

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dudley, West Midlands

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103831

Headteacher: Mr M W T Millman

Reporting inspector: Mr Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: 8th -11th May 2000

Inspection number: 191403

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cedar Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Taylor

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Nelson	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it? What could the school do to improve further? The schools' results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed?
Liz Halls	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Nina Bee	Team inspector	Art Areas of learning for children under five Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning
John Collier	Team inspector	Science Music	How well are pupils taught?
Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	Geography History Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
Joyce Cox	Team inspector	English	Assessment
Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	Information technology Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils	593
Pupils with English as an additional language	0.2% which is low
Pupils entitled to free school meals	29.5% which is above average
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	30% which is above average.

This is a very large infant and junior school with a nursery unit serving the Priory Estate of Dudley. Most of the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage with a small proportion of ethnic minority pupils. The high proportion of pupils who leave or join the school part way through Key Stage 2 has a negative impact on test results at the end of the key stage. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school in several respects. The school is good at getting parents to value learning and achieve educational qualifications for themselves and at ensuring the welfare and well-being of its pupils. It is less successful at raising attainment in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with generally good teaching at Key Stage 1, but teaching is unsatisfactory in one in ten lessons at Key Stage 2. While leadership is satisfactory overall, there are some weaknesses in the way the school is managed. Given a generous level of funding, it provides unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Promotes very good links with parents and the local community.
- Has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance.
- Has good procedures for ensuring the welfare and well-being of its pupils.
- Makes good provision for the social, moral and cultural development of pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading at Key Stage 1, and in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.
- The quality and consistency of teaching at Key Stage 2.
- The effectiveness and impact of the senior management team.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The quality of teaching is much better than when the school was last inspected in January 1997 but remains inconsistent at Key Stage 2. Levels of attendance have improved since the last inspection. The school has improved the provision for information technology and it now meets statutory requirements. It has improved achievement in history, geography, design and technology, information technology, physical education and music, which were criticised last time. It has raised attainment in writing at Key Stage 1. It has not raised standards enough in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2, or reading at Key Stage 1. It has yet to improve assessment procedures in these subjects and ensure that monitoring teaching and learning by senior management leads to sustained improvements in standards at Key Stage 2. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	E	D
Mathematics	E	D	E	E
Science	E	B	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that standards in the 1999 tests for 11-year olds in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average. When compared to standards of schools with similar pupils the standards in English and science were below average and in mathematics they were well below average. Standards in 1999 show no improvement upon those attained in 1997. While standards nationally have risen over the last three years in all three subjects, standards at Priory improved in 1998 in English and science before falling back again. In mathematics they have got worse over the three years. Even taking into account those pupils who join and leave the school during Key Stage 2, the school is still not improving standards as fast as the national rate of improvement. The school has set targets for the year 2000 tests which are realistic rather than challenging, and are well below last year's national average. The standards of work seen during the inspection confirm that attainment at Key Stage 2 is well below average in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 1 standards in reading are below average, while standards in writing and in science are close to the average. In mathematics they are below average. In religious education, information technology, art, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education, achievement is average at both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to school and work well in their lessons but a minority do not.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory for most pupils but with a minority whose behaviour is unsatisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are generally good and pupils get on well when given responsibilities. Most pupils are polite and well mannered.
Attendance	Although attendance is below average it is improving due to the efforts of the school.

Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work, behave sensibly and are polite and well mannered. A significant minority, particularly in years 3 and 5, have unsatisfactory attitudes to their work and their behaviour disrupts lessons and affects the pace of learning. Overall relationships are good but occasionally some pupils are insensitive to the needs of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory in most subjects, including English and mathematics, and most pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. However as they start from such a low base they still leave school with standards well below average. In geography, history, physical education and religious education teaching seen during the inspection was good. In 94% of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better and in 10% it was very good. In 39% teaching was good. In 6% of lessons teaching was less than satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 there was only one unsatisfactory lesson, but at Key Stage 2 10% of lessons were unsatisfactory and teaching is inconsistent across the key stage. Teaching is better at Key Stage 1 and as a result standards are beginning to rise in writing and mathematics. In the best lessons pupils are expected to behave well and work hard and they respond well to these expectations and learn effectively. Learning in Key Stage 2 is affected by the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils in a few classes who affect the pace of learning of the whole class. While the teaching of literacy and numeracy is largely satisfactory there is not enough emphasis on basic skills, which need constantly reinforcing with many of these pupils. Many find difficulty in retaining what they have been taught and although they can complete exercises they cannot transfer their learning easily to other contexts. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make satisfactory progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall though less time is devoted to English than in many schools. The school has maintained a broad curriculum covering all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are supported effectively in classes and in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for spiritual development and good opportunities for social, moral and cultural development of pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. While provision for pupils' welfare and well-being is good, procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory.

The school has a very good partnership with the parents and most recognise the value of education. Pupils are well cared for and the school places a strong emphasis on pupils' welfare and safety. However it does not have effective procedures in place to assess and record their progress in English and mathematics.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall, but with weaknesses in terms of the impact of the senior management team on standards at Key Stage 2.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The school has a committed and hard working governing body which knows the school well but needs clear ways of evaluating the effectiveness of management decisions and new initiatives.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management team has a sound view of the school's strengths and weaknesses but needs a clearer focus on whether its decisions actually improve those weaknesses they are meant to address.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall but the school does not make the most effective use of its most senior teachers to raise standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.

Overall leadership is satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators work hard and have improved achievement in some of the subjects criticised in the last report. The senior management team, while having a sound view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, does not effectively evaluate the impact of its decisions on those weaknesses. The school has enough qualified staff for the number of pupils. The non-teaching staff make an effective contribution to pupils' learning through their support in lessons. The accommodation is good and includes spare classrooms which are used effectively for sets of pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. Staff work hard to make the school attractive and welcoming. Resources are satisfactory. The senior staff and governors have a satisfactory understanding of the principles of best value and are seeking training on how to apply them effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons. • Homework provision.

Out of 590 questionnaires sent to parents 311 were returned. The inspection team agrees with the parents that their children like school and that they are mostly expected to work hard and do their best. The team finds that teaching and the progress pupils make is satisfactory overall rather than good. The school provides a good range of activities outside of lessons and provides an adequate amount of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The children enter the nursery with low levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress in their learning but by the time they enter the reception classes they are still well below average in their language and number skills and in what they know, understand and can do. Because of the predominantly good teaching in reception most children make good progress. Even so they enter Key Stage 1 with below average attainment and few meet the national targets for the age group.

2 The results of the 1999 national tests for seven year olds show standards in reading and mathematics to be well below average and standards in writing to be average. Over the last three years this shows a good rate of improvement in writing where standards were well below average in the tests in 1997. Tests show that there has been no improvement in the standard of reading and that standards in mathematics have declined when compared to results nationally. When compared to the results of schools with similar pupils standards in reading and mathematics are average and standards in writing are well above average. Standards in writing have risen much faster than standards nationally. Standards in reading have risen in line with national improvements. Standards in mathematics have got worse while national standards have risen.

3 The 1999 national tests for eleven year olds show that standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average. When compared to the results of schools with similar pupils standards in English and science are below average and standards in mathematics are well below average. Standards show no improvement on those attained in the 1997 tests when compared to national results. Standards did rise in all three subjects in the 1998 tests but fell back in 1999. Over the last three years standards in English and science have been erratic. They showed a good improvement in 1998 before dropping back again in 1999. In mathematics standards have declined since 1996. Overall standards are not rising anywhere near as fast as standards nationally. The school has set targets for the year 2000 which are realistic rather than challenging and which are still well below the current national averages.

4 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards achieving the targets set for them. The systems for identifying the needs of these pupils enable staff to define appropriate targets and support, both in lessons and in small groups outside normal lessons. The setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy in the upper Key Stage 2 classes mean that most pupils with special educational needs receive adequate support and work suited to their learning needs. Apart from setting for literacy and numeracy lessons the school has no structured systems for identifying and supported talented and gifted pupils. There is a very small minority of pupils within the school for whom English is an additional language. None of the pupils is at the early stages of learning English. They are developing their speaking and writing skills well, and this enables most pupils to work at similar levels, to the rest of the class. Achievement is steady, and the pupils make sound progress as they gain greater confidence and competence with their skills in English. Girls' attainment in Key Stage 2 is poorer than boys, The school has looked at ways of improving this. For example when purchasing a new scheme for mathematics, the particular needs of girls was considered.

5 Attainment in speaking and listening is below average at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and pay attention to what their teachers tell them. Higher attaining pupils answer questions with an appropriate amount of detail as in

discussing texts in literacy sessions, for example. However, many pupils have difficulty in expressing their ideas and use only single words or short phrases in their responses. At Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to debate and discuss their work but many find this difficult. They lack the breadth of language to be able to express themselves fluently in subjects like science, for example, and they struggle to support their ideas and opinions by giving reasons for them. Some higher attaining pupils do acquire a reasonable knowledge of words in some lessons like those who learned terms such as 'sonnet' and 'limerick' in a literacy session in year 6.

6 Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and progress in learning is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1 most pupils have too few ways to tackle new words. Although they know the names of letters they do not connect them with the sounds and so cannot sound out unknown words. They have difficulty in understanding their reading books and cannot predict what might happen next in a story. They lack confidence and rely heavily upon adult support in their reading. Only a small number of pupils are reaching the expected standard in reading by year 2. By the end of Key Stage 2 only a few pupils are reading fluently, though without expression. Very few pupils of this age can discuss favourite books and authors and many have great difficulty in understanding words and texts. Although many pupils can explain how to select a book from the school library, few have the skills needed to find relevant information from such books, through skimming and scanning text for instance. Their poor reading skills have an adverse impact on their learning in some subjects. Although some pupils might have the knowledge and understanding in subjects like science and mathematics their lack of ability to read the questions set hinders their progress.

7 Attainment in writing is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make satisfactory progress, but by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is well below average and progress is unsatisfactory. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive impact on standards of writing at Key Stage 1 but not at Key Stage 2. The majority of year 2 pupils write interestingly with accurate spelling and punctuation and the handwriting of higher attaining pupils is neat and joined. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils have great difficulty in combining neat handwriting, accurate spelling and punctuation and interesting text in their writing. Some higher attaining pupils can write well, producing good accounts of life at sea from the perspective of a crew member of the *Mary Celeste* for instance. However, too many pupils do not have the skills, knowledge or understanding to make satisfactory progress. This is partly because teachers do not have a clear idea of pupils' levels of understanding in order to set work closely targeted to their learning needs. For example the work scrutiny showed that that there is no consistent approach to the teaching of spelling or handwriting at Key Stage 2 with all the pupils in a class being given the same spelling list to learn regardless of their different levels of attainment. Overall standards seen during the inspection reflect the findings of the 1999 national tests. Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 and in reading and writing at Key Stage 2 have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

8 Standards in mathematics seen in the inspection were average at the end of Key Stage 1 but well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact at Key Stage 1 but not at Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection pupils at Key Stage 1 have improved their confidence with mental mathematics and explain how they work things out in their head. They are beginning to understand place value, have a sound knowledge of multiples of ten, and know the correct terms for units of measurement. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are well below average. The previous report said that findings were broadly average so this represents a decline in standards since then. Standards in basic skills and mental calculation are well below average. Pupils understand the relationship between simple fractions and decimals but they do not understand the equivalence of fractions. Lower attaining pupils need help in

reading the problems they are set because of their poor literacy skills. These also hinder progress in working on graphs as pupils find difficulty in understanding what is expected of them.

9 Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are close to the national average and show a slight improvement over the standards indicated by the teacher assessments last year. The improvement is due to some good teaching and a revised scheme of work, which sets out clearly the work to be covered. Year 2 pupils know what they need for a healthy diet, sort mini-beasts according to agreed groupings and complete a simple electrical circuit to make a bulb light up. Progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall and pupils are better at remembering past work than they were at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are still well below average and there has been no sustained improvement since the last inspection. Discussions with older pupils about their work show that while they have been taught satisfactorily they have difficulty in retaining the information and need external prompts to trigger their memories. They know about food chains and understand that salt dissolves in water and can be retrieved through evaporation. They carry out simple investigations, for example holding a tuning fork to water to show the vibrations which cause the sound. They are reluctant however to use proper scientific terms like 'dissolve' and 'evaporate' and their poor literacy skills hamper their progress and have a significant impact in written tests.

10 Progress in English, mathematics and science is unsatisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1 progress is generally satisfactory except for reading. At Key Stage 2, while satisfactory progress is made in most lessons, there is a significant proportion, around 10%, where progress is less than satisfactory. Inconsistent teaching across the key stage and the pupils' poor ability to retain what they have learned mean that standards are not rising as fast as standards nationally. The school's figures show that the movement of pupils into and out of the school during Key Stage 2 does have the effect of lowering overall standards and that pupils who stay at the school throughout the key stage generally improve their attainment satisfactorily by around two National Curriculum levels over four years. The school is a long way from keeping pace with the national rates of improvement, even taking the figures of just those pupils who remain at the school throughout the whole of Key Stage 2.

11 Standards in information technology and religious education are satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use the mouse accurately, print out their work and use correctly terms related to the computer. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in mixing pictures and text and in choosing appropriate font sizes. In religious education pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and the other world religions that they study. By year 6 they use religious terminology with reasonable confidence. Achievement in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are broadly satisfactory at both key stages. The last report said that that standards were below average in information technology, and music at both key stages, in history at Key Stage 1 and in geography and design and technology at Key Stage 2. The school has made good progress in these subjects. The school has sustained satisfactory standards in the other subjects at both key stages. The subject co-ordinators have worked hard to provide effective support and guidance in order to raise achievement where it was criticised last time. The school now needs to do the same with reading at Key Stage 1 and with English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.

12 Although the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented in the school and are having some positive impact at Key Stage 1 they are not leading to sustained improvements at Key Stage 2. Literacy, numeracy and information technology skills are used in some other subjects but there are many opportunities which are missed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13 Most pupils like coming to school and settle quickly into lessons and activities. They mainly show positive attitudes to their learning and behave well in and around the school. At the meeting prior to the inspection, and in their questionnaires, parents were happy with the attitudes and behaviour of their children. Most pupils, including those with behavioural or special educational needs, respond well to the school's rules and emphasis on positive behaviour and some parents choose to send their children because of this. Most pupils behave well around the school and in the playground. They are friendly and well mannered, kind and considerate. In lessons behaviour is generally satisfactory and sometimes better. In a year 5 design and technology lesson, for example, pupils worked very well independently of the teacher while she supervised a small group using tools. However, there are some classes in Key Stage 2 where a significant minority of pupils have negative attitudes, behave inappropriately and do not respond well to their teachers. This is usually linked to inconsistent implementation of the school's assertive discipline procedures. For example in design and technology lessons in year 3 pupils' behaviour disrupts some lessons and impedes the quality of learning. There were two fixed-period and one permanent exclusions in the last school year. The majority of pupils develop good personal skills and when given the opportunity work well both independently and co-operatively in groups. Since the last inspection the school has sustained generally good behaviour.

14 Relationships are good throughout the school. The pupils form good relationships with one another and the staff of the school. They respond well to the help and guidance available to them. Bullying or harassment are rare and parents and pupils report that any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively.

15 Most pupils make good progress in their personal development. They are eager and willing to take responsibility in class and in activities around the school; for example showing new pupils or visitors around the school. Monitors carry out their duties conscientiously and their active involvement helps support the school community. When given the opportunity, pupils work well independently and take responsibility for their own learning; for example a small group of pupils used the computer to research switches and electrical circuits. However, some of the younger pupils have not used the new library this year.

16 Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. Most absence is authorised and due to sickness or holidays taken during term time. Where an individual's attendance gives cause for concern the school works closely with the educational welfare service. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and has successfully raised attendance levels since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 Teaching is satisfactory in the school as a whole with 94% of lessons being judged sound or better. Of these, 39% are good and 10% are very good. The percentage of lessons that are less than satisfactory has dropped from 27% at the last inspection to 6% now. This is a significant improvement. The number of very good lessons has remained the same. The good and very good teaching is spread amongst all subjects and between the key stages. In geography, history, physical education and religious education the teaching seen during the inspection was mainly good. Teaching in the nursery is at least satisfactory with 18% of lessons seen being good. In the reception class containing children who are under five, four out of five lessons are good or better. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good overall with 53% of lessons being judged as good or better, of which 10% are very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. In Key Stage 2, there is a less consistent pattern and a wider variation in teaching quality. 10% of lessons here were less than satisfactory including

one that was poor; 38% were good and 11% very good. Teaching in this key stage is satisfactory overall.

18 Teachers generally have a secure grasp of the subjects that they are teaching. Only one lesson was judged unsatisfactory because of lack of expertise and this was in music. Teachers conduct literacy and numeracy lessons to the recommended structure and timing and plan the work using the national strategies. This is enabling most pupils in Key Stage 1 to learn effectively and acquire the expected levels of knowledge and understanding in most subjects, except for reading, by the time that they are seven. However the teaching of basic skills is not consistent or sustained throughout the school. In particular there is no common policy for improving spelling and handwriting and phonic knowledge is not always developed in reading to help with the recognition of unknown words, which is why learning slows in Key Stage 2. This is partly due to the technical language needed to make progress in subjects such as science. The required vocabulary is outside the experience of many pupils and teachers do not always appreciate that unfamiliar words and basic skills have to be continuously used and reinforced so that pupils can retain them. Some teachers are aware of this. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher clearly explained words like 'quotient' and 'multiple' and encouraged pupils to use them. Other subjects too have to contribute towards the development of literacy and numeracy skills but opportunities to do this are often missed, particularly in Key Stage 2. In a year 3 history lesson, for example, the worksheet was too difficult and many pupils could not read it. The opportunity to consolidate reading and comprehension skills, alongside knowledge and understanding of history, was therefore lost. Similarly, in science, some teachers ask pupils to copy work when their writing skills would be better developed by having the chance to write in their own words.

19 Teachers' planning is sound. Those in the same year-group plan together so that all pupils cover the same work. In the class that contains pupils from years 5 and 6, a special programme is drawn up so that each group has its own work. Weekly plans are developed from schemes of work that generally give good guidance on what is to be covered over time. Most teachers state clearly what it is that they want pupils to have learned by the end of a lesson. Occasionally the objective is too broad as in a year 3 geography lesson where the intention was 'to investigate places'. Some teachers share their learning intention with pupils at the start of the lesson. This is good practice and helps pupils to focus on the task. It also enables them to become more aware of their own learning, especially when the teacher returns to the objective at the end of the lesson and asks the pupils whether they have achieved the learning. Year 6 teachers are particularly good at this. In an art lesson, pupils were clear that they were contributing to a class mural and knew what part they were to play in its construction. Throughout the lesson they appraised their own work and that of others and could focus on the end product.

20 Some year-groups are split into ability sets for English and mathematics. This enables teachers to plan more easily the work that will meet the specific needs of pupils. In other lessons seen during the inspection, the majority of teachers planned different work for the various groups of pupils in their class. However, the analysis of work in books shows that this does not always happen. Science books, for example, reveal that, in some classes in Key Stage 2, all pupils, regardless of their ability, are given similar work, some of which is copied. In most lessons, however, teachers offer suitable challenges to pupils and expect them to be able to cope. In a year 2 music lesson there was a proper emphasis on improving the performance of a newly learned song. In a religious education lesson, the teacher had high expectations that children in her reception class could concentrate and listen closely to the story of Jairus's daughter. Occasionally work is too easy, as in two year 1 classes where the task in mathematics was finished in a matter of minutes and extension work had to be given. Pupils respond well to challenging work that holds their interest and maintains their levels of concentration. This is more noticeable in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 though it is satisfactory here too. Year 2 pupils are highly motivated when working on computers and

sensibly work in pairs, trying to solve their own problems and only asking the teacher for help as a last resort. By the end of the lesson they can access information from a CD-ROM using the *menu*, *index* and *search* facilities and have made very good progress.

21 Teachers in Key Stage 1 are generally effective in choosing teaching strategies that motivate pupils. In a year 1 physical education lesson, good use was made of pupils to demonstrate their tall, wide, curled and twisted shapes and others learned from this. In a history lesson in year 2, drama was used effectively to instigate a discussion about invaders. In Key Stage 2, a few teachers have difficulty in holding the attention of pupils and behaviour deteriorates. There are a significant number of pupils in years 3 and 5, for example, who need skilful handling. While some teachers implement the school's behaviour policy effectively to deal with those who step out of line, others are not always able to cope. This leads to lessons that are less than satisfactory. Some teachers compound the difficulties by planning activities that are too easy for pupils. In a science lesson, for example, pupils completed the task of measuring the height of a plant and then had nothing else to occupy their time. Other unsatisfactory lessons, in years 4 and 5, result from the disruptive behaviour of some pupils and the teachers' inability to deal with it effectively. This affects the learning of all pupils in the class and prevents them from completing sufficient work in the lesson. Most teachers are effective in managing pupils and in choosing activities that interest them. In a year 6 geography lesson, the hands-on experiment to illustrate river erosion gave pupils the opportunity to work responsibly with plaster-cast rocks and to complete the activity at a good pace.

22 Teachers prepare and use resources well in both key stages. In a year 2 design and technology lesson, the teacher provided a good range of puppets to give pupils ideas. Overhead projectors are often effectively employed, for example in a year 6 literacy lesson to display text. Key Stage 1 teachers in particular make good use of their support staff as in a year 1 literacy lesson to assess the responses of four pupils with special educational needs. Teachers of the younger pupils are also particularly good at maintaining a brisk pace in their lessons. In a year 2 mathematics lesson, there was a brisk mental maths session. This contrasted with a leisurely lesson in the same subject in year 1 where the task proved too easy for the pupils, the pace of learning was slow and the teaching was therefore judged unsatisfactory. At least two teachers in Key Stage 2 conducted introductions that were too long but generally lessons in this key stage are taken at a reasonable pace. Some teachers set time targets for work to be completed and this helps to keep pupils interested and involved. This happened in a year 6 lesson where pupils were designing a biscuit for a special occasion.

23 Many teachers begin their lessons by reviewing the learning that has taken place previously and this enables them to assess how much has been understood. By skilful questioning, they also assess how much is being learned in the lesson. In the final part of a religious education lesson in year 2, the teacher probed pupils' understanding of what constitutes a 'special place' through her questions. Marking of books however, as a means of assessing what has been learned, is inconsistent, particularly in Key Stage 2. In the best examples, the teachers write perceptive comments that support pupils and give suggestions on how work can be improved next time. Individual targets are rarely written out or agreed with pupils. Homework is given to all pupils and this is satisfactory. It is usually centred around English and mathematics but a year 2 group of higher attaining pupils was asked to find out at home what characterises an insect. This was to help them in sorting a collection of mini-beasts into groups in their science lesson.

24 The rate of learning of children who are under five is satisfactory overall. They make noticeable progress in their creative and physical development and in acquiring the expected personal and social skills but language and number skills are still below what is expected by the time they are five. In reception and Key Stage 1, learning accelerates, partly due to the

consistent teaching which is often good. In Key Stage 2, progress overall is satisfactory but in the important subjects of English, mathematics and science, learning is unsatisfactory due in part to inconsistent teaching and, in particular, to unsatisfactory standards of behaviour in a few classes. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. Provision for them is satisfactory and support staff, particularly in Key Stage 1, are deployed effectively to help them. When they are given particular help in withdrawal groups, they can make good progress. Thus pupils in year 5 were given work matched to their needs and practised spelling simple words like 'lollipop' by listening to the sounds of the letters.

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

25 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant enough to meet the needs of the pupils. The school teaches all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection when information technology did not meet statutory requirements. At the pre-inspection meeting some parents were concerned that the emphasis on literacy and numeracy might detract from other subjects. The inspection findings show that the school has improved some of those subjects which were criticised in the last inspection and has maintained the quality of the rest. The inspection team does not share the parents' concerns on this issue.

26 As well as teaching all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education the school also finds time for lessons in personal and social development at both key stages and economic and industrial awareness at Key Stage 2. However, in relation to other schools, too little time is spent on the teaching of English. This results in insufficient focus on the teaching of basic skills, particularly phonics. Despite the pressure to introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies the school has reviewed several of its subject policies and schemes of work, adopting some of the national guidelines and adapting them, with useful guidance added by the subject co-ordinators. They generally give clear guidance to teachers and help pupils to make satisfactory progress, as in design and technology for example. The provision for children under five is satisfactory and planned on the basis of the recommended areas of learning.

27 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school has clear procedures for identifying and assessing these pupils and most of their individual education plans contain specific targets for them to achieve, although in one or two plans the targets are too vague to be really helpful. Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through a planned programme of extra support. This includes additional help in the classrooms and in small groups withdrawn from normal lessons. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly with the full involvement of their parents. The school does not identify and support gifted and talented pupils in the same way, although it does set pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons in years 5 and 6.

28 Although the school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies the impact has not been sufficient to raise standards at Key Stage 2 and in reading at Key Stage 1. There is some evidence of literacy and numeracy skills being reinforced in other subject areas but this is inconsistent throughout the school and some good opportunities are missed.

29 All pupils are fully integrated into the daily life of the school and have access to all lessons. This includes pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. The school has made an audit of its books and resources to

ensure that information about other cultures, and different beliefs, is reflected in a fair and positive way.

30 The school is proud of the links it is making with other schools' in order to foster racial harmony and provide positive experiences for all its pupils, including those from ethnic minorities. For instance, it was the only school with mainly white UK heritage pupils to enter the local Indian dance festival.

31 There is sound provision for pupils' personal and social development including a planned programme of sex and drugs awareness education. The school has good links with the local community and uses these links to promote a safe and healthy lifestyle for its pupils. For example the school nurse and local policemen come in and talk to the pupils. Teachers value these visits and reinforce them with informative artwork related to these issues, such as in year 2 where they have worked on a class painting about 'people who help us'. The school has developed satisfactory relationships with neighbouring schools, in particular with the two main secondary schools to which pupils transfer at 11. The headteachers of these two schools take turns to act as governors of the primary school.

32 The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have the opportunity to develop and reinforce skills in science, mathematics, football, athletics, art, dance, drama, recorders, computers and gardening. Educational visits are used effectively to make learning more relevant and interesting for pupils. Most curriculum areas are enriched by visits to places such as Ludlow Castle, Wyre Forest Visitors Centre, the Sikh temple and local churches.

33 The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory throughout the school. Collective worship is well planned by the worship co-ordinator and complies fully with legal requirements. Pupils are given moments for quiet reflection in most assemblies. Religious education and assemblies offer the pupils opportunities to learn about and value the wide range of beliefs and customs of different faiths and cultures. Assemblies also provide regular opportunities to reflect on particular aspects of life such as friendship, kindness, hard decisions, and moral dilemmas. Assemblies in both key stages provide opportunities for staff, parents and children to value out of school achievements of pupils. These include success in sports for example a six mile marathon, and any charities supported. In assemblies and in religious education lessons opportunities are built in to reflect or pray, using a candle as a focus. Staff in both key stages work hard to promote discussion and reflection through poetry, stories and visits to different places of worship including local churches and a Sikh temple.

34 Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good in both key stages. Most pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong, and are encouraged to be truthful and honest and to discuss their views on the morality of each situation. Teachers tell Key Stage 1 pupils' stories with moral themes such as belonging to a family and school, friendship, being kind and helpful. In Key Stage 2 themes are built into the curriculum to ensure pupils reflect on increasingly complex concepts such as, justice, fairness, courage, tolerance, and to consider and make judgements about whether, for example, home and school rules, rules in society and in different religions are fair and valid. The relationships developed by staff with pupils helps promote concern for others and the environment. Opportunities are built into the curriculum for older pupils to consider the impact of their actions, for example through a project on recycling. Overall the teachers work hard to develop a strong sense of belonging to the school and the local community. The school supports charities regularly. The school has a millennium promise 2000 project where all pupils have made a personal promise to do something useful during the year. The parents feel that the school promotes this aspect well.

35 Teachers ask pupils to reflect on their actions and to consider the consequences of what they have done or are doing, in order to promote an awareness of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The school has a good behaviour policy and strategies with clear rewards and sanctions. The school has many strategies for developing pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence through the use of circle times and effective use of praise and rewards. Most pupils are clear about the school's rewards and try to earn points to achieve them. However not all sanctions are effective for the pupils who have persistent behavioural problems. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together and to form effective relationships with their classmates, during, for example, after-school sports clubs and through many planned visits. Registration and assembly sessions are also used well to give pupils turns at taking responsibility to act as class helpers.

36 The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils learn to value and understand their own cultural traditions through the many effective links with the community, a wide range of educational visits and many visitors to the school. Pupils visit museums and art galleries to explore British and worldwide cultural heritage and they experience a range of composers and music from around the world, including classical, jazz, Caribbean and folk. In art pupils study a range of male and female artists such as William Morris, Matisse and Beryl Cook. Pupils are developing their own creative skills through art, music and technology lessons. Increasing opportunities are being created for pupils to appreciate a wide range of cultural traditions. They learn about other countries and cultures through planned projects in geography, history and religious education. Pupils in Key Stage 2 in particular, learn about different past civilizations like the Incas and Egyptians, famous people from the past in history, the contribution these people have made to society and the influence their actions have on life today. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including musical instruments, multi-cultural books in the library, cultural artifacts and pictures and books that reflect positive images and celebrate the achievements of a range of cultural groups. Since the last inspection the school has improved its provision for cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37 The school makes good provision for the welfare, support and pastoral guidance of all pupils, in a caring and supportive environment. Emphasis is placed on the welfare of pupils right from the start and nursery staff introduce children effectively into routines and quickly get to know them. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and gives them the ability and confidence to cope effectively with school life. Parents expressed the view that the school provides consistently good support for their children and is a caring place in which their children are happy and safe. Inspection evidence confirms these opinions. The school is an orderly, caring and sharing community, which abides by a few simple rules. This results in positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour in most pupils. The teachers and staff provide good role models and have a good knowledge of individuals, which they use well to provide comprehensive policies and procedures that are appropriate to meet the social needs of pupils. However, the academic needs of pupils are not so effectively met.

38 The school has unsatisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The previous inspection indicated the need to ensure greater consistency in the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress. The school has worked hard to revise its assessment procedures. However there is still no clear indication of what pupils know, can do and understand in relation to levels indicated in the National Curriculum in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology. Assessment in the non-core subjects of design technology, history and geography is good as it relates precisely to levels indicated in the relevant programmes of study. There are no assessment procedures in art, music or physical education and no assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored satisfactorily through regular reviews of individual education plans. Although the school has few formal

systems for monitoring the personal development of pupils staff know the pupils and their families well and are aware of specific needs and problems.

39 The assessment of pupils on entry to the school provides an accurate picture and is used to identify pupils with special educational needs. The school is starting to collect portfolios of work in many subjects. Although some are carefully annotated and dated they do not indicate levels of attainment and are of little use in planning work. National test results are analysed by gender and ethnicity and used to set realistic but not challenging targets in English and mathematics. There are discrepancies in results between teacher assessments and the national tests, particularly with regard to the higher attaining pupils. Inconsistencies in the quality of marking of work lead to unsatisfactory use being made of such assessments in planning future work for pupils.

40 The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 is not maintained or extended in Key Stage 2 because teachers are not secure in knowing precisely what pupils know, can do and understand and what they need to learn next. Unsatisfactory use is made of information from statutory and annual assessments. Assessment is used to place pupils in ability sets for mathematics and English, but this has not yet had an impact on standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is reviewing its assessment and recording procedures. Currently they are not leading to sustained improvement in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.

41 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The deputy head operates a first day response system and contacts parents when pupils are not in school. Parents are generally conscientious in notifying the school and staff follow up any absences where no notification has been received. Punctuality is monitored carefully. The school works closely with the education welfare service. These measures have resulted in a significant improvement in attendance levels since the last inspection. There are very good procedures in place for child protection and promoting the well-being and health and safety of all pupils, with high staff awareness of these issues. The school has very close links with other agencies and deals very effectively with any concerns they may have. The school is clean and well maintained and health and safety checks are carried out regularly.

42 The school has good measures to promote and maintain good discipline and behaviour with a reward system which pupils understand and value. There are clear guidelines for staff, but these are not consistently followed throughout the school. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with bullying or racial harassment and any incidents that arise are taken very seriously and promptly and effectively dealt with. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are not always effectively managed which sometimes disrupts lessons. The school works hard to include all pupils and has successfully integrated pupils from other schools. Exclusions are only used as a last resort and usually where safety of other pupils and staff has been a concern. The school has successfully maintained the effective provision for the pastoral support of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43 The school's relationship with parents is very good and benefits from the commitment of staff to work in partnership with parents. From the response to the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, it is clear that parents are supportive of the school. In particular they are supportive of the events organised by the 'Home School Association' and special events in the school. Parents comment very favourably on the openness of the school, say they are made to feel welcome and that staff are very approachable. The school has recently introduced a 'home school agreement' which most parents have signed. Parents are encouraged to attend parents' evenings and have appropriate opportunities for both formal and informal discussions with staff.

44 The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. Parents are kept well informed through regular letters and newsletters about school life. The school prospectus and governors' annual report provide up to date information. Annual written reports to parents are satisfactory and provide helpful information on work that has been covered, but do not always detail what pupils know and can do. Some have pertinent comments on areas for improvement. Curriculum evenings have been provided for parents to explain what is taught. Parents comment that these have been useful in helping to explain the changes in education.

45 Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are drawn up to provide appropriate targets, which are shared with those parents who attend meetings and reviews. The homework diary provides opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning, although this is not always used. Where they are used they are an effective communication tool.

46 Parents are appreciative of the opportunities they have to see class assemblies and school productions. A few parents, grandparents and friends of the school come in regularly to help in class, with swimming, with the school bank and with the libraries. Some parents help at home with reading and any other homework.

47 The school has been particularly successful in promoting learning in the community and parents speak very favourably about the impact of the training opportunities the school provides. The community room is used well and the 'Pop In' and 'Helping Hands' group meet regularly to use and develop their skills in projects for the school.

48 The school has successfully built on the good relationships established with parents and continues to promote partnership in learning. This has not led to sustained improvements in standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49 Overall the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory but there are some significant weaknesses. The previous report praised the school for its work in developing close links with the parents and promoting lifelong learning but said a greater focus was needed to ensure pupils reached their full potential academically. This is still the case. There has been insufficient improvement in the impact of leadership and management on standards at the end of Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection.

50 The headteacher is firmly committed to the belief that raising the image and status of learning among the parents will have a positive impact on educational achievements of the pupils. He has a clear vision of the school as the heart of a learning community. He has done much to ensure that parents understand the benefits of learning and many have acquired worthwhile educational qualifications as a result of the Priory Partnership, a project with local adult education providers, which has received national recognition and of which the school is justly proud. However this has not led to sustained improvement in the educational standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

51 The previous report commented on the need for strategies and structures to ensure that delegated responsibilities can be carried out more effectively. The school has a management structure which includes two deputy heads, a leader for each key stage, and a manager for the nursery, who do not have their own classes, as well as co-ordinators for each subject who do have full time class teaching roles. Because of prolonged staff absence one of the deputies has recently begun teaching a class each afternoon as part of a job share arrangement. Each teacher with a management role has a clear responsibility and a

written job description. Although all of those with a management role work hard to fulfil their responsibilities the current management structure is not leading to sustained improvement in standards and there has been insufficient improvement in the effectiveness of these structures since the last report. The school is not making the best use of the teaching expertise of some of these very experienced senior teachers to raise standards at Key Stage 2. At times they focus too much on routine administrative tasks which could be carried out much more efficiently by other staff. The school needs to question whether alternative structures would provide more effective and efficient solutions. The school is currently reviewing its management structure.

52 The governing body is hard working and fully committed to the school. It has committees with clear roles and responsibilities and fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors know what is happening in the subjects in the school and monitor standards regularly. They receive reports from subject co-ordinators to ensure that they are up to date with recent developments and keep themselves well informed about the school through both formal and informal visits. They take a full part in managing the school and in the development of the school improvement plan and the various policies and schemes of work produced by the school. They have a reasonable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school although there needs to be a stronger focus on the impact rather than the intention of management decisions. For example the school does a huge amount of work in collecting statistical information. It has won quality awards including the Investors in People and a National Training Award. It has introduced clear systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning although these have not been implemented as systematically as the school intended because of prolonged staff absence. However all these initiatives, although very well intentioned, have not led to sustained improvement in standards since the last report. The school has not put in place systems to show how all this work has provided good value for money and been an effective use of resources. A lot of work and time has gone into each of these initiatives but, while the impact on the community and on individual and groups of parents has been great, the impact on standards in school has been rather less marked. The governors and the senior managers of the school need a much clearer focus on how management decisions and structures, and initiatives like the Priory Partnership and Investors in People will impact on standards in school and they need to set clear, measurable targets, based on raising standards of attainment, at the beginning of each initiative in order to evaluate its impact properly.

53 The school has a comprehensive school improvement plan and includes appropriate priorities within it. However the emphasis in some parts relate more to putting systems in place than to their impact on raising standards. For example the way the school has planned to judge the success of its Education Action Zone priorities does not mention standards but focuses on raising awareness or appointing staff. Similarly, the action plan from the previous inspection includes a series of success criteria which focus on having systems in place, rather than having clear targets for raising standards, and this is another example of the school focusing on intentions, rather than the impact, of decisions.

54 The school complies with all statutory requirements and has improved the provision for information technology since the last inspection to make sure that it covers all the National Curriculum programmes of study. It has clear systems in place to identify and support pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they make satisfactory progress throughout the school. It makes effective use of grants specifically allocated to support these pupils. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum.

55 The school has good systems for financial planning both long term and day to day. The budget is designed to meet the priorities set out in the school improvement plan. The latest audit report was very positive with only minor issues for the school to attend to and these have been addressed. Grants for specific purposes are used properly for those

purposes. The school has been highly successful in attracting funding to support specific initiatives like the adult learning project for example. Strategic use of resources is generally satisfactory but the school needs to ensure that the impact of senior staff justifies their cost. A reduction in the school roll and unexpected long term staff absence have had a significant impact on the budget and the school is looking to resolve a potential deficit situation through sensitive re-structuring of staffing. The governors have an appropriate understanding of the principles of best value and are planning to receive training on the issue. Funding levels are well above the national average and given that standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are not improving fast enough, it provides unsatisfactory value for money.

56 There are sufficient, appropriately trained and qualified teachers to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. There is a good range of experience on the teaching staff. The school's pupil-teacher ratio is in line with the national average. The school has, however, suffered adversely from the long term absence of a number of teachers during the past two years. Despite the best efforts of the school, this has caused some disruption to the pupils' education. During the inspection, there were four temporary teachers on the staff. Apart from these, each teacher has responsibility for some area of the curriculum. There is a teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating special educational needs provision. Appropriate job descriptions are in place for all teaching and non-teaching staff. The hard work of subject co-ordinators has led to improvements in achievement in some subjects like information technology and design and technology, which were criticised in the previous report. There are sufficient, appropriately qualified and experienced classroom support assistants in the school and they offer good support to the teachers. A clear policy exists for the professional development of all teaching and non-teaching staff. There is no formal system for appraising the classroom performance of the teachers, but the school's Investors in People programme has a strong focus on staff development. The midday supervisors have had training in behaviour management and they meet formally with the headteacher at least once a term. A comprehensive staff handbook is in place, which includes satisfactory arrangements for the induction of new members of staff and for newly qualified teachers. There is very good administrative support in the school. The caretaker and the kitchen staff contribute well to school life.

57 The school building provides good accommodation for the pupils' education. The classrooms are adequate in size for the numbers of pupils and there are some additional classrooms in which groups and sets of pupils are taught. The school has plenty of space for libraries and computer suites. The computer suites are well stocked and in regular use which is helping to raise standards in information technology. There is plenty of accommodation for both indoor and outdoor physical education.

58 There are sufficient resources to support learning in all subjects and the school's expenditure on these items in the last financial year was in line with the national average. The previous inspection found learning resources were insufficient in a number of subjects. These have now been improved and are helping to raise standards as in information technology where there has been a huge investment and the ratio of computers to pupils is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 In order to raise attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 and in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 the school should:

- (1) **give more time to the teaching of English and use every opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects;**
(Paragraphs 2,3,6,8,10,18,26,70,71,74,75,78,84,85,88)
- (2) **improve the teaching of basic skills including, handwriting, spelling and phonics;**
Paragraphs 70,71,74,75,78,84,85,88,92,93)
- (3) **make sure that teachers move pupils' learning forward more quickly by; identifying very clearly, exactly what each pupil already knows, understands and can do; the precise steps each one needs next to build upon that knowledge; and telling the pupils clearly and consistently exactly how to improve their work;**
(Paragraphs 20,22,23,38,39,79,86,89,94)
- (4) **monitor regularly, systematically and rigorously the quality of teaching and learning and provide adequate and appropriate support where needed to improve teaching particularly at Key Stage 2;**
(Paragraphs 17,21,22,52,86,88,96,105,130)
- (5) **re-define the roles and responsibilities of senior teachers to make better use of their teaching expertise and experience in the classrooms;**
(Paragraph 49,51,52,55,105,130)
- (6) **establish clear systems for evaluating the impact on pupils' standards of achievement of all management decisions and future initiatives.**
(Paragraph 52,55)

Other issues which should be considered by the school

The school should also:

ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently to improve the behaviour of the minority of pupils where it is unsatisfactory.
(Paragraphs 13,21,95,106,111,117,122,134)

Key issues 2, 3, and 4 were issues last time the school was inspected.
Key issues 3 and 5 are among the school's priorities.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

124

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

30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	10	40	45	5	1	

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	61	532
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		175

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15	163

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	47
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	61

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.25
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.25
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	29	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	27	26
	Girls	19	23	21
	Total	40	50	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (66)	85 (78)	80 (71)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	27
	Girls	18	19	23
	Total	41	41	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (76)	69 (72)	85 (74)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	31	45	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	20
	Girls	19	17	23
	Total	34	32	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (65)	42 (47)	57 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	19	16	23
	Total	34	30	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (70)	40 (47)	55 (77)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	499
Any other minority ethnic group	23

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	63

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	1
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1095022
Total expenditure	1125722
Expenditure per pupil	1899
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1696
Balance carried forward to next year	-32396

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	590
Number of questionnaires returned	311

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	44	6	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	37	13	3	11
The teaching is good.	65	33	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	37	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	3	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	53	37	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	35	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	34	17	7	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60 The children enter the nursery at three years old and at the time of the inspection there were 126 attending part time. In the reception class there were 44 children under five attending full time. The nursery is one of nine in the local education authority with extra places for children with special educational needs. It has 6 extra places for these children. There are 25 children under five who are identified as having special educational needs. The school has continued to develop the good links with parents noted in the last report. Parents are all informed of the curriculum which is offered to their children, and they are pleased with the progress their children are making. They are impressed with how quickly their children settle into the nursery.

61 The curriculum for the children under five reflects the required areas of learning for children of this age. Planning in the nursery is sound. All children have opportunities to select well-structured play activities. The teacher and the nursery nurses all contribute to the sound day to day planning and assessment. These daily assessments are used to inform the next step in learning and to develop a profile on each child. They are useful and informative records, which are later used when the children move on to Key Stage 1. Links between the nursery and the reception classes are good. The children visit the reception class for a number of sessions before moving up. Learning resources are satisfactory in all areas of learning. There are good quality wheeled vehicles and toys for outdoor play.

62 What the children know, understand and can do on entry to nursery is well below average. All children under five are assessed on entry to the reception class. This year the majority of children reached standards well below what is expected nationally. Progress is sound overall in the nursery. However, most children make good progress in the development of personal and social skills and basic listening skills. On moving to the reception class most children continue to make satisfactory progress with many making good progress as they make the transition to the National Curriculum, in particular in the development of early reading and writing skills. The last inspection report criticised this area of learning. This is no longer an issue, as early reading and writing skills are now developed systematically and progressively.

63 The quality of teaching is sound in the nursery and occasionally good. In the reception class it is mainly good. Good teaching is characterised by thorough planning which is well matched to all children's individual needs. Sessions are well resourced with a good range of activities, which allow the children to acquire new knowledge, develop skills and increase their understanding. Groups are very well managed and all adults demonstrate good questioning and give clear instructions. Relationships between all adults and children in the nursery and the reception classes are good.

Language and literacy

64 Many children under five are reluctant speakers with limited understanding of basic vocabulary. A small minority of the children has been identified as having speech and language difficulties. The majority demonstrates appropriate listening skills. The children talk using limited vocabulary as they recall information about themselves, their experiences and their families. Most children enjoy listening to stories, handle books well and understand their purpose. From an early age they begin to learn the names and sounds of some letters as they attempt to write their names. The children record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing at an appropriate level. The quality of teaching of language and literacy

is sound. Most children achieve standards which are below those expected of this age. Most children make sound progress in this area of learning. A few make good progress.

Mathematics

65 The children work enthusiastically in particular on practical mathematical activities. In the nursery they count different objects such as the number of children in their group. Most attempt to name and write numbers up to 5 and above. All children learn number rhymes and the actions to go with them, such as *Ten Sizzling Sausages*. The children in the nursery demonstrate a limited number vocabulary. The higher attaining children know and understand the words 'count' and 'how many'. Children under five in the reception classes gradually increase their understanding of basic numbers and many confidently write numbers. By the age of five many understand terms such as 'one more than'. A few are able to count up to ten forwards and backwards. Most children name a few two-dimensional shapes and a few begin to name three-dimensional shapes. Clear teaching aids on the classroom walls reinforce mathematical ideas taught. Teaching is sound and the children make sound progress. Standards are below those expected nationally in this area of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66 The children begin to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. A few recall the number on their house or the name of the road where they live. They understand that they live near to their school and begin to develop an understanding of the local area. Limited understanding of basic language hinders progress in this area. Many are confused with the idea of old, older and oldest. They recognise that some things are alive and some are dead, but many confuse the two ideas. Children under five in the reception class increase their understanding of the human body as they learn facts about the skeleton. From an early age the children are given opportunities to discover that substances can change their form. In the nursery they learn that some things will dissolve and enthusiastically take a 'magic bean' home to see what happens when their parents put in it boiling water. The children listen and look carefully as they are told to only do the experiment with an adult and that boiling water can scald and be dangerous. With varying degrees of success all develop skills needed to cut and stick materials together. The children use simple computer programs confidently, and reinforce learning in many areas including music and mathematics. Most children develop a good knowledge of the keyboard, moving the cursor around the screen confidently. Teaching is sound in this area of learning. Most children achieve standards below those expected nationally in this area of learning.

Creative development

67 Careful artwork is created using a good range of techniques for example painting, printing, drawing and collages. All children under five select materials and equipment to develop interesting pieces of artwork such as sticking tissue paper shapes to make colourful patterns and blowing paint using straws to make symmetrical patterns. The majority of children demonstrate good listening skills as they sing songs such as *Five Green Speckled Frogs* showing great enjoyment. All children have opportunities to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through role-play sessions in the classrooms and playground. They do this with confidence and obvious enjoyment. Creative work is linked well with other areas of learning. For example the nursery learn about Africa and are given a Zulu doll to play with which begins to develop an awareness of the multicultural society in which we live. Sound teaching and support are enabling most of the children to reach the standards expected.

Physical development

68 All children who are under five have regular opportunities for outdoor play in a safe and secure area. The children use the good range of equipment including wheeled vehicles and prams with enthusiasm and enjoyment. In small groups the children in the nursery are taken to the hall to take part in physical activities, which enables them to develop sound body awareness and to move with confidence. Most listen and follow instructions very well. Most children handle scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with sound control although a significant number of children in the nursery have difficulties in this area. They play well together with construction toys and cut out shapes using malleable materials such as plasticine. Teaching is sound overall and this enables most children to reach the expected levels by the age of five.

Personal and social development

69 The children under five enjoy coming to school and they quickly settle into the routines of the nursery. They display positive attitudes to learning from an early age and most demonstrate appropriate listening skills. Behaviour is good in the nursery and in the reception class. The children begin to develop very good, constructive relationships with adults and with each other. Most work in pairs and small groups well and develop the skills necessary to work independently. The children select activities with confidence. This area is well promoted in everything the children take part in and progress is good. The majority of children reach the expected levels in their personal and social development.

ENGLISH

70 The results of the 1999 tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, indicate that standards in reading are well below the national average but are average when compared with similar schools. In writing pupils' performance is in line with the national average and well above that of similar schools. Over the three years 1997-1999, pupils' performance in reading was well below the national average. Pupils' attainment in writing has improved from well below average in 1997 to average in 1999. The performance of boys and girls is comparable in reading and writing over the last four years. The attainment of the majority of the current year 2 is below the national average for reading but close to average for writing.

71 At the end of Key Stage 2, test results in 1999, indicate that standards are well below the national average, but in comparison with schools of a similar kind, pupils' performance is below average. During the years 1997-9, pupils' performance in English has fluctuated from well below in 1997 to average in 1998 and well below average in 1999. The 1999 tests show the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels is well below the national average. The previous inspection judged standards to be below national expectations at the end of both key stages, but felt that pupils were making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory progress in some Key Stage 2 classes. The attainment of the majority of pupils in the current year 6 is well below the national average but is average for a minority of higher attaining pupils. Inspection findings are consistent with the outcomes of recent national assessments at the ages of seven and eleven. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 is not maintained in Key Stage 2. Boys have outperformed girls in the English tests at Key Stage 2 over the last four years.

72 Children enter the nursery and the reception classes with poor language skills in comparison to children of a similar age. Many children are reluctant communicators and only a very small number speak in sentences. Attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 1 is below national averages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Most pupils pay close attention to what the teacher is saying and higher attaining

pupils reply to questions with relevant comment and detail. A good example of pupils using their speaking and listening skills well occurred in a year 2 class when pupils discussed the shared text *Farmer Duck*. Pupils listened enthusiastically to the story and some higher attaining pupils could confidently and coherently answer questions about the text. Many lower attaining pupils, although appearing to listen carefully to their teachers, have difficulty in expressing their thoughts and ideas. They speak hesitantly in single words, phrases and short sentences. Some pupils struggle to find the correct word to use and have problems articulating word definitions. Teachers in Key Stage 1 work hard to compensate for pupils' lack of expressive vocabulary and modify questions well to match pupils' level of understanding.

73 Standards in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 2 are below national expectations for the majority of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to debate and discuss their work, but lower attaining pupils find this very difficult. For instance, when describing science experiments, they cannot recall the precise scientific vocabulary. Only a very small minority of pupils can extend their ideas in the light of a discussion or give reasons for their opinions. This was very evident when discussing reading books with inspectors. In literacy lessons, talk is often a preliminary to writing and put to good use in some classes when discussing texts. For instance, in a year 6 lesson, higher attaining pupils demonstrated that they have learnt to recognise different poetic forms and to use terminology such as 'sonnet', 'limerick' and 'rhyming couplet'.

74 Pupils' attainment in reading is below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below the national average at Key Stage 2. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their learning at both key stages. The majority of pupils have insufficient ways to tackle new words. For instance many pupils are aware of the names of letters but cannot connect this with the sound, so are unable to attempt new words. Most pupils rely on adult support when reading and are hesitant and lack confidence. Many pupils have difficulty in understanding their book and cannot deduce or predict what might happen next without considerable support. Most pupils attempt to join in with class reading during the literacy hour. A small number of higher attaining pupils in year 2 are reading at the expected level and read accurately, fluently and with understanding.

75 Pupils in Key Stage 2 are not confident readers. A small minority of pupils in years 5 and 6 read fluently but not with expression and very few pupils in Key Stage 2 could discuss favourite books and authors. Many pupils have extreme difficulty in understanding words and texts. They can read the word but cannot say what it means. For instance, pupils in year 5 cannot define 'fretful' or 'whimpering' and a year 6 higher attaining pupil did not know what the word 'scowled' meant. This lack of reading skills has an impact on other subjects. For example, in mathematics pupils' progress is impeded by their inability to read questions, although they may be able to perform the required computation. Although many pupils know how to select an information book from the library, there is no evidence of pupils being able to skim and scan texts for information. Only a small number of classes used the library during the inspection week even though this was identified as a concern in the last inspection. Many of the reading books are old and unappealing, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although reading records are kept in all classes, they vary considerably in their usefulness as the majority just list the books read and do not clearly indicate strengths and weaknesses in pupils' reading skills.

76 Pupils' attainment in writing is in line with the national average in Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress. Pupils' attainment in writing by the age of eleven is below the national average so progress in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. A key issue from the last inspection was to raise standards attained by pupils in English. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 1 with regard to writing. Pupils in the reception class write sentences about the text *Peace At Last* by Jill Murphy. They use their knowledge of initial sounds when writing words and demonstrate confidence and

enjoyment. The majority of year 2 pupils produce an interesting range of work, and use increasingly accurate punctuation and spelling. Higher attaining pupils' writing is neat and joined.

77 The previous inspection report highlighted the need to develop the range of written work in Key Stage 2 and to ensure greater consistency in the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils now have opportunities to write in a wide range of different genres. For instance, work sampling indicated that pupils in year 6 have written newspaper reports, dialogue, film reports, poetry and persuasive texts. Higher attaining pupils have produced some good writing from the perspective of a crew member on the *Mary Celeste*.

78 However, despite improved opportunities for writing in different forms, the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 have great difficulty in combining neat handwriting, interesting text, correct spelling and punctuation when producing a piece of writing. This is in part due to the fact that the majority of teachers are unsure of exactly what levels pupils are at in English and therefore in many instances the work provided does not meet or extend the pupils' learning needs. For instance in a year 6 lower attaining literacy set, pupils could not express the characteristics of the diary genre because they did not understand the word 'tense' when applied to verbs. There is no consistent approach to the teaching of spelling or handwriting in Key Stage 2. This was very evident in the work scrutiny, where there was no evidence of pupils receiving different spellings according to their different levels of attainment. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are not confident when using spellings in their writing and many lower attaining pupils rely on adult support. The higher attaining pupils in year 6 check spellings in dictionaries and thesauruses. The difficulties most pupils experience in converting spoken into written English affects the other subjects, such as science and history, where pupils experience problems when recording new learning.

79 The quality of teaching overall in English is satisfactory. It ranges from unsatisfactory to good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. In the good lessons, teachers show confidence and good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Work is planned to be challenging and builds on pupils' knowledge, which raises attainment. At best teachers inspire the pupils with an interest and love of literature, for example in the way they read stories. This was evident in a year 2 literacy lesson where the teacher skilfully conveyed her own enthusiasm for the books of Martin Waddell to the pupils. Good use is made of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, skilfully adapting questions so that pupils of all levels of ability can succeed and respond. There is a lively pace and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Where teaching is not so successful, the teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low, and work is not planned for different needs. There is an acceptance and praise of mediocre work and a lack of rigour and challenge. Teachers are unaware of the precise levels of attainment of their pupils and in many instances, pupils receive the same work regardless of their learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs receive enough support to enable them to make satisfactory progress.

80 The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy Strategy and the literacy hour is established in all classes. The strategy has had an impact on standards in writing in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2, where pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Although the school wisely supplements the hour with additional extended writing sessions, the school gives less time to English during the week than most other primary schools.

81 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and hard working and is committed to raising standards of attainment. Teachers keep records of pupils' work but these are not useful in their current form, as they do not define clearly what levels of attainment pupils are achieving. In the case of reading, teachers are recording books read and not assessing clearly pupils' strengths and areas of difficulty.

MATHEMATICS

82 By the end of year 2, standards are now in line with the national average. This is an improvement on the findings of both the previous inspection report and the results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests. In these tests, standards were well below the national average, though average compared with similar schools. Standards have been well below average over the past three years, though last year's results were slightly better than those of 1998. There has been no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress.

83 The previous inspection found that many pupils in Key Stage 1 were not confident with mental mathematics. This is now less apparent and many pupils explain how they worked things out. Most of the pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20. They have a sound knowledge of the multiples of 10 and they pair these multiples in different ways to make 100. Standards in basic numeracy are average. Most of the pupils understand how to round up or down to the nearest 10, though some find this difficult. They understand place value in two digit numbers and they have a satisfactory understanding of odd and even numbers. When using and applying their mathematical knowledge, most of the pupils refer to correct mathematical terms and units of measurement. They understand the main symbols of mathematical communication, such as equals, greater than and less than. In one lesson, lower attaining pupils used balancing scales carefully in using non-standard units of measurement to compare the weights of everyday objects. Many higher attaining pupils can solve simple word problems involving mass and they can convert pence into pounds, using the correct decimal notation. Many pupils are less confident when dealing with the concept of division. There is some evidence that the pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in science lessons, they have used Venn diagrams soundly to classify creatures and they have constructed simple bar charts of their favourite foods. In geography, the pupils have produced similar charts to record the findings of a local traffic survey and of the numbers of cars parked in a nearby road. In an information technology lesson, pupils in year 1 used computers to complete block graphs and pictograms to record data collected in a previous lesson.

84 By the end of year 6, standards are well below the national average. These findings do not reflect those of the previous inspection, where standards were broadly average, but they do reflect the results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests. In these tests, standards were also well below average when compared with similar schools. Over the past three years, standards have been well below average and have fallen year by year. Boys have outperformed girls. The school has introduced setting by ability in years 5 and 6 and it has set modest targets to improve standards, but these targets remain well below the current national average. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving less effective with pupils in this key stage than with those in Key Stage 1. The many pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress overall, though they do have difficulties with reading or understanding written problems.

85 At Key Stage 2 standards in mental calculation and in basic numeracy are well below average. By year 6 many pupils lack confidence in quick mental recall. Many pupils make careless mistakes in multiplication and division and in rounding numbers up or down to the nearest 100 or 1000. The pupils understand the relationship between simple fractions and percentages, but many find it difficult to understand the equivalence of fractions. They understand some of the vocabulary associated with probability and they investigate the probability of events. Higher attaining pupils understand that 0.5 is an 'even' chance and that 1 is 'certain'. Lower attaining pupils need help with reading problems. The pupils understand that data can be shown in a variety of graphical forms. In a lesson on data handling, the pupils interpreted a combined bar chart and line graph showing daily weather. However,

many pupils were, once again, handicapped by weak reading skills. They found it difficult to understand precisely what the questions were asking and what certain words actually meant. In this lesson, most of the pupils could not initially recall how 'average' was calculated. There is some evidence that the pupils use their numeracy skills soundly in science and geography although opportunities in some other subjects, like measuring in design and technology for example, are missed. In a year 6 lesson on India, the pupils recorded monthly temperatures and in a science lesson on air resistance, they used stop watches to time the descent of an aeroplane. Pupils in year 5 drew line graphs after measuring with Newton meters. Pupils in year 4 read a thermometer scale reasonably accurately whilst investigating the rate of heat loss in a cup of boiling water. Year 3 pupils used rulers, tape measures and string to record the growth of bean plants.

86 The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good overall, though it varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, though, again, it is variable, with examples of both very good and poor teaching. This variability in teaching reflects the findings of the previous inspection. That inspection also found that teachers rarely shared the learning objectives of lessons with the pupils. This criticism has been successfully addressed. The teachers make the pupils well aware of what they are expected to have accomplished by the end of each lesson and the pupils write the lesson objectives at the top of their work. Nevertheless, some lesson objectives are less precise than others.

87 In Key Stage 1, the teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy well. They start each lesson with a brisk, quick-fire session of mental and oral mathematics and this is having a positive impact on the ability of many pupils to recall number facts. A year 2 lesson with lower attaining pupils had many of the features which characterise a good mathematics lesson. Assessment of previous work through careful marking had informed planning for the lesson. A very good selection of practical resources helped the pupils to learn about weighing. The teacher stressed the importance of using correct mathematical terms, such as 'weighs' and 'balances'. Good questioning, such as "What do I do next?" and "Why do you think that?" made the pupils think carefully and encouraged all of them to contribute to the discussion. By monitoring the pupils' progress carefully throughout the lesson and by giving them helpful guidance, the teacher was successfully moving learning on. In other lessons in year 2, the teachers matched tasks well to three broad ability groups and they made good use of mathematical games and practical activities to enhance learning about rounding numbers up or down. In one of these lessons, the teacher made particularly good use of support staff, who made written assessments of the progress made by the pupils with whom they were working. The teachers encourage the pupils to use a variety of strategies to develop their learning and to explain how they have worked sums out. In a year 2 lesson on place value, the pupils learnt how to do the sum, how to work it out and how to check it. The teachers end their lessons with effective plenary sessions, in which they summarise what has been learnt. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the work was undemanding, particularly for higher attaining pupils; very little new learning took place and the lesson moved at a slow pace.

88 The previous inspection found that teachers in Key Stage 2 were making insufficient use of investigative and problem solving activities and were relying too much on text books. Overall, these issues have been successfully addressed. In many lessons, different tasks are set to match the varying needs of the pupils, even within the ability sets in years 5 and 6. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils are not always given hard enough work. In a year 6 lesson on probability, for example, pupils finished the task very quickly and wasted time waiting for something to do next. For them, the pace of the lesson was too slow. The teachers place great emphasis on the use of correct mathematical terms. These are usually clearly displayed on cards, which aids learning. In doing this, the teachers try to improve the literacy skills of the pupils. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils

think carefully. For example, in a year 6 data handling lesson, the teacher asked "What should we look for first on a graph or table?" and this made the pupils focus on what the graph was depicting. Both teachers and support staff work well with pupils with special educational needs, managing the small steps needed in their learning. In a year 5/6 lesson on probability, the teacher made learning relevant to the pupils by drawing on their own interests and experiences. They were encouraged to discuss the likelihood of their winning the National Lottery and of Manchester United winning the Premiership. Whilst most pupils in both key stages have positive attitudes to their mathematics lessons, there is a significant minority of badly behaved pupils in Key Stage 2. Some teachers manage this better than others. Indeed, the main characteristic of poor teaching in this key stage is weak class control. In a year 3 lesson, the classroom was not effectively organised for the teaching, with many pupils unable to see. Having to move their chairs merely added to the disruption and prevented effective learning from taking place.

89 The co-ordinator offers good leadership. She has developed a new, draft policy for teaching mathematics. Sound planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, but this is not, as yet, having a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator has led training for colleagues on the implementation of the daily numeracy hour. She monitors planning, in order to ensure it is consistent throughout the school, and she has monitored the teaching of mathematics in both key stages. Much work has gone into procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress, but this is insufficiently linked to precise National Curriculum levels. The result of this is that the teachers are not always clear as to what level the pupils need to work at, in order to plan subsequent work. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, but there is not always sufficient guidance on how they might improve their work. There are sufficient resources to support learning and these are easily accessible in each classroom. The teachers are beginning to use information technology more widely, in order to enhance learning. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social development, through encouraging collaborative work when necessary, particularly during investigative activities.

SCIENCE

90 The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 for 1999 showed that attainment was well below average when compared with the national picture but below average in comparison with similar schools. However, the number of pupils gaining the higher level of attainment (Level 5) was below, rather than well below, the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Teachers predicted these results accurately through their own assessments. On average, boys have performed better than girls over the last four years. Attainment overall in these years has worsened against the national trend except in 1998 when results were above the national average due to a smaller number of pupils in that year-group with special educational needs. The 1999 cohort had a higher proportion of pupils with special needs and this is true of the present year 6. Inspection evidence suggests that results will again be well below average. Compared with the last inspection report, when results were below the national average, there has been no improvement in attainment.

91 The results of the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and above and those reaching the higher level (Level 3) was below the national average. Current year 2 pupils are on line to achieve results that are close to the national average. This slight improvement on last year is due to some good teaching and to the revised scheme of work that clearly sets out the programme to be covered. The last inspection report indicated that pupils did not show sufficient understanding of their work in science. This has improved. Pupils in year 2 know what constitutes a healthy diet and the importance of exercise for the human body. They decide how to sort a collection of 'mini-beasts', for example, choosing to group those that fly and those that walk. Similarly, they sort materials into those that are hard, soft or spongy. They

know how to light a bulb by connecting it to a battery using wires. They conduct regular experiments to help their understanding. One involves predicting the warmest area of the classroom and then finding if the prediction is right by means of measurements and construction of a table of results.

92 Pupils in Key Stage 1 are happier to talk about what they know than to write it down - a similar finding to the last inspection - but they are now better at remembering past work. Progress is therefore satisfactory. A suitable emphasis is placed on investigation and experimentation throughout the key stage. Year 1 pupils, for example, experiment to find out that loud sounds travel further and that magnets only attract certain objects. They learn that animals move in different ways and on their worksheet they colour in the parts of the animal that help them move. Their science books show evidence of regular work often involving completion of worksheets. Some work is copied. An average year 1 pupil writes, for example, 'some types of light are artificial or man-made'. This would be better expressed in his own words and opportunities are being missed to develop the language skills that pupils will need as they get older. Similarly, scientific terms are not always used. The magnets worksheet, for example, says 'will it stick?' and the opportunity to introduce the term 'attract' is missed.

93 Pupils in year 6 work very neatly in their books and there is evidence of regular experimentation and an awareness of what constitutes a fair test. A group of pupils exploring the effect of friction on a moving object know that they must keep all variables constant except the surface on which the object moves. They go on to discover that grass offers the most resistance. Results of this and similar experiments are recorded in tables or graphs and this help to reinforce numeracy skills. Pupils have covered work in all aspects of the science curriculum. They know about food chains in the animal world and that some solids dissolve in water. They explain how a salt solution can be filtered and how, if they allow the water to evaporate, the salt can be recovered. They know that sound waves vibrate and have demonstrated this by putting a tuning fork into water. Discussions with a group of year 6 pupils reveal however that, though they have been taught satisfactorily, they do not retain information readily and some need prompts before they remember facts and display understanding. This again is a similar finding to the last inspection and explains why written tests cause difficulty for them when they do not have anyone to trigger their memory. Written tests also cause difficulties because of their below average reading and writing skills. This is compounded by reluctance to use scientific terms such as 'dissolve' and 'evaporate', again highlighted in the discussion and seen in lessons. Nevertheless, pupils display higher levels of attainment orally than are revealed in written tests.

94 In the lessons seen during the inspection, progress is satisfactory and pupils are being given suitable work. Year 3 pupils explore the different kinds of teeth that they have and what functions they fulfil. Those in year 4 explore ways in which solids can be separated using sieves with small, medium and large holes and year 5 pupils experiment to see what happens when more and more sugar is added to a given amount of liquid. As they work, they explain what they are doing and show that they are acquiring the required knowledge and understanding even though few of them use scientific vocabulary in their explanations. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well in classes and, partly because science in these lessons is practical, they usually make the same progress as their classmates. A scrutiny of work in books however reveals that progress over time across the key stage is unsatisfactory and there are three main reasons for this. First, the volume of work in some classes is not sufficient to cover the curriculum. A pupil of average ability in year 3, for example, has no work in the science book for October and only six pieces of work for the whole of the autumn term, two of which are unfinished. Secondly, much work is copied and often all pupils are copying the work regardless of ability. They are therefore not having the opportunities to make mistakes in their own writing that will alert a teacher to a lack of understanding. Thirdly, some capable pupils are not being given enough opportunity

to devise their own experiments and consolidate their understanding of how to conduct tests and record the results.

95 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a more positive attitude to science than those in Key Stage 2, though here too it is generally satisfactory. The younger ones openly display enjoyment as they use modelling materials to make their animal and show how it moves. Year 2 pupils co-operate well in groups to decide into which hoop they will put the various mini-beasts. In Key Stage 2 some pupils do not behave properly and disrupt the lesson or display a lack of care for materials. Some in year 3 damage the plants that they are measuring, albeit because they do not have enough to do and are bored. Others in year 5 constantly disrupt the lesson and work slowly at their task. These are the exception and most pupils respond with interest to the practical activities that teachers have prepared.

96 In half the lessons seen in Key Stage 1, teaching was good or better. In Key Stage 2, there were an equal number of good and satisfactory lessons but two were unsatisfactory and occurred in year 3 and year 5. Both were caused by difficulties in controlling the pupils, compounded by a lack of suitable tasks to keep them interested and occupied. In the year 3 lesson, pupils finished the task of measuring their plants in a matter of minutes and had nothing else to occupy them. Year 5 pupils did not appreciate the purpose of writing down what they wanted to learn in a topic about healthy eating and became restless. In both classes, the slow pace of the lesson and the constant need for the teacher to call for order affected learning. Most teachers plan lessons carefully and are clear about what they want pupils to have learned as a result of their teaching. A few share these intentions with the pupils and this is helping them to focus on the task and become aware of their own learning by reviewing progress at the end of the lesson. Most teachers, particularly those in Key Stage 1, have good relationships and convey their own enthusiasm for the subject. They prepare resources well and are conscious that learning in science is promoted best through practical activities. They have secure subject knowledge and many are skilful at asking questions such as "why is this happening?" when more and more sugar is added to a cup of tea. This encourages pupils to think for themselves. Many teachers set challenging tasks. In year 2, for example, pupils are allowed to sort out their own criteria for classifying their mini-beasts and the teacher's expectations are rewarded when groups come up with different solutions. This creates an opportunity for a useful discussion and the realisation that there is no right way of doing it. The quality of marking varies, particularly in Key Stage 2. In the best examples it is not only supportive but contains comments to guide the pupil on how work can be improved next time. Homework is occasionally set for the oldest pupils.

97 The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and is working to a useful action plan that he draws up every year. He has a clear picture of what is being taught through regular monitoring of teachers' plans and pupils' books but is rarely able to observe lessons. He has compiled a scheme of work that has been operating for the past year based on national guidelines but adapted for school use. It is a very helpful document and enables teachers to plan their lessons thoroughly. He is conscious however that it needs reviewing in the light of experience and is keen to include guidance on National Curriculum levels of attainment. The aim is to improve teachers' assessment, which at present is centred around evaluations of whether or not pupils have achieved the learning outlined in the key objectives in the scheme of work. This does not give as clear a view of progress as if teachers were to routinely assess work against levels of attainment and use the information to guide their subsequent planning. Resources were said to be inadequate during the last inspection. There are now sufficient resources to deliver the subject, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.

ART

98 Pupils' achievements in art are sound throughout the school and this is reflected in attractive displays of pupils' work that brighten up the corridors and classrooms. For example, the whole school has worked together to develop wall hangings on 'The Creation', using a variety of techniques and materials. This is prominently displayed in the hall.

99 Pupils in year 1 carefully mix colours and paint landscapes. They look at the line and texture of trees and create lifelike effects by using different sorts of paper. In links with geography they draw and colour things they see on their way to school. Further links with other subject areas show patterns made with mathematical shapes, which reinforce their understanding of squares and circles. Pupils in year 2 roll and manipulate clay confidently to form 'coiled pots'. They build on their experiences of colour mixing and paint pictures of city skylines and arctic scenes using 'hot' and 'cold' colours. Art skills are used to reinforce mathematical vocabulary as pupils develop collages of crocodiles to demonstrate 'greater than' and 'less than'.

100 Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop their knowledge of the subject and its associated skills. In year 3, pupils study the Romans in history. They look at pictures of mosaics and skilfully make patterns using plasticine and small cubes. Using the work of Pablo Picasso from his cubist period they paint intricate faces. Year 4 pupils study the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany. After looking at his *'Landscape scene with Iris and Flowering Magnolia'* they demonstrate a better understanding of landscapes as they use watery paint to gain a similar effect. Year 5 pupils look carefully at shape, colour and pattern and using stencils produce work in the style of William Morris. They use paints to mix and blend colours to produce pictures of their own choice. In year 6, pupils' work well using a wide range of materials, tools and techniques and they have a good understanding of the work of different artists. Pupils look at the work of Beryl Cook and using their observational drawing skills accurately enlarge sections of one of her pictures. To do this they demonstrate confident use of basic measuring skills they have previously been taught in mathematics. Pupils develop subject specific vocabulary as they move through the school. Literacy skills and numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to support the subject.

101 Pupils' response to lessons is good and occasionally very good. They enjoy art and work well in groups. Pupils listen carefully and all settle quickly to the tasks set. They develop good relationships with each other and are able to concentrate fully for appropriate amounts of time and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned. All pupils work well independently.

102 The teaching of art is mainly sound. However there is some good teaching in both key stages. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Planning for lessons is good and lessons are well resourced. Opportunities for assessment are not systematic and this was identified as a weakness in the last report. Teachers interact well within groups and give good supportive and helpful comments to the pupils. Some teachers give pupils opportunities to evaluate their artwork and the work of others.

103 The co-ordinator has devised a sound scheme of work, which guides teachers well and ensures the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in art. This and the subject policy are due for review. Pupils use their art skills in most other subjects such as history, English and mathematics. All pupils in Key Stage 2 now keep detailed records of their work in sketchbooks. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Information technology is beginning to be used well to support the subject. For example, in year 2 pupils make labelled pictures of houses and gardens as they develop the skills of changing the size of the letters. Resources are satisfactory, suitably stored and easily accessible. Pupils' work is displayed in an attractive and stimulating way.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104 Pupils' achievements in design and technology are average in both key stages, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. At that time they were said to be approaching the national standard at Key Stage 1 and below it at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 pupils make simple models from scrap materials learning basic skills like cutting and joining before moving onto more complex models involving moving parts like wheels on axles and winding mechanisms. For example year 1 pupils make simple models of playground equipment like slides from waste materials and paint them carefully, while year 2 pupils make models based on nursery rhymes including wells and clocks. They also make wheeled vehicles like a fire engine and produce annotated drawings as part of the design process. At Key Stage 2, pupils move on to incorporating simple pneumatic devices in their models to produce tipper trucks for example in year 3. By year 4 they are using gears in their windmill projects and year 5 make toys with moving parts involving the use of wood and dowel and winding mechanisms. Year 6 pupils make felt slippers from patterns that they have produced. At Key Stage 2 pupils consider existing products before beginning their own designs. For example year 3 pupils tasted various sandwiches before beginning to design their own and year 6 evaluated a variety of types of biscuit before deciding how to make some for a specific occasion. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their learning.

105 Overall teaching in design and technology is satisfactory but it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. At its best teaching is based on good subject knowledge, which ensures that teachers confidently set tasks that are hard enough for pupils and give them appropriate levels of support to ensure that they succeed. This was demonstrated well in lessons towards the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils learned to use simple tools and techniques to make moving toys and when they generated initial ideas for a biscuit for a special occasion. In both cases pupils responded very well to the task set by the teachers, working well in pairs and showing good levels of independence and responsibility. Pupils know what they should be learning and doing because teachers share the lesson objectives with them. They also know how well they are doing because teachers tell them clearly what is good about their work and how to improve it. In the weaker lessons pupils make slower progress because the pace of the lesson holds back the higher attaining pupils. For example in a year 3 lesson the whole class worked at the same pace throughout the lesson, following very closely the instructions of the teacher and the classroom support assistant when several of them could have completed the investigation independently if they had been allowed to. In another year 3 lesson all the pupils were expected to complete the task independently when several needed the security of the teacher guiding them very closely. The poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in both of these classes also meant too much time had to be spent on maintaining discipline and control rather than on extending learning at an appropriate pace.

106 Overall pupils have satisfactory attitudes to design technology and behave well in lessons. However in some lessons, in year 3, a significant minority do not have positive attitudes. They do not listen to the teacher, they call out instead of putting up their hand, they disturb other pupils and they talk while the teacher is talking. They do not follow instructions properly and are generally quite disruptive. In other lessons pupils listen carefully to each other and to the teacher, sustain their concentration throughout the lesson and work well with a partner. They handle tools and materials safely and sensibly and share their ideas and equipment with others. When given the opportunity to show responsibility they do so well. For example in year 5 when the teacher needed to oversee a small group working with saws and drills the rest got on with their work very quietly, moving purposefully around the room to get what they needed without disturbing other pupils.

107 Since the last inspection the co-ordinator for design and technology has worked hard to revise the schemes of work and bring them into line with national guidelines. This has ensured that pupils get a good grasp of the subject, building effectively on earlier learning. The schemes include an effective system for recording the National Curriculum levels that pupils are achieving. The co-ordinator has also provided effective written guidance on the subject for other teachers. She has worked hard to improve the standards the pupils are achieving and has been successful in doing so. The subject now needs more systematic and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure greater consistency of teaching at Key Stage 2.

GEOGRAPHY

108 At the end of both key stages, pupils achieve standards in geography similar to those attained by most seven and eleven year olds. Since the last inspection achievement has improved at Key Stage 2. This is because new guidelines for work in geography provide a clearer picture of what is to be taught and learned in each year group. Also, teachers are using questions more effectively in lessons to make links between the different aspects in geography, such as climate and land use, and this is improving learning.

109 At both key stages, pupils' achievement in geography is sound and their progress is steady. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Younger pupils at Key Stage 1 make good use of their school and local environment through field trips. They draw from this experience as they collect evidence and photographs and make and use simple plans and maps identifying important features and land use. Comparisons are made with visits to the seaside and new words such as sea, beach and cliffs are added to geographical language. By seven, pupils begin to respond well to 'why' and 'how' questions as they undertake simple traffic surveys. For instance, using simple graphs and bar charts to communicate data about local traffic and then identifying where and how to improve road safety.

110 Throughout Key Stage 2, skills with map work and the study of different places, such as St Lucia and Chembakholi in greater depth, help pupils to build successfully on previous learning. World and European maps are accessible in most lessons and support the pupils' growing knowledge and recognition of continents and countries. At year 5, discussions on world climates indicate that pupils are aware of the major climatic regions of the world. They make sound progress and learn new facts about the main physical and human features of the savannah, deserts and tropical rainforests. By year 6, themes such as rivers are studied well. Good links with first-hand experiences and experimentation with erosion bring learning to life and enable pupils to make good progress with their learning. For instance, by the end of a lesson on river journeys, the vast majority of pupils, many with special needs, can understand and use terms such as transportation and traction.

111 Attitudes towards learning are generally good and pupils share resources and ideas effectively in lessons. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils, mainly in year 3, and year 5, who lack concentration and are poorly behaved. Whilst their behaviour does not stop the learning of others it is distracting.

112 Teaching is good in geography; teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is evident in the depth and coverage of geography in the curriculum. There is a joint commitment by teachers to use questions to develop understanding and communication in geography and this is improving learning. The way in which pupils are encouraged to communicate their findings in geography is limited. Often worksheets provide the format for pupils to record their work. The structure of these and the amount of space provided for writing often limits the information pupils record. Very good use is made of the 'travelling teddies', as a focus point for study of other countries and cultures.

113 The subject is managed well and the new guidelines are useful and up-to-date. They are helping to raise standards and ensure that pupils' previous skills and understanding are built upon successfully. Resources are effective in supporting pupils' learning.

HISTORY

114 At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is average for their age groups. Since the previous inspection there has been an improvement in achievement in history at Key Stage 1. This is because standards do not vary so much from year to year and there is good coverage of the National Curriculum. At both key stages, better links with information technology are supporting personal learning: for instance pupils use computers to research information about topics of study, such as the Aztecs, and use print-outs as secondary sources for the whole class to study.

115 Pupils make steady progress with their learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In all year groups good use is made of time lines to develop an awareness of the passing of time. For instance, in Key Stage 1 pupils sequence old toys in order of age and begin to make comparisons with their own toys. The pupils' historical vocabulary also indicates how well their knowledge and understanding is developing: words such as 'Victorians' and 'century' are beginning to be used and understood. The study of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and Mary Seacole, is linked well to making comparisons with life in the past and the present day.

116 At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a greater awareness of specific periods of time. An example is when year 3 pupils study invaders and make good progress with their learning. They write letters to Duke William of Normandy explaining where and why Dudley Castle was built. This example shows how well pupils can organise and communicate their historical ideas when given the opportunity to do so. Too often worksheets are used for this purpose. By eleven, discussions with pupils indicate a good range and depth to their historical knowledge and understanding, but below average reading and writing skills are hampering the quantity and quality of written work produced.

117 Pupils enjoy history lessons and in general behave well. There is a significant minority of pupils in years 3 and year 5, however, whose poor behaviour is holding back their own progress.

118 Teaching in history is good. A commitment to using questions to open up debate and to involve pupils more readily with their own research and learning is beginning to work well. Teachers have expertise with the subject and use resources and visits effectively, for instance to Ludlow Castle, to enhance learning.

119 The co-ordinator is managing the subject well. Portfolios of work are being developed. These will help teachers to make better judgements about what and how well pupils have learned. Resources are effective in their support of learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can log on using their own passwords. They use the mouse accurately and can print out their own work. They are able to use the correct language for computer, mouse, screen, program, and printer and know that they have to save often. They are also able to word process their own stories. For example in year 1 pupils use simple programs to make faces, label body parts and dress a teddy. In year 2 pupils can input data for transport to make their own block graphs and access the encyclopaedia program to get more information about

living things. They have some experience of using control programs and have used a roamer, but this aspect of the curriculum needs further developing.

120 By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have extended their knowledge of information technology. Pupils in all classes use their keyboard skills successfully and are generally confident and skilled in mixing pictures and text. They are able to choose appropriate fonts and consider the size of the letters carefully and most move around the menus confidently and accurately. They use CD-ROMs and the Internet to retrieve information but need more focused retrieval strategies to search more purposefully. Throughout the key stage they are increasingly applying their skills to support other subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, design and technology and art. For example pupils in year 3 accessed information about Spain from the Internet, year 4 pupils gathered information to help them with a project on switches and circuits. Year 5 pupils, designed art pictures based on Matisse *The Snail* and year 6 pupils could use wrapped texts around pictures and made increasingly complex data bases. However pupils need more opportunity in controlling and modelling, in using email, digital cameras and scanners. Overall the rate of progress and the learning the pupils achieve in Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

121 The pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons in Key Stage 1 are very good. They are satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Overall they are eager to learn and interested. When the teacher is instructing knowledgeably, the pupils genuinely want to know how to carry out particular operations, listen attentively and many are keen to explain what they are doing. They are not afraid to volunteer their own suggestions. Because of the large number of computers pupils are usually able to work in pairs and most support each other appropriately. There are examples, however, mainly in Key Stage 2, where some pupils do not listen to the teacher and are unable to concentrate for the course of the lesson; this means the teacher has to spend some teaching time on managing inappropriate behaviour.

Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject on the timetable. Where teaching is at its best, there is very good knowledge and understanding. Expectations are appropriate and the pace is brisk. Ongoing class assessment is through rigorous question and answer sessions and correct technical vocabulary is used throughout. Since joining the Dudley Grid for Learning project a year ago, the training has had a real impact on the knowledge, skills and confidence of teacher and classroom assistants who are now enthusiastic about the possibilities of information technology. The subject now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Subject guidance and yearly plans emphasize the skills and vocabulary needed but the co-ordinator now needs to work with other subject co-ordinators to build in systematically to other subjects information technology opportunities. Also planned regular in-class support would enable the co-ordinator to monitor the effect of the in-service training and would enable more targeted focus on pupils' actual achievements.

The range and accessibility of information technology resources in both key stages is very good. Since joining the Dudley Grid for Learning, every class has a computer and laptop and throughout the school there are two information technology suites, one in each key stage, and a bank of computers in the junior library. Effective use is made of both suites, which are timetabled, and children in both key stages are allowed to use the computers informally in breaks and lunchtimes. More use needs to be made of the computers in the junior library. The school has a good range of software and now needs to buy more resources such as control games, to deliver the control and modelling elements more effectively.

Overall since the last inspection, there has been a real improvement in both key stages in the achievements by pupils, teachers' confidence and knowledge, and general resources.

MUSIC

122 At the time of the last inspection, standards in music throughout the school were found to be below national expectations and resources were inadequate to deliver the curriculum effectively. The school has made considerable efforts to improve and currently has a good supply of instruments, books and recorded music. Pupils are now achieving standards that are equivalent to those found nationally.

123 Singing in assemblies is enthusiastic and rhythmical. Key Stage 1 pupils sing tunefully, in a lively fashion and clap accurately to the beat as a class performs a song with their own instrumental accompaniment. In a Key Stage 2 assembly the singing of *Shine, Jesus, Shine*, is also tuneful and every word can be heard even though, for some at the back of the hall, it is difficult to see the words projected on to a screen. Only a small number of lessons could be observed during the inspection due partly to timetabling arrangements. Nevertheless, the work seen in Key Stage 1 is of a suitable standard. Year 1 pupils make a good attempt to sing *London's Burning* in a two-part round. They suggest the body sounds that represent elements of weather - rain, wind and even the sunshine - and play their simple composition well, observing the teacher's signal to stop. Year 2 pupils develop the idea of sound effects to illustrate a new song that they quickly learn by following the teacher's lead. They are particularly good at evoking the sound of the creaking door in the *Hairy, Scary Castle*.

124 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are just about able to hold their part in a four-part round. They quickly pick up rhythms that the teacher claps and repeat them accurately. When accompanying a new song, they play correctly on the first and third beat of each four-beat bar. Due attention is given to composing activities. Year 4 pupils create the sounds of creatures that live in a strange place using suitable instruments. Some have trouble naming the instruments, one pupil referring to 'that big round thing', and they find it difficult to take turns at playing in a group, all wanting to play at the same time. Nevertheless, one group produces a good composition, a single instrument starting and others joining in to represent scuttling, scurrying creatures.

125 The pace of learning across the school is satisfactory. Pupils are introduced to the music of famous composers such as Bizet, Mozart and Holst in assemblies and lessons. Year 4 pupils shut their eyes as they listen to *Jupiter* and consider the appropriateness of the instruments that they hear. They learn that graphical notation guides musicians so that they know when and how to play. They begin to understand a range of musical terms such as 'tempo' and 'pitch' and have chances to develop their creative talents. Most have a positive attitude to music but there are a few pupils who do not take the subject seriously. Some, for example, do not handle instruments carefully. This was seen in one of the year 4 lessons and contrasts with the youngest pupils who behave very well with their instruments and only play them at the correct time.

126 Teaching overall is sound, though one lesson was unsatisfactory due to the teacher's lack of confidence and expertise. She found it difficult to teach a new song and to formulate clear questions to discover whether pupils could identify how the words of the song could be divided into four-beat bars. Another lesson was barely satisfactory due to the time lost through constantly having to call pupils to order. However, good lessons were seen in both key stages. These teachers have good relationships with pupils and keep up a brisk pace in the lesson. They convey their own enthusiasm and have sufficient expertise to introduce and explain musical terms. A year 4 teacher structures her lesson well so that pupils have time to sing, listen to recorded music and practise compositions in groups that they perform for the class. Another, in year 1, has high expectations that pupils will be sensible with instruments

and that they can learn the correct musical terms and use them when they answer questions. There is due emphasis in a year 2 lesson on improving the performance of a new song.

127 The co-ordinator has just returned after maternity leave. Extra-curricular clubs have lapsed during her absence but another teacher has just started a recorder group for Key Stage 1 pupils who wish to learn. A new initiative is giving a few pupils in upper Key Stage 2 the opportunity to learn the flute or clarinet. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and is aware that some teachers lack confidence or expertise, as outlined in her perceptive action plan. This issue is to be addressed through the School Improvement Plan from next September. The co-ordinator has devised a very good scheme of work to help teachers with their planning and is available for advice.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128 By the end of both key stages, pupils' achievements are average for their ages in games, dance and athletics. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Gymnastics was not taking place during the inspection. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Pupils in year 6 can make contrasting body shapes and movements to interpret music on a theme of communications in the twenty-first century. They make sound interpretations of the act of finding their mobile phone and talking to a friend on it. They move around the hall, seeking out different partners and interpreting world wide electronic communication. The pupils often lack an awareness of space, however. They tend to crowd together in one part of the hall. A year 3 class gave a sound dance interpretation of the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* in an assembly. Standards in swimming at Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Currently, about a third of the pupils in year 4 can swim 25 metres unaided. In games, some pupils in year 2 can throw and catch a ball competently, whilst others are much less confident. They practise their skills with a partner and in small sided team games. In dance, pupils in year 2 can make tall, wide, curled and twisted shapes in responding imaginatively to music.

129 The quality of teaching in both key stages is good overall. However, as reported in the previous inspection, it is quite variable. Teaching is never unsatisfactory and there are examples, particularly in years 5 and 6, of very good teaching. In a year 6 dance lesson, the teacher used questioning well to make the pupils think carefully about what they had to do: "What is a contrasting movement?" He encouraged the pupils to be confident and expressive in their movements. He gave the pupils time to think about their performance and how they might make it better: "What is not happening?" In a year 5 indoor athletics lesson, the teacher focussed on the specific skills necessary to run well. She stressed the need for the pupils to maintain a steady pace in jogging and to push with the arms and streamline the body in sprinting. She joined in the lesson actively, using her demonstration to improve the pupils' learning. The warm up session in this lesson was most effective. The teacher made the pupils aware of the need to stretch the relevant muscles which running involves. In both key stages, the teachers dress appropriately for physical education. They manage changing sessions well and they encourage the pupils to help with fetching and retrieving equipment. Pupils who are not taking part in the lessons are asked to write notes about the performance of selected pupils. In some lessons pupils' speaking skills are developed. For example, in a year 1 dance lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to use appropriate words, such as 'creep' and 'dart', to describe their partners' movements. These positive features of teaching ensure that pupils in both key stages are learning well. In a year 3 games lesson, for example, the pupils learnt to keep their eye firmly on the ball in developing their racket skills and they learnt the importance of control.

130 Whilst examples were seen of pupils who had forgotten to bring their physical education kit to school for lessons, most pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They

change sensibly into appropriate kit and they take part in lessons enthusiastically. They listen well and respond quickly to instructions. A minority of pupils is less attentive and can become over-excited and silly.

131 A clear policy for teaching physical education is in place and planning is based effectively on local authority guidelines. All the relevant areas of physical education are covered. Whilst, overall, there is equality of access and opportunity for all the pupils, examples were observed of pupils being withdrawn from physical education lessons for extra numeracy support and for work in information technology. The timing of these withdrawal sessions is changed each half term so that pupils miss different subjects throughout the year. The co-ordinator offers sound leadership. She has organised training for colleagues and this has had a positive impact on teachers' confidence in teaching various elements of the subject, which was a criticism of the previous report. She has produced a clear action plan to secure further improvement. She monitors planning and she has monitored some teaching, offering colleagues help and advice as necessary. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. There is a good range of apparatus and equipment to support learning. Internal and external accommodation for physical education is good. After-school clubs for football, netball and activities enhance the curriculum. Matches are played against local teams, often with considerable success. Last year, the netball team were runners up in the local schools league and currently, the football team has reached the semi-finals of a knock out competition. Pupils have achieved individual success in the schools district sports. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral and social development, through involvement in clubs and teams and in encouraging cooperative work and the recognition of the need for rules in games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132 Standards are satisfactory at the end of both key stages and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have an understanding of Christianity and other world religions through looking at their special books, their symbols and how and why their followers pray. They look at how people celebrate festivals such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Diwali. They have learnt a little about Islam, Christianity and Judaism and are familiar with Bible stories such as Jairus's daughter, and Noah's ark, and have learnt about Jesus, his life and teachings. For example in year 1 pupils have learnt the bible story of Moses in the basket and in year 2 they have learnt that there are special, holy places such as churches and mosques. They have had the opportunity to visit a local church and the Dudley mosque. In Key Stage 1 they know that a candle is lit to give them an opportunity to reflect or pray. Most know that there are local heroes such as police and firefighters, and that there are Christian heroes such as the Good Samaritan. They appreciate that it is important to care for and about one another and what a friend is and why our families are important.

133 By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of world religions. They study in depth Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and mainly use religious terminology accurately. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils learn about religions and attempt to describe key activities, places and people more accurately. For example in year 3 most pupils understand concepts such as rules in life in different faiths, like the Ten Commandments. In year 4 most pupils can recall the symbols associated with Sikhism accurately and know who Guru Nanak was. In years 5 and year 6 concepts such as the similarities and differences between religions are explored with increasing depth and many pupils are clear about the difference between the main beliefs in Christianity and Judaism. Many pupils understand the different ways believers show their belief in God, such as through practising, for example, the Five Pillars of Islam and observing the Ten Commandments. Pupils have had the opportunity to visit local places of worship such as the local Gurdwara and are able to express views on its purpose and meaning to Sikhs. They

understand the rules and traditions of different religions such as Muslims being unable to eat pork or drink alcohol. They are aware that different religious communities mark special times in people's lives by specific rituals. By year 6 most pupils can use religious terminology with reasonable confidence. However, a significant minority lack the confidence to express and share openly their thoughts and feelings. Overall the rate of progress and the learning the pupils achieve in both key stages is good.

134 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The majority listens with interest and is keen to ask and answer questions. However in Key Stage 2 a minority of pupils are not able to concentrate or focus on the lesson and this affects their learning. Some pupils in both key stages also have difficulty with the written tasks and the subject language they need and have difficulty with more abstract ideas about religion.

135 The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stages 1 and 2. A strong feature of the teaching is the way in which pupils can reflect on their own experiences when trying to understand religious concepts. For example, a year 2 lesson on rules and the Ten Commandments gave pupils the opportunity to relate rules to school and home and their answers were respected. In year 4 pupils were able to reflect on concepts of honesty and fairness. The way teachers enable pupils to learn from religion and discuss religion, contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Generally the teachers have good subject knowledge and ask for support when necessary from the co-ordinator who is a specialist. Teachers carefully plan lessons together across year groups, and make good use of the artifacts and resources provided.

136 The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who is enthusiastic about the subject. She has carefully planned a scheme of work which fully complies with the locally agreed syllabus. The scheme is soon to be reviewed and is very helpful to teachers with their planning. The co-ordinator also collects samples of work but has had few opportunities to systematically work alongside colleagues and monitor understanding of the pupils. There is a satisfactory range of resources for each major faith and also resources for various cultures; these resources contribute to the cultural development of the pupils. Visitors from different faiths are also invited to lead assemblies. Overall since the last inspection, there has been steady improvement in both key stages in the achievements by pupils.