

INSPECTION REPORT

BELLE VUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103828

Headteacher: Mrs J Compson

Reporting inspector: Mr A Bond
17263

Dates of inspection: 24th-28th January 2000

Inspection number: 191581

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lawnswood Road Wordsley Stourbridge West Midlands
Postcode:	DY8 5BZ
Telephone number:	01384 818615
Fax number:	01384 818616
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Clayton
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Names of team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr A Bond Registered Inspector	Physical education	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Field Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms N. Bee Team Inspector	Geography History Areas of learning for under fives Special educational needs	
Mrs S Brown Team Inspector	English Music	
Mrs T Cotton Team Inspector	Art Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs J Hicks Team Inspector	Science Information technology Latin	How well are pupils taught?
Mr I Nelson Team Inspector	Mathematics Religious education	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

The inspection contractor was:

The University of Birmingham
The Schools Inspection Unit
School of Education
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Belle Vue is a popular primary school of above average size with 455 pupils and a nursery unit of 30 places. It serves the community of Wordsley, in the borough of Dudley and largely draws its pupils from families of white United Kingdom heritage. Children's attainment on entry to school is generally above what might be expected nationally. There are a very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds none of whom are identified as having English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection 45 pupils were on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. There is one pupil with a statement who is at present being reintegrated back into mainstream school from a local special school. The number of pupils registered for free school meals is 31, 7.4 per cent of the school population. This is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a well organised school which achieves high standards in the majority of curriculum subjects. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to school. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors lead the school effectively. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach high standards in English, religious education, information technology, music, art, physical education, history and geography.
- Teaching standards are good.
- The provision for children under five is good.
- The school provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and attendance are good. Behaviour and personal development are very good.
- Parents work closely with the school.
- The school's curriculum is good; it enriches the life of the school. Extra-curricular activities are excellent.

What could be improved

- Attainment in mathematics and science by the more able pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment procedures.
- Analysis of the school's own performance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. It has maintained high standards in many curriculum areas. The governors are more fully involved in the work of the school. The standard of teaching has improved further. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has developed well and the co-ordinator's role has improved. Assessment procedures are still unsatisfactory and standards in science have declined since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	Year 97	Year 98	Year 99	Year 99	
English	A	B	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	C	C	E	
Science	A	D	D	E	

Standards in English are well above the national average. There are high levels of attainment especially in reading. In mathematics, attainment is in line with national levels but a comparatively small percentage of pupils reach higher levels of performance, and as a result, compared with similar schools, attainment is well below average. In science, although the vast majority of pupils reach the nationally agreed standard, too few pupils reach higher grades, which has the effect of bringing the overall school levels below the national norm. Compared with similar schools pupils' performance in science is well below average. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils achieve high standards in religious education, information technology, art, geography, history, music and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show high levels of interest and their attitudes towards their work are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils use their initiative and there are warm relationships. Personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good, above the national average.

Pupils are confident and generally show enjoyment in their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English is good and in mathematics it is satisfactory. Literacy skills are taught very successfully across the whole range of curricular subjects. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily. Teaching overall is satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons, good or better in 69 per cent of lessons and very good or above in the remaining 19 per cent of lessons. Pupils work at a good pace. They concentrate well and show interest in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of enriched curricular opportunities. It is well balanced and meets all statutory requirements. Extra-curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils' individual education programmes are not sufficiently detailed and therefore progress is generally unsatisfactory in the development of literacy skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The schools' provision is very good across all four areas. Acts of collective worship make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. It involves parents in a variety of different ways. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Procedures for assessment of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and require further development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and give effective leadership to the school. The school has clear aims and values which are reflected in its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive and have sound mechanisms in place for monitoring school performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good systems for the monitoring and evaluating of teaching but insufficient attention is paid to the analysis of the school's performance to detect relative weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and the school uses its resources well to enhance pupils' levels of achievement.

The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified teaching staff and learning support assistants. The school setting and buildings are attractive and well maintained. They contribute to a very positive school ethos. Learning resources are good across all curriculum areas. The school is making very good use of new technology. The governors and senior staff are aware of 'best value principles' and spend school monies wisely.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school is good. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping my child to become mature and responsible. • The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his/her best work. • My child likes school. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. • My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. <p>(These views represent approximately five per cent of all parents.)</p>

The above views are taken from the pre-inspection meeting, which was attended by 25 parents and the response from 147 parent's questionnaires. Evidence from the inspection confirms the parents' positive views. The negative views of parents were not supported by inspectors' findings. Information supplied to parents by the school about how pupils are getting on was judged to be good and the quality of work undertaken at home was judged to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. National test results for 1999 at Key Stage 1 show that pupils' standards in reading were above the national average and writing was in line with nationally expected levels. In mathematics, initial interpretation of national tests showed levels to be marginally below national levels at the end of Key Stage 1 but on closer examination it shows that results are broadly in line. Teacher assessment in science indicates that pupil attainment is well below national levels.
2. The higher attaining pupils in the Year 2 classes who undertook tests achieve above average levels in English but in mathematics and science they perform below the nationally expected percentage levels.
3. Compared with similar schools, using the simple criteria of the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' performance is in line nationally for English but well below in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence supports the evidence provided by Key Stage 1 national tests in English and mathematics but not in science. Judgements based on lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the present Year 2 classes are in line to reach nationally expected levels in science by the end of the school year.
4. The Key Stage 2 national tests of 1999 show that pupils in Year 6 achieve standards well above national levels in English, in line for mathematics and below in science. Inspection evidence supports this view. Judgements for the present Year 6 classes support National Curriculum test results and show a very similar pattern of performance based on the evidence of lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work. High attaining pupils in English perform well above national levels but a similar picture to Key Stage 1 results exists in mathematics and science, in that a smaller than average percentage of more able pupils reach the higher grade level 5.
5. Compared with similar schools, using data for the number of pupils eligible for free school meals as the yardstick, pupils' attainment levels in English are in line at the end of Key Stage 2, but mathematics and science are judged to be well below.
6. Girls generally achieve higher levels than boys in English, mathematics and science but this is fairly typical of the national picture in test results. There is some evidence to suggest that a widening gap between girls' and boys' performance in mathematics is beginning to appear, especially in Key Stage 1.
7. Children enter the nursery from different socio-economic backgrounds with a range of abilities. In general what the children know, understand and can do on entry to nursery is above average. There are four children who are identified as having special educational needs. All under-fives are assessed using the local education authority baseline assessment programme on entry to the reception class. This year, the majority of children attained standards above that which is expected nationally by the age of five. Progress is good overall and the children continue to maintain progress as they make the transition to the National Curriculum in the two reception classes.
8. The good quality of provision for the under-fives ensures that the majority of children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they begin statutory schooling.

Above average levels of attainment are achieved by children in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development.

9. In language and literacy children quickly develop confidence in their use of language. The majority demonstrate very good listening skills. Children enjoy mathematics. The children work enthusiastically, in particular on practical mathematical activities. The children begin to develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. In creative work children have opportunities to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions in the classrooms. There are regular opportunities for outdoor play in a safe and secure area outside the nursery. The children use the good range of equipment with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Children's personal and social development is good. The children demonstrate very good listening skills and display positive attitudes to learning from an early age.
10. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive appropriate work match for their differing abilities and make sound progress in lessons where literacy and language skills are not required. However, pupils with limited reading and writing skills often have difficulty reading what they have to do. Many cannot read back what they have previously written. Lack of specific support, especially in Key Stage 2, to develop independent basic writing skills makes it difficult for them to record their efforts. Pupils' individual education programmes are insufficiently detailed and not monitored rigorously enough by teachers. As a result, progress is unsatisfactory.
11. The school is in the early stages of compiling a register of gifted and talented pupils. No formal recognition procedures exist to identify these pupils but there are opportunities for participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to pursue their talents at a higher, more challenging level.
12. Trends over time using national test results show that the school is maintaining and even improving high standards in English at both key stages. In mathematics results have remained largely in line with national levels at Key Stage 2 but fallen slightly in Key Stage 1. In science results over the last three years have been variable but the general tendency has been that of a decline compared with national trends.
13. In Key Stage 1 standards of reading are particularly strong. Pupils read fluently and with good expression. Most literacy lessons begin with an opportunity for pupils to read aloud together. As a result, they read with confidence, tackling new vocabulary and drawing on a wide range of strategies to help them. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop these skills further, reading more complex and demanding text accurately and with increasing expression. They make effective use of punctuation to enhance their reading. Higher achievers use skills such as inference and deduction well, referring to the text to support their ideas.
14. A further strength of the school is the high standard of speaking and listening. By the age of seven, pupils listen attentively, talk enthusiastically about their work, and respond eagerly to questions. Pupils in Year 6 are interested listeners, eager to participate in discussion about the characters, plot and descriptions in shared text. Many pupils are articulate, expressing their ideas clearly and thoughtfully.
15. By the age of seven, pupils form letters accurately, many writing neatly, some with a secure cursive style and with an interesting and imaginative content. They draw on a wide range of vocabulary to enhance their writing and write for a variety of audiences. Higher achievers make very good use of punctuation in their writing. By the end of Year

6, pupils write in a wide variety of forms. Writing is lively and thoughtful and ideas are often extended. Pupils demonstrate an adventurous choice of vocabulary, when writing. Punctuation is used very well. Writing is well organised in paragraphs and many have developed exciting styles in writing. Although pupils write in a cursive style the quality of handwriting is variable towards the end of Key Stage 2.

16. In mathematics most pupils in Year 2 are fairly confident when adding two single digits in their head and the higher attainers know that 1000 is a multiple of 10 because it ends in zero. The higher attainers have a secure grasp of number facts to 20 but several average and lower attainers still rely on counting on fingers. Pupils know the names of some common two and three-dimensional shapes and measure in centimetres as well as in non-standard units like paper clips. Pupils in Year 6 understand simple fractions like a quarter but some are confused initially and make mistakes with thirds and quarters. Most know that a half is the same as 0.5 and count in 0.25s with reasonable confidence. Only the higher attainers have secure understanding of the terms 'denominator' and 'numerator'. Many pupils have only a moderate knowledge of number facts like multiplication tables and this hinders their progress at times. Most pupils have a sound understanding of shape and of collecting and representing data in graphs although work in these areas is fairly unexciting. While most pupils learn at a satisfactory pace during lessons and over time, there are groups of higher attaining pupils who are not being sufficiently extended because the match of work lacks challenge.
17. In science lessons pupils in Key Stage 1 work well for their age. In Year 2 they compare insulating properties of various tea cosies, and are beginning to understand what constitutes a 'fair test'. The pupils make reasonable predictions, record their findings accurately in tabular form and write clear accounts in their own words. Some higher attainers are starting to offer well reasoned explanations, as when the pupils observed ice cubes melting at different rates in various locations. Pupils in this year-group demonstrate secure general knowledge about a range of materials, suggest how they might be classified and have a developing understanding of why materials are chosen for specific purposes. In a lesson on light, Year 4 pupils successfully predicted which materials light would pass through and tested their results systematically along lines suggested by their teacher. They understood that light travels in straight lines and had an idea of how shadows are formed. The ability to hypothesise, reason and explain does not develop sufficiently in Years 5 and 6, and the pupils' understanding tends to lack depth. On the positive side, the older pupils continue to develop an understanding of 'fair testing', and can explain that only one variable at a time can be changed. Many pupils' explanations indicate insecure understanding of the concepts involved when different forces are brought to bear upon an object, and scientific vocabulary is not sufficiently extensive. In Key Stage 2 teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of the standards which might be achieved and some of the work was pedestrian, especially for high attainers.
18. Pupils make good progress in English throughout the school. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 accelerated progress is made by the oldest pupils. In mathematics pupils' progress is satisfactory overall through the key stages. In science progress is satisfactory generally but slows and becomes unsatisfactory as pupils approach the end of Key Stage 2.
19. Pupils' standards of attainment are generally high in religious education throughout the school exceeding those set in the locally agreed syllabus and good progress is made. In information technology standards are generally in line with the average by the end of

Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. As pupils' confidence increases so levels of progress increase especially in Key Stage 2.

20. In the non-core subjects above average levels of progress and attainment are achieved by pupils in music, art, history, physical education and geography in Key Stage 2. Progress and attainment in design and technology and geography in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory.
21. Literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum areas. Pupils use their acquired skills in reading and writing very successfully to apply them to daily tasks in lessons. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed. There is sufficient evidence to show pupils use their skills of calculation effectively in lessons. In consultation with the local education authority adviser, the school has set generally appropriate targets for English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 for the next two years. In the light of the above average results in English in 1999, this target has been reviewed. Based on inspection evidence the school appears likely to meet its targets. However, targets focus on the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally agreed average level 4 grade. Greater emphasis should be given to targeting the performance of higher attaining pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. Pupils at Belle Vue want to learn. They start the day in a purposeful way and show very enthusiastic responses to the effective ways in which teachers promote a good work ethic. Through a consistent focus on literacy and numeracy tasks, whilst registration is undertaken, pupils practise basic skills and get the day off to a productive start. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a high level of interest in lessons, and a willingness to take on roles of responsibility. Relationships in the school are very good and this is reflected throughout the caring, cohesive and harmonious community. Bullying instances are few but are taken seriously and responded to effectively. Pupils at the school feel safe and secure. Parents appreciate the ways in which the school fosters pupils' confidence and maturity. Positive features identified in the previous report have been successfully sustained.
23. Children in the nursery show good attitudes and respond well to the way in which the team of staff ensure that individuals are well settled at the start of the day, and enabled to grow as people. Children show interest in what they are doing and work purposefully alongside one another for prolonged periods. They cooperate well when building a train track together and are respectful of one another when asking who would like biscuits or fruit at break-time. Children demonstrate good levels of motivation, and good perseverance when trying to put on coats for example. By the time that they are five, most children are confident to make choices, understand well the way in which to behave, and get on with others.
24. In all years pupils are showing positive attitudes to their studies and most enjoy learning. Pupils are eager to learn, have good levels of motivation and work with good application. In a very small number of lessons, pupils' responses were dampened by the undemanding work expected of them and their achievements suffered as a consequence. In some lessons, music and art for example, they are encouraged to take initiative and show good levels of creativity and self-expression as a result. In Year 2 some particularly positive responses were observed. Pupils responded well to the challenge to improve on their personal best.

25. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils respond well to the clear code of conduct expected of them. Older pupils show mature and responsible attitudes, for example when helping the dinner ladies look after the youngest pupils or when fund-raising for their chosen charities. On a visit to the museum in Dudley to find out about life in the Second World War, pupils' behaviour was exemplary and they were very good ambassadors for their school. Pupils were very adept at using the various sources of information provided to find out many useful facts to help in their work back at school. Pupils have a good grasp of how the impact of actions affect others. For example in an assembly about 'courage' pupils reflected well on how difficult it is to stand up to a bully but knew that it was the right thing to do. Pupils show good levels of self-esteem and are confident to take full advantage of the good experiences provided for them.
26. Levels of attendance in the school are good, and are contributing positively to the generally good standards achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching of children under five in the nursery is consistently good and sometimes very good. Of the lessons seen, almost 70% were judged to be good or better, and almost 20% of the teaching was very good. Unsatisfactory teaching is rare. Teachers plan conscientiously, building logically on work completed earlier in the term. They nearly always explain the purpose of their lesson to the pupils in a way which is clear to all involved, thus helping to give the class a sense of direction and improving the pupils' understanding of what they are doing. Learning is supported in many lessons by useful summing up at the end.
28. For the most part staff teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. In the nursery, particularly good use is made of routines such as registration and snack time to teach the children to talk in turn and listen to others, with skills such as counting and letter recognition developed systematically through a range of structured play activities. In the reception classes, staff are quick to build on what the children have already learned. In one session, for example, five-year olds were being taught to build up simple three-letter words involving the letter 'e'. With clear and effective explanation, the principle involved was quickly grasped so that later on in the week a lower attaining child could still recall how to spell the word 'egg' with obvious pride. Throughout the school the literacy hour is being used with firm understanding and to very good effect to develop the pupils' technical writing skills, to raise standards of reading and to develop the vocabulary needed to talk about language. Younger pupils are taught to form their letters correctly and neatly. Cursive script is not developed with quite the same consistency further up the school, but all teachers give good attention to standards of presentation in each area of the curriculum. All staff have an essentially secure understanding of how to teach and develop the pupils' number skills and mathematical concepts, although not enough attention has been given to mental calculation in the recent past. This is now improving.
29. Teachers generally have a good grasp of what they are teaching, with strengths particularly in English, religious education, music, physical education, information technology and art reflected in the high standards achieved. In one literacy session observed, for example, the teacher's insights helped the pupils to tackle a challenging poem, and to develop the vocabulary needed to articulate their ideas. Teachers' knowledge of information technology is good and improving fast as training in the use of new hardware and software comes online, and this is enabling the pupils to use computers increasingly to support their work in many areas of the curriculum. Some members of staff have very high levels of expertise in this area. Subject knowledge in

other areas is secure, except that there is not enough understanding of what the oldest and most capable pupils should be covering in science and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics. As a result, too few intellectual demands are made of the higher attainers, and these pupils are not making enough progress. Occasionally this contributes to more general under-expectation, and in these instances teaching falls below the usual standard.

30. When teachers' understanding is strong, lessons generate interest and enthusiasm and all, including the most talented pupils, are stretched appropriately. This was seen in a highly effective Key Stage 2 art lesson when the teacher encouraged the pupils to experiment with colours and washes to create seascapes. A strength here was the strong emphasis on developing individual imagination and creativity. In a dance session with older pupils a knowledgeable and skilled teacher successfully engaged and sustained the attention of all, including a group of less enthusiastic boys, increasing technical vocabulary and improving performance significantly. In many such lessons teaching strategies are well planned for the intended purpose, for example when drama is used to deepen pupils' understanding of historical events or to bring home a point in a religious education lesson. Resources, including well designed teacher-made prompt or worksheets, are conscientiously prepared and often contribute to the smooth pace of lessons.
31. The good relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school, and the management of pupils' behaviour often appears effortless, partly because of the use of judicious praise. Teachers meet the social and emotional needs of the pupils well. In other respects, the school meets various learning needs satisfactorily on the whole. In literacy sessions, group work is often appropriately planned at different levels to match learning needs, contributing to the good progress made by almost all pupils. During the inspection some lesson plans in other subjects included detailed support for lower attainers and extension activities for more able pupils. This was not consistent, however, and on occasions teaching was undemanding for some groups, whilst others struggled. The use of nursery nurses and classroom assistants, especially in Key Stage 1, to support lower attainers was sometimes highly effective, with instances of well co-ordinated teamwork between colleagues in the sessions observed. In general, however, staff are not sufficiently alert to the learning needs of the small number of pupils formally identified as having special educational needs, and lesson planning takes insufficient account of the targets in their individual education plans. This has an adverse effect on the learning and progress of this small and vulnerable group of pupils.
32. The pupils' completed work is regularly marked, with some constructive comments especially in English books. Marking in other subjects almost invariably picks up significant errors and provides an overall evaluation for each piece of work set. Although teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally satisfactory, staff often do not take the opportunity to note points for development or set individual targets. Throughout the school there is an effective use of homework to encourage personal reading, finish off tasks and undertake preliminary thinking or research. Almost all pupils complete this work conscientiously and on a regular basis.
33. The pupils work hard and at a good pace in most lessons, with older ones completing a considerable volume of well-presented work in their exercise books and folders. The pupils show some awareness of what they have learned, with a marked sense of achievement seen in the under-five classes. Older pupils are capable of very high levels of concentration when teaching staff make sufficient demands of them. In one Latin session, for example, a large class of Year 4 pupils concentrated hard and sustained a fast pace as the teacher tested their recall, introduced a new concept and worked

briskly from a text book, calling upon the pupils in turn to read aloud or translate. In this session they showed commitment to learning and a complete lack of awkwardness or self-consciousness. Typically no pupil was afraid to make an honest mistake. Similar instances of very good effort were seen in a range of other subjects, including music, art and physical education. The pupils are capable of working independently and using their own judgement when given the opportunity. From the start personal independence is promoted effectively and well by the nursery. By the time pupils approach the end of Key Stage 1 and throughout Key Stage 2, they are capable of organising practical elements of their own work very competently and know how to collaborate well, for example in musical composition sessions.

34. During the inspection most of the learning observed at first hand in lessons was judged to be at least good overall, sometimes better. There was a slightly less positive picture in Year 5, partly the outcome of a particular mix of individuals, with relationships appearing less positive here than in other year-groups. In one session the pupils were passive and did not respond readily to whole-class questioning, although they were open and co-operative on a one to one basis. In another lesson the pupils were noisy and did not respond readily to instructions or appeals for quietness. This is not by any means typical. The overall picture is one of pupils who want to learn, work hard, form good relationships with their teachers and other staff, and have very positive attitudes to learning. The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is more imaginative and gives pupils far greater opportunities to use their initiative and develop their creative skills.

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

35. The school has responded to previous inspection findings by implementing a clear structure for monitoring the curriculum and standards in subjects.
36. The curriculum is of good quality and meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education. Its strengths lie in excellent extra-curricular provision and very good provision for personal and social development.
37. The quality of the curriculum for children under five is good. It covers all the Desirable Learning Outcomes thoroughly.
38. The school has spent time ensuring that its broad, well balanced curriculum reflects learning in core and foundation subjects through following Qualification and Curriculum Authority national guidelines. Pupils benefit from the richness of curriculum found in subjects such as English, history, information technology, religious and physical education, and achieve good standards with their work. Provision for science in both key stages is weaker. At times, the focus on science is lost when the subject is taught in a cross-curricular way: for instance, in the Ancient Egyptian topic. In science and mathematics standards are not as high as in English and the provision lacks challenge for the learning needs of higher attaining pupils.
39. The school has responded well to major national initiatives. Information technology is being developed successfully and effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy are established in each year group. This is the first year of the national numeracy strategy and it is being implemented in a satisfactory way.
40. Extra-curricular provision is excellent and reflects opportunities for intellectual, creative and personal development. Pupils, in both key stages, take advantage of the many

exciting opportunities provided at different times of the day, to widen their horizons and develop new interests. Music, sport, art and Latin clubs are very popular and well attended. Visits out of school have firm links with subjects being studied and help to bring learning to life. For example, visits to Dudley museum, highlight everyday experiences during the Second World War, while the work of famous artists is studied at the Barber Institute and the National Gallery. Residential visits to Astley Burf add to the quality of the pupils' learning

41. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. The school is aware that boys' achievement can be lower than girls' and has aimed for a better gender balance of staff and is beginning to select a range of resources reflecting boys' interests.
42. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has some weaknesses. The school has responded to the national Code of Practice with a staged referral system, which has been implemented. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils are in place. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop these further. The system is not monitored satisfactorily and there are instances of pupils' needs not being identified in basic skills, particularly in reading and writing. Individual education plans do not consistently identify specific targets and this makes progress difficult to measure accurately. There is little evidence of teachers specifically working on these targets. Reviews are completed regularly, parents are invited and they are satisfactorily documented. The school has not maintained the good standards in this area as recorded in the last inspection.
43. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school draws from the experience and expertise of many outside agencies and is at the forefront of national work with healthy living, drugs awareness and sex education. Pupils understand right from wrong, and are taught the skills needed to make informed and healthy choices. From an early age pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, to respect the feelings and beliefs of others and to develop links with the wider community as future citizens. For instance, pupils' work is shared in displays in a local shopping complex and artists from the wider community work with pupils to enhance the school environment and broaden experiences.
44. The school has strong links with other schools and colleges. It has forged a very effective partnership with Newman College. The close relationship began six years ago with the training of teachers in school and has now grown significantly to the mutual benefit of both establishments. Course material for trainee teachers has been developed successfully; students have given support to pupils in information technology, so improving their skills. The school has four trained mentors who prepare sessions for students who are about to undertake school experience. The training of nursery nurses from Stourbridge College has also been well developed. This has a positive effect on classroom support in the nursery. Partnerships with Key Stage 3 is also well established, with Year 6 pupils making visits before they transfer schools. Teachers value the expertise of the local teachers' centre at Saltwells for professional guidance and curriculum update. Links with parents are good: parents are pleased with their relationships with the school and are well informed and supportive of homework set by the school.
45. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good and is a strength of the school. The previous report does not make an overall judgement but is very positive about this area and the school has sustained high standards since then. Provision permeates all aspects of school life. Spiritual development is very good. Pupils are given many opportunities for quiet reflection,

particularly in acts of collective worship. In many curriculum areas, additional opportunities exist such as in religious education lessons, when studying the work of famous artists, musicians and authors and when using the sculpture trail. The school builds into its residential outings for older pupils, opportunities to meet the residents of a silent monastic order and to take a silent meal with them as well as to reflect quietly and focus on the sounds of the countryside. These outings are also planned to ensure the effective social and moral development of pupils by providing challenges for them to overcome and opportunities to show independence and initiative. The outings are supplemented by a carefully planned programme of classroom activities to encourage pupils to reflect upon their own lives. Teachers offer pupils many opportunities to work together in lessons, often on genuinely collaborative tasks as in dance or games for example. They are expected to organise themselves in their groups and share resources amicably as when they work on computers or in mathematics when they share counters or cards in group work. Teachers' high expectations are invariably met by the pupils. The school's provision for social and moral education is very good.

46. Acts of collective worship are of high quality and always include a prayer and a time for quiet reflection. A reflective atmosphere is usually created through the use of appropriate music and a lighted candle. Pupils respond well to these events. Collective worship makes a strong contribution to moral and social development of pupils through stories and themes which capture their imagination. During the inspection period the weekly theme was courage and this was illustrated in a wide range of ways including reference to well known Bible stories. The school has well documented policies for developing pupils in these areas and these are applied consistently. As a consequence pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. All staff provide very good role models in this area and relationships throughout the school are very good as a result.
47. Religious education lessons play a significant role in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school develops pupils' cultural education particularly well. As well as introducing pupils to a wide range of faiths and cultures the school also gives opportunities for self-reflection, for working with others and for learning about their own heritage. Visits to different places of worship, such as the Gurdwara and the local church, enrich pupils' knowledge of their own and other people's cultures. The school draws upon the work of famous artists, writers and musicians within lessons and highlights their work through displays around the school. The sculpture trail, depicting several world wide cultures, is an excellent example of the strong commitment the school has in this aspect of school life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school is very caring and has well organised procedures for ensuring the well-being of pupils and as a result children are happy to come to school. Child protection procedures are good. The school keeps a watching brief on children it feels may be vulnerable. Close attention is paid to health and safety matters and risks are regularly assessed. The procedures for ensuring regular and frequent attendance operate effectively. Staff know pupils well and give encouragement to support pupils' whole development. The school takes this aspect of its work very seriously, and has sustained the high quality reported in the previous inspection. This is a strength. Pupils at Belle Vue are being well prepared for the next stage of education and are well on their way to becoming good future citizens.
49. Children are well supported when they join the nursery. The baseline assessment is used to good effect and is linked well to planning for the range of learning experiences.

Very effective routines support the nursery team's consistent practice in reinforcing what is expected in the way of behaviour and attitudes to learning. This gives the children a firm foundation for successful learning in the future. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the children transfer smoothly to reception in the year in which they are five.

50. Pupils in both key stages are given effective educational support and guidance, though much of it is informal and not kept as a written record in subjects other than English and mathematics. Because the teachers know the pupils well most pupils' needs are responded to appropriately, however there is a lack of precision in the targets written into individual education plans and sometimes ancillary staff in Key Stage 2 are not deployed to the best advantage when pupils are experiencing difficulty with their work. Good support is given to aid pupils' personal development. The records of achievement which all pupils compile year on year, are a positive feature in recording qualities of application, effort, self-reliance and co-operation with others for example. Pupils in Year 6 spoke animatedly about the value of the residential experience they had had in Year 5 in developing personal development skills including leadership.
51. The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' good behaviour, and improving attendance are good. A merit system is well liked by the pupils who see the award of certificates very positively in helping them to aim high, and do their best. The school tackles instances of bullying effectively and does not tolerate aggressive behaviour or wrong-doing against others. A system of detention has been established as a "last resort" strategy with the approval of parents.
52. Senior managers in the school have a clear view of who is doing best in the school and why, but do not have rigorous systems in place to support or promote these views in order to improve rates of progress and raise standards of attainment. For example, insufficient use is currently made of national test data to analyse how well girls and boys in the school are achieving compared to the national picture. There is limited analysis of what progress pupils of differing ability are making over time. The school has recently invested in computer software to aid future work in tracking and target setting. Statutory requirements for assessment in English, mathematics and science are fully met. There is however, very limited evidence of assessment in other subjects.
53. Parents hold positive views about the level of care given to children but some would like to know in more detail about how well their child is doing at school. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, and the use of assessment to guide curricular planning was raised as a key issue for the school to tackle at the last inspection. Insufficient progress has been made in improving this weakness since that time. Assessment practices are still unsatisfactory although there are pockets of good practice in the school. The school is now beginning to take steps to address this issue with the appointment of a senior member of staff to undertake the development of assessment. He has made a useful start by addressing administrative weaknesses and in setting up a system of assessment practices which all staff have agreed to implement.
54. In lessons there is limited use of pupils' self-assessment or individual target setting, although good examples were observed in design and technology and art lessons. Often good use is made of plenary time in the literacy hours to evaluate how well the pupils have done but this is not always recorded nor used consistently to guide the next lesson. In the numeracy hours most teachers are closely adhering to the National Numeracy Strategy timetable for age and time of year without accurate assessment of how well this is suiting individual learning needs.

55. A very small number of parents, amounting to 5%, in responding to the pre-inspection consultation said that they would like to know more about the progress their child is making. Although the school's procedures are satisfactory because they give detailed information about achievements, the annual written reports do not consistently address an individual's progress nor do they all feature explicit targets that parents could support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school has worked hard to maintain a very productive working partnership with parents since the time of the previous inspection. This aspect of provision is a strength. The quality of information is good overall although more specific detail about how well pupils are doing at school would be helpful to some parents. The introduction of a Home School Agreement has been positive in setting a clear statement of intent on both sides which virtually all parents have signed up to. The Home and School Association continues to thrive and is raising significant finances to support school improvement. A very high number of parents and friends of the school work in support of teaching and learning each week to very good effect. Parents make a valued contribution to their children's learning both at school and home. Parents hold very positive views about the quality of education being provided.
57. There is useful information provided to parents to help prepare their children for school. Parents support their children well in nursery through attending the meetings arranged, and by supporting the book lending library initiative for example. At both key stages parents are kept well informed about what is going on in school. Documents such as the prospectus, governors' report and fortnightly newsletters are friendly and contain useful details. Many parents visit the school for a variety of reasons over the course of a year, for example to support school sports day, concerts and special assemblies. During the week of inspection a number of parents and senior citizens supported a Year 6 visit to the local museum very effectively, each being allocated to a group of pupils to help guide them around the exhibition on the Second World War.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The headteacher provides effective leadership and gives clear educational direction for the work and development of the school. She is supported successfully by the deputy headteacher. Their styles of management and specialist expertise complement each other well and as a result bring considerable benefit to the leadership and management of the school. High standards have been sustained in the life of the school and the vast majority of curriculum areas since the last inspection. Strategies for maintaining staff morale and enthusiasm have been developed well, ensuring that the existing good quality of teaching has been further improved. The headteacher's determination to maintain and develop a rich, well balanced and broad school curriculum, at a time when nationally schools' provision is narrowing, is particularly praiseworthy.
59. The school aims and values are clearly reflected in its work. Pupils are given a wealth of opportunities to develop social and academic skills. The school community works harmoniously together and promotes good values and attitudes giving pupils confidence which will serve them well for their later lives.
60. There is an appropriate structure which delegates responsibility of management through a senior management team and subject co-ordinators. These roles are generally developed properly. Teachers' planning is properly monitored and pupils' work is scrutinised periodically to gauge the pupils' progress. However, the structure within

which co-ordinators monitor is imprecise. Non-teaching contact is allocated but specific targets for the completion of co-ordinator tasks are left to individuals' discretion. The result is a variation in the levels of effective monitoring.

61. The governors are a committed and knowledgeable group who support the school well. They have a good grasp of the school's current position and hold an influential position in shaping school initiatives. Well established, efficient committee frameworks exist which monitor and review the work of the school. The governors are generally conscientious and undertake a significant amount of training. The system for the induction of new governors is particularly well developed through the work of a designated link governor. The relationship between the governors and senior staff is good. This enables the school to build on the existing strong foundations. Appropriate and realistic performance targets are in place for the headteacher and deputy headteacher as a result of appraisal for senior management.
62. The governors fulfil their statutory duties properly. However, there are two minor omissions from the annual report to parents which need to be rectified to comply completely with requirements. These include details of elections for new governors and facilities available for disabled pupils.
63. The school has invested time and finance in tackling stress related illnesses. The system of staff release time from classroom duties for short periods of time to complete administrative tasks is beginning to benefit the school with a reduction in staff absence and an invigorated team of teachers.
64. The induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are very good. Significant support is given by experienced teachers and adequate opportunities for further training are given to new teachers. Good monitoring systems enable senior staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in teachers' performance and take appropriate action. This system has enabled the school to produce a core of promising enthusiastic young teachers, who make a significant contribution to the good quality of teaching. The headteacher has a clear picture of the quality of teaching throughout the school through the adoption of effective formal and informal monitoring systems. This knowledge has been used well to build a very effective teaching force.
65. The school appraisal system had to be abandoned in September 1999 due to the teacher union action but many of the good practices from the system still remain. Job descriptions are reviewed annually and interviews with teachers related to subject and career development still take place. Teacher training is carefully linked to school priorities to ensure successful curriculum development.
66. The school development plan, which includes a business plan, is a useful tool for school development. It sets out plans for tackling the school priorities and delivering national initiatives. Funding is appropriately matched for the completion of targets. Personnel are earmarked to lead developments and reviews are periodically undertaken to assess progress. However, the school has no rigorous system for analysing its own performance, that is, detecting strengths and weaknesses in its provision. As a result, a small number of areas, for one reason or another, have declined and no major action to redress the weaknesses has been implemented.
67. The school has good systems for financial planning. The deputy headteacher has a clear vision of how the school budget can be used to improve educational achievement. Budget predictions are made early on the basis of historical costs and thorough consultation takes place with governors and senior staff. Prudent management of

contingency funds, special grants and projected underspend enables the school to plan for long term projects to improve accommodation facilities and support curriculum initiatives. The most recent audit report undertaken by the local education authority confirms the school's careful management of funds and resources. Daily financial and administrative procedures are effective and allow routine systems to be completed efficiently. The chair of the finance committee is well qualified to assess the school's financial position and monitors expenditure regularly.

68. The school is aware of the best value principles and due consideration is taken before orders are placed for equipment and services. Pupils have benefited from wisely targeted spending decisions. Modern technologies are well established in school and are used to very good effect for school management systems and for pupils' educational advancement.
69. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers to implement the National Curriculum successfully. They are deployed properly and are committed to providing a good quality of education. The school has invested in an increased number of classroom support assistants and nursery nurses. The nursery nurses make a very positive contribution to children's learning in under fives and in Key Stage 1. However, the deployment of classroom assistants is less effective especially in Key Stage 2 and there are times in lessons when more thought might be given to maximising the use of the support available. The school is in the process of exploring systems to find the most effective way of deploying learning support assistants.
70. The headteacher is aware of the need to monitor the provision for special educational needs more rigorously. At present it is unsatisfactory. Funding for special educational needs is used appropriately for the release of the co-ordinator and to develop resources appropriately.
71. The accommodation is used effectively. The school setting and buildings are attractive and well maintained. The sculpture trail around the site is a stimulating area for pupils to use as an educational resource and a rich background for leisure time pursuits during school breaktimes. The school facilities are good. The school halls, specialist areas, including the library, information technology suite and playground areas are put to good use. One large playground is, however, pitted and uneven and has limited use for games lessons. The school has already informed the local education authority about their concern and the need for remedial action. Learning resources are good and support the curriculum effectively. The school has good library facilities in Key Stage 2 which enables pupils to carry out research and investigation. The Key Stage 1 library is only small and of limited value but the school has definitive plans for future development. The school makes good use of community facilities as exemplified by the visit to Dudley museum. These first hand experiences capture pupils' imagination and stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for learning.
72. The key issues for action from the last report have been addressed successfully with the exception of procedures for developing effective assessment systems. Little progress has been made in this sphere, largely due to the long term absence of a key member of staff. A new assessment co-ordinator is now in place and steps are being taken to improve systems and make resulting information useful to guide future curricular planning. Overall, there are sound management systems in place and the school has made sound progress since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. The inspection team recognise the high standards sustained by the school in many areas, but to improve further the standards achieved and the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Raise the levels of attainment of higher attaining pupils in science and mathematics by providing more challenging and suitably matched work to improve their performance. (paragraphs 2, 4, 16, 17, 29, 31, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 104, 108)
 - (2) Devise and implement a system of school self-analysis in order to detect weaknesses in provision and the standards achieved by pupils. From the information gained set school priorities to overcome perceived weaknesses. (paragraphs 52, 66, 70, 72, 102, 112)
 - (3) Improve assessment procedures particularly in the core subjects so that pupils' progress is more closely monitored and the resulting information is used to inform curricular planning. (paragraphs 52, 53, 55, 72, 99, 102, 111, 112, 117, 128, 137, 154, 161)
 - (4) Improve the direct support given to pupils with special educational needs and define the targets more precisely in individual educational programmes, to enable pupils to increase levels of progress, particularly in literacy skills in Key Stage 2. (paragraphs 10, 31, 42, 50, 87, 92, 130)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	50	29	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	455
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	44

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.79
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.04
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	32	33	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	24
	Girls	30	29	33
	Total	54	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (83)	84 (83)	89 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	25
	Girls	28	28	27
	Total	49	54	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (89)	84 (95)	81 (94)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	27	28	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	23
	Girls	27	21	25
	Total	46	40	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (69)	73 (86)	85 (72)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	23	21
	Girls	20	24	26
	Total	39	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (81)	85 (84)	87 (84)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	423
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	30.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	98-99
----------------	-------

	£
Total income	738,943
Total expenditure	736,423
Expenditure per pupil	1,636
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,183
Balance carried forward to next year	33,703

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	462
Number of questionnaires returned	147

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	52	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	46	15	0	0
The teaching is good.	45	51	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	56	16	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	37	8	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	52	14	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	38	51	7	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	45	9	0	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

74. What the children know, understand and can do on entry to nursery is above average. There are four children who are identified as having special educational needs. All under-fives are assessed on entry to the reception class. This year the majority of children attained standards above what is expected nationally. Progress is overall good and the children continue to maintain progress as they make the transition to the National Curriculum in the two reception classes.

Language and Literacy

75. Children quickly develop confidence in their use of language. The majority demonstrate very good listening skills. A small minority of the children has been identified as having speech and language difficulties. These children talk using limited vocabulary as they recall information about themselves, their experiences and their families. All children enjoy books, understand their purpose and handle them carefully. From an early age they begin to learn the names and sounds of some letters. Children attempt to write their names and record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing at an appropriate level. The quality of teaching of language and literacy is good and sometimes very good. Most children are on course to attain higher than the standards expected nationally by the age of five. The children make good progress in this area of learning. A few make very good progress.

Mathematics

76. The children work enthusiastically in particular on practical mathematical activities. In the nursery they count different objects and name and write numbers up to 5. Many recognise and count numbers over 5. Older children in the reception classes develop an idea of counting over ten and confidently write numbers. They develop a good number vocabulary for example 'one more than'. Most children name two-dimensional shapes and many begin to name three-dimensional shapes with confidence and recognise some of their properties. The children confidently cut out circles and make and name cone shapes. Teaching is good and the children make good progress. By the age of five most achieve standards which are above those expected nationally.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. The children begin to develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They recall the number on their house and when prompted know where they live. They understand that they live near to their school and begin to develop an understanding of the local area. Most name things they see on the way to school. The children are beginning to understand that the world consists of different countries. A few name places they have visited such as Spain. The majority of children show some idea of the past. They talk about when they were babies and most describe their grandparents as the oldest people they know. The children show amazement as they are shown an old teddy, which used to belong to the teacher and identify old and new toys easily. They recognise that plants are alive and that they are growing. Most begin to recall the main parts of a plant such as the 'root' and the 'stem'. They know substances such as ice cream can change their form and a few suggest why.

78. The children listen and look carefully and then follow instructions sensibly as they are shown how to make cakes. They select materials and equipment to make models from recycled materials, such as 'The millennium fireworks' and develop skills needed to cut and stick materials together. The children use simple computer programs confidently, which teach and reinforce many areas of learning. Most develop a good knowledge of the keyboard moving the cursor around the screen confidently. They enjoy working in the listening area, which teaches, and reinforce many areas of learning such as reading, singing, and listening to stories. Teaching is good. By the age of five most children achieve standards above those expected nationally in this area.

Creative development

79. Most children sing songs with great enjoyment, from memory. The majority of children demonstrate very good listening skills. All children have opportunities to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions in the classrooms. They do this with confidence and obvious enjoyment as they play in the 'play house'. Careful artwork is created using a good variety of techniques such as collage, printing, painting and drawing. This area is linked well with other areas of learning. For example three-dimensional models of the Jindi and Neena sisters links artwork with the children's mathematics work and develops an awareness of the multi-cultural society in which we live. Good teaching and support are enabling most of the children to exceed the standards expected nationally by the age of five.

Physical development

80. In the nursery there are regular opportunities for outdoor play in a safe and secure area outside the nursery. The children use the good range of equipment including wheeled vehicles and prams with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They have regular opportunities to take part in physical activities in the hall, which enables the children to develop good body awareness and to move with confidence. Most listen and follow instructions very well. The children handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with sound control. They play well together with construction toys and confidently cut out shapes using malleable materials such as Play Doh. Teaching is good overall and this enables most children to exceed the expected levels by the age of five.

Personal and social development

81. The children under five settle quickly into the routines of the nursery. They enjoy coming to school. The children demonstrate very good listening skills and display positive attitudes to learning from an early age. Their behaviour is very good and they develop very good, constructive relationships with adults and with each other. Most work in pairs and small groups well and develop the skills necessary to work independently. The children select activities with confidence. Teaching is very good and this area is well promoted in everything the children take part in. Progress is good and often very good. The majority of children exceed the expected levels in their personal and social development by the time they are five.
82. The school has maintained its high standard in the teaching and provision for the under fives. This area continues to be strength of the school. The children enter the nursery at three years old and at the time of the inspection there were 60 children on roll. All attend part time. In the reception classes there were 37 under fives who attend full time. The curriculum for the under-fives is closely related to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Planning in the nursery is good. All adults contribute to the good day to day assessment. These assessments are used to inform future teaching and planning.

Comprehensive profiles track each child's progress throughout the Desirable Learning Outcomes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Learning resources are good to promote all areas of learning. There are good quality wheeled vehicles and toys for outdoor play. Links between the nursery and the reception classes are good and useful and informative records are transferred to Key Stage 1. A very good feature is the home school personalised phonic sound books, which are started in the nursery and transfer with the children on entry to the reception classes. Visitors such as the mum with her twins and the lady who spoke about Diwali are invited into school to talk to the children. These visitors enhance the curriculum offered to the under fives.

83. The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Good teaching is characterised by thorough planning for the needs of young children. Sessions are well resourced with a good range of activities, which allow the children to acquire new knowledge, develop skills and increase their understanding. Basic language skills are systematically developed in all areas of learning. Groups are very well managed and the needs of all children are met. Adults demonstrate good questioning skills and give clear instructions. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants are used well and give good quality support. Relationships between all adults and children in the nursery and the reception classes are very good.

ENGLISH

84. The 1999 National Curriculum tests, shows that standards were above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and well above the national average for pupils reaching the higher level 5. However, when compared to the standards achieved by similar schools, the school's results were broadly in line with the average levels. There is some indication from the National Curriculum test results in recent years to show that boys do not achieve as well as girls in their writing.
85. The results in the Key Stage 1 national tests were not as high as those in Key Stage 2. In 1999, the results matched the national average at level 2 in reading and writing with reading at the higher level 3 well above the national average, and writing at level 3 above the national average. When compared to similar schools the results in reading were close to the average but below average in writing. There is a good evidence, however, from these test results that the higher achieving pupils do well in both key stages.
86. At the time of the last inspection English was a strength of the school. The previous inspection report showed that standards in English were above the national average at the end of both key stages, with a high proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, again above the national average. In addition, the quality of teaching was good in both key stages overall but with a lack of pace in some lessons in Key Stage 2. The subject was well managed. In 1999, evidence shows that these high standards have been maintained, and in some respects, further improved since the last inspection. English remains a strength of the school.
87. From the National Curriculum test results, pupils do better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. This is borne out by the inspection findings. A close scrutiny of pupils' past and present work shows whilst standards are good in English by the end of Key Stage 1, they are better at Key Stage 2, with a higher proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels. Work is generally well matched for the higher achievers and average pupils, but sometimes this is not the case for lower achieving pupils. The school is well placed to

meet its statutory targets for attainment by the year 2001. The impetus given to English is largely due to the success of the National Literacy Strategy which is contributing effectively to raising standards.

88. Pupils' progress over time is good. Pupils maintain good progress through Key Stage 1 but with variations in some years. Progress is good at Key Stage 2 with accelerated pace evident for the oldest pupils. This is the case in speaking and listening. In reading, the pace of progress is very good in both key stages. Although writing is good, it is the weaker aspect of English. The pupils with special educational needs are not always sufficiently supported. Sometimes learning objectives are not precise enough to ensure that the work is well matched to their needs. As a result, they do not always achieve as well as they might. Overall, within the class, pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Higher attaining pupils are often well challenged.
89. A particular strength is the quality of reading throughout the school. Pupils read fluently and with good expression. Most literacy lessons begin with an opportunity for pupils to read aloud together. As a result, they read with confidence, tackling new vocabulary and drawing on a wide range of strategies to help them. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop these skills further, reading more complex and demanding text accurately and with increasing expression. They make effective use of punctuation to enhance their reading. Higher achievers use skills such as inference and deduction well, referring to the text to support their ideas.
90. A further strength in the school is the high standard of speaking and listening. By the age of seven, pupils listen attentively, talk enthusiastically about their work, and respond eagerly to questions. Discussions build well on pupils' vocabulary, through demanding questions. Pupils listen to instructions carefully, discuss and recall text and speak confidently about authors and illustrations. Many explain articulately the meaning of vocabulary in texts used in the literacy hour. Pupils in Year 6 are interested listeners, eager to participate in discussion about the characters, plot and descriptions in shared text. Many pupils are articulate, expressing their ideas clearly and thoughtfully. The teacher's skilful questioning ensures that lower attainers also engage confidently in discussion. There are good opportunities in other areas of the curriculum for pupils to extend skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
91. The good focus on basic skills ensures pupils acquire and develop these well. By the age of seven, pupils form letters accurately, many writing neatly, some with a secure cursive style, and with an interesting and imaginative content. They draw on a wide vocabulary to enhance their writing and write for a variety of audience. Higher achievers make very good use of punctuation in their writing. Story, poetry, instructions together with researched accounts, such as that in the first person about life as a Victorian are examples of the different forms of writing used. By the end of Year 6, pupils write in a wide variety of forms. Writing is lively and thoughtful and ideas are often extended. Pupils demonstrate an adventurous choice of vocabulary, when writing. They use research skills well and are able to write in more formal styles when required. Punctuation is used very well. Writing is well organised, in paragraphs and many have developed exciting styles in writing. Although pupils write in a cursive style the quality of handwriting is variable towards the end of Key Stage 2.
92. Pupils respond positively to English and as a result the quality of the learning is good and often very good. Their behaviour is very good because the challenging and interesting tasks motivate them well. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They work hard, with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They

particularly enjoy the literacy hour and this is reflected in the good quality of work produced. They are expected to work independently and to use their initiative. This contributes effectively to their personal development.

93. The good quality of learning is a direct result of the good teaching. At both key stages a high proportion of teaching was of a good, and sometimes very good standard, characterised by the teacher's good subject knowledge, high expectations, effective planning, good management and lively teaching methods. The brisk pace at which some lessons proceed, with a clear focus on setting time targets results in pupils covering a good amount of work within lessons. Teachers' confident delivery of the National Literacy Strategy is also having a very positive effect on standards. In the less successful lessons, the pace is often slow, resulting in less work being covered. Sometimes learning objectives fail to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, because they are too imprecise.
94. Literacy lessons start promptly with shared objectives and a focus on shared text work. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of genres and authors. An example of a very good lesson was seen in a Year 6 class where the teacher ensured that all pupils were clear about the purpose and tasks in the lesson. The shared text *Goodnight Mr. Tom* was read expressively first by the teacher, whose good example was followed in the pupils' expressive and fluent reading. All pupils engaged eagerly in the oral discussion, through skilful teacher questioning and by extending pupils' thinking skills. Their reading shows a very good understanding of the effects of punctuation and pupils' knowledge and understanding of complex vocabulary is very good. Their use of standard English is very good. The excellent use of time targets in lessons and high expectations of the teacher ensure pupils cover a very good amount of work. Through the effective use of the plenary session the teacher draws the main teaching points together, reinforcing these well and checking pupils gains in learning.
95. English is very well managed by the capable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who sets a good example through her teaching. There has been, and continues to be, a good drive to raise standards through an exciting and challenging curriculum, and particularly through the successful implementation of the literacy strategy. The co-ordinator, together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been involved in monitoring of teaching in the literacy hour and this is a developing area with greater use made of individual target setting to further improve standards. The good resources, including the very good library provision in Key Stage 2, contribute well to the good standards achieved. The library is used well by older pupils, in particular for independent study and research. They are well equipped to locate books and retrieve information. Library provision in Key Stage 1 is very limited in space and does not enable library skills to be taught effectively. There are plans to improve this provision. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and views in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

96. The 1999 National Curriculum tests indicate that standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages are in line with national averages. When compared with similar schools standards at the end of both key stages were well below average. At both key stages the proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels in mathematics was in line with the national average but the proportion gaining the higher levels at end of each key stage was below the national average. The inspection findings confirm that at the end of both key stages most pupils are attaining standards at the expected levels for their ages but

that few are attaining the higher levels. The previous report indicated that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were said to be in line with national averages. Comparison would indicate that there has been a marginal decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 but similar standards have been maintained at the end of Key Stage 2. Girls generally outperform boys in mathematics, as is the national trend, but there is a widening gap developing based on the evidence of National Curriculum test results.

97. Most pupils in Year 2 are fairly confident at adding two single digits in their head and the higher attainers know that 1000 is a multiple of 10 because it ends in zero. Higher attaining pupils also recognise the step from $8+1=9$ to $80+10=90$ largely due to their growing grasp of place value. Pupils explain confidently how they worked out their answers. The higher attainers have a secure grasp of number facts to 20 but several average and lower attainers still rely on counting on fingers. Pupils know the names of some common two and three-dimensional shapes and measure in centimetres as well as in non-standard units like paper clips. Pupils at Year 6 understand simple fractions like a quarter but some are confused initially and make mistakes with thirds and quarters. Most know that a half is the same as 0.5 and count in 0.25s with reasonable confidence, as part of the class chanting in sequence. Only the higher attainers have a secure understanding of the terms 'denominator' and 'numerator' and that a fraction is a part of a whole number. Many pupils have only a moderate knowledge of number facts like multiplication tables and this hinders their progress at times. The higher attainers work confidently on finding common denominators but many pupils can become confused. Most pupils have a sound understanding of shape and of collecting and representing data in graphs although work in these areas is fairly unexciting
98. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and has adopted this in place of the published scheme which used to form the basis for mathematics teaching. Teaching is based securely on the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy in terms of both content and the structure of lessons. Teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. In around a third of lessons at both key stages teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in mathematics during the inspection. In most lessons the majority of pupils achieve the levels expected for their ages but few attain the higher levels because the work is not set at a sufficiently high level. This is particularly noticeable at Key Stage 2.
99. Teachers at both key stages have a secure knowledge of the mathematics they are teaching and of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and this leads to confident direct teaching of the subject. Lessons follow closely the guidance from the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers' daily plans identify what pupils will learn during the lesson. Teachers share these learning objectives with their pupils. However, they do not give the opportunity for their pupils to evaluate how well they have learned, or to set targets for improving their own performance the following day. In the best lessons teachers have work prepared at different levels so that all pupils are challenged appropriately. These lessons are mainly at Key Stage 1 where teachers set more difficult tasks or give different resources to pupils to ensure that they work at a level suited to their needs. For example in a lesson on addition of money, lower attaining pupils were only given coins to the value of one pence or two pence with which to generate their sums, while the higher attainers had coins of higher value and were expected to add three or four digits instead of just two.
100. However, in many lessons in Key Stage 2 all the pupils are given the same task at the same level. This means that the lower attainers struggle to understand and require a lot of support from the teacher while the higher attainers easily complete the task and are

not sufficiently challenged. This is exemplified in a Year 6 lesson on finding fractions of quantities. Some of the lower attainers became very confused and tried to divide by the numerator and multiply by the denominator. Meanwhile some of the higher attainers could do the problems in their heads or with a minimum of paper calculation. Insufficient use is made of ongoing assessment to plan future work, to enable a closer match to the needs of pupils. Teachers at Key Stage 1 are confidently following the National Numeracy Strategy and also setting work within each area which is appropriately challenging for most pupils. In contrast at Key Stage 2 teachers seem to be rigidly following the content and levels in the strategy and not targeting work sufficiently closely to the needs of groups of pupils within their classes. The previous report criticised the over reliance on the published scheme in use at that time. Having replaced the scheme with the Numeracy Strategy too many teachers at Key Stage 2 are now over reliant on closely following it to the letter and some of the higher and lower attaining pupils are not receiving work at appropriate levels as a consequence.

101. While most pupils learn at a satisfactory pace during lessons and over time, through both key stages, there are groups of higher attaining pupils who are not being extended sufficiently because the match of work lacks challenge. The progress made by these pupils is unsatisfactory. At the other end of the spectrum pupils who lack confidence with numbers in mathematics are requiring extensive teacher support to meet with success in terms of completing the tasks given. However, they lack the real understanding that would give them independence to tackle similar problems in the future. This is an issue mainly for Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 some lessons make very effective use of information technology. This is evident when pupils use addition techniques in computer simulation, so developing both their skill in control technology and their learning of number facts. The effective use of classroom support assistants at Key Stage 1 also has a significant impact upon pupils' learning. Well briefed classroom assistants and nursery nurses work confidently with groups of pupils supporting learning on practical activities and encouraging pupils to explain how they worked out the answers to simple problems. This support means that pupils with special educational needs progress at a satisfactory pace in mathematics at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 2 are given the same work as the rest of the class in many cases and as a result require a lot of support from their teachers to complete their work. They barely make satisfactory progress.
102. Pupils at both key stages have positive attitudes to mathematics. They behave well in lessons and concentrate on their tasks. Even those pupils who find the work very hard and occasionally confusing persevere with tasks while the higher attaining pupils enjoy rushing through their work with great enthusiasm.
103. While the mathematics curriculum ensures that all pupils cover all aspects of mathematics in a logical and structured way not enough use is made of assessment to inform the planning of future work. Too little attention has been paid to addressing the issue of why the school is performing at a lower level when compared to similar schools. Although there is a programme of curriculum monitoring, this is not rigorous enough to be having a positive impact on raising standards particularly among the higher attainers. There are some good examples of systems for recording pupils' progress in mathematics but there is no coherent whole-school assessment and target setting programme in place to highlight where the problems lie and how to address them. A new co-ordinator for mathematics has just been appointed and has already drawn up a draft action plan for raising standards. However, the plan is not based upon evidence of why standards are at the level they are and what needs to be done to raise them. There is a need to raise standards, particularly of the higher attainers, by putting

in place a coherent and rigorous assessment system and by setting more challenging work for them.

SCIENCE

104. The standards currently being achieved in science are broadly average as the pupils now in Year 2 approach the end of Key Stage 1. This is a rather more positive picture than that indicated by the most recent teacher assessments at the end of this key stage (1999), when numbers reaching the expected standard (level 2) were below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (level 3) in 1999 was broadly average. These outcomes, which were lower than the standards being achieved by similar schools, suggest a decline since the last inspection, when attainment at the age of 7 was judged to be above average.

105. Inspection evidence shows that the standards achieved in the current Year 6 are below average, and this is consistent with the outcomes of recent national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2. Average scores in the 1999 assessments were below national levels and well below the standards achieved by comparable schools, with a relatively small proportion of pupils reaching a higher level (level 5 or 6). Standards have fallen off since the last inspection, when attainment at 11 was judged to be above average. Average scores in national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 show a slight decline over the past three years, against national trends. Differences in the performance of boys and girls do not show a consistent pattern, and are not a significant feature in this subject.

106. The pupils now in Year 2 present their work in science well for their age. They gain experience of testing, as when one class compared the insulating properties of various tea cosies, and were beginning to understand what constitutes a 'fair test'. The pupils make reasonable predictions, record their findings accurately in tabular form and write clear accounts in their own words. Some higher attainers are starting to offer well reasoned explanations, as when the pupils observed ice cubes melting at different rates in various locations. The pupils' written work shows a secure understanding of the basic conditions for survival of animals and plants, but not much higher level work on life processes and living things. Practical work is competent for the age group. In two lessons observed on electrical circuits, for example, the pupils handled equipment sensibly and safely as they learned how to make a bulb light up. Subsequent written accounts were well illustrated with neatly labelled diagrams. Sensible attitudes on the part of the pupils and well planned teaching combined to ensure good progress in both of these sessions.

107. In the early part of Key Stage 2 the level of achievement seen in lessons is satisfactory, although written work is limited in Year 3. Pupils in this year-group demonstrate secure general knowledge about a range of materials, suggest how they might be classified and have a developing understanding of why materials are chosen for specific purposes. In a lesson on light, Year 4 pupils successfully predicted which materials light would pass through and tested their results systematically along lines suggested by their teacher. They understood that light travels in straight lines and had an idea of how shadows are formed. The pupils noticed that a faint shadow was perceptible when a light was trained through and around a shape made of translucent material. Some high attainers offered a generalised explanation of this phenomenon, but not many pupils could articulate their ideas readily.

108. The ability to hypothesise, reason and explain does not develop sufficiently in Years 5 and 6, and the pupils' understanding tends to lack depth. On the positive side, the older

pupils continue to develop an understanding of 'fair testing', and can explain that only one variable at a time can be changed. They know that tests need to be repeated to ensure reliability, and can explain why. Work in exercise books is often very well presented, and the pupils support their findings appropriately with tables and graphic representations. On the other hand, the pupils have limited experience of devising their own tests and show little initiative when they encounter a practical problem: for example, when ramps could not be raised high enough for their tests on friction. Many pupils' explanations indicate insecure understanding of the concepts involved, for example when different forces are brought to bear upon an object, and scientific vocabulary is not sufficiently extensive. By Year 6 the pupils have covered most of the Key Stage 2 programme of study, but discussion shows that they have not revisited topics often enough to develop an all-round understanding and to make connections between different aspects of science. Even the most capable pupils are not quick to apply their knowledge of science to solve problems, for example to separate a mixture. Pupils with special educational needs make generally sound progress. Although a very large percentage of pupils reach nationally expected levels at the end of the key stage, the progress made by higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory, when pupils' capabilities are taken into account.

109. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good, but was mainly good in the majority of lessons observed. Many of the sessions seen were well prepared, clearly explained and provided an effective combination of practical work, discussion and writing. Some lessons were very effective in putting across a new topic or idea, as in Year 2 work on electrical circuits and Year 4 lessons on light. Here the pupils' understanding was developed effectively and logically through hands-on experience and skilled questioning. In one session there was good planning to extend higher attaining pupils. Lessons were of a less high standard towards the end of Key Stage 2, even though general teaching skills and class management were usually good. Here teachers did not have sufficiently high expectations of the standards which might be achieved and some of the work was pedestrian, especially for high attainers. Investigations were organised for the pupils when they could have planned their own experimental work. Not enough rigour or analysis was expected in the pupils' observations and measurements. In one unsatisfactory lesson, there was a slow pace and the pupils became bored and noisy. Scrutiny of the pupils' books supports the view that the older pupils are not working independently enough. There is little evidence of extended writing being used to help pupils to clarify their thinking about scientific principles, and limited use of secondary sources or note-taking at this stage. This is contributing to a slowing of progress as pupils approach the end of Key Stage 2.

110. The pupils' constructive attitudes, practical competence and ability to collaborate with others all make a positive contribution to their learning in science. They handle equipment carefully and have a good understanding of safety requirements. Throughout the school they take pride in the appearance of their work, taking care with layout and in the execution of sketches, diagrams and tables.

111. The school has a sound policy statement for science. The scheme of work was drawn up some years ago and, whilst it ensures basic coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, there is not enough to ensure that work is covered in depth at a sufficiently demanding level. In some year-groups, for example Year 1 and Year 3, science is not always developed systematically in the course of general topic work. Work at the start of Year 6 is fragmented apart from a 'mini-topic' on health education which is valuable but has a relatively limited scientific content. The well planned use of the school environment and adjacent parkland to support environmental studies is a

good feature of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 gain valuable experience from a link with the science department of a local secondary school.

112. Arrangements for assessment are being reorganised at present, with new assessment sheets being trialled. Their format is sound, and the new sheets have the potential to support teachers' planning effectively. At present, though, comments tend to be too general to be useful. A sharper focus on specific aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding is required.
113. As the school has become increasingly involved in national and local initiatives, science has been low amongst the school's priorities in recent years: it does not feature in the current development plan. There has been some monitoring of teachers' planning, and the subject co-ordinator knows that the scheme of work is being covered. However, there has been little response to unsatisfactory outcomes in national assessments and tests at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and not enough has been done to seek explanations for an apparent decline in standards. Science now needs a far higher profile throughout the school to ensure that the subject has a distinctive place within the curriculum in each year-group and to raise the aspirations of staff and pupils.

ART

114. Art has improved since the previous inspection and achievement across the school is good.
115. Focus on the work of other artists, discussions in art and the provision of a wider range of experiences has enriched learning and raised standards, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as their peer group.
116. A deeper study of famous artists, such as Monet and Turner, provides pupils with the opportunity to experiment with new ideas and techniques. For instance, older pupils compare how light is used in seascapes and mix colours and washes to reflect similar effects. Pupils also express their ideas and feelings through a wider range of exciting experiences. For example, younger pupils model animals in clay, work with pastel and use the computer to experiment with line and colour. At Key Stage 2, work in drawing and painting shows greater control of detail and accuracy. This is evident in work in sketch books, where good progress is made as pupils build upon their previous skills and learning. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to choose materials and for older pupils, under the guidance of teachers, to make choices of personal study in art.
117. The school has created an exciting learning environment, which includes the high quality provision of a 'sculpture trail' and visits to galleries and museums. This in turn is reflected in the high standards and expectation pupils set themselves. Pupils enjoy art lessons and are motivated by the value their work holds in both school and community displays. They are keen to experiment and improve their work, share resources amicably and work well with others.
118. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection period so no overall judgement can be made about the standard of teaching. Pupils' work was scrutinised, as were displays, teachers' planning and pupils' previous work. In the lessons observed teachers had good subject knowledge. By sharing their ideas, techniques and resources, they ensure that standards in teaching are consistent. Art is successfully linked to other subjects: for instance, paintings and displays of 'fashion

through the ages' enliven work in history. Lesson plans draw from clear policy guidelines for art and skills with painting and drawing are being developed in each year. As yet, assessment is not linked firmly enough with planning for the next step in learning.

119. Art is well managed, with the co-ordinator working effectively with the link co-ordinator to ensure there is coverage of the National Curriculum and development in pupils' learning. A portfolio of work gives evidence of standards and the development of skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Achievement in design technology is sound at both key stages. This includes achievement for pupils with special educational needs. Present findings broadly reflect those of the previous inspection.

121. Throughout the school, there is a clear structure for planning, making and evaluation. This is understood and used by pupils as they develop and refine their ideas into a finished product. All groups make good progress with this aspect of design and technology.

122. At Key Stage 1 pupils discuss their study of the local environment, compare photographs of buildings and plan how to construct three-dimensional houses. They make choices about the materials they are going to use and experiment with the construction of walls, doors and windows. Practical skills with marking, cutting and gluing also are developed effectively. At Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with designing free standing structures. They use different joining techniques and measure with greater precision. Pupils collaborate well as they examine difficulties and begin to evaluate and test for improvement.

123. The school makes good use of the links between food technology and learning in other subjects. For instance they prepare Aztec food after study in history or plan a Caribbean meal. As part of a 'healthy eating' programme, pupils prepare packed lunches and salads and evaluate taste and presentation. Skills with textiles are built upon effectively in each year group. Pupils make steady progress with their achievement in sewing and weaving as they make sock puppets and hanging textiles. By Year 5, finished products such as textile landscapes are finely made.

124. Pupils work well and their good behaviour and commitment make for a happy working atmosphere in lessons. Resources are used safely and sensibly.

125. A limited number of lessons were observed and so pupils' previous work and lesson plans have helped form judgements. In the limited number of lessons observed teaching looks sound. There is a clear planned overview of what is to be taught in each year group and this guides lessons and ensures coverage of the National Curriculum. At times, especially in Key Stage 2, too much time is spent on instructing and explaining, so that less time is spent on 'making'. The pace and challenge of work for older, most able pupils is particularly affected by this.

GEOGRAPHY

126. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching in geography because only two lessons were seen being taught during the inspection. This was due to the position of the subject in the curriculum plan. However, further evidence was drawn from teachers' planning, the scrutiny of pupils' work and from discussions with pupils

and teachers. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is good. The school has maintained this high standard since the previous inspection.

127. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound knowledge of their immediate environment. They visit their local area and compare the different houses they see. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of weather and learn about the different types of clothes necessary for different climates. Geographical vocabulary is developed appropriately. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum such as history and English. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively. In Year 1 pupils learn sayings from the past for example 'The North Wind doth blow, and we shall have snow.' By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of maps and use a computer program to identify the countries that make up the United Kingdom. They recognise the effects of pollution and begin to articulate their thoughts confidently and accurately.

128. As pupils move into Year 3 they learn more about their immediate locality and compare it with more isolated places such as Tilsay. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop a sound understanding of maps and their uses. Most are able to name countries and their capital cities in the world. Geographical vocabulary develops well as pupils recall facts they have learnt in Year 5 about the 'Rainforest'. They talk with enthusiasm and confidence about the work on 'Rivers' they have completed. They name rivers around the world and talk with confidence about how they measured rivers to find the longest river in the world. They show their developing knowledge of the effects of pollution and how people damage the environment. Pupils with special educational needs make generally sound progress.

129. Useful guidelines have been developed and are now used consistently throughout the school. The co-ordinator has started to monitor teaching through samples of work. The last inspection identified the lack of assessment procedures in geography. This is still an issue. Resources are satisfactory in quantity and quality. Displays promote and reinforce the geography topics, which are taught. Visits to local places of interest such as the Botanical Gardens and Whitley Court enhance the geography curriculum. Residential visits enrich the curriculum area further and promote the social development of all pupils.

HISTORY

130. Only two lessons of history were seen being taught during the inspection due to the position of the subject in the curriculum plan. There is therefore insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching. However, further evidence was drawn from teachers' planning, the scrutiny of pupils' work and from discussions with pupils and teachers.

131. Most pupils make good progress and exceed standards expected for their ages. However, pupils with special educational needs sometimes do not receive work which is matched accurately to their individual needs. Consequently their progress is unsatisfactory during some lessons. Most pupils acquire a good knowledge of chronology and this is reinforced consistently in many classrooms as teachers develop useful and informative time lines. This is shown for example in the 'shoe timeline' in Year 1. Pupils throughout the school develop skills, knowledge and understanding and appropriate vocabulary across a range of historical topics such as the Victorians in Year 2 and Anglo Saxon England in Year 4.

132. Pupils in Key Stage 1 think about famous people from the past and decide who they would remember. They link history with art and paint portraits of people such as

Princess Diana and Jesus. Most demonstrate a good understanding of the past. They talk about older members of their families and begin to develop an idea of what life was like before they were born. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make distinctions between their own lives and those of people in the past. For example pupils in Year 2 look at clocks from the past and compare them with the digital clocks of today. These differences are successfully learnt through the use of photographs, artefacts, books and costumes.

133. In Year 3 pupils use their literacy and information technology skills to write accounts about life in Ancient Greece. Pupils have the opportunity to link history with art as they learn about the Invaders and Settlers. They develop a weaving technique similar to that used in the past. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show a good understanding of areas in history they have covered. They use and interpret data confidently and develop a good understanding of how the Second World War affected the lives and in particular, the occupations of so many ordinary people. Visits to places of interest, such as the very good visit to Dudley Museum to see an exhibition about the Second World War, enhances and enriches the work taught in school. Information technology is beginning to be used successfully to support the subject.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

134. At the start of the current academic year the school received a significant input of new computer hardware and software as part of the Dudley Grid for Learning, involving a change from familiar machines and programs to an entirely new system. Comprehensive arrangements for staff professional development are in place but training had not been completed at the time of the inspection. These changes have inevitably had some influence on the level of achievement, as staff and pupils learn to use new systems and discover the potential of their equipment. Priority was given last term to familiarising pupils with systems for communicating and handling information, with other strands only now beginning to receive attention. Even in these circumstances, attainment is well in line with the average for the age-group at the end of Key Stage 1 and is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. As pupils' confidence is developing, so standards are rising. Individual pupils in Year 6 achieve very high standards when they attend the school computer club. Taking recent developments into account, the school has succeeded in sustaining the high standards described at the time of the last inspection. With excellent resources now in place, provision for IT is one of the strengths of the school.

135. Pupils at Key Stage 1 regularly use computers to support their learning in many areas of the curriculum. In Year 2, for example, they are taught how to use CD-ROM to access information about topics they are studying such as environmental pollution. Another class visited the 'Living Library' web site to extend their understanding of electricity. Higher attaining pupils suggest appropriate key words and understand how to conduct a search. The pupils use a word-processing program to create and present texts on the new computers, and know how to save and retrieve their work, which they print out with a little adult assistance. Year 2 pupils have good experience, which they recall clearly, of using the old machines to help them classify and present information, as when they created a bar chart to show favourite colours. The curriculum includes a broad range of opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to give signals and sequences of commands, for example when working with a programmable robot, and to use simulations.

136. At Key Stage 2 pupils make extensive and often highly effective use of computers to communicate their ideas and to acquire and organise information. In a Year 3 group,

pupils were using a graphics program to create winter scenes successfully in the style of Breughel. Older pupils experimented with archaic-looking fonts to match the style of their narrative writing. A Year 5 class were learning how to interrogate a data base to gain new information and find the answer to questions. In Year 6 the pupils had worked in pairs to combine text, photographs and illustrations to present the outcomes of a history project. This task involved use of digital camera and scanner, with materials selected carefully and combined effectively for the purpose. In computer club a talented pupil had created his own web site and was currently helping a member of staff to develop ideas for updating the school web site. Controlling, monitoring and modelling were less evident at the time of the inspection, but are well catered for within the school's scheme of work. In computer club, Year 6 pupils had good opportunities to work with advanced simulations, design programs, and with logic and mathematical games. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress, developing their skills at the same pace as other pupils in their classes.

137. Short IT sessions are regularly timetabled, and Key Stage 2 pupils have weekly access to the new computer suite. It was not possible to observe much IT teaching during the inspection, but what was seen was consistently good, with some very effective teaching. At best staff are very well informed, and the school can draw upon real expertise, including that of the co-ordinators and a highly skilled nursery nurse. Even teachers who are more diffident about their skills show a thoroughly secure grasp of what they are teaching. Members of staff support pupils well whilst encouraging exploration and independence; many convey their enthusiasm and excitement to the pupils. As they realise the potential of the new equipment, teachers are starting to use it imaginatively. Good use was made of a white board and overhead projector linked to a computer in one session, for example, to create a communal text. The pupils learn effectively and independently, working with good concentration individually and collaborating well when working in pairs. Learning generally takes place at a good pace, but is sometimes slowed by under-developed keyboard skills. Ways of speeding up the pupils' typing need to be considered.

138. IT is managed very effectively, with good teamwork between the co-ordinator, the link co-ordinator and the nursery nurse whose responsibilities include IT. There is a well written policy document and a draft scheme of work which takes appropriate account of recent developments in the subject. The after-school computer club is a real asset. It is open to a small number of Year 6 pupils at a time, with each pupil in the final year enabled to attend for half a term. The club provides excellent opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and pursue personal interests with a high level of expert adult support available. Provision is further supported by a productive link with a local teacher training institution, with opportunities for pupils to receive additional teaching at an individual or small group level. Pupils' hands-on experience is monitored and checked by staff, but there is no effective system of assessing the pupils' developing skills in the subject. The school is well aware that this is the next step.

MUSIC

139. Music is a strength of the school.

140. The subject has maintained its high profile and success in terms of standards in Key Stage 1 and has improved standards and progress in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection report.

141. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across both key stages in all aspects of music, with some very good progress as a result of the

very good specialist teaching. Pupils make particularly good progress in developing skills in composing and performing, gaining confidence and developing their experience, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Their ability to listen to music and sounds and comment critically upon them is above average. Well developed listening skills contribute effectively to the quality of singing in the school and also to listening skills in other areas of the curriculum.

142. The younger children experiment with instruments, interpreting the story of *Rosie's Walk*. Teachers build well on these early skills extending the range of songs and developing their ability to compose simple tunes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work together well, devising simple ways for recording musical patterns, and performing these to an audience. They sing a wide range of songs, singing tunefully, keeping good time and recalling words clearly. They identify a large number of instruments by name, know the sounds they make, and describe these sounds, using correct musical vocabulary. At Key Stage 2, pupils build upon these experiences. For example, in a Year 4 class pupils worked in small groups to create a Nordic landscape using tuned and untuned percussions. They demonstrated very good listening skills, responding quickly to the teacher's instructions, and good collaborative skills as they planned their performance. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within groups and participate fully. Their skills are enhanced by the very good specialist teaching. Pupils communicate musical ideas using a good variety of instruments from a variety of cultures, creating a sense of place and mood in their performances. Pupils are encouraged to appraise each other's music-making, improving their performance as a result. They treat instruments with care and respect. When singing, pupils demonstrate a keen sense of rhythm, and awareness of dynamics and perform tunefully and with enjoyment. The school benefits from two specialist teachers, both of whom have high expectations of what children can achieve. In addition, the headteacher makes a considerable contribution through specialist groups such as the senior recorder group. Through the support and guidance of specialist teachers, other teachers have developed greater confidence and improved their own skills in music.

143. Teaching is good in both key stages, with some very good specialist teaching, particularly from the two teachers who co-ordinate the subject. Lessons are planned well, proceed at a brisk pace and provide pupils with a range of interesting tasks that challenge them well. However, time constraints mean that there is insufficient time in some lessons for plenary sessions. Timetabling arrangements also mean that some music lessons are interrupted with swimming or Latin coming between two halves of a lesson, affecting continuity in such lessons. Many pupils acquire good skills in playing an instrument with the support of good specialist teaching. They learn to sight read well and show commitment and determination. There are good opportunities to learn the flute, violin, guitar, recorder and other brass and woodwind instruments.

144. Pupils enjoy music. They concentrate well, listening carefully and following instructions. They work together with enthusiasm when composing and playing. They perform with confidence and pride in their achievement.

145. Since the last inspection, resources have been improved and now make a good contribution to the quality of learning. Assemblies are also regarded as an important part of pupils' musical development with time to listen, appraise and reflect on a wide variety of music and composers. There is now a full scheme of work in place which ensures greater progress across both key stages. Both co-ordinators provide good leadership.

146. Musically, the school is very involved in the wider community performing in concerts and festivals and enjoying close links with the local authority's music centre. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhance the music curriculum offered. This is of an excellent standard. The school is rightly proud of its reputation for musical performance. Music makes a very meaningful contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development, as well as enriching their personal development and contributing well to other areas of the curriculum together.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils are attaining high standards in physical education by the end of both key stages. They make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding as they pass through the school. There are many factors contributing to the pupils' high level of attainment. These include good teaching, the quality of the physical education curriculum, the provision of good facilities and learning resources, the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and the commitment of the subject co-ordinators.

148. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a clear understanding of the need for safety. They lift apparatus safely as a team, using rhymes to synchronise a collaborative movement. Pupils practise their skills at different levels, improving and refining actions as they develop linked movement. Through knowledgeable teacher intervention and group discussion they find ways of effecting improvement. They expand their knowledge by learning new vocabulary about body positions such as star jump and arabesque.

149. Pupils realise that vigorous exercise undertaken in the warm-up session affects the body. By feeling their pulse and heartbeat they understand that their blood circulation rates have increased. Pupils are developing a good sense of rhythm by interpreting musical accompaniment at the commencement of lessons.

150. At Key Stage 2, pupils are finding imaginative solutions when interpreting music in dance lessons. They perform at a high standard, using precise accurate movements when simulating mechanical actions. Fitness levels are good. Pupils sustain activity well during lesson introductions. Pupils discuss confidently the strong and weak points in dance sequences performed by groups within the class.

151. Pupils in Year 3 are comfortably in line to reach national standards in swimming by the age of eleven. The more able pupils are already swimming beyond 25 metres using a creditable front crawl action. They complete sitting dives competently and swim using a range of styles. Pupils of average swimming ability are competent swimmers over distances of 20 metres. With the aid of floats they improve their leg kick for the back stroke style. The least able pupils are confident in the shallow end of the pool. Using a less fluent style, they travel effectively across the width of the pool.

152. The school has maintained the high standard reached at the time of the last inspection. Physical education is still a strength of the school. There have been further improvements in teacher expertise, the extension of extra-curricular activities, the provision of equipment and the co-ordination of the subject across the key stages.

153. The standards of teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In some lessons they are very good. There is a high level of teacher expertise and enthusiasm; this ensures pupils readily acquire skills, gain accurate knowledge and deepen their understanding and commitment to physical education.

154. Teachers manage classes well, ensuring that a good framework of discipline is established to allow pupils to concentrate and make progress. This was apparent in a Year 6 dance lesson entitled 'repetitive motif' where pupils practise and review their work in groups. The most successful teaching takes place when teachers' expectations are high and they challenge pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort, as demonstrated in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson on balance. Lessons are usually of a brisk pace and encourage a commitment to vigorous activity. There is no specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs; nevertheless they make similar progress to their peers.
155. There is a good range of learning opportunities for pupils to experience, including a residential visit. Extra-curricular activities are excellent with high levels of staff and pupil participation. The skills and knowledge acquired through many club activities have a positive impact on the standard of performance in lessons, as demonstrated in the Year 2 after school gym club. Teachers and staff are always dressed appropriately and smartly for physical activity. This reflects the school's high expectation in the subject. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are very good. They are committed to improving their standard of performance and demonstrate enthusiasm in their work.
156. The subject is well led by two co-ordinators, one for each key stage. They are committed to maintaining and improving the subject at a high level. There is an adequate level of monitoring undertaken but, with the exception of swimming, assessment procedures are inadequate. This does not allow for pupils' progress to be monitored accurately and make a useful contribution to teachers' future planning.
157. Resources are generally good. A good, varied range of equipment is available and facilities for indoor and outdoor activities are also good. However, the playground surface is uneven and this limits its use in games activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. Standards of attainment in religious education are good by the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are familiar with several aspects of Christianity, including some of the ceremonies like baptism and the relevance of the cross and the candle. One pupil for example refers to the lighted candle as symbolising the idea of Jesus as the light of the world and many know why the cross is the recognised symbol of Christianity. They are also increasingly aware of aspects of other world faiths, such as the symbolism associated with the Sikh religion and special people associated with Sikhism.
159. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have built up a good factual knowledge of a range of world faiths. They go beyond just learning facts and consider similarities and differences as when year 6 pupils compare aspects of the local Anglican and Methodist churches. They have a very good knowledge of the Bible, which is built up progressively over both key stages. They understand that it was written over thousands of years in more than one language and that it had to be translated into English. They compare different versions and appreciate that each one reflects the time and the purpose for which it was written.
160. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus. Learning is good at both key stages. The scheme of work for religious education ensures that pupils revisit aspects of religion at ever more complex levels over their time in school. For example at Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the Bible being a collection of books. By the time they are near the end of Key Stage 2 they are beginning to appreciate some of the difficulties in translating it into

English. Lessons are based very firmly on the scheme of work. Lesson plans identify clearly what the pupils will learn and the wide range of strategies used helps to reinforce learning. For example at Key Stage 1 pupils act out a baptism service and at Key Stage 2 visiting ministers talk about the Bible and bring a variety of examples to show the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make generally sound progress.

161. Teaching is good. Much of it is done by the co-ordinator who is well qualified in the subject. Where it is taught by other teachers the comprehensive and clear guidance of the scheme of work and the good range of resources available ensure that it is taught with confidence. Lessons are based on clear statements of what pupils will have learned by the end of the session and these objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. They are frequently reinforced throughout lessons. However, in the lessons seen there was little evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to evaluate how successful they were as individuals in reaching the objectives. Teachers use a wide range of strategies in their religious education lessons. They often include periods of reflection and have a strong impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example in the Key Stage 1 lessons on the baptism, the teacher used a candle as a focus for reflection. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on homes and homelessness pupils were encouraged to think about why their home was important to them and what they would miss about it. Teachers make lessons interesting through a combination of challenging work and an effective use of resources. This was exemplified in a Year 2 lesson when four generations of the same family were used to talk about family trees. This acted as an introduction to the family tree of Jesus, as told in the Gospels. The combination of interesting topics, appropriate and varied teaching strategies and effective use of resources ensures that pupils are interested in religious education. They pay attention and behave well throughout the school. They show great interest in the topics they study and are keen to ask and to answer questions. This was demonstrated well when Year 5 pupils worked with a local minister asking searching, well thought out questions about the Bible.

162. The religious education curriculum is rooted firmly in the locally agreed syllabus. It provides good coverage of all the elements required and fully meets statutory requirements. It provides pupils with a wide range of experiences and knowledge and understanding of religions and their impact upon the every day lives of those who believe. However, the school is aware of the need to develop suitable assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress in this newly designated core subject. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to the promotion of literacy skills through the school. Pupils are given opportunities to record their ideas and feelings and what they have learned. It makes a strong contribution to speaking and listening skills as pupils are given good opportunities to discuss issues and ask and answer questions. Religious education also has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It gives them opportunities to meet a range of people from the local community, to visit places of interest like local churches and a Sikh temple, and to then reflect upon what is important to themselves and to others.

163. Religious education was seen in the last inspection as a strength of the school. It still is a strength and the high standards and quality noted last time have been maintained. This is due largely to the effective leadership of the subject. The school has a clear commitment to maintaining the high standards of religious education and is well placed to do so.

LATIN

164. Latin was introduced as an extra-curricular activity for older pupils two years ago, and has been taught for one 30-minute period each week in Year 4 since the start of the current school year. A lunch-time club caters for up to a dozen pupils in Years 5 and 6. During the inspection this club and one of the Year 4 lessons were observed. The teaching is based on attractive materials produced in the course of a national project.
165. The progress made in a few months by a large class of Year 4 pupils is witness to the success of this initiative. The pupils have acquired a basic vocabulary, enabling them to answer simple questions orally. They read Latin confidently and discuss grammatical points such as the difference between masculine and feminine adjectival endings. They cope well with Latin word order, and are becoming aware of the grammatical differences between a language that relies heavily on inflexional endings and English. Year 6 pupils attending Latin Club are developing a wide vocabulary which is helping to extend their grasp of English words such as 'habitat', 'fractured' and 'cantata'.
166. The limited amount of teaching seen was highly effective. With very strong subject knowledge, the teaching is confident and challenging, involving each pupil in turn through well targeted questioning, despite large class sizes. Expectations are very high and the pace brisk, but no child is allowed to fall behind. Teaching is interesting and enjoyable, with a judicious combination of quick oral practice, new learning, textual work and 'fun' activities, as when the older pupils played 'Simon Says' in Latin. Good use is made of homework such as completing a worksheet or learning vocabulary. The pupils respond with enthusiasm. They show very high levels of concentration in lessons and respond confidently even when they make mistakes. The progress they are making is enhancing their self-esteem.
167. Pupils given this opportunity are developing skills which are improving their understanding of language and languages and enhancing their ability to learn and to think. Latin is making a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development and historical understanding.