

INSPECTION REPORT

The Ridge Primary School

Stourbridge

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103805

Headteacher: Mr G Robertson

Reporting inspector: Mr J White
17242

Dates of inspection: 26th - 29th June 2000

Inspection number:192004

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gregory Road Wollaston Stourbridge West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Nick Richards
Date of previous inspection:	10 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J White	Registered inspector	Science; Information technology; Art; Design and technology; Physical education; Equal opportunities; Special educational needs; English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
R Barnard	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?
J Dawson	Team inspector	Mathematics; Music; Religious education; Under fives	
D White	Team inspector	English; Geography; History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in Wollaston near to the centre of the town of Stourbridge. It draws pupils from a reasonably wide range of socio- economic backgrounds. Only a few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The school is of average size but the roll has risen since the last inspection and is currently 218 (115 girls, 103 boys). Forty pupils are on the special educational needs register including one with a statement; this figure is below the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Admission into the reception class is twice a year in September and January. At the beginning of the inspection 13 pupils were under five. The governors provide an independent Kindergarten and most of the pupils transfer to the reception class. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

By the age of eleven standards are good in most subjects. The overall quality of teaching is good but often very good in the junior classes. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Leadership is generally effective and has helped the school to improve since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of eleven standards are good in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology, and religious education.
- Standards at age seven are good in information and communications technology and religious education.
- The quality of teaching is good overall but often very good in the junior classes.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes.
- Leadership of planning, monitoring and review of the school's work is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics are below average at the age of seven.
- The oldest, most capable infant pupils are not making quick enough progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Reception pupils' independent learning skills are not developing as well as they should.

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 well since the last inspection in February 1997. At that time the inspection identified the need to make improvements particularly in leadership and management, curricular planning and provision for pupils under five. The current headteacher has been at the school for two years. Leadership and management have improved and governors and staff are now well involved in making strategic decisions. Curricular planning is better and provision for pupils under five has improved. Additionally, standards at age eleven have risen in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology, and religious education. The school exceeded its National Curriculum targets for 1999 and the signs are that standards are continuing to improve. Key improvements at age seven are in information and communications technology and religious education but standards have fallen in mathematics. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching is higher and often the teaching is at least good. Pupils are well cared for but formal policies and procedures for ensuring their welfare still require some improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	C	B	B
mathematics	D	D	B	A
science	C	D	B	B

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

The results indicate that standards have improved over time especially in mathematics. The school's trend in its overall performance over time is in line with the national trend. The school is well on course to exceed its targets for the Year 2000. The current pupils at the end of the juniors achieve good standards in all three subjects, and in information and communications technology and religious education. Pupils aged seven achieve satisfactory standards in English and science and good standards in information and communications technology, and religious education. Standards in mathematics are unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and relationships are harmonious.
Attendance	Attendance rates are average.

Pupils are enthusiastic and respond particularly well in class discussions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Ninety-four per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better and in 27 percent of lessons the teaching is very good or better. Some of the teaching in the juniors is excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching is uncommon. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught thoroughly in the vast majority of lessons. Most lessons meet the range of pupils' needs. High expectations, good subject knowledge and good pace are significant strengths in the effective teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Moral and social development is promoted well. Curricular planning is good overall but not enough opportunities are provided for the youngest pupils to learn independently. Induction of the youngest pupils into the school is thorough and links with the kindergarten are effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership and involves the staff well in strategic planning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities and give good support to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning are developing well.
The strategic use of resources	Spending is controlled carefully and closely linked to the school's educational priorities.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate overall. Good use is made of new technology including a recently developed computer suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Children are making good progress and behave well.• The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress.• A significant minority would like the school to work more closely with them. They would also like the school to provide a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection findings strongly support parents' positive views. Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' annual reports and found them informative but sometimes too impersonal. There are suitable plans to improve reports for the current pupils. The school is keen to improve its partnership with parents and they have been consulted over a number of initiatives. The school recognises that consultation about changes to the school uniform could have been undertaken earlier. The inspection finds that a good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Some parents expressed concern over the way in which bullying or inappropriate behaviour is dealt with. The inspection investigated the school's arrangements and found them to be good. However, the school should provide more detail in its behaviour policy and share it with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 national tests the school's average scores for pupils aged eleven were above the national averages in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools the scores were also above the averages in English and science but well above the average in mathematics. Results have risen since 1996 and the trend in improvement is in line with the national trend. Boys have performed better than girls. The current pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in all three subjects and these are better than those found in the last inspection. The school is on course to meet its targets for the current year. The average scores in the 1999 tests for pupils aged seven were in line with the national averages in reading and writing and below the average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools the scores were below the average in reading, in line with the average in writing and well below the average in mathematics. Girls have performed better than boys. The last inspection in 1997 judged that provision in the reception class had significant weaknesses and this legacy may explain why results in 1999 fell from those in 1998. Additionally, in this particular cohort, there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usually found in the school. Unconfirmed results in the most recent tests suggest that standards have risen in reading and stayed fairly static in writing and mathematics. The current pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in English and science and these are similar to those found in the last inspection. Standards in mathematics are below average; they were better in the last inspection.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but skills in mathematics are slightly below. Overall progress is satisfactory in the reception class and by the age of five most children achieve the desirable outcomes in language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical and creative development. Achievement in mathematics is below average. Skills in information and communications technology are developing well. Children start school with well established social skills and by five they generally achieve the expected outcomes for personal and social development. However, they do not have enough opportunities to work independently.
3. Infant pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and by the age of seven standards are good. Pupils participate well in literacy lessons and usually listen attentively. Pupils are confident speakers and Year 2 pupils talk well about their reading. Good progress continues in the juniors. Pupils express their opinions confidently and speak clearly. By the age of eleven they make particularly good use of subject-specific terminology, for example, when discussing poetry. They listen carefully to the views of others. In the infants, progress in reading is satisfactory overall but good in Year 1 because literacy is taught well. Standards in Year 2 are satisfactory but in the lesson observed high attainers did not make the progress of which they are capable. Generally, pupils are developing satisfactory skills to read unfamiliar words and Year 2 pupils have competent understanding of what they read. Fluency and accuracy in reading improve in the juniors and standards in Year 6 are good. Year 6 pupils use inference and deduction confidently and have good understanding of character, purpose and plot. Their library skills are developing well. Progress in writing is good in Year 1 and satisfactory in Year 2. Year 2 pupils attain satisfactory standards overall but progress should be quicker. Most pupils have a

wide range of writing experiences and their writing is suitably clear and organised in sentences. Progress in the juniors is good. Pupils write in a good range of forms and draft and edit their work. Word processing skills are developed very well. Standards in Year 6 are good. Pupils write for different audiences and argue a case well, for example, when discussing fox hunting. Throughout the school pupils have good opportunities to write in other subjects such as science. Standards of presentation are inconsistent.

4. Children enter the school with below average attainment in mathematics and by the age of seven standards are similar. Pupils make good progress in Year 1, because of high expectations in the teaching, but progress slows in Year 2. Year 2 pupils of average and high attainment are not consistently challenged enough. However, pupils of low prior attainment make good progress. Year 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of place value are insecure and their mental recall of basic number facts is not quick enough. Very few recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 with any confidence. They are unsure which operation to choose when solving simple number problems. The good and often very good teaching in the junior classes ensures that pupils make very good progress over time and often in lessons. Much of the work in Year 6 demonstrates achievement in the above average National Curriculum Level 5. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of numbers, the number system and shape. For example, they use fractions, decimals and percentages accurately and use formulae for calculating the areas of triangles. They understand statistical data well and construct a range of graphs. The very high attaining pupils have undertaken work within Level 6 of the National Curriculum.
5. Progress in scientific knowledge and understanding is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Year 2 pupils undertake a satisfactory range of experiments including testing items of food for taste and smell, and observation of the growth of seeds over a period of time. Some of the work involves prediction and pupils talk competently about what they think they have learned. Knowledge of materials, living organisms and physical processes is satisfactory. Junior pupils undertake a good range of work in the required elements of the National Curriculum and undertake experiments regularly. Very good teaching in Year 4 contributes to pupils' especially thorough knowledge of life processes and living things. Pupils in Year 6 have good recall of the work they have undertaken, use scientific terminology well and give clear scientific explanations for their findings from investigative work.
6. Standards in religious education are above average by the ages of seven and eleven. By Year 6 pupils have progressed well in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards in information and communications technology are also above average and have improved mainly because of regular timetabled teaching of key skills. Pupils work increasingly independently and are developing good use of the Internet.
7. Standards in geography and history are average by the ages of seven and eleven and overall progress is satisfactory. Infant pupils make satisfactory progress in art and standards in Year 2 are average. There is some good work in Year 1. There was not enough evidence of pupils' work in art to evaluate standards in Year 6. The work seen in other junior classes was broadly average. Throughout the school, there was not enough evidence of work in design and technology to evaluate standards. In music, it was not possible to judge overall attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 but in the work seen standards were at least average. The school choir sings

well. The standard of work observed in physical education was average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Overall standards in the non-core subjects are mainly similar to those found in the last inspection but they have improved in physical education.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in literacy and numeracy by Year 6. In some lessons their progress is particularly helped by well-focused support. High attaining junior pupils make good progress in the core subjects because of consistently effective teaching and Year 6 pupils with very high prior attainment are given work that would usually be done at secondary school. Pupils often achieve well in Year 1 but high attaining pupils in Year 2 should be making better progress in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils show a good attitude to school which together with an improving appreciation of values and good personal development has a positive impact on their achievements. The great majority of pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. The youngest pupils are settled well into the reception class and keen to learn in lessons. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes in lessons are generally good and they show a steady improvement as pupils become older. Year 6 pupils' responses in lessons are very good and often excellent. Generally, pupils are keen to get on with tasks and concentrate well. They listen well to instructions and appreciate others' contributions. For example, in an art lesson in Year 6 pupils encouraged each other with comments such as 'you've made a lovely colour' and 'that looks nice'. Pupils' positive attitude to their learning is a significant feature of the effective lessons.
10. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is good. Some boisterous and aggressive behaviour occurs in the playground but it has not been serious enough to warrant any exclusions from the school. There have been no temporary or permanent exclusions during the past two years, a figure well below the national average for primary schools. Pupils know rules and conventions well and are aware of how to behave appropriately. They have good manners and generally show good respect for the feelings of others. Relationships are good and infant and junior pupils play together well. Pupils work together well in pairs and groups and this co-operation has a positive impact on their learning. In a dance lesson in Year 4 pupils' very good co-operation in pairs and evaluation of each others' performance contributed significantly to their very good progress.
11. Pupils' personal development is good. Tasks, such as returning registers or setting up equipment, are undertaken in a keen and responsible manner from an early age. Junior pupils perform a good range of responsibilities such as providing office cover at lunchtimes, helping younger children in the playground, and arranging collections for charity. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the range of extra-curricular activities provided.
12. Attendance levels are satisfactory and in line with the national average. A significant number of pupils take holidays in term time and so miss important areas of learning. For example, half of the pupils in Year 6 have taken at least a week's holiday in the current academic year. Rates of unauthorised absences are low. Few pupils are late and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is good. In 94 percent of lessons the teaching is satisfactory or better and in about a quarter of lessons it is at least very good. Some excellent teaching was observed in the juniors. Unsatisfactory teaching is uncommon. The proportion of teaching that is good or better is higher than in the last inspection. The teaching of children under five in the reception class is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. A lesson observed in music was very good. Teaching of under-fives has improved since the last inspection. Relationships with children are good and largely work is planned appropriately. However, reception children are not given enough opportunities to work independently.
14. In most classes literacy and numeracy are taught well but in Year 2 expectations of the average and high attaining pupils are not consistently high enough so they are not progressing as quickly as they could do. Usually, in infant and junior lessons, the whole-class-work at the beginning and end of lessons is managed well and has good pace. In the effective teaching brisk pace is sustained throughout the lessons and teachers regularly reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 1 the teacher, after a very good imaginative explanation of the word "increase", checked at regular intervals that pupils understood the term. The quality of pupils' work is often enhanced by the teachers' high expectations. In an excellent literacy lesson in Year 6 the teacher skilfully steered the pupils towards comparing their views of the emotion in a poem with the work of a famous artist. Good features of the literacy and numeracy lessons are the sharing of learning objectives with the pupils and discussion of them at the end of lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is good overall.
15. Most lessons are well organised, relationships with pupils are good and they are well managed. The key weakness in the very few unsatisfactory lessons was low expectations of pupils' performance. In many lessons, the very positive interaction between teachers and pupils is a significant factor in pupils' learning. The quality of questioning is often very good and has a significant impact on pupils' learning. In a very good science lesson in Year 4 the teacher's questions "why do plants have roots?" and "why is this root growing in this direction?" challenged pupils to observe plants closely. Very good questions of this nature coupled with clear introduction of new learning ensured pupils made very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of green plants as organisms. Teachers often make good use of their subject expertise. For example, the co-ordinator for information and communications technology teaches all classes in the school's computer suite. The thorough teaching of computer skills, including use of e-mail and the Internet ensures that all pupils make good progress.
16. There are good examples of assessment in English, mathematics, science and physical education being used to modify the teaching and suggest how pupils' can improve their performance. Teachers often give pupils good oral support and feedback in the lessons. Some teachers write detailed comments in pupils' books that evaluate the work they have done and tell them what they need to do next. This means that pupils have a written record of their achievements and can see when they have improved. However, this policy is not applied consistently throughout the school and often not enough attention is given to improving the presentation of pupils' work. Homework is used appropriately throughout the school to support pupils' learning.
17. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support. They are benefiting from the literacy strategy and by Year 6 make good progress in English

and mathematics. The teaching of the highest attainers in Year 6 is very effective and ensures they work at levels that are well above average.

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

18. The curriculum for pupils of statutory school age is broad, balanced and relevant to their ages, needs and interests. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and complies with statutory requirements in all subjects. The last inspection identified the need to provide suitable policies and schemes of work for all subjects. This issue has been dealt with and a suitable range now guides the teachers' planning. Planning is good. Teachers identify the knowledge and skills to be taught and this secures continuous and progressive learning. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' stages of learning and assessment opportunities are clearly identified. The curriculum and its planning are monitored and evaluated by the curriculum co-ordinators who keep the headteacher fully informed. Good use is made of national guidance to steer the curriculum. The timetable for science needs review because the time allocated to single lessons is too long in some classes and makes it difficult for teachers too maintain pace and rigour in pupils' learning.
19. The curriculum for children not yet of compulsory school age has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall. Suitable emphasis is given to the areas of learning especially language and literacy, and mathematics. During the summer term the work in the reception class is planned according to the early stages of the National Curriculum. Whilst this is appropriate for most of the children it is not always suitable for the youngest whose work should still be planned according to the desirable learning outcomes. Overall provision for personal and social development is satisfactory but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to learn independently. The school has already written a suitable policy for the new Foundation Stage that begins in September of the current year.
20. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been largely implemented successfully. The time allocation to literacy is above that of most schools and this helps to raise the standards of all pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are well linked to other subjects and there are good opportunities for writing to be extended within the context of subjects such as history and geography. Speaking and listening skills are given a high priority and provide an important strategy for learning across the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the pupils have the appropriate subject language to aid them in communicating their ideas. Numeracy makes a good contribution to geography and science with pupils using measuring skills and co-ordinates in mapping their classroom or the imaginary Isle of Skuay.
21. All classes are regularly taught key skills in information and communications technology in a recently developed computer suite. In addition, each class is equipped with a computer to provide further opportunities for learning. The use of specialist teaching in this and other subjects is having a positive impact on standards.
22. A key issue in the last inspection report was to ensure infant pupils' full entitlement to the National Curriculum. All pupils throughout the school now have equal access to the curriculum and the range of opportunities provided. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the Code of

Practice. Pupils' individual education plans are suitable overall but their targets are not always sufficiently precise. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school seeks to improve this and has made it a priority in its improvement plan. Appropriate opportunities are created to heighten pupils' awareness to the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. Sex education is provided within the curriculum as part of the pupils' health education.

23. Good use is made of the local area to support the curriculum and some pupils in Year 6 have just had a week's residential visit to Wales. Visitors to the school enrich the pupils' curriculum experiences, for example, by providing historical enactment of Tudor times and the Civil War. Children's authors and theatre groups also visit. Links with the adjacent kindergarten and secondary school are good. The programme of induction for children under five is thorough.
24. A good range of extra-curricular activities and events is available for pupils throughout the year including sports, musical and computer clubs. Sports teams representing the school take part in competitive fixtures with other schools. The choir has performed at many outside venues. These activities provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to extend their learning beyond the curriculum.
25. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for reflection and prayer are provided through the daily acts of collective worship and spiritual development is promoted through religious education. In some lessons pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect on their personal feelings when, for example, in Year 6 pupils shared their thoughts on "The Listener" by Walter de la Mare and the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Opportunities for pupils to study other faiths, such as Hinduism and Judaism, are appropriately developed through religious education.
26. Pupils' moral development is promoted well. Adults consistently promote a clear message of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and pupils respond positively. Good relationships are fostered throughout the school. The staff provides good role models and show care and concern for the well being of the pupils. Moral issues are well promoted during assemblies and often highlight the importance of being responsible for one's own actions and learning how to live alongside and care for others. For example, in the juniors' assembly the pupils were given a vivid example of how performance can be enhanced by pupils working together. Good opportunities are provided in "circle time" for pupils to develop moral values.
27. The provision for pupils' social development is good. There are plenty of opportunities, including educational visits, for pupils to work co-operatively. Social skills are consistently encouraged and reinforced. Pupils treat each other with kindness and show sympathy to peers when they are upset. They listen to one another with attention and respect when exchanging ideas in class activities. Junior pupils are given good opportunities to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning. This has a positive impact on educational and social standards. The quality of relationships is good and contributes to pupils' awareness of accepted standards of social behaviour. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake responsibilities that contribute to the life of the school, for example, library and office management at lunchtime, preparing the hall for assemblies, working with younger pupils and taking registers and money boxes to the school office. Pupils are well involved in raising funds for both national and international charities, such as the

National Care for the Homeless, Help the Aged, Shoes for Eastern Europe and, organised by pupils, the Blue Peter Premature Baby Unit Appeal.

28. The school's provision for cultural education has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture through visits to historical and geographical places of interest that provide opportunity to appreciate and learn about lifestyles and cultures of different times and places. Pupils' work in religious education enables them to develop an understanding of world faiths. Displays around the school reflect features of cultural diversity. There are examples in English, art and music of work which provides opportunities for pupils to appreciate both European and non-European cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. Pupils are well cared for but the lack of formal policies and detailed procedures hinders consistent implementation throughout the school. This was a key issue identified in the last inspection and insufficient progress has been made. However, the school has plans to rectify the situation. The school is secure, clean and tidy. Good educational and personal support enables the youngest pupils to settle well in the reception class and good care is taken of them at the end of the day. Strongly established links with the local secondary school ensure that the support given to pupils ensures they are well prepared and confident in their move to secondary school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and consequently make at least satisfactory progress towards meeting the targets in their individual educational plans. Good support for a pupil with physical impairment ensures he is able to participate in physical education lessons.
30. Measures to promote and monitor good behaviour are satisfactory overall. The behaviour policy is too brief and lacks detail on procedures for promoting good behaviour. Similarly the staff handbook does not include a formal code of practice, guidelines or advice to ensure a consistent approach. For example, teachers deal differently with those few occasions when pupils shout out in class. Despite these omissions the school has a positive approach to discipline. Each class has a shared code of conduct and certificates are used to reward good behaviour. Lunchtime assistants are developing a range of activities to help improve behaviour at lunchtimes. The headteacher has a good awareness of issues relating to oppressive behaviour and bullying, and deals with these few instances effectively. Pupils' awareness of bullying is promoted well especially in assemblies. Incidents are reported and recorded thoroughly.
31. Overall procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Monitoring of holidays in term time is insufficiently rigorous and parents are not discouraged from taking their children away in term time. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and are governed by the local authority's guidelines. However, staff are not given regular updates on awareness of issues and only minimal guidelines are included in the staff handbook. Health and safety procedures are effective.
32. The general procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound. At the beginning of the reception year the school uses the Dudley baseline assessment and the children's English, mathematical and social skills are compared with other children in the local education authority. As children begin to work within the National Curriculum the teachers use the school checklists as work is completed. In

addition, the teachers keep records of the children's reading skills and their knowledge of the sounds that letters make. These records, alongside spelling achievements, continue as pupils work throughout the school and are linked to the national literacy strategy. Assessments in reading, writing, mathematical achievements and science are regular. Standardised tests, including the statutory tests and tasks at the end of each key stage and voluntary assessments in Years 3, 4 and 5 are carefully analysed. Differences in pupil's performance from year to year and between boys and girls are beginning to be monitored. The school is concerned to use data on pupils' performance more thoroughly and has identified this as one of its key priorities. Reading progress is monitored from year to year and teachers are beginning to analyse the progress their pupils have made. The tests in Year 5 are used to set targets for pupils' attainment at the end of the key stage. Common weaknesses in mathematics are noted and the curriculum is adjusted to address them. The year's mathematical targets are identified to the beginning of each pupil's exercise book and some teachers refer to individual targets throughout the year. Teachers set individual targets with parents and pupils that include English, mathematics and personal targets. Pupils are not yet involved in setting their own targets. The school does not keep records of pupils' achievements in any other subjects but uses pupils' books passed from year to year to inform the next teacher of the work that pupils have completed. A designated teacher has the responsibility for developing improved provision for "The Able Child" but the new policy has not yet been implemented. There are appropriate procedures for identifying pupils with special needs. The recording of their progress following reviews of their individual education plans is not consistently thorough.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The school is keen to improve its satisfactory partnership with parents. The great majority of parents who expressed a view are happy with standards of children's achievements, the general information they receive in newsletters and the support for new children. They also think the teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard. Parents' views at the pre-inspection meeting, in the parents' questionnaires and letters, and in discussion during the inspection, indicate that a significant minority has concerns over several aspects of school life. The main concerns are how bullying is dealt with, the impersonal nature of pupils' annual reports, and lack of consultation (especially in relation to the recent change to the school uniform). Some parents also feel that not enough extra-curricular activities are provided.
34. Inspection evidence shows that the treatment of bullying is good. Pupils' annual reports are good overall, especially in relation to the information provided on pupils' attainment and progress. However, many comments are preceded by impersonal comments that may be off-putting to parents. The school recognises this and plans to amend reports accordingly for the current pupils. The headteacher recognises that in relation to the change of uniform parents were not consulted early enough. On the other hand consultation on the home/school agreement was good and has produced a very good response from parents. Consultations and information over issues about staffing and class sizes are dealt with as quickly as circumstances allow. Parents have been provided with clear guidelines on homework and termly newsletters indicate what pupils will be studying. Parents have welcomed the meetings on the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Termly open evenings give parents and pupils good information on progress and the academic and pastoral targets for the next term. Parental attendance is very good.

A small number of parents provide good help in the daily life of the school and this has a positive impact on standards, for example in information and communications technology. Reading diaries indicate that parents give good support to their children's reading.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35. The last inspection found significant weaknesses in leadership and management. The current headteacher has been at the school for just under two years and the issues from the last inspection have been dealt with. Leadership and management have improved. The Key Stage 1 manager is currently acting as deputy headteacher.
36. The headteacher has spearheaded a clear cycle of planning and review and a key priority has been to develop a team approach. Staff and governors are well involved in formulating the school improvement plan. Some of the governors attended the planning day and valued working with the staff. The plan is comprehensive and identifies suitable priorities for the school's future direction. Projected expenditure is clearly identified and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are also indicated. The progress of the improvement plan is a regular agenda item at governors' meetings.
37. The governors support the school well and have a clear vision for the school's future direction. They are committed to improving academic standards and want to maintain pupils' good social skills. They also want to continue to support improvements in information and communications technology. The decision to enable the co-ordinator for information and communications technology to teach all classes is having a significant impact on standards. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring the school's work. Each governor is "linked" to a subject co-ordinator and this provides a very useful focus for his or her visit to the school. For example, the governor for science recently wrote a useful report of his meeting with the science co-ordinator. Governors receive termly information on the work that pupils will be undertaking. Governors monitor expenditure carefully and systems of financial control were found to be good in a very recent audit. They are vigilant in ensuring best value for money and compare the school's performance with other schools. Funding received under specific grants is used appropriately. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
38. The headteacher is establishing good systems for monitoring the teaching, learning and curricular planning and is aware of strengths and areas for improvement. He has observed lessons. For example, he most recently observed numeracy lessons, gave a written report to each teacher and discussed his findings with them. Subject co-ordinators are better involved than they were at the time of the last inspection. They now monitor the planning for their subjects, have also observed lessons and write an action plan for their subjects' development. Observations from monitoring are discussed at staff meetings if appropriate. They are also responsible for managing their own subject budget. Provision for special educational needs is managed satisfactorily. Improvements are needed in the monitoring of pupils' individual educational plans to ensure targets are precise enough and that records of progress are fully up-to-date.
39. The staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the range of the curriculum and to meet pupils' needs. Good use is being made of individual teachers' expertise,

for example, in mathematics, music and information technology. The overall accommodation is adequate. Two teachers work in the Year 2 room because there are more than 30 pupils. This situation is managed satisfactorily. The outside area adjacent to the reception class is small and consequently restricts the provision for children's physical development. Resources are satisfactory overall but good in information and communications technology because of the school's involvement with the Dudley Grid for Learning project. The recent development of a "state of the art" computer suite is having a marked impact on standards even though its space is somewhat restricted.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. The governors and headteacher should;
- (1) Improve standards in mathematics in Year 2 by providing more challenging work for pupils of average and high capabilities. (Paragraphs: 1, 4, 14, 18, 63, 65-6, 68)
 - (2) Improve the progress of the most capable, oldest infant pupils in literacy and numeracy by ensuring their work builds on their prior achievements. (Paragraphs: 3- 4, 8, 14-15, 55, 59, 65-6)
 - (3) Provide more opportunities for pupils in the reception class to work independently. (Paragraphs: 2, 13, 19, 42, 44-6, 48, 51-2)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL FOR INCLUSION IN THE ACTION PLAN

- Ensure good standards of presentation of pupils' work are consistent. (Paragraphs: 3, 56, 65)
- Ensure science lessons are not too long. (Paragraphs: 18, 73)
- Make sure the targets for pupils with special educational needs are precise enough and progress is recorded consistently. (Paragraphs: 22, 32, 38, 66)
- Discourage parents from taking too many holidays during term time. (Paragraphs: 12, 31)
- Give more detail in written policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' good behaviour, protection and welfare. (29, 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

53

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

26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	21	42	26	6	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)	-	218
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	15	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	12
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	25	28	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (90)	88 (90)	78 (90)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (90)	81 (90)	81 (90)
	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	10	19	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	25	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (73)	79 (58)	90 (62)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	13	10	14
	Total	21	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (58)	62 (58)	76 (54)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (71)

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	-
Black – other	-
Indian	4
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	1
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	-

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)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.37
Average class size	36.33

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

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	2000
	£
Total income	400,854
Total expenditure	399,287
Expenditure per pupil	1,831.59
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,120
Balance carried forward to next year	20,687

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	142

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	45	6	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	34	55	8	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	62	6	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	56	20	7	1
The teaching is good.	32	61	4	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	51	23	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	36	20	9	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	58	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	17	42	26	14	1
The school is well led and managed.	17	42	15	16	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	20	63	11	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	38	24	19	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Children enter school in September or January in the year in which they become five. Very good systems ensure that children are introduced to the rigours of school life with as little trauma as possible. Parents and children are invited to literacy and numeracy workshops in the term before the children start school. Home visits, before children start school, also help their introduction to school life. Parents are invited to meetings where advice on home reading and social skills are given. Children visit the reception class, without their parents, for two afternoons before they start their full-time education. Thirteen children were still under five at the beginning of the inspection but a number became five during the week. All the children have had some pre-school experience, normally in the adjacent kindergarten. Links with the kindergarten are strong and space and equipment are shared in addition to regular informal adult and child contacts. One four-year-old has been identified as having special needs and has been put on the first stage of the special needs register.
42. Assessments carried out when the children start school indicate that their attainment is higher than usual for four-year olds in speaking and listening and social skills. Attainment is broadly average in other areas of learning except mathematics where it is below average. Children make satisfactory progress throughout their year in the reception class and most, by the age of five, meet the expectations of the desirable learning outcomes in all areas of learning except mathematics. The teachers give more emphasis to the first levels of the National Curriculum in the summer term. All the work is planned in National Curriculum subjects rather than the areas of learning for children under five. Although most children cope with this, there are some, especially those who started in January, for whom this is inappropriate. There are not enough opportunities for children to select their own equipment or to learn independently through first hand experiences.
43. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good and a very good music lesson was observed. Two teachers share the responsibility for the reception class and share the curriculum between them except for information and communications technology, which is taught by the co-ordinator for the subject. The teachers, the nursery nurse and non-teaching assistants have warm, caring and purposeful relationships with the children and these contribute to their progress. With the exception of independent learning, the teachers' planning is appropriate and promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world, their personal and social development, and their physical and creative development. Children's linguistic and mathematical skills are promoted well through all areas of the curriculum.
44. The teachers keep suitable records of children's progress in literacy and mathematics. They also record the work covered in science and a "sketch book" shows the children's development in pencil and crayon control and their creative development with dated pictures. Marking of children's work is very detailed and gives them a clear indication of what they have learnt and what to do to improve. Good work is praised and work that is not as good as expected has gentle reminders of the teacher's expectations. Although there are no formal records of the children's progress in the other areas of learning the two teachers work closely together and know the children well. However, assessment is not used to identify children whose

knowledge and understanding are better than the work planned for their group, or if the formal work planned is not appropriate for individual children. Although resources and activities are carefully planned not enough thought is given to developing children's independent learning to enable them to select resources for themselves and to apply their knowledge and skills

Personal and social development

45. Personal and social development permeates throughout the whole curriculum. Throughout the day adults in the classrooms encourage children to take turns, listen to each other and share and help other people. Children are encouraged to express their opinions and feelings about the things they see and hear. During the inspection children were studying the seaside and in a good science lesson described how the wet and dry sand felt. In a music lesson, children gave opinions about the quality of the sounds they heard and expressed amazement at the similarities between the sound the "ocean drum" made and the recording of the waves on the beach. Good relationships between both teachers and the nursery nurse set a good example and the children are well settled in their secure and orderly environment. Children start school with well-established social skills and readily work co-operatively with each other rather. They take care of their equipment and take pride in their written work. Corporate responsibility is strong and routines are adhered to. Children sustain concentration when working and playing individually and in groups and persevere with their tasks. Opportunities for individual responsibility are too limited. For example, children rarely have the opportunity to "write" freely. Equipment is usually chosen for children to use so consequently they do not develop their independence and initiative by sometimes choosing for themselves.

Language and literacy

46. Children have good speaking and listening skills. They communicate clearly, answer questions and make comments using full sentences. They often extend their speech with appropriate descriptive words. In a combined science and art lesson children described a picture of a large wave as a spiral and "like a bird's mouth". In a music lesson, one child described the cymbal at the end of a group composition as "a big bang when the wave crashes on a rock". In the same lesson the children used good technical vocabulary when they named instruments and described sounds. They listened very carefully and echoed the rhythms of syllables in words. Children listen in silence when required and interpret what they hear. Using role-play in a literacy lesson, children devised a story about a fairy and all in the group took part. Most children, with help, follow the story in the shared texts in their literacy lessons. Most identify the initial sound of a word and some know sounds with more than one letter, for example "sh" in "shop". Children are systematically taught writing skills. They learn to form their letters carefully, position words accurately on the page and spell simple words. They practise their letter formation regularly and their handwriting is reasonably accurate. Most use upper and lower case letters appropriately when copying their teacher's writing. High attaining children write several simple sentences. All have a good attempt at writing their own names. Groups of children are set different targets for their writing based on the teachers' expectations for the group. Their schoolwork is extended in homework that helps their reading. There were no examples in children's work of them having the opportunity to experiment with writing. All the work starts from a teacher-directed stimulus.

Mathematics

47. Most children make satisfactory progress in their recognition of written numerals and matching them to the correct number of objects. In one lesson high attaining children were adding pairs of numbers to make 10. Some add three numbers to make 10. Several manage these tasks easily and should be applying their skills to higher numbers and more complex processes. They have explored patterns of 15 and subtracted numbers from 20. They find "hidden" numbers, for example $5 + \square = 9$, solve money problems and find patterns of 2. Most children understand the symbols =, - and + and write number stories to record their calculations. Lower-attaining pupils do not yet have secure ordering skills and are unsure of the order of numbers to 10. One or two do not count accurately beyond 3. These children do not make as much progress as their peers because they need more opportunities for practical activities to help establish a secure understanding of the relationship between objects and numbers. The teaching consolidates the children's mental arithmetic skills at the beginning of numeracy lessons. Their mathematical vocabulary is developed well and they are suitably encouraged to predict outcomes, for example, when passing "Ridge Rabbit" round a circle of children the teacher asks "Who thinks they will be number 10?" as each pass is counted.
48. Other aspects of mathematics are promoted through practical work and recorded in children's books. Children compare size, shape, weight and position. They use a good mathematical vocabulary. However, there are too few opportunities for them to select their own equipment or the methods they use. A group of children were asked to add 1 more to a selection of numbers up to 10. They were told to use beads and laces and draw the result. Most could calculate this mentally and were capable of more challenge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

49. Children have a sound general knowledge and understanding of the world about them. The series of topics covered in their first year of school provides them with an appropriate range of experiences. They have discovered which materials float and have sorted sets of hard and soft materials. They have matched words to objects connected with the seaside. They have made detailed observations of their own faces studied in mirrors, identify the differences between babies and children and label the major parts of the body. Children know which parts of their bodies are responsible for enabling them to use their senses, and the food they need to keep them healthy. Their attainment in this aspect of their learning is average but their information and communications technology skills are good. They log on competently and use the keyboard and mouse confidently when using particular programs. This good progress is due to the effective specialist teaching in the computer suite.

Physical development

50. Children's physical development is in line with expectations for their age. They manipulate pencils and crayons well and use paint and glue carefully. When making sand pictures, children scattered the grains with precision. Musical instruments are controlled well. In their physical education lesson, the children catch the ball with reasonable accuracy, and use space appropriately. In the lesson observed during the inspection the children played with the small apparatus sensibly but they were not given enough help to improve their throwing and catching. There are very few opportunities for children to use large apparatus for climbing and balancing. The outside area attached to the class is very small and there is no permanent large

apparatus for the children to use. They occasionally have access to the toddler group's equipment and use the kindergarten play area.

Creative development

51. The reception classroom contains attractive displays of whole class artwork. In the corner an attractive seaside collage acts as a backdrop for the display of seaside artefacts. Children use paint with care and most paint recognisable forms. The children's creative development is in line with the expectations for their age. Their musical development is good. When working in groups with an adult, they create effective compositions to represent the sea, gradually increasing or decreasing the volume or speed in response to the adult's prompts. Children respond to the sounds they hear, often going beyond a description of a sound to a comparison with other sounds and even how it makes them feel. Almost all children clap the rhythm of "sea-shells", "don-key-rides" and "sun-tan-lotion" accurately. In a literacy lesson children joined in with the growls of the wolf and their faces reflected the happy and angry aspects in the story. They sing simple songs and nursery rhymes and join in the actions. Opportunities to extend their imagination independently are too few. Their artwork is very structured and they do not have daily access to painting activities and resources.
52. The provision for children under five was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. It has improved considerably. Planning is more appropriate and caters for those children who are ready for the National Curriculum. The teaching is satisfactory overall and there is a clear policy for the introduction of the Foundation Stage that starts in September. Children make satisfactory overall progress throughout the reception year. Teachers assess the children's attainment in English and mathematics and this influences the groups the children work in. There is now a need to provide more opportunities for children to learn independently.

ENGLISH

53. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven the school's average points score was broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing. When compared with similar schools the performance in reading was below average and in writing it was average. Inspection evidence and the unvalidated most recent test results indicate that standards have improved in reading and remained constant for writing. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was close to the national average in reading and above average in writing. Girls' achievement was significantly higher than that of the boys. These standards are consistent with those achieved in the previous inspection. The current pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in English overall. In the 1999 tests for pupils aged eleven the school's average points score in English was above average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. There has been a continuing improvement over the past three years. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level of attainment was in line with the national average. The performance of boys was above that of the girls. These standards show an improvement since the previous inspection. The current pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in English overall.
54. In all year groups pupils make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills and by the ages of seven and eleven attainment is good. Pupils in Year 1 explained with accuracy that plucking, banging and scraping actions could produce sound on a variety of instruments. In Year 2 pupils included detail in their discussion

of "I Know" by Bel Mooney and talked well about the humour of Roald Dahl's Magic Finger. They are confident speakers. In Year 6 the pupils showed maturity in their analysis of "The Listener" by Walter de la Mare. They showed a good understanding of technical vocabulary and were able to provide examples of imagery, alliteration, metaphor, simile and emotion within the poem. At the same time other pupils were expressing their emotions and feelings when studying the art of Andy Goldsworthy.

55. Infant pupils make satisfactory overall progress in reading and attainment is average by the age of seven. Progress in Year 1 is good as a result of the successful application of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils read with accuracy and enjoyment. They make use of a range of strategies, including recognising letter sounds, to assist with reading unfamiliar words. They particularly enjoyed comparing two versions of Three Little Pigs. In Year 2 many pupils make good progress but the high attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged in the literacy lesson observed and therefore did not make the progress of which they are capable. Year 2 pupils are beginning to locate information by using their alphabetical knowledge. Many understand the purpose of, and use, contents, indexes, and glossaries. They discuss their favourite books with clarity and give reasons for their choices along with episodes from the story to illustrate the reasons. Junior pupils continue to improve their accuracy and fluency and by the age of eleven pupils select features of text to explain their ideas and use inference and deduction confidently. They employ the appropriate skills in analysing and investigating text for character, purpose and plot. High attaining pupils, aided by very careful and skilled questioning by the teacher, identified elements such as movement, imagery, language structure, emotion (words such as "eerie" and "lonely" were described as surreal by one pupil) and response, in their analysis of "The Listener" by Walter de la Mare. They have appropriate library skills and they carry out independent research to extend their knowledge and understanding. They are very successful in using information retrieved by electronic means.
56. Infant pupils make satisfactory overall progress in writing and attainment is average by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress and high attaining pupils are beginning to write in complete sentences with competent use of capital letters and full stops when recalling the story of the Three Little Pigs. They employ a wide range of interesting vocabulary. Infant pupils are provided with a wide range of writing experiences. By the end of the infant years most pupils' writing is suitably organised, imaginative and clear. Their ideas are competently developed in a sequence of sentences when presenting their research into their favourite author and their letter of apology to the Three Bears from Goldilocks. Words in their poems are chosen for variety and interest. Junior pupils make good progress. They plan, draft and use dictionaries to aid the editing of their work. In Year 3 pupils chose words for interest and effect when preparing their sequence of sentences inspired by Simon James' "Dear Greenpeace". They included information about the author gathered from his web site. The presentation of work in Year 4 is of a consistently high quality. Pupils' "Summer Cinquain" poems contained interesting and imaginative vocabulary. Precise instructions were given to construct an Origami envelope and lively and thoughtful words were chosen for effect in the discussions for and against zoos. In Year 5 pupils are beginning to use appropriate connectives to produce more complex sentences. They employed good planning techniques when preparing their play scripts. Their "Tyger" poems, after William Blake, contained an adventurous choice of words. In Year 6 research skills are well developed in the pupils' commentary on the pros and cons of fox hunting. More able pupils are producing work that is varied and interesting, taking into account the proposed audience. This was evident in their comparison of two works by Robert Westall and

their descriptions of four paintings included in the Images of Women in Art Exhibition (a National Gallery project). In infant and junior classes pupils have good opportunities to write in other subjects. For example, in science pupils record their observations in note form and also write their own accounts of scientific experiments. Throughout the school standards of presentation are erratic. Handwriting is taught as a discrete subject and on a regular basis but its effect on handwriting in other areas of the curriculum is not consistent.

57. The National Literacy Strategy is well managed and delivered. The school has appreciated the need to ensure that pupils have the appropriate subject specific vocabulary and are able to express their thoughts in complete sentences; it employs strategies to reinforce these skills in all lessons. The structured approach to the teaching of reading is having a positive influence on the pupils' critical abilities. Their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar enhances their written work and they make good use of dictionaries. Opportunities have been identified to provide the pupils with the appropriate vocabulary and extended writing experiences across the whole curriculum.
58. Pupils enjoy the Literacy Hour. They persevere and concentrate well to improve their work. They are well behaved and respond well to challenging work. Relationships are good and pupils value the support they receive from their teachers. They respond well to praise, collaborate well within their groups and are keen to evaluate and improve their work. There is mutual respect and trust and pupils are quick to appreciate the efforts of others.
59. The overall quality of teaching is good. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson. The teaching was very good or better in half of the lessons in the juniors. In all lessons the planning is good, learning objectives are specific and clearly identified and shared with the pupils. Usually, teachers take care to plan tasks that meet the range of pupils' prior attainment. Tasks for pupils with special educational needs are carefully matched to individual education plans enabling them to make good progress. Assessment information successfully supports the teachers' planning and ensures that medium term plans are relevant to the pupils' needs. Teachers encourage pupils to contribute to class discussions and they structure their questions to enable all pupils to participate and succeed. This was exemplified in an excellent lesson in Year 6 when the teacher linked pupils' discussion of emotion in poetry with their views on the work of the artist Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed and this is implicit in the busy working atmosphere evident in classes and the good standards of behaviour. Teachers show respect for the pupils' contributions to lessons and value their efforts. Effective classroom organisation and management enable pupils to move easily from whole class to group activities. Where teaching is of a very high standard expectations are high, subject knowledge is very good, questioning is skilful, praise is used to good effect and pupils make very good progress. The end of most lesson plenaries reinforces and extends the pupils' learning well and sets clear objectives for the next lesson. Homework is used appropriately to support the pupils' learning and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. In the one lesson where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory there was insufficient challenge for the high attaining pupils and consequently they did not make the progress of which they were capable.
60. Curricular planning is of very good quality. Structured subject guidance ensures progression in learning and supports teachers well in their lesson planning. Planning ensures that pupils have a broad range of experiences that are well linked to other subjects. Planning for the literacy hour is detailed and very thorough and provides a

secure framework for developing the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, in the unsatisfactory lesson planning was not implemented as well as it could have been. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. The results of national and school-administered tests are carefully analysed to provide information to identify priorities for the subject's action plans and to support future planning and teaching. Teachers maintain detailed records of pupils' results and progress, and use these to group pupils appropriately. Marking supports the pupils' learning and targets for improvement are agreed on a termly basis. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning are very secure and provide useful information that teachers share as a team and use to refine their skills.

61. The co-ordinator and headteacher have made good contributions to leading and managing the subject and to the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching teams meet regularly to plan units of work and the co-ordinator has regular access to the teachers' planning. In addition, lessons are monitored and teachers take an active role in the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning together with the co-ordinator and headteacher. These initiatives have a positive effect on school improvement and lead to a clear rationale for target setting.
62. Resources are of good quality and are generally sufficient in number to support the delivery of the whole curriculum. Book provision has improved since the last inspection. The library, though restricted in size, is being well developed with the librarian playing an active part in developing the pupils' library skills. An electronic loan system is being introduced and will be an extension of the library monitors' activities. The books are monitored for their quality and for their value in supporting the curriculum and the pupils' interests.

MATHEMATICS

63. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the average points score for pupils aged seven was well below the average for all schools and had fallen from the average attainment in 1998. Pupils' results were also well below those of pupils in similar schools. Unconfirmed results from the most recent tests indicate an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the better level 2 grades but the number of pupils achieving level 3 is still well below last year's national results. There is no national data available for this year. Girls have consistently attained higher levels than boys over the last few years. The current pupils in Year 1 make good progress but progress is too slow in Year 2 and overall attainment is broadly below average. In the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds the average points score was above the average for all schools and well above average compared with similar schools. Results rose from below average in 1997 and 1998. Boys have achieved better than girls. The current junior pupils make very good progress especially in Year 6 where the teaching is excellent. Attainment in Year 6 is above average. At the time of the last inspection standards were average at ages seven and eleven.
64. Pupils in Year 1 started the year with attainment levels below the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five. The Year 1 teacher has high expectations of pupils and has set them challenging work throughout the year. Pupils learn different strategies for solving problems and have opportunities to apply them in their work. Pace in the mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of the lesson is very good. The teacher has very good relationships with pupils and good subject expertise. Pupils find the work challenging but also enjoyable. For example, in a very good

lesson a pupil asked what "increase" means. The teacher curled up on the floor with the pupils and then grew in size. He then asked for a guess and a demonstration of the definition of "decrease". At appropriate times during the lesson a quiet "increase" generated an instant response. All understood the term by the end of the lesson!. A part-time teacher works in Year 1 for one morning a week to allow the co-ordinator to work with junior pupils. Her teaching is satisfactory but would be more effective if she had training in the National Numeracy strategy.

65. Progress slows in Year 2 and attainment is below average overall. In much of the work in numeracy too many pupils have not progressed beyond the below average National Curriculum level 1. Also, little of the work demonstrates achievement at an above average level. Most pupils add and subtract mentally within 10 and count up and down in 2s 5s and 10s. Very few have mental recall to 20 and their knowledge and understanding of place value are insecure. Average attainers double numbers using picture prompts and are beginning to double single figures mentally. Some pupils understand that multiplication facts can be reversed. Several pupils are not sure whether to select + or – to solve simple problems. Pupils are beginning to use standard units of measure and display simple data on bar charts. There is little evidence of work in symmetry. High attaining pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their mathematical skills. Pupils' presentation of their work does not progress satisfactorily over time
66. In Year 2, the teaching is shared between two teachers. One teaches a group of pupils of high and average prior attainment and the other teaches a group of average and below average attainment. Pupils in the lowest ability group make good progress in lessons. They have additional support from the classroom assistant and students. The teacher explains things clearly and matches the work to pupils' needs, challenging them appropriately. In one lesson pupils found it difficult to double numbers accurately but were taught how to use different methods to support their calculations. Average attaining pupils in this class were given the challenge of carrying on doubling and halving until they could go no further. They relished the challenge and took pride in their achievements. In the other class the teaching was satisfactory overall but the pace of the lesson was sometimes too slow. The highest attaining pupils wasted some time in undertaking a task that was too easy for them. Both teachers ensure that mathematical language is used appropriately during lessons. Throughout the infants pupils with special needs are given appropriate support but some targets in their individual education plans are very general and do not provide the small steps in learning to enable them to make more speedy progress
67. In three-quarters of the lessons in the juniors the teaching is very good and in Year 6 it is excellent. This very good teaching has a major impact on the pupils' achievements and the way they learn. They make very good progress, raising their attainment from below average to above average from Year 3 to Year 6. All the teachers have high expectations of their pupils, challenging and supporting when appropriate. Some pupils in Year 6, while exploring the properties of angles in regular shapes, including exterior angles, looked for equivalent and alternate angles in dissected parallel lines and calculated the angles based on their knowledge of angles of a straight line. This is GCSE work, well within level 6 of the National Curriculum. All pupils in the class calculate the fourth angle of a quadrilateral and the third angle of a triangle. They measure angles accurately, most within 1 degree, all within 5 degrees. They use protractors accurately, and, by estimating the rough size of the angle they are measuring, read the correct scale. The work in the books of the majority of the pupils contains work in all aspects of mathematics within the

above average Level 5 of the National Curriculum. Pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages accurately, converting from one to another. They use formulae for calculating, for example, the area of a triangle, and ratios for increasing and decreasing statistical data or shapes. Pupils understand and use statistical language, finding the mean and average of data. They construct different types of graphs, including those that record continuous data. For example, most have constructed a graph to convert metric to imperial units or temperature scales. Very few pupils are not working within Level 4. Teachers throughout the juniors have similar expectations of their pupils. For example, some pupils in Year 4 have completed work that has elements of Level 4. They have solved problems involving fractions of weight and find equivalent fractions such as $\frac{1}{3} = \frac{9}{27}$. Low-attaining pupils and those with special needs make good progress. Work is matched to their abilities and they have good support from their teachers. All teachers have good subject knowledge and plenty of enthusiasm. Pupils respond with commitment to their tasks and very good pace. Their work is presented well, homework is completed and corrections done.

68. The quality of the teachers' marking varies throughout the school. At its best it gives clear guidance for improving the work as well as comments about how pupils have achieved the tasks. All pupils have the yearly targets for mathematics at the beginning of their exercise books. The policy is that individual pupils have their own targets to work towards. This is not applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils are not yet involved in setting their own targets. Pupils' progress is monitored throughout the school with regular standard tests and teachers are beginning to analyse these results to identify where there are weaknesses in pupils' learning. Targets for eleven-year-olds are based on the non-statutory Year 5 tests. However, the Year 6 teacher has set more challenging targets for her pupils, which has raised attainment beyond the initial expectations. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and generally, numeracy is promoted well throughout the curriculum. In Year 3, for example, pupils measure temperature in geography. Year 6 pupils have constructed mileage and time charts for aircraft flying to holiday destinations. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 use co-ordinates for mapping. The very good, and sometimes excellent teaching, and the additional numeracy support, including that provided by the mathematics co-ordinator, have resulted in considerable improvement since the last inspection. However, standards in the infants have fallen because expectations of pupils' achievements in Year 2, especially for those with average and above average attainment, are not high enough.

SCIENCE

69. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged eleven the school's average score was above the average for all and similar schools. Results were better than in 1998. Boys performed better than girls. The current Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average and higher than at the time of the last inspection. According to teachers' assessments in 1999, the percentage of pupils aged seven who achieved the expected level 2 or higher was well below average. The current pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards and these are similar to those in the last inspection.
70. Infant pupils make satisfactory overall progress. Pupils in Year 1 successfully use a range of instruments to identify sounds from a range of sources and record their results competently in tabular form. They make good attempts to describe what happens when objects are pushed or pulled. They also identify living and non-living things. Standards in Year 2 are average. Pupils name a range of materials, including brick, plastic, wood and wool, and describe differences and similarities between them. They know the basic conditions needed for seeds to grow and have observed and recorded the growth of sunflowers. Some of their work includes prediction, for example, what would be the best conditions for growing cress. They accurately explain how to light a bulb in a simple electrical circuit. Year 2 pupils talk well about their work but find it difficult to explain what constitutes a fair test. Their work indicates that they are rarely set challenges at an above average level,
71. Junior pupils make good progress and consequently by the end of the juniors attainment is above average. In the lesson observed in Year 4 progress was very good. Pupils throughout the juniors undertake a good range of investigative work. Year 3 pupils identify which materials will change and whether the changes can be reversed. They know which substances will dissolve. They accurately name different sources of light and describe the functions of switches in an electrical circuit. Their work on the Earth and beyond is good. In a lesson on the sun pupils gave clear explanations of "orbit". Pupils in Year 4 achieve especially well in their work on life processes and living things. They have good knowledge of different habitats and sort living things systematically, for example, creatures with shells or with no shells. They test their predictions whether wood lice prefer damp conditions and also predict which way roots will grow in a controlled experiment. In a very good lesson they made rapid progress in their understanding of the functions of parts of a flower because of the very good teaching. Year 5 pupils predict and interpret their results on testing for evaporation and condensation. In a good lesson they improved their knowledge of food chains. Much of the work in Year 6 shows attainment at an above average level and discussion with a representative group of pupils confirmed their good knowledge and understanding. They give good accounts of experiments they have undertaken including separation of mixtures of materials and identify differences between solids, liquids and gasses. Pupils have good knowledge of the functions of human organs. In a good lesson on health they showed mature awareness of the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Their knowledge of plants is also good and some pupils make good attempts to explain photosynthesis. Several pupils give good explanations of balanced and unbalanced forces. Junior pupils record their results of investigative work in a number of ways including good written interpretations.
72. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and often very good. Usually, they work hard and safely. In the very good lesson in Year 4 pupils' attitudes and behaviour were excellent and contributed significantly to their very good learning in their study of plants.

73. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Lessons are largely well planned and have clear learning objectives. In the best of the teaching the teachers' subject knowledge is good, expectations are high, and questioning is skilful. Appropriate scientific terminology is also used. In Year 4 the teacher's well-focused questions on the function of different parts of flowers helped pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of living things. In the same lesson, very clear explanations of processes such as plant reproduction captured pupils' interest very well. In most lessons pupils are managed well. In Year 6, pupils were managed very well in a potentially sensitive discussion on the effects of drugs on human health. Much of the pace of teaching is brisk especially at the beginning of lessons when the teacher is addressing the whole class. On a few occasions teachers found it difficult to sustain pupils' interest throughout lessons because they were too long. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent. The best of the marking not only praises pupils but also suggests how they might improve but this is not consistent practice.
74. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and has a good overview of the school's work. She monitors the planning and has undertaken some useful observations of lessons. More thorough monitoring of teaching and learning is needed in the infant classes to help raise standards above the average.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. Only one lesson was observed. A scrutiny of infant pupils' work indicates that progress in art is satisfactory and attainment by the age seven is average. There is some good work in Year 1. The amount of Year 6 pupils' work available for scrutiny was very limited and there was not enough to make an overall judgement on standards. Overall, the amount of junior pupils' artwork on display was small. There are examples of pupils' work collected in large folders but these are generally not dated and are often in a dog-eared condition. The quality of work observed is broadly average but there is some good work in Year 4. There was not enough evidence of design and technology to evaluate progress and standards throughout the school. Standards in both subjects are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
76. Pupils in Year 1 have painted colourful pictures of the "very hungry caterpillar". In their work on "warm" and "cool" colours they have produced expressive pictures after looking at pictures by Turner and Gauguin. Paint has been mixed and applied well in pictures based on the work of Lowry and Cezanne. Their observational drawings of objects are good. In Year 2, pupils use a satisfactory range of media to paint, draw, print and create collage. Good coil pots and tiles have been made in clay. Competent skills are shown in pupils' attempts to paint in the style of Seurat and their printing based on the work of William Morris. Pupils in Year 3 have created interesting and careful paper mosaics. Year 4 pupils show good use of colour in their paintings of light sources. Self portraits and portraits of Henry VIII's wives are good. Pupils have used fabric crayons well in their designs of T-shirts. Sketchbooks are being used well in Year 4 and include helpful teacher's comments, for example, "good shape of landscape, try next time to add more detail". Pupils in Year 5 have satisfactorily designed, made and evaluated glove puppets. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicates that they are developing their knowledge of the lives and techniques of several artists. They have recently produced work based on the art of Andy Goldsworthy and in the only art lesson observed they used a range of media to paint

in the style of Frida Kahlo. Good displays of artists' work are contributing to Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding.

77. In the one lesson observed, the teaching was good. The discussion on the artist's work was well managed and pupils responded well to choosing which media to use. The teacher gave helpful feedback on pupils' efforts. The pupils showed good attitudes and behaved well.
78. The co-ordinator for art is relatively inexperienced but has good ideas on how to raise the subjects' profile. Resources for three-dimensional work are too limited and the school's kiln is not in working order.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

79. Only one lesson was observed in geography and two in history. Judgements on standards have been made from the lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils. By the ages of seven and eleven standards are average in both subjects. The evidence for geography in the last inspection was very limited and no evaluation was made of standards by the age of seven. Standards in the lessons seen in the juniors were good. In history standards at age seven were below average and at age eleven they were above average.
80. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both subjects. Infant and junior pupils acquire sound knowledge and understanding of a range of places and compare their own environment with contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and the wider world. For example, in Year 4 pupils are collecting information to enable them to compare Stourbridge with Chembakoli in India. In Year 6 pupils used their mapping skills to locate St Lucia on small scale maps of the world before moving to larger scale maps to discover the physical geography of the island. Pupils in Years 1 and 3 have made useful studies of the locality. Year 1 surveyed the local shops and Year 3 made a physical map of the surrounding locality by observing the area from an advantage point in the school grounds. Pupils are aware of different periods of time such as Ancient Greece, Roman, Viking, Tudor, Civil War and Victorian. They compare and contrast lifestyles of the periods with their own times and relate their feelings about what life would have been like. For example, in Year 3 pupils very ably described the way of life of Viking men and women. They recalled facts about their homes, their clothes and the methods they employed to keep warm. They also speculated on how Vikings would have left information if they had no pens or paper, and suggested they would carve messages in stone. In Year 1 pupils used images of houses on computer to place them in chronological sequence. They gave good reasons why they thought the houses were as old as they had predicted. Later they used this skill to order various artefacts from the past few years, including a cassette recorder, wireless and telephone. Throughout the school pupils use primary and secondary sources of information to find out about the past including enactment by visiting Tudor "ladies" and a Civil War "veteran".
81. Pupils' response to both subjects is good. They are attentive, enthusiastic and often eager to offer opinions based on careful consideration of facts following research. Pupils work well with partners and small groups.

82. The overall quality of teaching was good in the two junior lessons and satisfactory in the one infant lesson. Teachers consolidate previous learning generally well and use appropriate questioning to develop pupils' thinking and knowledge. This was well illustrated in a very good introduction to Year 3's discussion about the Vikings. Appropriate subject terminology is emphasised. In a good geography lesson in Year 6 the teacher very effectively promoted proper geographical terms and vocabulary and gave clear explanations to pupils in order to increase their understanding. Good opportunities for writing are provided in both subjects. Generally, lessons are well organised and learning objectives are shared with the pupils.
83. The co-ordinator for geography is knowledgeable and has reviewed the scheme of work in the light of the new curriculum orders and the needs of the pupils. The co-ordinator effectively monitors and evaluates the planning and teaching. Planning is good. The leadership and management of history are good. The co-ordinator has identified areas for development and has clear plans to bring them about. The school has prepared a new grid for learning for September 2000 that will provide more focus on key skills. Elements of the scheme of work are being monitored effectively this term. The quality of planning and teaching is monitored by the co-ordinator and enables good practice to be shared with the whole staff.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils throughout the school are regularly and systematically taught information and communications technology in a computer suite. All classrooms are also equipped with computers. The direct teaching of key skills is ensuring that pupils make good progress and by the ages of seven and eleven standards are above average. Standards are better than at the time of the last inspection.
85. Although pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 were not observed in the computer suite the co-ordinators' records indicate that work covered builds upon the good standards in the reception. Infant pupils gain confidence in the basic operations of using the keyboard and mouse. They develop their word processing skills and know how to change the size of fonts. They also know how to save and retrieve their work. Year 2 pupils have learned how to log on and have sent e-mails to their friends sitting near to them. They use functions such as clip art and have also used the talking Textease programme. Year 2 pupils talk well about how they use the computer.
86. Junior pupils make good progress over time and in the lessons observed in Year 3, Year 5 and Year 6 progress was also good. Pupils are developing increasing confidence and independence in using hardware and software. They have good awareness of the importance of technology in every day life. Pupils' use and understanding of appropriate terminology are good. All pupils have been taught to use the Internet and e-mail. In a good lesson in Year 3 pupils worked in pairs to construct and send e-mail messages to their friends. They showed growing fluency in the use of the computer's features such as icons and menu. Pupils in Year 5 accurately controlled devices when they used the "Crystal Rainforest" programme. They also made sensible predictions of the consequences of their decisions in the simulation exercise. In a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils used the Internet to find out a range of information about the "Harry Potter" books. They worked in two groups formed according to their prior attainment. One group used the search engine quickly, selected the information they needed, and then cut and pasted it into their own devised format. The other group, after researching for information, used a publishing programme to design a page in which they stated the case for or against

reading Harry Potter books. Pupils knew the computer applications well, showed good word processing and publishing skills and worked speedily. Their good progress was aided by very good teaching. Some Year 6 pupils talked about the limitations of CD-ROM in comparison with using the Internet!

87. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject and enjoy their lessons. They work very well together and behave well. They eagerly give advice to their classmates when they spot they need help.
88. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Pupils are taught key skills thoroughly and lessons are well planned. The computer suite is too small to accommodate all pupils from a single class and so the adjacent library has to be used also. Despite its disadvantages this arrangement is managed well. In the very good lesson in Year 6 the tasks in the computer suite were challenging, instructions were very clear and the help given during the activity was very purposeful. Consequently all pupils made good progress.
89. The school is well equipped for work in information and communications technology and uses its facilities well. The co-ordinator runs a weekly computer club and this enhances pupils' learning. A good record of what is taught is maintained and plans for further assessing pupils' progress are appropriate.

MUSIC

90. Few music lessons were observed during the inspection but in the work seen standards were at least average. There was not enough evidence to evaluate overall attainment by the ages of seven and eleven. The school's scheme of work places the emphasis on composing and performing and pupils have well-established routines for working together to create music and evaluating each other's work. Children in the reception class play instruments very well controlling them to play loudly and softly, quickly and slowly. Pupils in Year 4 read standard notation to identify beats and rests. They maintain steady complex rhythms with at least four different parts to accompany Greek music. In a good lesson in Year 4 the music co-ordinator gave pupils clear criteria for listening to and evaluating taped music. She reminded them of the musical elements of pace and structure and expected pupils to use them when evaluating the music. The targets for the lesson were clear from the beginning and pupils measured their progress towards these targets at the end of the lesson. The next week's targets were shared with the pupils. Pupils worked very hard and produced a high level of performance. Year 5 pupils listened to the opening few bars of the theme from "Close Encounters" and then composed their own dramatic sequence concentrating on dynamics and timbre. Unfortunately, too much time was spent discussing the recording and very little time was left for pupils' own composition. It was surprising how much was achieved when the teacher told them they only had one minute left.
91. The school choir, consisting of about forty junior pupils sings very well. Pupils are trained by the peripatetic music teacher and are performing in joint schools' performance in Dudley castle. They sing songs with confidence and skill. Their voices reflect the mood of the music and their faces echo the emotion in the words, "Here, carved on this stone, one name alone, an infant daughter lies". The choir sings in three parts confidently and tunefully even though a part sometimes has a difficult melody line.

92. The school's provision for music is good. At least 55 pupils have instrumental tuition and they play brass instruments, violins, woodwind and guitars. Pupils take part in musical events regularly, including the Ridgeway Festival, the Stourbridge Festival, and the Dudley Music Festival. The school performed for the Merry Hill video of Song and Dance. There is a recorder club open to infant pupils. Instrumental tuition observed during the inspection was good and helped pupils to make good progress. Pupils make good progress in music and standards have improved since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

93. Lessons were observed in games and dance. In the work observed in Year 2 standards were average and in Year 6 they were above average. In other lessons standards were average overall. Generally, standards have improved since the last inspection.
94. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in sending and receiving a ball. They make good use of space in the warm-up at the start of the lesson and they work co-operatively in pairs and small groups. They make some improvements in the accuracy of striking a ball. In Year 2, pupils' skills in throwing and catching a ball, and using a small racket, are average. Pupils generally behave well and try hard. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils produced a good range of different sequences of movement and refined their movements as the lesson progressed. In a very good dance lesson in Year 6, after watching video footage of professional dancers, pupils made good attempts to move in unison and then worked in small groups to devise movements in response to music. Ideas were good and pupils co-operated well.
95. Generally, pupils have good attitudes towards the subject, work safely and listen carefully to instructions. They respond particularly well to opportunities to evaluate their performance.
96. The teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent and is good overall. In the good and better teaching, expectations are high and teachers focus well on improving pupils' performance. For example, in Year 6 the teacher used video footage of professional dancers very effectively to heighten pupils' awareness of dance techniques. She introduced them to "ensemble" and "canon". In Year 4 the teacher's management of pupils was calm and purposeful and she gave very useful advice on how pupils could improve. In the one unsatisfactory lesson pupils did not learn enough because they were not well managed.
97. The curriculum for physical education is enhanced well by a range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The school participates in several tournaments and sporting events. Swimming was not observed during the inspection. All pupils are taught swimming when they are in Year 3. The co-ordinator has produced a comprehensive scheme of work since the last inspection and has therefore helped improve provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

98. The scheme of work is comprehensive and firmly rooted in the Dudley Agreed Syllabus. Standards by the ages of seven and eleven are above average. Pupils study Christianity and Islam in the infants and continue these studies, adding

Judaism, in the juniors. Pupils have a thorough understanding of these religions and identify similarities and differences between them. Throughout the school they develop an awareness of symbols of faith, the rules that govern the lives of the faithful and aspects of prayer and worship. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

99. Infant pupils learn about some of the famous stories from the Bible, Christian and Muslim prayer, special things and the Holy Books of both faiths. They compare aspects of the Qur'an and the Bible and the major festivals of both religions. In a lesson during the inspection pupils were asked to describe the feelings they had when in a spiritual or religious environment. Although this was a difficult task the pupils tried very hard and the lesson contained some mature discussion. It was evident that the pupils had a good knowledge of the inside of a church, naming the altar and the font. Pupils in Year 2 have been studying christenings and make good attempts to explain the symbolism of the service.
100. In Year 3 pupils have a knowledge of the plagues of Egypt and their impact that would do credit to much older pupils. They know that the Pharaoh kept changing his mind. Pupils have a good knowledge of Judaism, using technical words like "Kosher" and the "Torah". They listened, with some foreknowledge, to the story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the whole class joined in a mature discussion about the meaning behind the rules. Pupils then arranged the commandments in their own personal order of importance and gave their reasons. All participated well in the discussion and the task. By Year 5 pupils understand that there are aspects of some religions that are echoed in others. Pupils know that Gabriel was a messenger to Mohammed as well as to Mary. The pupils are taught about the traditions of Islamic prayer and that Muslims perform Wudu. One pupil asked if this was one of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, putting the teacher on the spot! The teacher made good use of artefacts, including a prayer mat, to support the lesson. There were good gains in learning through the discussion and lively debate. The Year 6 pupils' books have evidence of the exploration of the meanings of religious faith. Their teacher's marking is very good and sets further challenges with comments such as "You might like to research into a Bar Mitzvah."
101. Few lessons were observed during the inspection. The teaching was at least sound and it was good in the juniors. A strength of the teaching is the use of discussion and debate to explore the significance of religious faith. All the teachers had very good relationships with their pupils. They inspire confidence and trust and this helps pupils' confidence when they express their thoughts and opinions. All teachers follow the scheme of work and they plan their lessons carefully. Visits to local places of worship and visitors to school enhance the curriculum. For example, members of the Hindu community helped the school celebrate Diwali.