. Pupils' achievements are better in some classes. In one Year 3 class and two Year 6 classes, the staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and ensure all the pupils remain on task throughout the lesson. The quality of teaching in other classes is good overall but in some lessons the expectation for behaviour is not as high as it could be and on occasions pupils do not remain on task all the time where the behaviour policy is not closely followed. This sometimes has an adverse effect on the attainment and progress of the pupils.
14. The best progress is being made in literacy and numeracy. This is particularly noticeable in the pupils' improvement in reading and the pupils' mental arithmetic strategies, which are taught from the National Numeracy Strategy. Apart from science, progress is satisfactory in other subjects. Co-ordinators for other subjects apart from design and technology, history and geography where there are no coordinators at present have not had the opportunity to monitor their subjects and make suggestions for improvements, except in religious education and physical education. The school is aware that where subjects are taught under topic headings such as art, design and technology and history and geography the curriculum lacks breadth and depth. This is an area outlined for development for the near future. In religious education, pupils make satisfactory progress. In information and communication technology progress is unsatisfactory across the school.
15. There is some significant difference between the progress of boys and girls, with girls achieving better than the boys in English and science. The school has put strategies into place to address this issue such as selecting reading resource that will appeal to boys and individual support where necessary. The setting of pupils has been arranged in groups to encourage the boys to attain higher standards in literacy and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory. The school strives to create a warm, inviting atmosphere to develop the enthusiasm for pupils coming to the school. However, this is not always effective and there is evidence to indicate that pupils do not always arrive punctually. Attendance levels are not as high as they should be.
17. Pupils show good interest in learning new things and being set challenging work. The strong emphasis the school is placing on numeracy and literacy is proving to be effective. Pupils are responding well to the demands placed upon them in these important areas. Pupils are always willing to become involved during lesson activities and there is a particular keenness in mental arithmetic and reading.
18. There is good provision for pupils to be appointed as monitors. Their duties cover a wide range of activities. For example, there are monitors for taking care of the plants, assembly work, registers, and tuck shop and house points. Two year six pupils diligently record and monitor the "25's" allocated to pupils for inappropriate behaviour.
19. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during lessons are variable but are generally satisfactory. They move around the school in an orderly manner and are polite to visitors and to one another. Four incidences of fixed period exclusions, related to unacceptable behaviour, have been reported during the previous year but none so far this year. Pupils are courteous and teachers are good role models in developing social and moral skills of the pupils. There is an

acceptable understanding of the class rules and what is expected of them from teachers. The classroom management strategies used by teachers to control behaviour are inconsistently applied. When lessons are not challenging enough there is a tendency for some pupils' attitudes to be affected and some pupils stray off task where the expectation for behaviour is lower than it should be.

20. Pupils' behaviour in the playground can sometimes be boisterous, particularly amongst the boys, where kicking and other rough play can be commonplace. Incidents occurring as a result of this rough play are recorded and sanctions raised against offending parties. The strategies for controlling pupils' behaviour during playtime and lunchtime are less effective than those used in lessons. There is an element of bullying taking place during playtimes. The Playground Committee, comprising of pupils from each class, has developed a set of rules for playtime activities. The members are also there to listen to pupils having minor problems and to alert teachers of bullying incidents accordingly. Pupils respond well to this responsibility and are always willing to help others when needed.
21. There is a genuine understanding from pupils of the impact their actions have on others. Discussions during scheduled "Circle Time" help the pupils to have an appreciation of others feelings, values and beliefs. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are good. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils at all times and this has a marked impact on the levels of learning.
22. Attendance levels at the school continue to be unsatisfactory and are well below the national average. About one fifth of the authorised absences are attributed to extended holidays for families going overseas. The school keeps parents informed of the impact this is having upon their children's learning and the school's attendance levels. Unauthorised absences are above the national average. Registration procedures are very efficient and meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. Overall the quality of teaching seen during the inspection is good. Of the lessons seen, 17 per cent were judged to be very good, 40 per cent good, and a further 40 per cent were satisfactory. Just three per cent or two lessons were unsatisfactory. There is an improvement in the quality of teaching from the last report, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There is very good teaching in Year 3 and Year 6. This is characterised by very good pupil-management and very good working relationships, both between the teacher and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. Teachers have very high expectations, both in terms of work and behaviour. Positive but firm relationships ensure high standards of behaviour. In these very well taught lessons teachers are also careful to check on pupils' skills development. They use assessment well to check whether pupils understand the work, and, if not, why not.
24. The strengths of teaching generally are the use of correct subject language which makes a good contribution to pupils' basic literacy skills, the understanding which teachers show of the individual needs of their pupils, the good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and very good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The use of homework to support mathematics in school is also a strength. This work is particularly well integrated with class work. Where teaching was unsatisfactory in two lessons observed, pupils were taught by temporary staff who did not sufficiently know the pupils to match the activities and resources appropriately to their needs.
25. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory. They are able to give clear explanations of the work and to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. This enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills effectively. In information and communication technology however, many teachers lack confidence and their subject knowledge is

insufficient to enable them to teach the subject effectively. The teaching of phonics and other basic skills is good.

26. Teachers' planning of their work is good in the core subjects, but is less well developed in the other foundation subjects. Planning is satisfactory overall. Teachers use a variety of different formats for their medium and short term planning, but generally make clear their learning objectives. They plan different work for pupils of different abilities, so that all are given work, which is at the right level for them. This clear planning enables pupils of all abilities to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort appropriately as they work.
27. In order to challenge and inspire their pupils teachers generally plan interesting and enjoyable activities, and present them in an engaging manner so that pupils are well motivated to do their best. These planning and teaching methods enable all pupils to learn effectively, and to show interest and sustain concentration. There are some inconsistencies in planning and assessment in history, geography and design technology. Planning in physical education is good. Where subjects are taught as part of cross-curricular topics there is also some inconsistency in planning, with activities sometimes allocated to the wrong subject areas. This can lead to confusion about the amount of time within a topic, which is given to each subject.
28. In most lessons seen teachers manage pupils well. In the vast majority of lessons good working relationships are established, and a purposeful working atmosphere is created. In a very few lessons, however, there is an element of unsettled, inattentive behaviour which sometimes has an unsettling effect on the class as a whole. In the best-taught lessons, however, these behaviour patterns are not seen, and the school should therefore look at ways of extending the good practice in behaviour management in these classes to the rest of the school.
29. Teachers generally make good use of time, support staff and resources except in the case of information and communication technology. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is well below average, with many opportunities missed. Despite the recent improvement in resources available in classrooms teachers are often leaving computers unused when they could be making valuable contributions to learning in all curriculum areas.
30. The use of assessment is generally good in English, mathematics and science. Teachers assess their pupils' work thoroughly. They discuss the work with pupils either through comments made in marking or by talking over individual problems. This enables pupils to understand what they are doing, and how they can improve. In history, geography, art and design and technology, taught under topic headings there are no school systems of assessments of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, which limits planning for future work when teachers are unsure of how previous skills have been acquired and how much of the subject has been previously understood.
31. Homework is well used to support pupils' work in school. Pupils take work home regularly, particularly in the core subjects. The activities undertaken at home are often extensions of work done in class. Homework is collected in and marked by teachers on a regular basis.

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

32. The school meets curriculum requirements in respect of literacy and numeracy and has adopted the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The school offers a curriculum, which correctly places priority on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However there is insufficient depth and breadth in the subjects of art, design and technology and history and geography, which have been taught under topic headings. The planning, and

assessment of these subjects is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are appropriately balanced. In design and technology, history and geography the co-ordinators are yet to be appointed. The coordinator for art is not in a position to analyse these subjects, as they do not monitor their implementation across the school.

33. Schemes of work for literacy and numeracy follow nationally agreed strategies and provide a clear framework for long term planning. In other areas of the curriculum planning is inconsistent and often lacks clarity and detail. Schemes of work in other subjects lack an overall school assessment system where there is a systematic tracking of skills development through the key stage. At present teachers assess their pupils' achievement in topics individually, but this does not inform the school how the progression of skills is monitored throughout the school.
34. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school's prospectus informs parents how sensitive issues will be taught. Parents are given the opportunity to preview the teaching of sex education and to raise questions that concern them. Sex education is taught as part of the Science curriculum. Visitors, such as the local police, make a positive contribution to health education particularly teaching the pupils about the misuse of drugs.
35. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils. These include gardening and bird clubs, ocarina, mathematics, recorder clubs and choir. The school also has boys and girls football teams and the athletic team competes in the local schools sports. There are opportunities for the pupils to participate in the L.E.A. 'Safe Cycling' scheme. Residential visits take place, mainly for year 6 pupils. They visit London and Bryntisilio to promote social development and to experience a range of different physical activities that are not normally available to them for example, canoeing.
36. Joint planning takes place between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers, learning support assistants, voluntary adult support staff as well as representatives from outside agencies, such as Services for Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment and Occupational Therapy. Planning together ensures that individual targets are identified for pupils. Close liaison ensures that pupils of the same age are experiencing broadly the same curriculum but with appropriate modification and differentiation to meet individual needs.
37. Equality of access for all pupils is very good and a strength of the school. The school promotes fairness and equality. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided by the school. Where pupils are withdrawn from class for specialist tuition to meet their particular educational needs their work is linked, as far as possible to the work taking place within the classroom. This applies particularly to pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils recently arrived at school from Eastern European countries are particularly fortunate to have support from an adult who voluntarily works full time to ensure the pupils are gaining confidence and language skills to enable them to integrate as fully and as quickly as possible into the school environment. As their ability to communicate increases they are becoming integrated into the school community. Other pupils for whom English is an additional language also have access to support from adults who speak a range of languages and who help to interpret and develop the pupils' communication skills. Many of the adults who support these pupils in school give of their own time to support the families and help them adjust to the demands of their new, strange environment, for example, by accompanying parents, when necessary to medical appointments.
38. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are carefully identified and provision for them is good or very good. The Code of Practice is fully implemented. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good and for those who have English as an additional language it is very good. Many of the support staff have

undertaken additional training, and have gained further qualifications for classroom assistants. The governor representing special educational needs on the governing body has been appointed very recently and has not yet had the opportunity to fulfil this role.

39. The school has good links with the adjacent infant and secondary schools. They pupils share dining facilities. The headteachers of both schools work collaboratively for the benefit of all pupils. The headteacher of the neighbouring comprehensive school is also a member of the governing body. The school, as part of Walsall Primary Link now has contact with South Staffordshire Water Company. They support learning and as part of this Year 4 pupils are able to undertake studies using the Blithfield Reservoir. Their Education Officer is also a member of the governing body. There are very good transfer arrangements for both schools to ensure that pupils move from one school to another with minimum disruption to their learning.
40. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to reflect on what they are doing and how their actions will affect others. This is most apparent during collective worship, when a candle is lit to signify a time for prayer and quiet contemplation. During lesson time, particularly numeracy and science time is made available to enable pupils to reflect on new learning.
41. Provision for moral development is satisfactory. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and mostly adhere to the school behaviour policy. However, there are some instances of aggressive behaviour in the playground and some pupils do not always stay on task during lessons. Pupils are polite and helpful, to each other, to visitors and to other adults. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good role models and there is mutual respect between staff and pupils.
42. The social development of the pupils is satisfactory. There are opportunities provided for pupils to develop their social skills through residential visits and competitive sports fixtures against other schools. Many opportunities are provided during lessons for pupils to work collaboratively in small groups. The gardening and bird clubs are examples of how the pupils are becoming responsible for their learning by caring for their environment.
43. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils study the local area in geography, and in history learn about the local area in the past. Pupils learn about life in other countries for example the Ancient Greeks in history. Pupils listen to a range of music, study literature and art from other cultures. The major world religions are studied in religious education, but pupils know most about Christianity. Opportunities are missed to use the cultural heritage of the pupils in the school to raise an awareness and appreciation of the richness of cultural diversity in society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. This is a caring school and pupils' learning takes place in a safe and secure environment. There is satisfactory awareness of child protection matters from members of staff. Good internal communications ensure that concerns are brought to the attention of the headteacher immediately.
45. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and each area of the school is carefully evaluated. A few minor health and safety issues were raised during the inspection and appropriate actions taken. The evacuation of the congested dining room in the event of a fire had not been fully considered at risk assessment. The testing of portable appliances around the school had been postponed and some of the computer equipment was long overdue for testing.

46. The procedures for checking and improving attendance are good, but have yet to have an effect upon the number of pupils taking holidays in term time. The attendance records are entered onto the computer software and this allows the generation of monitoring reports. The school sensibly evaluates these reports and trends on absences are readily identified. The school works very closely with the Education Welfare Officer and other outside agencies to follow up absences from school. The school promotes good attendance through reward systems, which acknowledge pupils who have 100 per cent attendance records. The school has set targets for improvement and is working hard to meet attendance targets for this academic year.
47. Monitoring and promoting good behaviour is satisfactory. The school has well-developed systems for identifying and recording inappropriate behaviour. Individual Behaviour Programmes are used for pupils with serious behavioural problems. Pupils not complying with specific class rules are requested to write the rules out twenty five times and to submit them to their teachers the following day. Pupils displaying good or improved behaviour are offered “golden tickets” which are placed into a drum for the Friday afternoon draw. The lucky winner receives a book token.
48. There is an anti-bullying policy, which is adhered to by the vast majority of the pupils. Any incidences of bullying are carefully logged and resolution is sought by the headteacher. If pupils are unwilling to talk about the problems they are encouraged to write a short summary of the events leading up to the incident. There are lots of playtime incidents reported but the school does not fully analyse these incidences to completely eliminate their re-occurrences.
49. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils’ academic progress and personal development are good for English, mathematics and science. Information related to the results of tests carried out by the pupils is systematically entered into the computer. Data related to individual pupils or year groups can be readily interrogated and trends identified. For example, the under-achievement of boys in specific areas was identified using these techniques. However, in art, history, geography and design and technology assessment procedures are not clearly defined which limits the teachers’ planning for pupils’ future work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents’ have good opinions of the school. Most felt satisfied that their children’s attainment and progress were in line with their own parental expectations. However, in the meeting for parents, most felt that spelling and presentation of work needed improving. The values and attitudes the school teaches were widely acceptable to parents. They were pleased that the school actively encourages children to be self-confident and to have high self-esteem.
51. Parents feel welcome at the school and have the opportunity to speak to teachers about queries they may have about their children’s work or progress on a day-to-day basis. The home-school agreement is having a satisfactory impact on the partnerships established. There is satisfactory involvement from parents in ensuring that homework is completed on time and that children receive maximum benefit from working at home. There is a reasonable amount of homework set each week by teachers and this is having a positive impact on pupils’ progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
52. A small group of parents willingly raise funds for the school. The staff and pupils are appreciative of these efforts and the funds go towards purchasing small gifts, such as dictionaries, for the pupils who are leaving to go to the secondary school and other resources to support the curriculum. There are a few parents who assist on school visits and on the weekly visit to the local swimming baths. Many parents support the school library project and read with their children after school. Others who work in the school meet each week with

the teacher who has responsibility for community liaison to discuss and make improvements to their work.

53. The information going to parents is of a good quality. The school brochure contains useful information and is presented in a pleasing easy-to-follow manner. There are regular newsletters going to parents informing them of things happening at the school and the topics for pupils' involvement. The annual reports about pupils' progress and achievements are well designed. These reports provide a good insight into the individual targets that pupils are working towards and give valuable information on progress made in each subject and where pupils need to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. There is effective management of the school. The strength in the leadership is the importance the school places on developing the academic skills of literacy and numeracy of individual pupils as well as the care that is taken in pupils' personal development. There are good relationships overall within the school and the headteacher and the staff work effectively to improve standards. The school is meeting its aims and most parents are pleased with the way these aims are reflected in pupils' achievements and personal development. Pupils are encouraged to make good progress and most work as hard as they can to achieve well by the time they leave school. The leadership and management of the school have identified the major strengths and weaknesses of the school and set challenging targets for improvement.
55. Governors work well with the school on a day-to-day basis to meet the school targets. They are regular visitors to the school and curriculum developments are effectively checked. The school development plan is regularly reviewed and evaluated. It provides an effective instrument upon which the governors make informed decisions for future development. New initiatives are carefully costed and prioritised and best value for money is sought before the governors commit to expenditure. Statutory requirements are met except for some elements of information and communication technology.
56. There is a good blend of recently qualified and experienced staff in the school. All teachers have at least one area of subject responsibility. The headteacher has no curriculum responsibilities but does contribute greatly to the education in the school by his discipline and behaviour management role. He effectively monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and works closely with the staff and governors to ensure school targets are met. There is a high correlation between the teachers' qualifications and their curriculum responsibilities. There is an experienced special educational needs co-ordinator, who is ably supported by a number of classroom support assistants. The teaching of English as an additional language is well managed and the team provide a detailed and systematic programme and the pupils make very good progress. Those children who have recently arrived as refugees have been given very good support largely from voluntary help from the community and they also are making very good progress. Good induction procedures are in place, with newly qualified teachers having the support of a mentor, regular contact with the headteacher and much informal help from the whole staff. The good support provided by the local education authority is also valued. While the appraisal cycle has recently lapsed, the school has its own informal procedures for staff development, which takes account of personal professional needs as well as the school priorities.
57. The staff work well together and informally share their expertise to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, teachers in literacy and numeracy and physical education give demonstrations for colleagues. Surgeries are held for literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology so that staff can seek advice and help from the coordinators. In other subjects the weakness is that, although staff are clear about their curriculum responsibilities, there is little time for them to fully develop their role. In design

and technology, history and geography there is no named coordinator in place, although the school has plans to appoint coordinators in the near future. The monitoring of teaching and learning in information and communication technology, art, design and technology, history and geography is insufficient. Thus the co-ordinator for information and communication technology and the senior management have insufficient information about the strengths and weakness in these subjects across the school. The lack of sharply focused action plans for future development limits the effectiveness of the school to raise standards. The school has recognised the need for development in these areas.

58. Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved their expertise in English, mathematics and science. The hard work of the subject co-ordinators and the determination of the staff have been amply rewarded by raised levels of pupil attainment. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a major impact on teaching techniques and have extended the boundaries in each subject. However, in information and communication technology, some staff lack expertise and confidence. The coordinator is knowledgeable and supports colleagues whenever possible but has not been given sufficient time to monitor the subject across the school.
59. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught appropriately but the structure of the building has limitations, which has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. The temporary classrooms have no water and are cramped when pupils do practical work for art or design and technology. The school makes use of accommodation in the main school for art and design work. The school is soon to have a new building to replace the temporary classrooms. The dining area is adjacent to the school and is shared by the nearby nursery and infant schools. At lunchtime the building is overcrowded and the furniture is arranged in rows which puts pupils' safety at risk if they need to exit the building quickly. The schools are currently working together to resolve this issue. The outdoor facilities are good, with a spacious grassed area and playground and a refurbished wildlife area.
60. Learning resources overall are good, both in quantity and quality. They are good in mathematics, science, history, geography and physical education and music. Resources for literacy are very good, with good quality books in the libraries, both fiction and non-fiction. In art, more books and prints of artists work are needed. A member of staff makes a significant contribution to the management of the resources by cataloguing them on a computer and assisting staff in finding the resources they need.
61. The efficiency of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, school secretary and the finance committee from the governing body take responsibility for and monitor the school's budget. The budget is approved by the finance committee and then is taken to the full governing body. The school development plan is costed to develop the educational priorities of the school such as literacy and numeracy. The school spends money allocated for the support of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language in an appropriate manner.
62. The day-to-day administration of the school is good. The school administrative officers have a good understanding of both the school and the local authority systems. They make a positive contribution to the efficient running of the school ensuring that best value is achieved when ordering stock and buying in services. The school has addressed all the points raised in the latest audit report. All school accounts are audited annually.
63. Good use is made of staff to meet the needs of the pupils. The support staff for pupils with special educational needs and staff who support pupils who have English as an additional language are deployed well, and provide good support for the pupils. Curriculum coordinators all have an amount of money allocated to them but they do not have the opportunity to

monitor standards or teaching and so are not able to assess the cost effectiveness of their spending.

64. The leadership and management of the school are good, with the governing body providing appropriate support for the school. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below average in information and communication technology, but they are in line with the national expectations for English and science and above average in mathematics. The overall trend for improvement over time is in line with the national trend. Standards have risen significantly since the 1999 test results in English and mathematics and science. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' mental mathematics in particular, and there is improved teaching in literacy and science. The pupils make good progress in the time they are in this school. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the school and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The governors, headteacher and the staff should:

- (1) improve pupils' attainment in information and communication technology by:
 - (i) teaching all the strands of information and communication technology;
 - (ii) providing more in-service training for staff to increase their confidence and expertise;
 - (iii) monitoring the teaching and learning to improve the quality of teaching;
 - (iv) using information and communication technology to support learning throughout the curriculum (*Paragraph 4,10,25,29,57,58,80,89*):

- (2) improve the curriculum for design and technology, history and geography by:
 - (i) developing the role of the coordinator to monitor teaching and learning in art, design and technology, history and geography to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered; the strengths and weaknesses of subjects are clearly identified and there is a sharp focus for improvement. (*Paragraph 57,98,102,107,111*):

- (3) improve the assessment procedures for art, design and technology, history and geography by:
 - (i) developing procedures to identify pupils' subject skills and knowledge;
 - (ii) making a more consistent use of information from the assessments of pupils' attainments to identify areas for improvement and inform future planning (*Paragraph 27,30,32,49,98,101,106,110*).

Although this is not a major issue to address, the governors, headteacher and the staff should consider the following points for inclusion in their action plan:

improve the arrangements for pupils in the dining hall so that it is not overcrowded; and arrange the furniture to allow pupils to exit safely and quickly in an emergency. (*Paragraph 44*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

87

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

65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	40	40	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		359
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		129

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		60

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	119

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	42	34	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	23	25
	Girls	26	25	27
	Total	43	48	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (47)	63 (38)	68 (65)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	23	27
	Girls	26	23	27
	Total	37	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (48)	61 (49)	71 (64)
	National	68 (N/A)	69 (N/A)	75 (N/A)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	57
Pakistani	58
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	217
Any other minority ethnic group	18

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		
Indian	1	
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	156

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	580,000
Total expenditure	605,638
Expenditure per pupil	1,756
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,085
Balance carried forward to next year	9,447

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	359
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	39	4	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	54	11	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	44	8	3	2
The teaching is good.	53	44	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	50	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	35	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	45	13	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	48	38	7	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	48	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	33	16	6	10

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

ENGLISH

66. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments at Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment for Level 4 and above was well below the national average and average in comparison with pupils' performance from similar backgrounds. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5, was well below the national average for pupils of this age, and also below average in comparison with pupils' performance from similar backgrounds. The attainment of girls was significantly higher than that by boys. The tests and assessments show that pupils' attainment in reading was low and very low in writing; particularly for boys, with only 24 per cent achieving Level 4 or above in writing.
67. Results for Key Stage 2 over the last three years have been uneven, but show that pupils' attainment has risen in reading and writing and have kept pace with the national trend. However, the results for 1999 have been higher than previous years and risen at a faster than the national results.
68. Overall, attainment is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 where the results of 1999 National Curriculum tests show that 57 per cent of pupils achieved the expected levels or better. This was significantly above the school's agreed target of 37 per cent for 1999. The agreed targets for this year's National Curriculum tests for the present pupils in Year 6 are 30 per cent higher, at 67 per cent, than those for the previous year. This is to take into account the variation in the attainments of these cohorts of pupils and the anticipated impact of changes in teaching. There is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils of different ethnic groups.

Speaking and Listening

69. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are similar to national expectations for most pupils. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to other pupils in their Literacy lessons. Within these lessons pupils are able to use the technical vocabulary of their English lessons with accuracy and confidence. Some higher attaining pupils are able to share their work and information they have retrieved with confidence, with appropriate expression and vocabulary. In Year 4 these pupils were able to describe the ways in which suffixes can be used to change the role of words from nouns to verbs within sentences. Some lower attainers are less confident talking to adults and other pupils within lessons and express themselves with less clarity and a less varied vocabulary. In Year 3 pupils were successful in planning and reciting an alternative verse for the poem 'Gran, can you rap?'
70. Most pupils make satisfactory progress during the key stage. Pupils targeted for extra support for learning English as an additional language make very good progress.

Reading

71. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are similar to national expectations. Pupils are able to read meaning from a range of poems and stories, evident in poetry in their literacy lessons. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils were able to make significant inference from a reading of two contrasting poems. In Year 6 pupils read a wide range of different books including fiction, plays and poems. They enjoy reading and a significant majority have their favourite authors and stories. A majority read regularly at home. They can recount stories but fewer are able to predict their outcome. Most pupils read their selected books with accuracy but the majority do not take due note of punctuation and fail to use appropriate expression. They know how to break a word down into parts if they can't read it and understand the meaning of words in

context. Pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language, are developing skills in making inferences beyond the literal meaning of text. Pupils understand how to locate non-fiction in the school library and most can locate the information they need in the book. However, the majority of pupils have yet to learn appropriate skills for using dictionaries. By the end of the key stage, pupils make good progress. Pupils targeted for additional support for special educational needs also make good progress, whilst those learning English as an additional language, make very good progress over the key stage.

Writing

72. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below national averages. Fewer pupils are reaching the expected level, and this is particularly true for boys. Pupils write letters and stories, make posters and have the opportunity to write a range of explanatory texts. In Year 5, letters written to manufacturing companies follow the conventions of letter writing, but pupils fail to distinguish between appropriately formal and colloquial vocabulary. Biographical writing of fellow pupils shows good levels of investigation and satisfactory use of language and correct structure. In their narrative writing, a significant majority of pupils fail to plan their work sufficiently well to have a beginning, middle and suitable conclusion. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops to correctly demarcate sentences but make little accurate use of other punctuation to write in a more complex way. The range of writing overall is similar for the full range of abilities in the year. Many pupils of all abilities use mainly short sentences, frequently showing confusion over noun and verb agreements. By the end of the key stage pupils, including those targeted for extra support for English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils' attainment in handwriting is unsatisfactory. By the end of the key stage, there is inconsistency in handwriting and some pupils still do not easily write using a joined, neat and consistent script. However, writing has been a priority for the school this year and standards are improving.

Teaching and Learning

73. The quality of teaching is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In all lessons of the National Literacy Strategy, planning is good and teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers maintain the structure of the literacy hour, with lessons having a good balance of whole class teaching, group and individual work. Teachers combine effective questioning to promote pupils' thinking about the reading text being used and the written responses required, particularly evident at the end of the key stage. They develop reading by applying the pupils' previously learnt skills to new texts. Teachers effectively model writing for the pupils to show them how to improve and structure their writing. However, the absence of differentiated writing frames in some classes fails to match the writing requirements of, in particular, more able pupils who are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils respond well to teachers in the whole class sessions of lessons. They are enthusiastic learners, keen to contribute, make suggestions, and apply previously learnt knowledge and answer questions. The lessons are well-prepared and organised to challenge and support pupils' language development. Teachers direct support staff with their work. The language development teachers, funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, target some of the pupils with English as an additional language who are at risk of underachieving. These teachers plan the work for these pupils alongside their class teachers and present their teaching within the structure of the Literacy Strategy. The lessons are well organised and resourced, presenting appropriately challenging learning opportunities for the pupils. Pupils learn very well in these highly focussed lessons becoming familiar with the grammar and structure of the language using the same texts as the other pupils in the school. In a significant majority of the lessons, teachers explain the group activities clearly to the pupils; matching the learning resources and activities to individual needs. Where the learning objectives have been clearly identified by the teacher and work and behaviour expectations made clear to the children, pupils settle to good quality and sustained work. Likewise, the pace of the lesson and learning is sustained by the high expectations of

these teachers. In some instances teachers are insufficiently assertive about work expectations and the implementation of the school's behaviour policy. In these lessons the pace of the lessons slows down and opportunities for learning are lost. In many group activities pupils work individually rather than being required to collaborate with their learning. In this way opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss and develop their thinking with each other which would improve their speaking and listening and their rate of learning.

74. The subject co-ordinator has very effectively managed the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy throughout the school. She has written a development plan for the subject, with the promotion of improved attainment by pupils as its principle focus. She has introduced a common planning format for teaching the subject which has been consistently implemented across the school. Lessons to provide further opportunities to teach writing skills have been planned outside the Literacy Hour. When these two-hour lessons are organised systematically, using a similar format to that of the Literacy Strategy, the children develop improved writing skills. In some lessons there is an insufficient focus for the pupils to sustain quality work and learning for the whole two hours. Excellent resources, mainly reading and teacher-support materials, have been purchased from the subject's budget. A further £3000 has been allocated for the current financial year to match resources to the subject's development plan. Recently books have been bought to appeal to boys, and others have been purchased to reflect the pupils' cultural heritage. A programme for monitoring teaching of the subject has been initiated by the co-ordinator and headteacher. Evidence from this monitoring has been discussed by the senior management team and, subsequently, action taken to support the work of teachers. The Literacy 'surgery', which provides individual teachers with support opportunities, is a helpful initiative to raise standards of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator recognises the success that has been achieved through the systematic implementation of the Literacy Strategy and has recognised in the Literacy Development Plan areas of the subject that require further promotion. She has agreed, with the headteacher and governors, challenging targets for future improvements in pupil attainment. Additional lessons have been timetabled to support an improvement in pupils' writing and spelling which are targets within the subject's development plan. Pupils are given regular opportunities to use the extensive fiction and non-fiction library, which is seen as an important contribution to raising standards in English. The work of the library, very well promoted by the librarian and a parent governor, provides valuable opportunities for children to extend the range of their reading by selecting their own books from a carefully catalogued range of books. Outside of the school day, the library offers very good opportunities for reading development through a well-used family literacy initiative.

MATHEMATICS

75. National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 indicate that the standard of attainment in mathematics was slightly below the national average when compared with all schools and above the national average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below national expectations. Over the last 3 years, the performance of pupils has been well below average, but the school has kept pace with improvements in standards nationally. However in 1999 standards rose significantly, mainly due to the good teaching methods of the National Numeracy Strategy and the priority given to the subject. Standards have continued to rise and the rate of improvement exceeds the pace for most other schools.
76. Inspection findings show that this school is improving in the subject and standards of attainment are above average. The school has set challenging targets for improvement in pupils' attainment and is developing appropriate strategies to help achieve these targets. A 'booster' group has been innovated at Year 6 to further improve attainment. Setting has been established throughout the school. Standards of attainment in mental mathematics and basic number are above average for all pupils including those pupils with special educational needs.

Standards of attainment for higher attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language are very good. There are no significant differences in attainment between the ethnic groups or between girls and boys.

77. Overall progress is good for the majority of pupils including those with special educational needs who have clear targets and are supported effectively in their learning. Progress is very good for higher attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language, which is strength of the school. Most pupils are becoming competent at using their multiplication tables and are developing strategies to solve problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Progress is improving by building on previous knowledge to reinforce learning. Pupils interpret data and illustrate their findings in graph form; they solve problems mentally and are able to explain different strategies used to reach their answers. Although some of the average and lower attaining pupils in Years 3,4 and 5 are experiencing difficulty with the logic of problem solving and investigative mathematics.
78. Year 3 pupils know how to calculate mentally the difference between 2 digit numbers to explain ways for working out their answers. The higher attaining pupils are developing different strategies and methods for working out addition and subtraction problems; for example, by partitioning into tens and units. Year 4 pupils confidently add 3 digit numbers mentally; some pupils use a number line. Other pupils willingly explain the process of addition of 4 digits. Year 5 know how to use mental recall to solve multiplication problems, understand place value and use a variety of mental and written computations. The higher attaining pupils are confidently using strategies for tackling more complicated multiplication; for example, 19 times tables and consolidating strategies previously taught. Year 6 pupils achieve the lesson objective of multiplying 2 digit numbers by 1 digit using partitioning; higher attaining pupils are effectively challenged by more multiplication using partitioning and brackets. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils understand how to co-ordinate shapes using correct grid references; for example, drawing rhombus, parallelogram, kite and trapezium. They use fractions and the equivalent decimals and improve their knowledge of weight length; for example, drawing to scale New York buildings 4 m to 1 cm, understanding probability, area and data handling. Open ended investigative type activities are incorporated into many lessons.
79. The attitude to work of the majority of the pupils is positive. They show high levels of interest, respond well, listen to others and are generally appreciative of others' achievements. Most collaborate well when working on group tasks and are respectful to each other. They are confident to explain tasks and share their findings to adults or to the whole class. Some unacceptable behaviour is evident where there is a minority of pupils who are inattentive to the teaching and consequently experience difficulty with the written activities.
80. The teaching is good with teachers demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. One unsatisfactory teaching lesson was observed, which was largely due to the temporary teacher having insufficient knowledge of the pupils. Most lessons are well planned using the National Numeracy Strategy materials, with clear objectives, activities and differentiation covering all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Good methods and organisational strategies are used. Teachers use correct mathematical vocabulary and encourage their pupils to do the same. The pace of most lessons is generally good, retaining pupils' interest and preventing boredom. Management of the pupils is inconsistent on a very few occasions and teaching is less effective. Where teaching is good or very good, particularly in Years 3 and 6, the teachers use lively challenging approaches promoting participation and enjoyment. High expectations and effective pace of work promotes the good or very good learning in these classes and pupils achieve well. Good working relationships both between pupils and between teachers and pupils promote positive attitudes towards the subject and good learning. Homework is set regularly and relevant to the current lessons, mainly extending the concepts

learnt in class. However little use is made of information and communication technology in the subject.

81. The policy was updated and reviewed in July 1999, the scheme of work is mainly from the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has made a good start in implementing this Strategy and planning is appropriate. A range of methods is used to assess pupils' progress including standardised tests for each pupil in addition to the national tests.
82. The mathematics co-ordinator is keen, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and her priority is to further raise standards. Her role in evaluating teaching and curricular effectiveness and in supporting and guiding the professional development of her colleagues is very effective. Release time has been provided for her to monitor teaching in addition to the monitoring undertaken by the headteacher. Demonstration lessons for newly qualified staff have been provided by the co-ordinator. She also supports another school by demonstrating her mathematics expertise to their staff. The co-ordinator organised a numeracy evening to introduce parents to the National Numeracy Strategy. This was well attended; a video was shown and some mental mathematics games played with parents. A numeracy newsletter is sent out to parents termly.
83. A weekly mathematics club taken by a voluntary helper with specialist mathematics skills is well attended by pupils. All are enthusiastic about this session; they play computer chess, solve mathematical puzzles, and improve strategies for playing games; for example, draughts. Very good social interaction between the pupils and helper is evident. Plenty of space is available in the classroom to ease the moving from one activity to another. All the activities are well set out. This is a worthwhile extra-curricular activity, which enriches the school's curriculum by extending pupils mathematical skills and promoting social values.
84. Staff have been well prepared through in-service and in-school activities for recent developments most notably the National Numeracy Strategy. The coordinator is available during a 'surgery' time each week to give advice and help to colleagues. The subject is well resourced.

SCIENCE

85. The results of the national tests for 1999 show that the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above was well below the national average, those attaining Level 5 or above were below the percentage found nationally. The attainment of boys is below that of girls. Overall, the attainment of the girls was close to the national average but the attainment of the boys was below the national average. The school is aware of the differences in attainment between boys and girls, and is examining ways in which it can be remedied. In comparison to similar schools attainment was average. At the time of the last inspection the standards were average. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language has resulted in some fluctuations in results over the past few years. Science has not been a priority for development over the past few years. However, over the past 3 years the school's results in the national tests has kept pace with the national trend and there has been a marked improvement this year.
86. Inspection findings show that at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectations, and they make satisfactory progress. Standards in the different areas of scientific knowledge and understanding are broadly similar. The quality of teaching has improved this year which has led to this improvement in standards. The overall identification and planning to meet the needs of the pupils has improved. The emphasis on investigational work and the teaching of correct vocabulary especially at the end of the key stage has made a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

87. By the time they reach the end of the key stage pupils know how to make predictions about their work. They understand the importance of fair testing, and can use correct scientific language to describe their work. They can alter electrical circuits so as to vary the brightness of bulbs, and understand the factors, which cause the brightness to change. They are also developing their understanding of properties of light and the functions of lenses. They compare the workings of the human eye with those of a lens. However a number of pupils have difficulty in interpreting questions and in making hypotheses.
88. As they get older the pupils are given opportunities to develop their investigative skills. From the youngest classes they learn to discuss what they think will happen in an experiment, and to consider whether tests are fair. In order to further improve standards the school intends to continue to develop this approach, so that the use of investigations is more fully integrated at all stages.
89. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is at present unsatisfactory. Teachers generally do not make use of information and communication technology to support the work and so potential opportunities to use appropriate software are not exploited. In planning their work in science teachers do not generally identify points at which pupils could benefit from working at the computer, so as to support or extend activities.
90. The school has good facilities for the teaching of environmental science. An attractive garden has been developed, and the school also has a range of mature trees, shrubs and hedges which attract wildlife and give pupils direct experience of a wide variety of plant and animal life, all easily accessible from their classrooms.
91. The teaching of science is good overall, particularly in Years 3 and 6. Good teaching methods are used, so that lessons are purposeful and well paced. Pupils of all abilities are given work, which is appropriate to their needs and abilities and thus they achieve well. Teachers generally choose interesting and enjoyable practical activities, which promote pupils' enjoyment of science. Work is well planned, and teachers generally have satisfactory subject knowledge. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils are learning about how sounds are made. They enjoy experimenting with various musical instruments and the teacher uses questions well, and gives pupils a chance to express their opinions. A very good learning environment is created. In most lessons observed during the inspection teachers missed opportunities for using information and communication technology, and this was a negative aspect of the teaching seen. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and are supported well; both by their class teachers and by well-directed support staff, and they are therefore able to participate fully in the work of the class.
92. In general teachers use correct scientific language well, so as to enhance pupils' language skills. This work makes a positive contribution to the basic literacy skills of all pupils. Opportunities are also given for pupils to develop their basic numeracy skills by using graphs and tables to record the results of their investigations. In the majority of lessons observed pupils are well managed and behaviour is good. There is a tendency in a very few lessons for inattentive behaviour on the part of a very small minority of pupils to be ignored, and this can at times create an unsettled atmosphere, which on a very few occasions hinders learning for the whole class. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively, and appropriate records are kept.
93. At present some science is planned as part of cross-curricular topics and some as subject science lessons. This leads to confusion in teachers' planning, and the school is working towards a more subject-based approach when new curriculum plans are brought in next year.
94. The combination of good teaching, and the provision of interesting and stimulating activities together promotes good learning at all stages. Pupils therefore acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well throughout the school. Because the work is generally well matched to

their interests and abilities, pupils learn to concentrate well. In a lesson on sound, for example, pupils are amazed when they see the vibrations of a tuning fork cause water to splash. The special feeling, which they experience, contributes to their appreciation of the wonders of science. They show interest and enthusiasm for what they are doing, and learn to work independently when given opportunities. Because they are well motivated, pupils show good intellectual, physical and creative effort in their work. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are effectively supported, and so they too learn well.

95. The subject is well co-ordinated and managed. The co-ordinator is appropriately qualified and experienced, and has worked hard to organise resources and provide support for colleagues. Resources are of good quality, easily accessible, and effectively organised. Due consideration is given to safety issues. The school's science curriculum is enriched by a variety of visits for pupils in different age groups. These include visits to the Snibstone Discovery Park in Leicester, and Blithfield Reservoir, where aspects of the water cycle are studied.

ART

96. Pupils' attainment in art is average. Pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. No lessons in art were observed during the inspection. Sufficient evidence was available from the pupils' previous work, discussions with pupils and teachers, to allow judgements to be made. Standards in the last report were similar to those seen at present.
97. The Year 6 pupils study William Morris and after looking carefully at his work they draw and print designs in his style demonstrating good observational drawing skills. They clearly enjoy their work and are keen to improve showing a good level of interest and enthusiasm for this period of art. Throughout the key stage the pupils build appropriately upon the skills and techniques that they have learnt earlier, particularly in drawing and painting. Art often supports other subjects such as history and geography. For example, the pupils in Year 4 design and draw Viking shields with symmetrical patterns. Pupils in Year 3 research Queen Boudicca in their study of the Romans and draw her portrait. While support of other areas of the curriculum provides consolidation of learning in these areas and opportunities for pupils to develop their drawing skills, insufficient opportunities are presented for pupils to work in three dimensions or to make choices of materials to work with. However, some members of the bird club have made and painted detailed clay models of good quality from clay.
98. The staff have sound subject knowledge, and guidance. The co-ordinator is an art specialist and has good subject knowledge, but is not allocated time to monitor the subject across the school. The scheme of work is in line to be reviewed in the light of the new requirements of the curriculum. Work in the school is displayed appropriately and when the pupils talk about their work it is clear that they are proud of it and enjoy seeing it displayed. There is no whole school assessment system for recording pupils' attainment and progress in art, which limits the extent to which the school is able to assess the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The resources for art are satisfactory overall and appropriately stored, however there are insufficient books and prints of other artists work. The accommodation in the temporary classrooms, which have no water and limited space for pupils to move around, restricts pupils' progress in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Pupils attain average standards. During the course of the inspection only one lesson of design and technology was seen, therefore judgement is based on scrutiny of the policy, pupil's work

displayed about the school and in classrooms together with discussion with pupils, the co-ordinator and staff. Standards are similar to those previously reported.

100. During the one lesson observed pupils were asked to design a healthy eating game. Teaching was good and learning, attainment and attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory.
101. The scheme of work shows a general progression in skills of designing and making. Staff use effectively their assessment of pupils' work during the lessons to further pupils' understanding and skills. Design and technology is taught as part of either topic or science lessons and each teacher assesses pupils' work at the end of the topic. However their development of skills is not part of a school assessment system, which limits teachers' in knowing the overall development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Thus teachers are unable to fully inform the next teacher of pupils' achievements over time. A lack of a school assessment system and regular checking of teaching and learning have led to some inconsistencies in practice between classes. Design and technology is used by the teachers to support a range of subjects in the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4, make Viking helmets by folding paper. Other pupils make three-dimensional structures to test the strength of apparently fragile structures. This was linked appropriately to work on electricity pylons. However, all pupils tend to make the same artefacts following similar designs, which inhibits their ability to solve design problems and to make an appropriate choice of materials.
102. At present there is no coordinator. The subject lacks depth and breadth. There is insufficient rigour in systematic implementation and planning for the appropriate development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The policy and guidelines for design and technology is presently under review. When this is complete it is anticipated that in-service training will take place to ensure all staff have a better understanding of the requirements of the subject.
103. A practical area has been designated for teaching design and technology and storage is available for resources. The range of resources is adequate for construction of products but there were no products available for pupils to disassemble and investigate their structure.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Only a limited number of lessons were available to be seen during the inspection week. Judgements are made from discussions with the teacher overseeing work in geography, talking to pupils, the scrutiny of work completed last term and displays across the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their learning. Standards and pupils' progress was similar to the last report
105. There is satisfactory development of mapping skills through the geography studied in topic work. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have some knowledge of direction and symbols in maps but do not know how to use scale. Map drawing skills lack precision and attention to clear and accurate presentation. Pupils' understanding of various and contrasting communities in England and the impact of development on the environment is in line with that which is expected of pupils of this age. However, they know less about the location of countries on a world map or using an atlas. A number of pupils have travelled to Asia and make sensible comparisons about their country with England.
106. Overall, the teaching of the few lessons observed was good. The pupils' attitude and behaviour is satisfactory overall. In the Year 6 lesson where pupils were asked to make judgements on a local environmental issue from newspaper reports, the teacher had identified clear learning objectives and had high expectations of pupils. The pace of learning in this lesson is brisk and the attitude of pupils positive. When teachers do not identify the

geographical skills to be developed and expectations of pupils not made clear, the pace of learning is slow and too many pupils are not actively involved. The absence of a planned and systematic development of geographical skills slows the rate of pupils' learning and progress. Pupils' experiences include practical work in the local area and field study work in contrasting locations studied during residential visits. For example, pupils in Year 5 compare Walsall with the rural town of Bridgenorth and the local area is studied during the residential visit to Wales.

107. Resources for teaching the subject are good and easily accessed. At this time there is no named co-ordinator for the subject, which limits the development of the subject across the school.

HISTORY

108. Standards in history are similar to those seen in the majority of schools and pupils' attainment is average by the age of eleven. Only a few lessons were seen during the inspection and judgements were also made by talking to staff and pupils and looking at pupils' past work. Pupils including those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their learning. Standards and pupils' progress are similar to those previously reported.

109. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have studied all the required units of history curriculum. They have a satisfactory awareness of Ancient Greek society, can describe the life style of rich, poor and slaves and are able to describe the different characteristics of various city states. They respond well to questions and have some interest in the past. However, their knowledge and understanding of chronology is limited having only a limited awareness of the order of historical events.

110. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the better lessons, teachers have identified precise learning objectives and make good use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking about the subject. In Year 3 pupils were asked to use different sources of evidence to build up a portrait of Queen Boudicca. In some lessons when teachers' expectations are insufficiently high and the pace of work is slow, pupils are less positive in their work and learning is slow. There is an absence of a systematic development of skills in the subject, which prevents good levels of learning by pupils.

111. School displays of the areas of history studied are mostly of paintings of historical artefacts but do little to extend pupils' knowledge of the subject. Resources, including books in the library, are of good quality and are well organised. There is no co-ordinator at present which hinders the development of the subject across the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information and communication technology are well below average. Many areas of the curriculum are either omitted or given only partial coverage. Standards were average at the time of the last inspection. However the school has not improved its teaching and use of information and communication technology in line with the national trend. The extent to which pupils are given experience of information and communication technology activities is variable, and there is no means of tracking or recording pupils' involvement in, or understanding of, the different aspects of information and communication technology.

113. In communicating and handling information, pupils are given some opportunities to convey information; mostly through basic word-processing. There is also opportunity to use simple software for drawing. However, skills in these areas are not developed systematically.

The other aspects of communicating and handling information are covered from time to time; for instance, such as when pupils have opportunities to seek information using CD-ROM based resources, or by searching on the Internet. These activities have recently been given more attention but are still in the early stages of development.

114. The controlling, monitoring and modelling aspect of information and communication technology is largely absent from the curriculum. Some isolated activities in these areas have been undertaken, but not such as to constitute a coherent curriculum. Opportunities to use information and communication technology to monitor external events, or to control programmable toys through series of instructions have been, for the most part, absent. The use of simulation packages to explore different variables and the use of information technology to predict outcomes have also been given insufficient attention.
115. Scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils all show that standards are well below average. By the time the pupils reach the end of the key stage, their knowledge and understanding of communicating and handling information using information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. They are well below average in controlling, monitoring and modelling.
116. There have been several developments in the subject over the last two years that indicate that the school has begun to address these shortcomings. A new co-ordinator was appointed 18 months ago and she has a good overview of the subject and clear plans to take it forward. Much has already been done to improve the school's resources and pupils' access to them. Some £7500 has been spent on new hardware and software during the last two years and a further £4000 has been earmarked for next year. Each class now has an up-to-date computer system including printers. There are plans for a new information and communications technology suite but these are dependent on additional building work, which has yet to be approved by the Local Education Authority. Because of the recent prioritisation of literacy and numeracy, opportunities for in-service training have been limited.
117. The coordinator has also undertaken a survey of current practice and set up a staff 'surgery' to deal with teachers' problems. Some in-service training activities have been run for staff. For instance, personal skills development sessions have been held on how to operate e-mail systems.
118. During the inspection only a small number of lessons with small groups of pupils took place. Consequently, it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching overall. However, some members of staff lack confidence and expertise in the subject. During the inspection week many examples were seen where opportunities for using information and communication technology to support work across the curriculum were not taken. In many lessons the computer was either switched off, or, although switched on, was unused throughout the lesson, even though its use would have made a useful contribution to pupils' learning. In contrast to this there were also times when some teachers showed imagination and understanding. For instance, Year 3 pupils typed their names on the computer during registration, and a complete list is printed out when the register was completed. This gave pupils an opportunity to practice keyboard skills, as well as seeing a practical application for the subject. Staff who work with special educational needs pupils in Year 4 for instance and those who work with pupils who have English as an additional language make good use of the computers to support their teaching and develop the pupils' skills.
119. At present the understanding is lacking of how the computer could be used in different situations, and how the development of skills can be linked to work in all subjects of the curriculum in a significant number of classes. Examples were seen, however, during the inspection, to the contrary, where some teachers had clear ideas about how to make good use

of the computer and did so. It is evident therefore that the skills needed to improve this aspect are already available in the school. Ways could be found to spread this expertise, so that all staff can become proficient.

120. When they are given opportunities to undertake information and communication technology activities pupils show positive attitudes. Many have computers at home and so are familiar with the basic operations involved. They show interest and enthusiasm for what they are doing, and can sustain their concentration well when working away from the teacher. In most classes, however, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop these positive attitudes.

MUSIC

121. By the time they reach the end of the key stage pupils are achieving standards, which are similar to those, found in other schools. At the time of the school's last inspection standards in music were found to be better than the national expectation, and so the current findings indicate a fall in standards. During the inspection lessons were observed involving pupils from all year groups, some whole class teaching and some instrumental group work taught by peripatetic staff from the Local Education Authority music service. Peripatetic staff provide instrumental teaching of strings, brass and woodwind, and the school is appreciative of the work of the local authority music service.
122. In the younger classes pupils develop their understanding of the elements of music. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils sing from memory. They are learning to control the sounds of their voices, as well as a variety of untuned instruments with which they accompany the singing. They are learning to control pitch, dynamics and breathing. In rehearsing, performing and sharing their music making they are showing enjoyment and enthusiasm. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils are showing an understanding of texture and dynamics in their music making. They can clap and play percussion instruments, developing different rhythm patterns. Most pupils can create a planned musical effect by using structured sounds.
123. The teaching of music is good overall. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject and they communicate their enthusiasm to their pupils. The work is clearly planned and teachers use appropriate teaching methods well, so as to promote pupils' physical, intellectual and creative effort. Time and resources are used well.
124. Overall pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. There is much good learning, but this is sometimes undermined by inappropriate behaviour on the part of a minority of pupils in a very few lessons. This behaviour is sometimes allowed to go uncorrected, and thus has a detrimental effect on the learning of the class as a whole.
125. The great majority of pupils enjoy music and participate with enthusiasm. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils are given opportunities to sing, play instruments and dance. Pupils of all abilities find the work enjoyable, and they join in well. The choice of a song from the Caribbean gives pupils experience of music from another culture.
126. The co-ordinator has a clear sense of direction of the subject, and there is an awareness of the need to develop composition further. Some work has been done on this area by the Local Education Authority music service staff with the Year 6 pupils. The school's present scheme of work has too much emphasis on singing, and not enough on composing. The co-ordinator has identified a need to rewrite parts of the scheme so as to remedy weaknesses and to ensure that best use is made of limited curriculum time for the subject.

127. Music is used in a variety of ways in the day-to-day life of the school. Music is often used in assemblies, and pupils are told about composers and their lives. Pupils have been involved in a variety of musical activities such as concerts at the town hall, musical productions in school at Christmas and in July. Groups of pupils play in assemblies from time to time. Whilst much good work has been done in this area the school should examine further ways in which music can be used to enrich the life of the school. Ways should also be found to reflect a wider range of cultures through music.
128. As well as the instrumental classes taught by the local authority music service staff, the school also runs extra-curricular recorder and ocarina clubs. These also make a worthwhile contribution to the life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Lessons were observed in gymnastics, dance, games and swimming during the week of the inspection. Plans show that all requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are met. Pupils' attainment, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress overall to attain standards that are normally expected from pupils of similar ages. This is a good improvement from the last report.
130. Year 3 pupils are improving dance skills, controlling and comprising movements by varying direction, level and gestures. They repeat a previously performed series of movements with increasing control. For games Year 3 pupils have improved their striking, fielding and scoring skills and play fairly an adapted game of rounders. Year 4 pupils know how to link a series of gymnastic actions to produce a more complex sequence. They continue these movements using the apparatus of mats, boxes, balancing stands and benches. Year 5 pupils improve their games skills by batting balls correctly and accurately in the right direction. During gymnastic activities they curl and stretch at different levels, balance and roll building up into a sequence of movements. Year 6 improve, develop and practise the correct way of hitting a ball in preparation for volleyball. For gymnastics all pupils improved a series of actions both on the floor and on the apparatus.
131. Year 4 pupils make good progress in swimming because they receive good quality tuition. Approximately three quarters of the pupils are competent swimmers who are developing good swimming techniques. All were very confident in the water with the backstroke. Most were capable and confident swimming underwater. Approximately half of the pupils from being non-swimmers are on line to achieve at least 25 metres by the end of this academic year. Parents help to supervise the pupils during changing and transport.
132. Pupils enjoy physical education throughout the school. Most pupils listen attentively, behave well, are keen to explore tasks set and work successfully. They put out apparatus enthusiastically but safely. Routines are well established. Occasionally pupils display unacceptable behaviour by not listening to the teaching. Too many pupils are excluded from lessons mainly because they have forgotten to bring their kit.
133. The overall quality of teaching is good. Most successful teachers set high expectations and make regular use of demonstrations by pupils to illustrate good practice. Throughout most lessons a good pace of work is maintained and appropriate apparatus provided.
134. Since the last report in-service training has been given to all staff. The Local Education adviser has supported staff by observing lessons and giving positive feedback. The school has good detailed planning with schemes for all three areas of PE and assessment including evaluation of lesson plans. Also a good swimming policy with very helpful

guidelines has been produced. The school provides some extra-curricular activities, which are well supported by pupils; a mixed football team and netball team with inter-league matches. An inter-school field sports day and swimming gala are held annually. Pupils prepare, compose and perform dances for the annual Dance Festival. Outdoor and adventurous activities for year 6 are catered for at Bryntysilio, Walsall's Residential Centre for outdoor education. Year 3 has canoeing and athletics provided at the Woodlands Activity Centre.

135. The co-ordinator is newly appointed to this subject and is now developing and supporting all aspects of it. Resources for the subject are good overall with much new equipment bought recently. The school has good facilities for both indoor and outdoor activities. There is a hall with climbing frames and accommodation for storage. Outside there is a large playing field and playground.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have made satisfactory progress overall and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last report.

137. Throughout the school, pupils show some understanding of festivals and celebrations in the Christian and other major faiths. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of religious concepts through stories from the Bible. They know about Old Testament characters, for example, Noah, and about the Creation, the miracles of Jesus and the significance of Christmas and Easter. Year 3 pupils know about being Christian and understand Christian beliefs. They experience traditional church music Handel's Messiah and contrast it with pop church music. Year 4 pupils listen to the story of the curing of the ten lepers and discuss trusting in God. Year 5 pupils explore the origin of Holy Communion and its importance to Christian people today. They contribute their own experiences and are interested in looking at Christian artefacts; for example, a chalice. Year 6 pupils know the Christian perspective for the festival of Easter by watching a video about the Crucifixion and discussing the story later.

138. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, which is represented well in lessons. Year 3 pupils study Sikhism, Year 4 pupils study Islam and Year 5 pupils study Hinduism. Year 5 pupils know the story of Rana and Sita and the significance of 'mendi patterns'. Year 5 pupils visited a Temple for celebration of Diwali last November. Pupils are interested in finding out and comparing religious festivals and celebrations and respond well to their work. Most show a willingness to join in discussion, offer their own ideas, and are attentive to the stories. However, pupils record their work mainly on worksheets, which offer little scope for pupils to write at length about their own experiences.

139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. One lesson was unsatisfactory, as the teacher did not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the pupils. A visiting qualified teacher leads most of the religious lessons with support from the class teacher. Some good use is made of pupils' own experiences and clear explanations are given. Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to discuss their religious beliefs. Although pupils learn about beliefs, stories and festivals of other major faiths, the school the customs and festivals of other faiths, are studied in less depth. Acts of collective worship contribute effectively to religious education. At an assembly about Easter, some pupils showed surprise and excitement when a series of Russian eggs decreasing in size were contained within one egg and then displayed. An interesting assembly explained the Muslim New Year with a story

from the Koran about, 'the man who had no shoes'. Muslim pupils are visibly proud that their religion was the theme of this assembly.

140. The school is revising its policy and guidelines in line with the revised agreed syllabus for Walsall. The co-ordinator, a newly qualified teacher, is enthusiastic and plans to improve all aspects of the subject and teachers' assessment and recording procedures. The school receives support and visits from local clergy. Resources including artefacts are satisfactory.