

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Sheldon, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103441

Headteacher: Miss M M McGrath

Reporting inspector: Mr R Cheetham
2592

Dates of inspection: 18th February – 22nd February 2002

Inspection number: 191579
Full 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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Thomas More Catholic Primary Horse Shoes Lane Sheldon Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Joseph Perkins
Date of previous inspection:	10/02/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2592	Mr R Cheetham	Registered inspector	Mathematics, physical education and equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9003	Mr B Findlay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12954	Mrs P Claxton	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology and The Foundation Stage	How well does the school care for its pupils?
15360	Mrs E Randall	Team inspector	English, music and special educational needs	
28071	Mr A Williams	Team inspector	Art and design, geography and history	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School in the Sheldon area of Birmingham and serves the parish of St Thomas More. The area is one of average economic circumstances. Nearly all pupils are baptised members of the Catholic Church. Most are of White UK heritage, 14% are of other White heritage backgrounds and a few are from other minority ethnic groups. Seven pupils are from Traveller backgrounds. The school is larger than most primary schools with 289 pupils on roll including 30 children in the reception class. Children start full time in reception in the September after their fourth birthday. Most children's attainment on entry is around that generally found but varies significantly from year to year. 15% of pupils are eligible for a free school meal and this is below the national average. 19% of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is also below the national average. Their needs include: moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. Four pupils have a statement of special educational need. Largely as a result of promotions, staff illnesses and difficulties in appointing staff, seven teachers have left and four have been appointed over the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that gives satisfactory value for money. It is well led and its aims and values are very well reflected in its work. It is mostly successful in catering for the needs of its pupils and has good strategies to include them in its activities. Most teaching is good and eleven-year-old pupils reach above average standards in English. Most reach average standards in mathematics and science. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Pupils aged eight to eleven do not make enough progress in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT).

What the school does well

- Promotes pupils' good progress and high standards of attainment in The Foundation Stage, English, geography, history and physical education
- Provides a very good Foundation Stage curriculum*
- Assesses pupils' progress very well in English and mathematics
- Teaches pupils well
- Is well led and managed
- Promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well

*The Foundation Stage curriculum is that taught in the reception class in this school

What could be improved

- Eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in design and technology and ICT and their higher attainment in mathematics and science
- Governors' involvement in monitoring the school and shaping its strategic direction
- The detail of school development planning over three years

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and since then has made good progress in maintaining or raising pupils' standards of attainment in most subjects and improving the quality of teaching. It has made good progress on nearly all of the Key Issues identified in the previous inspection report. There are schemes of work and assessment procedures in

place for all subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well established. The school has improved eleven-year old pupils' standards of attainment in physical education. Seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in design and technology and ICT have improved, but there has not been enough improvement in eleven-year-olds' standards. The school has a good system of performance management. The school has the capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	B	B	B	well above A average above B average Average C below average D well below E average
mathematics	C	B	D	D	
science	C	C	C	C	

This table shows that over the last three years, eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment have generally been above average in English. They were consistently average in science and in mathematics, standards improved to above average in 2000 but then fell to below average last year. In both these subjects, too few pupils reached the higher level of attainment. In 2001, pupils' attainment in English was above the average of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal). Their attainment matched that of similar schools in science and was below this in mathematics. This lower attainment in mathematics was due to staff changes and because staff did not expect enough of higher attaining pupils. During the same period, seven-year-old pupils' attainment was generally above average in reading. It was mostly average in mathematics. In writing, pupils' attainment fell from above average in 1999 to average in 2001. Last year, the school exceeded its target for eleven-year-old pupils' attainment in English but did not reach its target in mathematics. It is making satisfactory progress towards its targets for 2002.

Current standards of literacy and numeracy are above average. The current Year 6 pupils reach above average standards in English and make good progress. They reach average standards in mathematics and science and make satisfactory progress. A higher proportion of pupils than last year is making good progress and reaching the higher level in mathematics. Most pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. Seven-year-old pupils reach above average standards and make good progress in art and design and geography. Eleven-year-old pupils reach above average standards and make good progress in geography, history and physical education. Higher attaining eleven-year-olds make good progress and reach high standards in art and design. Most eleven-year-olds make unsatisfactory progress and reach below average standards in design and technology and ICT.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their learning. They settle quickly to work and take pride in doing well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well and respond very well to staff's expectations of them.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy very good relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils play happily together and share play space very well. They are good at taking the initiative and even the youngest pupils carry out responsibilities well.
Attendance	Attendance is good and has improved recently.

Unauthorised absence is low and much improved since the last inspection. Punctuality is very good. Most pupils have a very good record of attendance. Pupils are keen to be involved in activities and are clear about what they have to do. There is a settled sense of discipline in the classrooms but occasionally a few lose interest and do not behave well when not properly managed. They work very well together and respond very positively when given more demanding work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The school teaches the skills of literacy and numeracy well and meets the needs of all its pupils well. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with one another and staff. The high quality teaching in the reception class is based on a very good understanding of how young children learn best and a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is a good balance of activities between those the teacher directs and those pupils can choose for themselves. This fosters their independence, decision-making and maturity and pupils make good progress. Most teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. In a few lessons, this teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils make slow progress. Throughout the school, teachers' lesson planning is consistently good and they make clear to pupils what they are to learn. Teachers use national planning guidance well. They have good subject knowledge except in ICT and design and technology. They generally have high expectations of their pupils except for higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science. They manage pupils' behaviour well by pointing out when they do things well rather than on the few occasions when they do not. Pupils respond well. They behave very well, listen carefully and work well in groups. Older, higher attaining pupils are increasingly confident in explaining and developing their ideas. Teachers generally assess pupils' progress well in most subjects and are developing good systems of recording this.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality curriculum and the community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Teachers plan work carefully so that all pupils have the chance to learn in nearly all lessons. Qualified teaching assistants and learning support assistants generally work well with these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and makes good provision for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school assesses pupils' progress well and takes good care of them.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school continues to offer good support and guidance to its pupils. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn the full range of ICT skills. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' stage of development on entry to the school and their subsequent progress particularly in English, mathematics and science. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The school promotes an effective partnership with parents, who express considerable confidence in the school in most areas of its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school well and is supported in its good management by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. Most subject co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are strong supporters of the school but do not play an active enough role in monitoring its work or in its medium term planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its progress satisfactorily and closely monitors the quality of English and mathematics teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of most of its resources and grants but does not plan in enough detail over the medium term.

The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. It has good levels of staffing, the accommodation is good and most subjects have good resources. The headteacher sets a clear educational direction to ensure that the school's aims and values are reflected in its policies and work. Senior staff have clear areas of school responsibility and carry these out well. Governors fulfil nearly all aspects of the statutory duties satisfactorily except for a

small omission in the school prospectus. They are not closely enough involved in challenging or evaluating a few of its decisions such as those related to value for money.

The school has a good system for improving the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Co-ordinators in most other subjects do not concentrate enough on the standards pupils are intended to reach or the progress they are expected to make.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school • Behaviour is good. • Pupils are expected to work hard and make good progress. • Teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons • A few parents would like more information about pupil progress and wish the school to work more closely with them

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The school provides a wide range of events and activities that enrich the curriculum, provides adequate information on pupils' progress and has good working relationships with parents. Therefore, the inspection team does not agree with these parents' views on improvements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The Foundation Stage (children in the reception class)

- 1 Children begin the reception class with a range of skills similar to those generally found. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children achieve well and reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning. A significant minority reach higher standards. These standards are good. Children make very good progress in language, literacy and communication, personal and social development, mathematical development and physical development. They make good progress in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual plans because their work is well planned and they are well supported.

Key Stage 1 (pupils from five to seven)

Recent trends

- 2 For the last four years, reading standards have been consistently above the national average and in 2001 they were above the average of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal). Standards of writing were never less than average and in two out of the four years were above or well above average. In 2001, standards matched the average of similar schools. In mathematics, standards were generally at the national average except for one year when they were well above this. In 2001, standards were below those of similar schools. Last year, pupils' attainment in science was very high compared with the national average.

Key Stage 2 (pupils from eight to eleven)

Recent trends

- 3 For the last four years, pupils' standards of attainment in English were generally above or well above average. In 2001, they were above the average of similar schools. Mathematics standards were above average in two years, average in one and below average last year. They were also below the average of similar schools last year. In science, standards were above average in one year, average in the following two and below the national and similar schools' averages last year. While the picture for English was generally positive, that for mathematics and science was unsatisfactory and higher attaining pupils were not making enough progress. The school explains this by accepting that it did not cater well enough for higher attaining pupils and too few reached levels of which they were capable. This was partly due to significant staff absences because of illness and a higher than usual amount of staff changes. The staffing situation is now more settled. The school is taking action to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science and this is having some effect.

The current seven and eleven year olds

- 4 Standards of literacy are good. Most pupils' standards of speaking and listening are average and they make satisfactory progress. Most listen well to the teacher and each other. Pupils follow instructions carefully, which helps them to improve their work. Most speak clearly in small groups and answer questions clearly. Most pupils are not confident about speaking to larger audiences and do not speak clearly enough. Seven and eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in reading are high because teachers consistently show them how to improve and encourage them to read regularly. Most pupils make good progress. Seven year olds read

accurately and with expression. Most eleven-year-old pupils read fluently and enjoy discussing what they have read. A few average attaining pupils read hesitantly when faced with an unfamiliar book but quickly gain confidence when they keep trying. Eleven-year-olds use the new computer based system in the library to find books quickly. They know about the index and contents pages and use these to help them find the right page. Average and lower attaining pupils cannot find out information quickly because they do not pick out main words in the relevant text. Standards of attainment of seven and eleven-year-old pupils in writing are above what is generally expected. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils see that there is a real reason for writing because teachers give them opportunities in English and other subjects. As well as writing in English lessons, pupils write for instance, prayers in religious education, descriptions in geography and factual accounts in history.

- 5 Standards of numeracy are good. In mathematics, most seven and eleven-year-old pupils are working within the levels expected for pupils of these ages. Six and seven-year-old pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points and those aged from eight to eleven make good progress. Older pupils generally make faster progress because more is now expected of the higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 and this is starting to raise expectations of others. A slightly higher proportion of eleven-year-olds than last year are working at the above average level but the proportion is not as high as it should be. Overall these standards and progress represent satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
- 6 Seven-year-old pupils are making good progress in counting on and back using numbers from 0 to 100 but their recognition of number patterns is unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of the place value of whole numbers but their understanding of decimals and fractions is not as advanced. Lower attaining pupils know basic addition and subtraction facts and the names of some two and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils have not done enough work on showing information in different ways such as in bar charts to understand and interpret the data well enough. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in their number work because the teachers set challenging work.
- 7 Most eleven-year-old pupils have a good knowledge of the four rules of number. Average and higher attaining pupils are making good progress in understanding the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. Their progress in solving problems that the teachers set is satisfactory but they make slow progress in solving problems of their own. Lower attaining pupils are making good progress in using the four rules of number and have a satisfactory knowledge of some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. The teachers of older pupils do not build on the skills of using ICT to present data in different ways and eleven-year-olds do not reach the higher than expected level in this aspect.
- 8 As the result of good science teaching, most Year 2 pupils are working above the level expected for their age. Most Year 6 pupils are working within the level expected for their age. The difference in the attainment of the two groups of pupils is because Year 6 pupils have not done enough investigation work during their time in the school. The school has now put this right and this is benefiting pupils.
- 9 Pupils in the five to seven age group generally make good progress in lessons. Pupils in the eight to eleven age group make satisfactory progress overall. Some make good progress in lessons where the teaching is good. Year 2 pupils use good scientific language to describe the properties of materials such as metal, wood and

plastic. Most pupils in Year 6, when creating a fair test to investigate dissolving solids found it difficult to judge what they needed to measure and how they would go about it. Higher attaining pupils could make some suggestions but still found the task too challenging. This is because the pupils generally do not have enough experience of work involving practical investigations.

- 10 Seven-year-old pupils reach above average standards and make good progress in art and design and geography. Eleven-year-old pupils reach above average standards and make good progress in geography, history and aspects of physical education. Higher attaining eleven-year-olds make good progress and reach high standards in art and design. Most pupils reach average standards and make satisfactory progress in the remaining subjects except in design and technology and ICT. In both subjects, eleven-year-olds make unsatisfactory progress and reach below average standards.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics because teachers plan work carefully to meet their learning needs. They set targets with the pupils and encourage them to reach them. Learning support assistants and qualified teaching assistants work well with small groups and some of this work with pupils aged eight and nine is very effective and these pupils make very good progress. Pupils gain confidence from working individually with the specialist teacher and they make satisfactory progress. When working in small groups with the specialist teacher in their class, they make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils generally make good progress towards their targets in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and soon settle ready for work at the start of the day. They are keen to be involved in activities, mainly because work is made interesting and pupils are clear about what they have to do. Pupils take a pride in doing well, for example in a Year 6 physical education lesson where pupils worked hard to improve their skills. This level of enthusiasm was seen in most lessons. Almost all parents who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated their child liked school.
- 13 Behaviour is very good. Pupils soon learn the standards of behaviour that are expected, because staff set very good examples and make clear and reinforce codes of conduct. There is a settled sense of discipline in classrooms and a commitment to learning, which creates an atmosphere in which pupils can get on with their work and make good progress. From a very early age, pupils take very good care of equipment and a good example of this is how well the reception class tidy away after themselves. Behaviour is also very good in the playground and around the school. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their work and try hard. They are usually keen to improve and behave well in most lessons. A few lose interest and do not behave well when staff do not provide interesting work or do not keep pupils' attention.
- 14 Pupils form very good relationships with other pupils and members of staff. They co-operate very well in lessons, such as when exchanging ideas in Year 6 science lesson. Pupils also respond very positively towards their teachers when they set challenging work such as in Year 2 science and Year 6 mathematics lessons. Pupils play happily together and share play space very well. They have no concerns about bullying and feel secure and comfortable in school. Loud or aggressive

behaviour is rare and the rate of exclusion from school is very low, although one pupil was excluded in the past year.

- 15 Pupils develop very well during their time at the school. They develop a good sense of right and wrong and acquire mature values. Older pupils set a good example to the younger ones. They readily listen to each other's ideas and take pleasure when others do well, such as in a Year 5 lesson in physical education when pupils appreciated the way others had improved their balances. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities around the school, such as litter patrol, staffing the school bank and monitoring duties. They take on a high level of individual responsibility and can be relied upon to get on with their work without too much supervision and to organise themselves and extend their own work. A good example of this was in a Year 6 *circle time* lesson in which pupils examined their feelings and ideas with pupils who are not their close friends.
- 16 Attendance is good. Average rates of attendance for the current year are in line with figures usually found and are an improvement on previous years. Unauthorised absence is low and much improved since the last inspection. Punctuality is very good. Most pupils have a very good record of attendance and rates are consistent across all year groups.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 In the school as a whole, 20% of lessons are very good, 57% are good and 23% are satisfactory. Half of the teaching in the reception class is very good and the remainder is good. Most of the teaching of pupils aged from five to eleven is good.
- 18 In the reception class, the teacher's planning of the curriculum is very good and is based on the nationally recommended Foundation Stage Stepping Stones (detailed stages of learning). The planning fully takes into account the learning needs of different children. The nursery nurse ably supports the teacher and together they plan a good range of interesting activities that move children's learning forward at a brisk pace. The curriculum for language and literacy and mathematical learning provides a very good introduction to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
- 19 Staff make good use of resources to ensure children remain interested and involved. For example, they were excited when they used number fans to show their answers to addition questions, holding them up for the teacher to see. Staff plan a good balance between activities that the teacher directs and those that children choose for themselves. Staff and parents who help in class routinely ask children questions about their work. This encourages them to think about what they are doing and develops their vocabularies and communication skills. The teacher plans key questions for adults to ask children and this provides very good guidance for parent helpers, who make a significant contribution to supporting pupils' learning. This also helps the teacher to check the learning and to plan further activities to meet the needs of individual pupils. Assessment of pupils' learning is very good. The teacher records detailed information on individual pupils across all the areas of learning. She uses this very effectively to check the learning and progress of individuals and to inform her planning of activities. Staff make very good use of homework to support children's literacy and numeracy skills and to form a partnership with parents. For example, they provide work on letter sounds and advice sheets on number activities for the children to use with their parents. In addition, the teacher uses her knowledge of individual children's progress to set targets for improvement and shares these with the parents and child.

- 20 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in most settings and they make good progress overall. Class teachers usually plan different levels of work for pupils' various levels of attainment and this is a strong feature of English, mathematics and science lessons. In Years 3 to 6, qualified teaching assistants work well with small groups of pupils because class teachers work out exactly how they are to do this in the different parts of the lesson. In Years 1 and 2, the qualified teaching assistants' role is not defined as well and during the part of the lesson taught by the class teacher. They are not directed well enough and do not help pupils to progress. The specialist teacher works satisfactorily with individual pupils when they are withdrawn from class. She makes good use of a wide range of resources to help them learn. When supporting groups of pupils in class lessons, her support is not as effective because the work is not always planned well enough with the class teacher and the management of pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory.
- 21 In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan their work well. They (and their colleagues in Years 3 to 6) use the national guidance for the teaching of literacy and numeracy very well. They set work that is well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils and qualified teaching assistants work with groups of lower attaining pupils and help them to progress. Staff have been well trained in the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and have good subject knowledge. Their subject knowledge in most other subjects is good and this gives them the confidence to answer pupils' questions or ask them challenging questions. They generally assess pupils' progress well and are developing systems of recording and tracking pupils' progress. This is done particularly well in English and mathematics and increasingly well in other subjects. In some subject such as art and design, teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work and, as a result, seven-year-olds can write about the art skills they have learned and in which areas they want to improve. Most lessons begin well. Teachers set clear objectives and discuss them with the pupils.. Through careful questioning, they check that pupils have remembered but some teachers do not use open questions enough (those beginning with how? or why?) to promote extended answers and meaningful discussion. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well by pointing out when pupils are quick to respond or when they have acted on their own initiative. This produces a very good response from pupils. They listen carefully, work very well in groups and try hard to improve their work. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and this promotes good progress. In Year 2, not enough is expected of higher attaining pupils in mathematics and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- 22 Most of the teaching of pupils aged from eight to eleven is good. This is based on consistently good planning and clear lesson objectives. This helps pupils make connections with what they have learned previously. In a few ICT lessons, the focus of the learning is not clear and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to discuss and analyse their work. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They show interest and excitement, remain on task with the minimum of supervision and co-operate very well with adults and each other. Good examples of this were in physical education lessons when older pupils evaluated each other's dance performances and so increased their quality through further practice. The introduction of science homework across the school is a positive step to improving pupils' knowledge and understanding. This complements the homework set in English, mathematics and other subjects such as geography. This work at home extends pupils' understanding and allows them to practise their skills in practical ways. Teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects and this gives them the confidence to teach well and cater for the needs of all pupils. For instance, in Years 5 and 6 creative writing flourishes and higher attaining pupils are particularly good at writing striking

introductions that seize the readers' attention. Most teachers do not have enough subject knowledge to teach all aspects of ICT and design and technology to the same high levels. Teachers assess pupils' progress very well in English and mathematics and in Years 5 and 6 make good use of this information to teach pupils well in ability groups. Their assessment of pupils' progress in most other subjects is good and with their colleagues in Years 1 and 2 are developing systems of recording and tracking pupils' progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well by being clear what they expect and providing interesting lessons that appeal to their pupils. Pupils generally behave very well and concentrate on their work.

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

- 23 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. It is good for pupils aged five to eleven, meets statutory requirements and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All pupils have good access to the whole curriculum. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop the full range of ICT skills.
- 24 The curriculum for children under five is a strength of the school. There are very good opportunities for the development of children's mathematical and communication skills together with their personal, social and emotional development.
- 25 The curriculum for pupils aged five to eleven reflects the school's priorities for improving standards in English and mathematics. The National Literacy and the National Numeracy Strategies are being implemented successfully and staff training and the introduction of different teaching methods is helping to raise standards, especially in literacy. However, a large amount of time is being devoted to English at the expense of subjects such as design and technology. The school needs to review the amount of time given to each subject and ensure, for instance, that physical education lessons are not too long for some younger pupils or too short for others.
- 26 Curricular planning is good. The Foundation Stage planning is firmly based on the Early Learning Goals and this planning successfully meets the needs of all children. The quality of the planning is very good and it is used to identify key learning objectives for groups and individual pupils. The school uses national guidance to provide teachers with a good basis from which to plan the lessons for pupils from five to eleven. In an effort to raise standards in mathematics, the school groups ten and eleven-year-old pupils by ability. This allows teachers to focus their teaching in a class where there is a narrower range of attainment. The school uses its teachers and most classroom assistants well to support pupils' learning.
- 27 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness education is good. This is provided as part of the Diocesan religious education programme, the family life and health education and the science programmes. The school makes good use of the biannual visit of the Life Caravan for drug awareness education. All classes now have timetabled lessons for personal and social education and these include activities such as circle time. These are well-organised lessons that have strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak. They help pupils develop respect for one another.
- 28 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan work well to give the opportunity to learn in all lessons. Most classroom assistants provide good help to encourage pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons, and this helps them make good progress. Opportunities for working in small withdrawal groups means the pupils gain in confidence and are willing to try hard. This helps them to learn well. Pupils have good access to all curricular activities.

- 29 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This promotes high standards of personal development. The school is a very caring and happy community and this has a very good effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
- 30 Pupils' spiritual development is supported very well through the school's firm foundation in the Catholic faith. There are close links with the Parish and Church. Assemblies, Masses and the day-to-day school activities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers encourage pupils to think about the important aspects of life. Regular worship and daily prayers are very good opportunities for pupils to think about the importance of thanking God for what we have and remembering the needs of others. During discussion, teachers encourage pupils to think carefully about others and respect their feelings. Teachers consistently take into account pupils' ideas and show them that they matter. In turn, pupils are encouraged to do the same. One particularly good example of this is Year 6 pupils having time allocated to talk about their own achievements and respect those of other pupils in the class. The teacher asked the class to think carefully before speaking and then make a positive comment to someone about what they had done. There are other opportunities in different subjects. Pupils write prayers in religious education and have times to be quiet and think about their lives and world events. Teachers give opportunities for them to think about the beauty of the world through poetry and to listen to music quietly whilst considering how it makes them feel. In one art lesson, pupils spontaneously gasped with admiration when the teacher showed them artwork painted by a professional artist.
- 31 Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' moral and social development and consistently make them clear. Adults show a good example by treating pupils with great care and courtesy. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and consideration for others because teachers consistently reinforce these aspects. For instance, teachers expect pupils to apologise if they interrupt others working. The school's code of conduct and class rules are prominently displayed and teachers expect pupils to follow these. There is a strong emphasis on pupils doing their best. Teachers recognise achievement with stickers in the classroom and certificates given out at assembly. These show that the school values good work, politeness, helpfulness and effort. Teachers consistently remind pupils of their duty to care for others. Year 6 pupils help younger readers and older pupils look after younger ones at lunch times. Pupils are very aware of people less fortunate than themselves because the school brings them to their attention. They regularly raise money for charities. One example is the very good link through Catholic Aid For Overseas Development (CAFOD). This encourages pupils to learn about people in Columbia for instance and raise money in different ways to help them. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to work together. They show sportsmanship in physical education and compete fairly as individuals and teams. In music, pupils work together to produce group accompaniments. Teachers give pupils chances to do jobs around school such as looking after class libraries and running the school bank. These opportunities make a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- 32 There are good opportunities for pupils' cultural development. Visits, assemblies and subjects such as history, geography, music and religious education help pupils to understand different celebrations and cultures. In religious education, pupils learn about festivals in different faiths such as Hanukkah and Divali. Music and books give pupils the opportunity to experience, for instance, African Caribbean stories and traditions. The school does not fully exploit opportunities to display work on these themes to make pupils more aware of aspects of other cultures as well as their own.

- 33 Pupils benefit from a good range of activities outside lessons through visits and school clubs. Visits are arranged for all year groups, such as those to Ash End House Farm, the Museum of Cannock Chase and the Severn Valley Railway. The range of after-school clubs is good, including clubs for different sports, art and garden clubs and a choir. These are mainly for the older pupils and some parents would like to see more for the younger pupils. However, the school provides as much as can reasonably be expected and there is football coaching for pupils aged from 5 to 8.
- 34 The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Links with the local Parish are very good. There is regular involvement with the clergy and pupils visit the church. Pupils visit local places of interest, including work by Years 3 and 4 pupils in Sheldon Park in connection with a woodland project. The school also makes good use of the wider community through the use of the Internet and through visiting speakers and theatre groups. Older pupils use the Internet at the local library to support their homework. There are effective links with the secondary school, particular in the development of writing, where secondary school staff and local writers visit the school to work with older pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 35 The school continues to offer good support and guidance to its pupils. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress that meet statutory requirements. Teachers keep parents well informed about pupils' attainment and progress and make sure they know what they have to do to improve.
- 36 The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and stage of development on entry to the school. Reception class staff identify key learning objectives for groups and individual pupils and use these very well to assess children's attainment and progress. The teacher uses the information from assessment to set individual targets for improvement in literacy and mathematical development and to set group targets in all other areas. The detailed tracking and specific teaching of individuals and groups play a significant part in the good progress most pupils make. In Years 1 to 6, teachers make continuing assessments of pupils' progress in all subjects. They use assessment information in English, mathematics and science very effectively to set targets for improvement for individual pupils and groups. The recording system helps the school track each pupil's progress in English, mathematics and science as well as monitoring year group progress towards the targets for eleven-year-olds. The use of assessment in the other subjects is good although there are some minor inconsistencies between teachers. These are mainly due to the turn over in staff and the school is fully aware of them. In most subjects, the teachers use the information effectively to match tasks well to the pupils' abilities. In science and design and technology, tasks set for the oldest pupils are not always matched well enough to pupils' capabilities or prior learning. In physical education, the assessment system has just been introduced and staff are trying it out.
- 37 Teachers keep very detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress that are passed on to inform the next teacher. Teachers use a range of standardised tests in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) to monitor pupils' progress. They also assess pupils' progress well in most other subjects against key objectives at the end of units of work. Teachers use this information well to decide where extra support is needed and to inform their planning for all pupils. The school devotes a week to intense assessment once each term and uses the outcomes to cover any

identified gaps in the pupils' learning. The headteacher and the deputy head recently took on the responsibility of co-ordinating assessment when the post became vacant. They plan to use a computer programme for collating and analysing assessment data to make the information more useful for long-term school planning and to make the information more accessible to teachers.

- 38 The school supports pupils with special educational needs effectively by identifying their difficulties or talents at an early stage. Pupils are well supported in lessons and around the school. Pupils with the greatest need are given a high level of support. Pupils with exceptional abilities are supported through teachers' planning and awareness of their needs. The care and support given makes a good contribution to their attainment and progress.
- 39 The school continues to provide a safe and caring place for pupils to learn. There are satisfactory arrangements for pupils' safety and welfare and the school now has an adequate number of staff members trained in first aid. Procedures for child protection and health and safety (including safe access to the Internet) are effective but the arrangements for site inspections, risk assessment and reporting to the governing body are not clear enough in the policy. An area of concern is the potential danger to pupils caused by a few parents or carers who park their vehicles inconsiderately outside the school. The school has made every effort to make people aware of the potential risks but the congestion at the start and end of each school day during the inspection shows that a few people continue to ignore the school's appeals.
- 40 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school has a very effective system of recording attendance and analyses the information well to follow up individual cases of concern. Measures to improve attendance in the school improvement plan, including awards for very good attendance and the display of performance figures, have been largely successful. Attendance has significantly improved and is no longer a concern.
- 41 Good behaviour is promoted very well and supported by a positive ethos of respect and consideration for others, which is very apparent in the day-to-day life of the school. Members of staff insist upon high standards of behaviour and set very good role models for the pupils. Pupils are taught very clearly how they should behave, so that they rarely require more than a gentle reminder. There is an effective system of awards, which are celebrated in the classroom and with the whole school in assemblies. Senior staff are well informed through the records that teachers keep and they tackle any behaviour problems at an early stage. Consequently, the school is successful in preventing oppressive forms of behaviour such as bullying.
- 42 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Monitoring of progress in the reception class effectively tracks their progress at this early stage. In other parts of the school, teachers keep class records that provide a basis for good levels of personal support and guidance, including personal support for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 43 The school promotes an effective partnership with parents, who express considerable confidence in the school in most areas of its work. Most parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that pupils like school, are expected to work hard and make good progress. Parents also think that teaching is good, the school is well led and managed and that behaviour is good. They also feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. The inspection team confirms these positive views. A minority of parents feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons and a few parents would like more information about pupil progress and to work more closely with the school. These views are largely unfounded. The school provides a wide range of events and activities that enrich the curriculum, provides good information on pupils' progress and the working relationship with parents is good.
- 44 The quality of information given to parents is good. Information about the life of the school is well presented and the quality and frequency of newsletters are excellent. Publications are thoughtfully presented but the prospectus does not contain information about parents' right to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship. Annual progress reports on pupils are very detailed about their attainment, especially in English and mathematics. However, the expressions teachers use do not always give a sense of progress over time and information about areas for improvement is confined mainly to the subjects of English, mathematics and religious education.
- 45 The school works closely with parents and provides a range of opportunities to be involved in their learning at home and at school. Parents are encouraged to support their child through information about the curriculum provided each term and through curriculum meetings, such as numeracy and literacy workshops. The school makes effective use of homework with a clear policy and good communications. There are good arrangements for involving parents of pupils with special educational needs and the school makes every effort to keep parents informed about their child's progress. A very active Home School Association organises social and fund-raising events for the pupils' benefit and there is a substantial core of regular parent helpers in the classrooms, whose support the teachers can rely on and plan for.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 46 The headteacher leads the school well and is supported in its good management by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. Governors are strong supporters of the school but do not play an active enough role in monitoring its work or in its medium term planning. The school monitors its progress satisfactorily and makes good use of most of its resources and grants. It applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.
- 47 The headteacher continues to set a clear educational direction for the school throughout a period of significant staff changes. She has worked hard to ensure that the school's aims and values are very well reflected in its policies and work. This is based on a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a shared determination to raise standards particularly in writing and in mathematics. Senior staff have clear areas of responsibility and carry these out well. For instance, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator manages all aspects of the provision very well. Some senior staff, such as the deputy headteacher have taken on additional responsibilities to cover staff absence. It is thanks to this type of flexibility that overall school progress has been maintained and that the school has made good progress since it was last inspected.

- 48 Most curriculum leaders manage their subjects well. Examples of this are English and mathematics where the literacy hour and daily mathematics lessons are well established. Another example is physical education where the co-ordinator has given staff a lot of guidance in their teaching in order to raise standards. In all of this work, the headteacher has provided active support and guidance and helped build a strong sense of teamwork. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is shared between the headteacher and the full time special educational needs co-ordinator and is satisfactory.
- 49 Governors are proud of the school. They are keen to see it do well, to grow and they take an active interest in its work. They rely on the headteacher to provide them with information and she does this well. They fulfil nearly all aspects of the statutory duties satisfactorily except for a small omission in the school prospectus. They are organised to handle their routine work satisfactorily and take a keen interest in matters such as alterations in pupils' entry requirements and staff appointments. They monitor aspects of the school's work such as finance and pupils' attainment well. They are anxious to establish nursery education at the school to match other local provision. They are not closely enough involved in deciding the school's priorities or in challenging or evaluating some of its decisions such as those related to value for money. They have a satisfactory knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses by visiting the school or working at it. This knowledge could be improved with a more systematic set of visits linked to particular aspects of governors' responsibilities on which they could then formally report.
- 50 The school analyses pupils' performance in English and mathematics very thoroughly and uses this information well to group pupils, set targets with them and improve the quality of teaching. The school has a computer system for analysing this information on attainment and is preparing to bring it into use. Last year, the school exceeded its target for eleven-year-olds' attainment in English but fell below this in mathematics. The school is making satisfactory progress towards its targets for 2002 because it made changes to the way it organised mathematics teaching. This is improving pupils' progress, particularly of the higher attainers. The headteacher reports to the governors on the test results and on the school's progress in its development plan. The school has a good system for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. The headteacher and others observe lessons and give teachers their views on them and how they can be improved. The quality of written comments has got better recently and teachers have a clear idea on which aspects of their work they should concentrate.
- 51 Co-ordinators in most other subjects examine teachers' plans but do not concentrate enough on the standards pupils are intended to reach or the progress they are expected to make. Similarly they do not routinely examine pupils' work for attainment or progress and so do not have an accurate picture of how well they are doing or which aspects need improvement. The school has supported staff new to the school well and this has helped overcome some of the difficulties the school has faced in providing continuity to pupils' education caused by staff illness and promotion. Senior staff have also helped newly qualified teachers settle into school and helped them make a good start to their careers in teaching.
- 52 The staff contribute to school improvement decisions by writing action plans and deciding the school priorities for development. These are included in the draft plan that the governors consider and approve. The plan is well laid out and shows that the school's educational priorities are closely linked to its financial planning. Progress on a minority of its targets is straightforward to track because the plan

includes clear details of how the success of these targets can be measured. However, although the buildings element of the plan goes over the next few years, major elements of it such as raising pupils' attainment, the curriculum and improvements to resources and teaching do not. The school's finance officer helpfully produces three-year projections of the school's budget. Staff and governors should work together to link these to the schools longer-term targets for attainment and curriculum development to stage its improvement more effectively over the medium term.

- 53 The school has a good level of staffing to help pupils learn. The headteacher and governors have invested wisely in staff training and in the training of qualified teaching assistants and learning support assistants in particular who make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Better direction of their work during whole class lessons in Years 1 and 2 would improve provision further. The school has good accommodation and staff work very effectively to display pupils' work to a high standard and create a good atmosphere for learning. Resources for most subjects are good and both staff and pupils can access them readily. There are two good examples of this: the newly completed library and the computer suite. Both are well timetabled so that pupils have good access to them.
- 54 The school is making satisfactory progress on applying the principles of best value and should work with governors more closely on this to raise their awareness. The school compares its results with those of similar schools and those nationally. It does not yet compare its spending levels although plans to do so. It challenges its practice by examining the quality of its teaching and bringing about improvements. Governors do not challenge some of their spending decisions such as that on pupils with special educational needs to see if it is spent effectively. The school consults well with its parents by sending them a questionnaire when reviewing its development plan and asking for comments. It ensures fair competition in its tendering arrangements by contracting through the local education authority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Raise eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in design and technology and ICT and improve further the progress of higher attaining pupils in mathematics throughout the school and science in Years 3 to 6

Paragraphs: 90, 91, 92, 108, 109, 111, 73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 83

- (2) Improve governors' involvement in monitoring the school and in shaping its medium term direction

Paragraphs: 49, 54

- (3) Plan in more detail for school improvement over a three year period

Paragraphs: 52

In addition to these Key Issues, governors may wish to include the following minor issues in their action plan:

- Ensure that all the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is equally effective

Paragraphs: 20

- Put right the minor omission in the school prospectus

Paragraphs: 44, 49

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	34	14	0	0	0
Percentage	0	20	57	23	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	0	289
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	56

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	28	18	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	22	28
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	44	39	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (94)	85 (87)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	28
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	43	43	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	93 (89)	100 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	25	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	13	18
	Girls	22	17	25
	Total	39	30	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (84)	67 (78)	96 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	19
	Girls	23	19	23
	Total	38	32	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (82)	71 (78)	93 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9
Average class size	28.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	695,620
Total expenditure	664,812
Expenditure per pupil	2,194
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,884
Balance carried forward to next year	45,692

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	289
Number of questionnaires returned	118

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	7	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	9	1	3
The teaching is good.	62	33	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	38	11	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	41	12	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	36	23	6	8

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

- 55 Children begin the reception class with a range of skills similar to those generally found although this varies significantly from year to year. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning. A significant minority attain above this. These standards are good. Children make very good progress in language and literacy, communication, personal and social development, mathematical development and physical development. They make good progress in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets because their work is well planned and they are well supported. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented have their needs fully taken into account and are well supported.
- 56 The management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the recommended Foundation Stage curriculum and assesses children's attainment and progress very well. The co-ordinator has forged very good relationships with local nurseries and with parents, some of whom support children very well in the classroom. The quality of teaching in personal, social and emotional development and in the development of communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development is very good. It is good for children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. One particularly good feature of the teaching is how staff use homework very well to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills and to form a good partnership with parents.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 57 Children make very good progress in this area of learning. The school places considerable importance on developing children's social skills, attitudes to learning and self-awareness. The staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and this is promoted through all activities they experience. Children are encouraged to express and explore their behaviour and feelings and the effect these might have on others. Staff ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to join in discussions using activities such as *circle time* when every child is given time to think and express their thoughts. A good example of this was when children passed a shell to each other and the child holding it had the sole right to speak and add to the discussion on helping others. This activity also very effectively raised children's confidence and sense of self-value as well their learning of right and wrong. Staff organise activities and resources well to encourage children to work productively in small and large groups as well as working independently. Staff encourage children to co-operate, take turns and share. A good example of this was during snack time when children waited patiently to be served with biscuits by that day's helper and politely thanked him. The staff take every chance to remind children about respect for each other and provide good role models themselves. They are also very skilful with children who find difficulty in following instructions promptly. When one child refused to join the rest of the class for a song, the teacher allowed him to play quietly away from the rest but kept an eye on him. Several times she invited him to join the group and did not make a fuss when he declined. A few minutes later, he returned to the group and was included in the teaching and learning.

Communication, language and literacy

58 Most of the children make very good progress. Most can read simple texts independently and are already achieving the early learning goals in this area of learning. They can read and write familiar words such as *went*, *the*, *dad* and *some*. Attempts of less familiar words in reading and spelling show a good understanding of the sounds letters make. For example, in writing a story one child had written *pantm* for pantomime. Higher attaining pupils read and write accurately most of the first words children are expected to acquire by the time they start Year 1. Their writing already shows a growing awareness of sentence structure and punctuation. The teacher has identified a child who is gifted in this area of learning and is providing well-structured activities to meet her needs. Children who have special educational needs are well supported, not least through the use of resources such as sentence makers and are encouraged to read, re-order and write the words. Their writing shows understanding of the sounds which individual words start and end with, for example *fd* (food) and *nt* (night). The teacher has successfully integrated aspects of the Literacy Strategy into the curriculum. During these lessons, children respond enthusiastically to the learning. They can retell the events of stories in the correct order and identify words starting with specific sounds. Working together with the teacher as a whole class, they can write their own versions of stories. A good example of this was when the class worked with the teacher on a version of *The Three Little Pigs*. This strategy provides good models for children to use when creating their own writing. The children are confident speakers and listen well to each other. The teacher's skilful questioning that encourages pupils to explain and extend their ideas significantly enhances their learning in this aspect.

Mathematical development

59 Children make very good progress in this area of learning. The majority of children count and order numbers up to ten confidently and a significant minority can count to twenty and beyond. These higher attaining pupils can count to twenty in groups of two and add and subtract numbers up to 10 and some to twenty. For example, in a group adding and subtracting amounts of money up to twenty using coins, one child could add and subtract accurately to twenty without using the coins. Children with special educational needs can, with staff support use practical resources to count up to ten. They can count on one number at a time but some find it difficult to add one or more onto a number less than ten. For example, one child added five blocks to one block and counted them and correctly identified six blocks but when one more was added he had to start again by counting from the first block. Most pupils have a good understanding of simple shapes such as circle, square, rectangle and triangle. They can order by size, using words such biggest, bigger and smallest. The teacher makes very good use of the staff and helpers to provide both support and challenge for groups and individual children. She has introduced aspects of the Numeracy Strategy into the lessons and this is effectively raising attainment and improving progress. The numeracy lessons are exciting and all children take part enthusiastically. For example, when they used number fans to answer addition problems, their response was quick, generally accurate and the excitement at getting answers right quickly was clearly evident. Staff use every opportunity to reinforce number work through counting rhymes and songs and include counting in everyday activities such counting how many children in a group. The teacher makes good use of ICT to support number recognition and addition and subtraction activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60 Children make good progress in this area of learning. Staff plan a good range of activities, events and visits to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They make activities exciting and fun and this holds children's

interest and accelerates their learning. Children have explored change over time through their work on autumn leaves and the planting of plants and bulbs in the *Four Seasons* garden. As a result they have developed a good sense of place and time. The children confidently use the simpler aspects of ICT to support their learning, particularly in mathematical and literacy development. They show sound control of the mouse and can select icons to drag and drop into their work. They learn about wider world communities. For example, they learned about children's lives in a typical Nigerian village and have raised money from their Christmas production to help provide resources. Children have explored which materials float and which sink through investigation activities having previously looked at the properties of some of the materials. They can use words to describe them such as *hard, bendy* and *rough*. In the floating and sinking activity, children made sensible predictions on what objects would do and began to understand that some objects do not behave as they might have expected. For example, most expect metal to sink but some metal objects floated. The children learn about people who help us such as the Parish Priest. They explore the world around them through visits and events. For example, the children visited Ash End Farm at Christmas to see and feed the animals and they acted the nativity in realistic surroundings with sheep, a donkey and straw. This an uplifting experience and it helped children understand the setting of Christ's birth.

Physical development

61 Children make good progress in this area of learning. The teacher demonstrates movements to show children what they are to do and to help them refine their movements. The nursery nurse and parent helpers are well deployed to support children's learning and to ensure that they work safely. The teacher ensures children go through a warm-up routine to warm their muscles before working and they understand the purpose of the exercise. Children listen well and follow the teacher's instructions carefully. They use the climbing frames with developing confidence and respond well to position instructions from the teacher such as moving on, under and over, when working on the benches. They demonstrate a good understanding of space around them and are careful not to go into the space of others. For example, when practising star jumps they took turns well and were very careful not to hinder others. They have a good understanding of safe behaviour and staff encourage them to be aware of what their bodies can and cannot do. The outside area for reception children is adequate in size but lacks any large frame adventure apparatus to encourage children's confidence, strength and understanding of safe behaviour when using irregular apparatus. However, the children have the opportunity to develop their directional and control skills through using wheeled vehicles such as scooters and tricycles.

Creative development

62 Children's progress in their creative development is good. The teacher's planning covers a wide range of interesting activities such as art, design, music and imaginative play. The staff intervene very well to move children's learning on. For example, a parent who is training to be a nursery nurse, worked with two children selecting, placing and gluing fabric for a Mothering Sunday collage. She encouraged them to talk about the number of pieces, the feel of different types of fabric and the best way to place them for effect. The response to this was thoughtful discussion, careful placement and meticulous application of the glue onto the chosen pasta shells. Children can mix paint to create effects. They use clay to make simple pots and make large models using construction kits. Sand and water are both provided and the staff change the activities and learning experiences by altering the properties of the sand, such as adding water to it. They regularly change the tools and resources provided for children to work with in the sand and water trays to extend

learning on how materials and possibilities change. In music, children learn songs and how to clap or tap the beat. They can add actions to the words and suggest which instruments could be used to accompany a particular song.

ENGLISH

- 63 Pupils' standards of attainment are high because of good teaching and management. Most seven and eleven-year-old pupils are making good progress and are working above the level expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers plan well for them. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy well and this is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Standards of literacy are good.
- 64 Most pupils' standards of speaking and listening are average and they make satisfactory progress. Most listen well to the teacher and each other and show this by asking sensible questions. Pupils follow instructions carefully, which helps them to improve their work. Most speak clearly in small groups and answer questions when asked. Seven-year-old pupils can talk well enough about things that interest them. For instance, in one Year 2 class pupils were showing objects connected with science work. One boy said, "I brought this because it's made of all the materials we talked about, metal, plastic and wood. I have another one but it's slightly different – it's from World War 2 – but it doesn't show the materials so well." The teacher helped by prompting pupils to use correct vocabulary and speaking up. She also encouraged other pupils to ask sensible questions. Eleven-year-olds use good vocabulary confidently in small groups. "I'm trying to visualise a futuristic city and make a powerful opening by describing it," one Year 6 pupil said. Opportunities such as these, the class Radio Station which three groups produced, school assemblies and concerts help some pupils to do well but teachers do not plan them regularly enough for all pupils to make enough progress. Most pupils are not confident about speaking to larger audiences and do not speak clearly enough.
- 65 Seven and eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in reading are high because teachers consistently show them how to improve and encourage them to read regularly. Most pupils make good progress. Seven-year-olds read accurately and with expression. They use sounds and pictures to help them read. They build words up well. Teachers give them a thorough grounding in these methods. A few lower attaining pupils do not notice where there are full stops and so they do not read with enough understanding. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading and are happy to talk about their books. Most eleven-year-old pupils read fluently and enjoy discussing what they have read. This shows that they understand. They know of several different authors and can explain about their different styles. A few average attaining pupils read hesitantly when faced with an unfamiliar book but quickly gain confidence when they keep trying. One said, "This is a bit hard, I can read my own book better but I'm not giving up." This determined attitude is helping to raise attainment. Higher attaining pupils are good at comparing characters. "None has the same features but all wanted to improve themselves," one said. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to read in class and encourage them to read at home. Most do so and this is helping their progress. During literacy hours, pupils read with their teachers. They learn well from the teachers' examples and enjoy some quite difficult books such as *The War of the Worlds*. By using a range of books, teachers make reading interesting and enjoyable. Eleven year olds use ICT well in the library to find books. They know about the index and contents pages and generally use these to help them find the right page. Average and lower attaining pupils cannot find out information quickly because they do not pick out the key words to find the relevant piece to read.

- 66 Seven and eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment in writing are above what is generally expected. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is because teachers identify precisely what pupils need to do to improve and then set work to make sure that they are doing it.
- 67 Teachers give pupils real reasons for writing in all subjects. As well as writing in English, pupils write prayers in religious education, descriptions in geography, factual accounts in history and show their findings in science using tables, captions and labels. Pupils know that different kinds of writing are done in different ways. For instance, Year 2 pupils know that a book report needs to be brief and give an opinion and, with help most can write one. Year 5 pupils write fables knowing that their story must carry a moral lesson. "Don't take your friends for granted," wrote one pupil at the end of his fable. Teachers make sure that pupils think about the words they are going to use to make their work more interesting. They encourage them to extend their vocabulary by showing them examples in books and giving them ideas. Pupils from five to seven are good at making suggestions to improve this way. "You need to say how he did it," said one Year 2 pupil, "so it could be dreamily, sleepily or drowsily. Drowsily, I think I'll write." In Year 5, descriptions such as "Bongo, the right minded monkey", and "Entering into the silver lit room", make pupils' writing interesting to read.
- 68 Teachers help all pupils to learn to spell by getting them to practise regularly and learn new words. Most pupils include these when they write. Seven-year-old pupils know about capital letters, full stops and speech marks. Average and lower attaining pupils do not always use them. A few know and use exclamation marks. One seven-year-old reading his work to the class said, "I put an exclamation mark to make me say it importantly." From Years 3 to 6, pupils begin to write longer pieces with more detail. They plan their work well. They make changes and improve their writing by using different words and organising it in different ways. They are good at recognising where their work needs improving because teachers encourage them to check it through. One Year 6 pupil recognised that his science fiction story was "moving into the horror genre. I need to change it," he said. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to build up a story and find the right words to make it interesting. All seven to eleven-year-old pupils learn about a wider range of punctuation such as speech marks, question marks and commas. Most make good progress in using them accurately because teachers show them regularly. A few average and lower attaining pupils forget to use them when they are writing.
- 69 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In Years 1/2, 2 and 6, there is some very good teaching. All staff are committed to raising standards in literacy. Teachers plan lessons very well and are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They know the National Literacy Strategy well and expect pupils to do their best to attain high standards. Teachers show younger pupils how to use sounds, pictures and meaning in stories to help them build words. They give pupils a good grounding in reading. Teachers of older pupils make sure that they have plenty of opportunities for reading and help them to choose books which move them on well. In a few instances, teachers in Year 4 give pupils books which are too easy to read and do not expect enough of them. Older pupils are taught to think carefully about what they read and talk about the characters and how the author writes. Teachers use excerpts from books well to encourage pupils to look at how they are written to show particular meaning. Five to seven-year-old pupils learn many new words this way. Seven to eleven-year-olds understand that there are different types of books and each is written in a specific way. For instance, Year 5 and 6 pupils know that The

War of the Worlds is a science fiction book. This helps them to make good progress in their reading and inspires some very well expressed introductions to creative writing.

- 70 Teachers create a good learning environment in the school. They make sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve and give work to help them to do it. They then give praise and encouragement which makes pupils want to improve further. Most lessons move at a good pace and teachers use several ways to help pupils learn. They plan for pupils to work as a class, in pairs and individually. They ask questions that make pupils think harder about their reading and writing and then encourage them to produce their own work based on what has been discussed. In a few lessons in Years 3 and 5, the teachers talk for too long and do not ask the right questions to make pupils think enough. This slows progress. In most lessons, qualified teaching assistants and learning support assistants give good support and help pupils to understand their work. All teachers watch and listen to pupils well. They mark their work regularly and record what pupils have learned. This makes sure that they know what to plan next to help pupils move on. This is helping pupils to make good progress. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their feelings for poetry and literature from many different places. They listen well to pupils and show that they value their ideas. In this way, they are making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All teachers consistently give pupils good opportunities to learn and practise spelling, punctuation and handwriting. They regularly ask parents for support with homework. This is helping to raise standards.
- 71 Pupils work and behave well in English lessons because teachers make them interesting and make pupils think hard. In Years 1 and 2, they enjoy reading stories such as "The baby who didn't want to go to sleep". They like taking notes from a video of the Tudors in Years 3 and 4 and reading their writing out to background music in Years 5 and 6. They know what they need to do to improve because the teachers have told them. They concentrate well in most lessons. This attitude helps them to make good progress. Lower attaining pupils make slow progress in lessons where the teacher talks for too long because they lose interest.
- 72 The co-ordinator provides good leadership and supports colleagues well. This good management is helping to raise standards. She has taken successful action to raise standards of attainment in writing, which is one of the school's priorities. She has a good view of the quality of teaching and standards of attainment because she observes teaching, checks planning and pupils' work and thoroughly examines test results. The procedures for gathering, analysing and using information on pupils' progress are very good. They help teachers to set targets for improvement with pupils and contribute to their good progress.

MATHEMATICS

- 73 Most seven and eleven-year-old pupils are working within the levels expected for pupils of these ages. Six and seven-year-old pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points and those aged from eight to eleven make good progress. Older pupils generally make better progress because more is now expected of the higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 and this is beginning to raise expectations of others. A slightly higher proportion of eleven-year-olds than last year are working at the above average level but the proportion is not as high as it should be. Overall these standards and progress represent satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

- 74 Seven-year-old pupils are making good progress in counting on and back using numbers from 0 to 100 but their recognition of number patterns is unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of the place value of whole numbers but their understanding of decimals and fractions is not as advanced. Lower attaining pupils know basic addition and subtraction facts and the names of some two and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils have not done enough work on showing information in different ways such as in bar charts to understand and interpret the data well enough. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in their number work because the teachers set challenging work.
- 75 Most eleven-year-old pupils have a good knowledge of the four rules of number and work with speed and accuracy. Average and higher attaining pupils are making good progress in understanding the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. Their progress in solving problems that the teachers set is satisfactory but teachers do not encourage them enough to look for and solve mathematical problems of their own and they make slow progress in this. Lower attaining pupils are making good progress in using the four rules of number and have a satisfactory knowledge of some of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. These pupils and the average attaining ones do not make enough use of jottings to show their working out and a few do not check their answers carefully enough. Eight and nine-year-old pupils are not confident in recalling and using their times tables knowledge but are good at using ICT to present data in different ways such as in pie charts, straight line and block graphs. The teachers of older pupils do not build on this well enough and eleven-year-olds do not reach the higher than expected level in data handling.
- 76 Most teaching is good. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy well and pupils' standards of numeracy are generally good. Teachers plan well. They include the aims for each lesson and discuss these with the pupils. Most lessons then begin well and pupils know where the work fits into what they have already learned. Teachers plan work at three different levels of difficulty so that the work pupils do in groups is satisfactorily matched to their abilities. They also set extra challenges for one or two pupils who are particularly good at mathematics. As a result, such pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 for instance, make good progress. Overall, however teachers do not yet expect enough of the higher attaining pupils. An example of this is in a Year 2 class where the level of work set for higher attaining pupils was too low. Pupils behave very well and work together very well in groups or pairs. A good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson on area. The teacher asked pupils to use what they already knew to work out the area of complex shapes by splitting them up into simpler ones and then adding up the total. Pupils rose well to the challenge and a few higher attaining pupils helped one another to work out and use the formula for calculating the area of triangles. Pupils of all abilities present their work clearly and take a pride in it.
- 77 Teachers generally make good use of resources and most have gone to some extra effort to make them for their pupils. They do not generally make enough use of ICT although this is improving. Some older pupils working in small groups benefit from the support of trained assistants. They keep pace with the lessons and take a full part in them. Similar support for younger pupils is satisfactory and could be improved if the trained assistants had a clear role in supporting a small group during the part of the lesson when the teacher is teaching the whole class. Most teachers end the lessons by identifying with pupils the key points they were to have learned. They call up examples of how pupils have worked and encourage them to explain particular parts of it. This reinforces what pupils have learned and most teachers go

on to point out what pupils will be learning next. A few lessons do not end as positively because the teachers do not spend enough time reinforcing pupils' learning in these ways. Teachers set homework regularly and they agree individual targets with pupils to work towards. They share these with parents and this helps them support their children at home.

- 78 The school allocates a significant amount of time to teaching mathematics and ensures that all aspects of the subject are taught. Teachers are beginning to use mathematics in other subjects such as science but this is not a strong feature of the school's work. The school uses its information on pupils' progress very well in a number of ways. It tracks their progress and groups Year 5 and 6 pupils by ability to teach them in sets. This strategy is working well. It is particularly helpful for higher attaining pupils who enjoy the extra challenge of more demanding work. In a minority of lessons, more could be asked of the average attainers and they could work at a faster pace. The school provides well for lower attaining pupils and uses additional grant well for trained support staff to work alongside small groups of pupils. This works very well and a good example of this was in a Year 3/4 class. The learning support assistant made sure her group of pupils paid attention to the teacher, explained parts of the work that they found difficult, encouraged them to ask and answer questions and set a strong personal example of enthusiasm for mathematics. The pupils made very good progress.
- 79 The subject is managed well and the temporary co-ordinator and the headteacher work hard to ensure that the way the subject is taught reflects the schools aims and values very well. All pupils have good access to learning the subject and most are given the opportunity of doing their best. Senior staff use the pupils' test performance very well to check what they found difficult so that teachers can provide clearer explanations and examples. Teachers' work is monitored well and staff receive helpful guidance on any matters that need improvement. The quality of this written advice has improved because it now pinpoints particular areas for development with individual staff and these form the basis for the next observation of their work. This is a good process and should continue. It helps all staff share their strengths and improve their work. The school has an adequate range of resources but some is a little worn and there are a few shortages, for instance in equipment for teaching fractions.

SCIENCE

- 80 As the result of good teaching, most of the Year 2 pupils are working above the level expected for their age. Most Year 6 pupils are working within the level expected for their age. The difference in the attainment of the two groups of pupils is because the pupils in Year 6 have not done enough investigation work during their time in the school. The school has now improved this and this wider curriculum is benefiting pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally make good progress in lessons. Pupils in the eight to eleven age group make satisfactory progress overall. Some make good progress in lessons where the teaching is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and support staff give good support.
- 81 Year 2 pupils accurately use scientific language to describe the properties of materials such as metal, wood and plastic. For instance, a pupil asked to describe the properties of different types of glass said, "Opaque means you can't see through it, transparent means you can." In a good lesson in Year 4, pupils designed a fair test to investigate materials that would slow the rate at which ice cubes melt. They suggested that the temperature in various parts of the room would create differences in results. They recorded their results on charts and compared their findings. Year 6

pupils, when creating a fair test to investigate dissolving solids found it difficult to judge what they needed to measure and how they would go about it. Higher attaining pupils could make some suggestions but still found the task too challenging. This showed their lack of experience of work involving practical investigations and they do not achieve highly enough in this aspect.

- 82 All pupils are interested in their work and sustain their concentration over long periods of time. They are excited by the investigations they carry out and respond well to teachers' instructions and questioning. They work well in small groups, sharing ideas and resources. They treat each other and adults with respect and are careful with equipment. They answer questions confidently based on good reasoning.
- 83 Teachers set clear objectives at the beginning of lessons. Through carefully targeted questioning, they check that pupils have remembered what they have previously learned. However, some teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not use open questions enough (those beginning with how? or why?) to promote extended answers and meaningful discussion. Teachers plan lessons well and are now setting higher challenges for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6. Until recently this was a weakness and these higher expectations need to continue. Teachers make good use of time and resources and expect pupils to work at a good pace and be productive. Teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress at the end of units of work. They use the results well to set targets for improvement for groups of pupils. They also use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' learning which the school then takes steps to rectify. The introduction of science homework is a positive step to improving pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- 84 The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and she is building on the good work of the previous post holder satisfactorily. She is continuing to develop the aspect of science investigation and to increase resources to a good level and this raising the standard of teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

- 85 Seven-year-old pupils reach above average standards in art and design. Eleven-year-old pupils reach average standards, and high attaining pupils reach standards above this. Teaching throughout the school is good.
- 86 Five to seven-year-old pupils produce good examples of drawing, painting and weaving. Pupils are given opportunities to paint in the style of different artists, which allows them to express themselves in different ways. A good example of this was when pupils painted a self-portrait, cut the painting into different sections, and then re-assembled them in an abstract Picasso style. Groups of pupils skilfully weave different textiles on various looms. Other pupils designed calendars and made good use of their computer skills in designing and printing.
- 87 Nine-year-olds link their historical study of the Tudors well with their painting of King Henry VIII with his wives, and show a satisfactory use of colour mixing and painting technique. When they begin a printing topic, pupils help each other with advice and support, saying how the designs might be improved. In one very good lesson, eleven-year-olds used symbolism when putting a design on a plate, basing their work on the story of *The Willow Pattern*. This helps develop pupils' cultural awareness. Some pupils make a good link with their work on Greek Gods when they use their historical knowledge for the final designs. Pupils use the range of inks, paints, crayons or pencils well, choosing with sensitivity the best for the purpose. They could justify their decisions well when the teacher asked them. Eleven-year-old

pupils who attend the art club use good techniques to make the *Snow Queen* display in the school entrance and this club helps raise the standards of art and design in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive from teachers, classroom assistants and their peers.

- 88 Teaching is good overall. Lesson plans show good progression in art and design skills and opportunities for pupils to work with a range of media. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work as they produce it and teachers assess their work with them at the end of a topic. As a result, seven-year-olds can write what art skills they have learned and in which areas they want to improve. The school now needs to build on this and put in place a more structured system of recording pupils' developing skills.
- 89 Resources are good and enable all pupils to experience a range of media. These are well stored and easily accessible to staff. The new co-ordinator is providing good leadership. She has written new art and display policies and an action plan that has sensible priorities. She monitors teachers' plans and makes helpful suggestions for their improvement. The scheme of work from which teachers plan is based on national guidance and the co-ordinator has supplemented this with additional guidance. She is keen to raise the profile of art and design and has plans to enter national art competitions. Art and design displays in the school are good, especially in the entrance and library areas, and develop well pupils' awareness of art. Although pupils study the work of western artists, the use of artists from other cultures is unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 90 By the age of seven, most pupils reach standards in line with those expected nationally of pupils of that age. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Seven-year-olds who achieve average or higher levels have designed and made a biscuit for a celebration and carried out evaluations of their designs. They recorded their ideas using sketches and photographs. They made sound judgements about ways in which they would improve their designs. By the time pupils are eleven, standards are below those expected nationally and progress is unsatisfactory. They have designed and made a bag for a specific purpose such as carrying chocolates, but were not given the opportunity to select or consider suitable resources or tools. This pattern of progress is generally the same for pupils with special educational needs. However, the younger pupils in the eight to eleven age group produce examples of good work. In particular, Year 4 designed torches for secret reading in bed. They considered and solved the problems in their original designs and made changes.
- 91 The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory overall. The recent improvement in the teaching of design is beginning to have a positive impact, particularly on the teaching of younger pupils. Teachers' planning is sound and they identify clear objectives for the learning that they share with pupils. However, some Year 3 to 6 teachers' subject knowledge is unsatisfactory. This leads to a lack of challenge in activities for average and higher attaining pupils and the acceptance of design work that lacks quality. Teachers manage pupils well and pupils behave well and enjoy their design and technology tasks. Teachers make good use of initial discussions to get pupils to think about the purpose and audience for their work. However, older pupils do not have sufficient background in the subject to make reasoned decisions.
- 92 The small amount of time allocated to the subject for eight to eleven-year-olds is having a negative effect on the attainment of the oldest pupils. The scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils shows that pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and

understanding over time is unsatisfactory. For example, Year 6 pupils could discuss how they made their bags but found it difficult to decide what improvements they could make or how they might go about them. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and concentrate well to complete their tasks. They listen carefully to instructions, work productively together and take satisfaction in the finished product.

- 93 The co-ordinator's management of the subject is satisfactory. She is fully aware of the need to develop the subject further, such as by making better use of ICT and improving teachers' subject knowledge. Her subject knowledge and understanding is good and she has helped to improve the design aspect of the subject. She has monitored the quality of teaching and learning through teachers' planning, observing lessons in Years 5 and 6 and sampling pupils' work. She has made a good evaluation of the standards in the subject that has led to improved attainment and progress of pupils aged five to seven. It has yet to have a positive impact on the curriculum offered to older pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

- 94 Seven and eleven-year-old pupils reach above average standards and this is due to the good teaching throughout the school which now has an emphasis on teaching geographical skills. Younger pupils receive a sound grounding in learning these skills that are further developed as pupils progress through the school.
- 95 Pupils aged five to seven make good progress. They develop a sound sense of places and they show this when they learn about the school and its locality. They use their computer skills well when they write their names and addresses on labels that are then fixed to a local map showing where they live. They use the computer to print data showing how pupils come to school and the type of housing in the area. Pupils use their literacy skills well, for instance when they write poems about Sheldon.
- 96 Pupils aged eight to eleven make good progress. Eight and nine year olds learn about hot and cold countries although not all pupils know about the equator or how to find it on a globe. One eight year old said, "The equator is a country in the middle of the world," when the class was asked about the position of the hottest and coldest areas of the world. There are good links with mathematics when pupils learn about compasses, compass direction and angles. Pupils have a good knowledge of plans and use their mapping skills well when working out the direction of a journey from London to Birmingham or locating countries they have studied on a map.
- 97 Most eleven-year-olds can use co-ordinates well to locate particular features on a map. They know maps have different scales and can use various keys on different types of maps. They know some of the effects human activity has on the landscape such as how Birmingham Airport affects the environment in which they live. Homework makes a good contribution to their learning, for instance when they research the amount of water their families use over a weekend, and then make good use this information in their study of water. They can locate major English rivers but a few pupils are not certain in which direction rivers flow. They express views about caring for the environment and some of the damage pollution causes. All pupils with special educational need make good progress because of teachers' support and careful planning of lessons.
- 98 Teaching is good overall. Teachers' lesson planning is good. Lessons have clear aims for what pupils are to learn and activities are well planned for different groups within the class. Skilful questioning keeps pupils very interested and involved and they behave very well. Occasionally, teachers do not challenge the more highly attaining pupils, and as a result their learning is slowed. Geography skills are taught

well. Pupils aged ten and eleven make good use of their ICT skills when they use the Internet to find out about world weather patterns. They can interpret the data they collect and know why weather patterns are as they are. Pupils aged five to seven develop their fieldwork skills well in a study of a local park. They can talk about the area, say what they like and what they would like to improve and give reasons for their statements. They confidently use geographical vocabulary such as features, landscape and view.

- 99 Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, for instance when they study the Indian city of Bangalore. Their involvement with CAFOD and learning about South America in general and Columbia in particular aids their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 100 Resources are satisfactory with an adequate supply of globes, maps and atlases of different types. The small quantity of reference books in the library is of good quality. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and she has revised the policy. She is aware the assessment of pupils' geographical skills needs further development. Currently she provides satisfactory leadership.

HISTORY

- 101 Pupils aged seven reach expected levels of attainment and those aged eleven exceed the expected level. Teaching is good overall.
- 102 Pupils aged five to seven make sound progress and know about chronology and about people who lived in the past. They know about Florence Nightingale and how she improved nursing and hospitals and that developments have happened since she died. They can talk about modern kitchens and about those from earlier times but some pupils do not yet have the skills to make a comparison.
- 103 Older pupils make good progress. Pupils aged eight and nine know of the importance of the Tudors in English history and use their literacy skills well when they write a fictitious account about being Anne of Clevees, one of the wives of Henry VIII. Eleven-year-olds talk knowledgeably and confidently about the Ancient Greeks and the Aztecs. They apply good research skills using reference books and the Internet to find out about lifestyles and characters linked to the Aztecs. They know about primary and secondary sources of evidence when researching the past.
- 104 All pupils have a good attitude to learning history. They are eager to learn and behave very well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is well matched to their needs.
- 105 Teaching overall is good and teachers plan lessons well. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers use resources well. Teachers have high, but realistic expectations of pupils' progress. Their questioning is not always good because some do not use sufficiently challenging questions or else they direct them at a minority of pupils.
- 106 Resource levels are satisfactory but the school wisely links with the library and museum services to loan additional books and artefacts to supplement those of the school. Staff make good use of visits such as The Black Country Museum and Birmingham City Museum to extend pupils' learning opportunities. Visitors, usually linked to families within the school, talk about their experiences in the past, such as World War II, and these make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
- 107 The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She monitors teachers' plans and she has carried out an audit of resources. She recognises that staff could make more use of ICT. Although pupils' work is assessed and recorded, it does not sufficiently concentrate on the historical skills pupils need to know.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- 108 Seven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment are average and they make satisfactory progress. Eleven-year-olds make unsatisfactory progress and reach below average standards. These differences are mainly due to the lack of opportunity for older pupils to experience the full range of the subject. For example, there is a need for more control and monitoring work. The use of the computer suite for teaching ICT skills to the whole class has significantly improved the progress pupils make in word processing and data handling.
- 109 By the time they are seven, most pupils are familiar with word processing techniques such as saving, printing, placing pictures in text and correcting spelling errors. They can use paint programmes to create their own pictures and drag and drop symbols into data grids. However, a significant minority find controlling the mouse and correcting errors difficult. Most eleven-year-olds are competent in word processing and combining text and graphics. They use data programmes to produce spreadsheets, represent their findings through creating graphs and know how to question the data. However, the range of software available frequently limits the scope and level of their work. Pupils use the Internet for research in the wider world community, for example, in researching the Tudors in history. They have not had the opportunity to use Email in school although many have used it at home. They lack sufficient experience and competence in control, modelling and monitoring and have not had the opportunity to use digital photography or scanning to import pictures or text into their work. This is because the resources for these aspects are unsatisfactory.
- 110 The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are generally well prepared and pupils are well managed by teachers, support staff and parent helpers. Teachers give clear instructions and pupils know what they are expected to do. Teaching is best when teachers are confident in their own expertise and quickly deal with problems pupils encounter. There are sound links between ICT and other subjects and many ICT skills are taught in them. In a minority of these lessons, the focus of the learning is not clear and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to discuss and analyse their work. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are interested and excited, remain on task with the minimum of supervision and co-operate well with adults and each other. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress. More able pupils are not challenged enough and often carry out tasks which repeat skills they have already learned and this can be frustrating for them.
- 111 The management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-coordinator is aware of the need to improve further teachers' expertise and confidence. The co-ordinator is very active in providing additional training for teachers to add to the in-service course recently started by the whole staff. Assessment of pupils' progress is good and this is being used well to judge what improvements need to be made to the subject. The subject is well resourced to allow for pupil access to computers but there is a need to develop both hardware and software resources in line with the scheme of work to ensure older pupils cover all aspects of the subject in enough detail.

MUSIC

- 112 Seven and eleven-year-old pupils' standards of attainment are typical for their age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards of singing are good throughout the school and pupils make good progress because of good teaching.

- 113 Most pupils in the school sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. Teachers make sure that songs have a good rhythm and melody so that pupils are keen to practise and perform. In one session, Year 6 pupils sang a calypso with good, syncopated rhythm and showed great enjoyment. So much so that after the lesson most were still singing and beating the rhythm as they went out. Teachers make sure that pupils sing their words clearly and teach them to breathe in the right places. This helps them to make good progress.
- 114 Most seven-year-old pupils develop a reasonable sense of rhythm and can tap out the beat of a song. They can choose instruments to match the mood of the music. A few pupils cannot keep a steady beat and do not select their instruments well enough to match the sounds they want to make, for instance when choosing sounds to represent a horse clip clopping. Most know that loud and soft, fast and slow helps to make music more interesting.
- 115 Eight to eleven-year-old pupils learn more difficult accompaniments. By the time they are eleven they can work in groups making up their own rhythms to accompany songs. In one Year 5 lesson, groups used several different rhythms to develop their ideas. They worked on these, changing and improving them until they were ready to perform them. The teacher made sure that they explored different sounds and rhythms before they produced their final version. This helped them to build their pieces up well. A few lower attaining pupils find it difficult to keep to their part when playing in a group. Pupils are not so good at improvising their own tunes because they do not have enough opportunities to practise this.
- 116 Most pupils learn to listen very thoughtfully to music and then say how they feel about it. Teachers encourage careful listening and discussion. When listening to *Carnival of the Animals*, most Year 2 pupils recognised which animals the music represented and said how the music matched this. Older pupils talk about their feelings when listening to music and can recognise specific instruments. One Year 6 pupil listening to a calypso said, "This music sounds really rhythmic and happy because of the steel pans but the words are sad. It contradicts itself. I suppose that's why we like singing it because they both mean something, the words and the music."
- 117 The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good teaching in Year 5 and Year 6. Most pupils try hard and enjoy their lessons. Most behave well and this helps their learning. A few lower attaining pupils in Year 3 lose interest quickly and do not play the instruments sensibly when the teacher repeats the same task too often. This slows their progress. Teachers plan well and are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They choose catchy and tuneful songs, which pupils enjoy and are enthusiastic about singing. Teachers give regular opportunities for pupils to listen to music and talk about it. This encourages them to describe and compare different kinds of music and helps them to say how they feel about it. Pupils enjoy exploring sounds and using instruments. They develop good ideas for making their own rhythmic accompaniments to songs through this. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to create simple tunes, which slows their progress. Most teachers listen and watch pupils carefully in lessons, correcting mistakes and moving them on. They do not record enough about what pupils have learned which makes it difficult to plan for what pupils need to do next. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT in music.
- 118 Opportunities to sing and play in assemblies, concerts and at Parish Masses encourage pupils to perform well. A few pupils have the chance to learn the viola

and violin from a visiting teacher. Through listening, expressing feelings, working together and experiencing a range of different music, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- 119 The co-ordinator gives satisfactory leadership. She is aware of pupils' standards of attainment, especially in singing, because she observes and listens in assemblies and concerts and regularly talks to teachers. She knows some of the teachers' strengths and weaknesses from talking to them but does not observe lessons to make sure of this. She is aware that there is not enough information kept to know how well all pupils are doing and has rightly made it a school priority to develop records in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 120 By the time they are seven, most pupils are reaching the standard expected of pupils of this age in games skills and they make satisfactory progress. They make good progress and reach above average standards in gymnastics. Year 1 pupils make good progress in dance. By the time they are eleven, most pupils make satisfactory progress and reach expected standards in games skills. They do not reach higher standards because the skills have not been built up over a long enough period and because there are some gaps in teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils make good progress in dance and gymnastics and attain more highly in these aspects because the skills have been taught more systematically and staff enthuse pupils with their personal example and choose themes well. These standards are an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 121 Seven-year-old pupils work well together in groups such as when they discussed how to organise a game using small apparatus. They made satisfactory attempts at co-operating in pair work but found it difficult to do so in teams. They can hold balances well and higher attaining pupils are beginning to sequence movements smoothly. They learn to improve from watching others and talking about their work. Six-year-old pupils are developing a good sense of space awareness and higher attaining pupils can interpret and act out ideas such as moving like cats. Eleven-year-old pupils are developing satisfactory games skills such as fielding, catching and throwing. They have a sound understanding of tactics but most have difficulty in using the skills and ideas to play a team game such as Kwik Cricket well. In gymnastics, pupils control their balances and sequences well. Higher attaining pupils are good at judging their work and making improvements. In dance, their movements are expressive and controlled. They respond well to music and refine their skills and performances by thinking about ways to improve and watching others try out their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs gain self-confidence in physical educational lessons. They make good progress in working well with others and discussing their ideas.
- 122 Half of the lessons seen were taught well and the other half were taught satisfactorily. The better teaching was in gymnastics and dance. Teachers plan lessons well and make sure that pupils know how each lesson fits into the overall pattern and what they are expected to learn. Pupils respond well by listening carefully and working hard to improve. A good example of this was in a Year 6 dance lesson in which pupils tried out and refined a range of movements in response to music from The War of the Worlds suite they were studying in English. The teacher set a good personal example and gave the pupils the confidence to explore their ideas. Pupils behave very well. They respond promptly to the teachers' instructions and older pupils play games with a good sense of sportsmanship. They respect the efforts of other pupils. Older pupils and higher attaining younger ones

have a good idea of how to improve their work. This is because most teachers give them the chance to discuss improvements. However a few do not and, in a Year 2 class not enough is expected of higher attaining pupils. These aspects of teaching could be improved.

- 123 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities in physical education and extends this with a variety of after school clubs such as football and cross-country running. The school works well with the community by providing specialist tuition in football in lesson time and after school. Pupils are also enthusiastic members of a privately run judo club. The time allocated for the subject matches that recommended but timetabling is uneven. One lesson in Year 2 does not give pupils enough time to develop their skills and another in Year 1 gives pupils too much time and their attention and efforts begin to wane towards the end of it. The school makes arrangements for all older pupils to go swimming and reports that they make good progress. Staff support pupils with special educational needs well and ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to take part in all activities.
- 124 The co-ordinator leads the subject well and ensures that it reflects very well the school's aims. She is well organised and has put in place a number of improvements to help teachers plan their lessons and assess pupils' progress. This last aspect has just been introduced and so not all teachers are using the assessments to modify their teaching plans. The co-ordinator has built up a very good set of resources and organises them well with the help of older pupils to make sure that they are accessible.