

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COTWALL END PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sedgley, Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 332213

Headteacher: Mr K Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Jolly  
8750

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Inspection number: 192005

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Infant and Junior                                      |
| School category:             | Community  |
| Age range of pupils:         | 5 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| School address:              | Cotwall End Road<br>Sedgley<br>Dudley<br>West Midlands |
| Postcode:                    | DY3 3YG  |
| Telephone number:            | 01384 818730   |
| Fax number:                  | 01384 818731   |
| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body                                     |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr J Miller  |
| Date of previous inspection: | January, 1997  |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members  |                      | Subject responsibilities        | Aspect responsibilities  |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Mr A C Jolly  | Registered inspector | English                         | <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> |
| Mr R Jones    | Lay Inspector        |                                 | <p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>                      |
| Mrs S Barnes  | Team Inspector       | Science                         | How well is the school led and managed?  |
| Mrs C Bond    | Team Inspector       | Design and technology, Music    | Special educational needs.   |
| Mr C Edwards  | Team Inspector       | Mathematics, Physical education |  |
| Mr A Evans    | Team Inspector       | Geography, History              | <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p> <p>Equal opportunities.</p>  |
| Mrs M Hirst   | Team inspector       | Information technology          | Provision for the under-fives.   |
| Mrs J Radford | Team Inspector       | Religious education, Art        |  |

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Inspection Quality Division  
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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cotwall End Primary School, which is situated in Sedgley near Dudley in the West Midlands, provides education for 454 pupils. Pupils are admitted to the school in the term they are five and leave at the age of 11. It is a large school compared to most primary schools. There are eighteen pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but none for whom English is an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is above average for the Local Education Authority.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Cotwall End Primary School has a number of strengths. The pupils receive a rich and relevant curriculum, especially in the arts and humanities, and their personal development is very good. The teaching is generally good. The school is soundly managed and co-ordinators give consistently good leadership so that standards in most subjects are good by the end of Key Stage 2. However, in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, while overall standards are in all cases at or above those found nationally, a significant proportion of pupils are not challenged enough to reach their full potential. Overall the school provides sound value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve well in English at the age of 11.
- Standards in history and geography are good.
- Standards in art and music are good.
- The curriculum provides rich and diverse opportunities and the range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- The provision for pupils' moral, spiritual, cultural and social development is very good.
- Provision in reception is good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The match of work for and expectations of able pupils.
- The consistency of homework arrangements.
- The development of the pupils' skills in scientific testing.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then the quality of school development planning and the level of governor involvement have improved. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved markedly and is now a significant strength rather than a weakness. The quality of teaching has also improved in that instances of unsatisfactory teaching are now relatively rare.

Standards have remained good in most subjects. The school has revised its aims to include reference to academic standards. However, although monitoring procedures have been introduced, they are insufficiently rigorous. There are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment in order to raise their level of understanding in science. Therefore, overall the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last report.

## STANDARDS

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

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

| Key                       |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Well above average</i> | A |
| <i>Above average</i>      | B |
| <i>Average</i>            | C |
| <i>Below average</i>      | D |
| <i>Well below average</i> | E |

The table shows that the school compares well with schools nationally, especially in English, but less well with schools in similarly favoured circumstances. The latter comparison must be treated with caution because there are signs the school's intake is not wholly typical of this favoured group.

The test results at Key Stage 2 have fluctuated. Currently they demonstrate the good standards in English, in particular, and these were confirmed by the inspection findings.

In Key Stage 1 results have also been variable but have broadly followed the national trend of improvement since the last report. The last test results showed standards in writing and mathematics to be above average and standards in reading to be average compared to schools nationally. Last year's test results for writing was average when compared with similar schools but well below average in mathematics and reading.

The school's targets for English and mathematics in 2000 and 2001 have already been exceeded and are in need of revision if they are to offer any challenge.

The work seen showed that standards are good overall. Standards are average throughout the school in information technology, religious education, design and technology and physical education. Standards are good in history, geography, art and music. However a significant proportion of pupils, particularly able pupils in Key Stage 1, do not achieve the standards in English, mathematics and science, that might be expected.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Pupils are keen to come to school and participate enthusiastically in lessons and other activities.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils take full advantage of the very good opportunities the school offers for them to develop as individuals. Relationships are very good. |
| Attendance                             | Levels of attendance are well above the national average.  |



Pupils' attitudes and values are a credit to the school. Relationships are particularly good at all levels.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

94 per cent of teaching was sound or better and 6 per cent was unsatisfactory. 30 per cent of teaching was very good or excellent.

The teaching of English in Key Stage 1 and mathematics throughout the school is sound. The teaching of English is good in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where it is often very good. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught soundly and the teaching meets the needs of all pupils, except more able pupils in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 who make insufficient progress in their learning. The best teaching is in reception and Year 5, where teachers have high expectations of the pupils and consequently they achieved well.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The school provides a broad, balanced curriculum with a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities.                       |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | This is a marked strength of the school and the very good standard reflects the significant improvement since the last report. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school provides a safe and caring environment for the pupils. Assessment is generally sound.                               |

The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. The school works effectively with parents, who are well informed and involved in their children's learning. Systems for monitoring and promoting appropriate behaviour and attendance are particularly good.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect         | Comment  |
|----------------|--|
| Leadership and | The headteacher and senior management team provide sound, caring |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| management by the headteacher and other key staff    | leadership of the school and are particularly well supported by subject co-ordinators.                               |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance           | The school has evaluated satisfactorily its own performance but does not act sufficiently on the information gained. |
| The strategic use of resources                       | The school makes good use of its resources.  |

The school has good accommodation and resources. The staff are very hard working and well-motivated. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

| <b>What pleases parents most</b>  | <b>What parents would like to see improved</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• They would be comfortable raising any issue or concern.</li> <li>• The standard of pupils' behaviour.</li> <li>• The quality of information they receive from school.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right amount of homework</li> <li>• Reduce the number of occasions when physical education lessons are cancelled.</li> </ul> |

The inspectors agreed with the generally positive views expressed. Pupils and teachers confirmed that physical education lessons had sometimes been cancelled over the last year and inspectors judged that the subject is currently under emphasised. While there are some examples of homework being used effectively, the practice is inconsistent across the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The results from the Baseline Tests make clear that overall attainment on entry to the school is above the Local Education Authority average. Pupils do particularly well in reception and standards are good.
2. The most recent National Curriculum test results show that the oldest pupils normally reach above average standards in English and science and average standards in mathematics. However, if results are compared with those of schools in areas with similar socio-economic characteristics, the school appears to do less well, especially in mathematics and science. Although there are reasons why not too much reliance can be put on the comparison, neither can it be discounted. The inspection concluded that overall results could be higher for these subjects and the main factor depressing them is that the more able pupils, of whom there are many, do not reach their full potential. Expectations of what they might achieve are not high enough and consequently the work set them is often not accurately matched to their needs.
3. This is not a problem just for Key Stage 2. There is a similar pattern in the results of Key Stage 1. In fact the work seen indicated that progress of able pupils and, to a lesser degree, that of pupils generally, is slower from Years 1 to 4 and speeds up notably in Years 5 and 6. At Key Stage 1 the standards were shown by the tests to be best in writing and mathematics and less good in reading, though in no case were results lower than the national average.
4. At Key Stage 1 standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education and information technology are average. The achievements of the pupils are lower than might be expected given the good start made in the reception classes and the above average attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Standards in design and technology are sound. Pupils attainment is better in English as they progress through Key Stage 2 to reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. Standards in mathematics, science and information technology are average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are also in line in religious education and physical education.
5. Standards in the other subjects are impressive. The school has still provided a wide, balanced, curriculum, even though statutory requirements have been relaxed for the coverage of the Programmes of Study. Standards are good in geography, history, music and art. Standards in design and technology are sound.
6. Standards overall have maintained the levels of the last report. Standards have fallen in reading in Key Stage 1 and religious education in Key Stage 2 but they have risen in mathematics, art and history overall.
7. The school has set clear targets and analysed previous data. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well according to their abilities. However, insufficient attention has been given to improving the provision for those pupils identified as underachieving.

#### **PUPIL'S ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

8. In discussions the pupils said that they enjoyed coming to school and their parents confirm this. They show interest in their work and large numbers participate in the extensive range of extra curricular activities offered by the school. They are confident in expressing their

opinions and feelings, talking about issues such as friendship and peer pressure and listening to other pupils' viewpoints.

9. At the time of the previous inspection, behaviour was judged to be generally good and this remains the case. A very substantial majority of parents agree that the school promotes good behaviour. There have been no exclusions in recent years. School property, including a wide variety of items on display, is respected and treated well. Pupils behave well in assemblies, in the dining hall and in other communal situations. As they come into school, they settle quickly into quiet reading and other constructive tasks before registration. Behaviour in classes is also usually good, although in a very small number of lessons there is some noisy and disruptive behaviour when the pace of teaching is less stimulating and challenging.
10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work collaboratively and help each other in lessons on a range of tasks including scientific experiments on air resistance and sending e-mails. Pupils socialise and play well together and the harmonious atmosphere within the school is promoted by the constructive use of praise and encouragement by teachers.
11. The school actively promotes the personal development of pupils by providing many opportunities for them to take on responsibilities as prefects, monitors and librarians. Pupils can also participate in the School Council, which has made decisions on marking out the playground for games and the provision of seating. Their development as individuals is helped effectively by residential visits, community activities and their involvement in charity work.
12. Attendance levels are very good in all year groups and unauthorised absence is well below national averages.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when one fifth of lessons were judged to have unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is now at least sound in almost nineteen out of every twenty lessons.
14. The teaching is at least good in over two-thirds of lessons, and in over one quarter of the total the teaching is very good or excellent. The teaching of the reception pupils is good. In more than one lesson in three in reception the teaching is very good. Pupils respond to the demands made of them by teachers who have a very good knowledge of their needs. Their expectations are high and pupils are consistently well managed.
15. Relationships are good in Key Stage 1 and teachers have effective classroom organisation. Lessons are consistently well planned and support assistants used efficiently. The teaching of the non-core subjects is consistently good and better than it is of English and mathematics.
16. In Years 5 and 6 in Key Stage 2 some of the best teaching takes place where the flair and good planning of teachers takes full advantage of the very good relationships. Thus in a history lesson about the Blitz with Year 6, the teacher made the period come alive by wearing an Air Raid Warden's tin hat, playing appropriate music of the time and giving pupils copies of the 1940 edition of 'The Dudley Herald' newspaper to read and analyse.
17. The level of subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection report and there are no weaknesses. Significant strengths exist in music, art, history and geography that contribute towards the above average standards in those subjects.

18. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally at least sound and often very good in literacy lessons in Years 5 and Years 6 where teachers foster imaginatively key linguistic skills. Teachers' planning is consistently good both for the medium term and daily lessons. Lessons have very clear learning objectives, usually outlined to the pupils at the start of lessons and summed up in the plenary.
19. The main weakness is the teaching of more able pupils. Lessons too often lack the pace, challenge and high expectations needed to ensure those pupils achieve appropriately. This is particularly marked in Key Stage 1 and the early part of Key Stage 2. Although learning was generally sound in the lessons observed, pupils' work indicates that insufficient consolidation takes place of previous learning in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1. Thus the rate of progress is insufficient after the good foundation in the reception classes. It was not possible to observe any science teaching in Key Stage 1, but in English and mathematics the work was insufficiently matched to the needs of able pupils.
20. Parents reported some dissatisfaction with the amount of homework set. The findings of the inspection are that homework arrangements and provision are inconsistent between classes.

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

21. Despite an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics, the school continues to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant to the needs of all the pupils and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The school meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and for religious education. It offers the pupils a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. Forty pupils have instrumental music tuition and there are weekly swimming lessons for the pupils in Year 4. The total weekly teaching time is in line with the national average in both key stages. Weekly teaching times for individual subjects are broadly in line with the national average at both key stages, though there is evidence that time is sometimes taken from physical education to cater for events such as rehearsals for school productions.
22. Each subject has a clear policy and scheme of work. Long, medium and short term planning of the curriculum is very good, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Particular strengths of curricular provision are music, art, history and geography. In addition, the school is a pilot school for the Dudley Grid for Learning and provision for information technology is good.
23. The parents appreciate the range of opportunities that the school provides outside lessons. Indeed, this continues to be a strength of the school, as judged by the previous inspection. A weekly timetable of clubs and activities includes environment/gardening, choir and gymnastics for Year 2 and, in Key Stage 2, choir, orchestra, recorders, drama, technology, science, information technology, football, netball and girls' football. During the inspection, 32 Year 2 pupils were observed enjoying singing after school, both accompanied and unaccompanied, to a good standard. Sports matches are played against local schools, often with success. A pupil in Year 6 recently won the Black Country Schools' Cross-Country Tournament. The school also offers the pupils a wide range of visits and receives regular visitors.
24. Indeed, the school makes good use of the local community to contribute to the pupils' learning. Good links with the pre-school playgroup and the provision of a twice-weekly pre-school club in the months before the children start school ensure a successful induction into reception. There are good links with All Saints Church, where the school choirs have sung. The pupils have visited the local public library and they have danced around the maypole at

Sedgley's Village Fair. The pupils in Year 3 spend a day at Dudley College, learning about bricklaying, plumbing and aspects of technology. There are good links with some local businesses. The Dudley TEC has contributed money towards an environmental clean up around the school area and, following a visit from an Express and Star executive, some older pupils produced their own newspaper, as part of a literacy project.

25. There are constructive relationships with the local secondary school. The school's sex education policy was written in consultation with secondary colleagues and similar consultation led to the setting of appropriate mathematics work for a gifted pupil. The two schools maintain an effective 'bridge curriculum', which tries to make the transfer from one to the other as smooth as possible for the pupils in Year 6.
26. The school has developed a good equal opportunities policy, which includes useful guidelines on achieving equality of access and opportunity. Overall, this is working in practice.
27. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The school is a 'health promoting school' and, as the inspection took place during National Schools Meal Week, one assembly observed made a good contribution to the pupils' understanding of 'you are what you eat'. There is a very good planned programme of work for each year group. Formal sex education is provided in Year 6 and the pupils are made aware of the dangers of substance abuse.
28. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents a considerable improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when provision for spiritual and cultural development was judged to be unsatisfactory and that for moral and social development to be sound. The teachers have received training on ways in which the pupils' spiritual awareness can be developed and this is proving very effective. Regular lessons in personal development, together with assemblies, contribute very well in making the pupils think deeply about, and reflect on, relevant issues.
29. Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. Clear policies on behaviour and bullying provide a good framework for the pupils' personal development. Rules, rewards and sanctions and notices are clearly displayed throughout the school and many classrooms have additional rules, which the pupils have helped to devise. The pupils are encouraged to respect other peoples' property and to keep cloakrooms tidy. The teachers make the pupils very aware of what is right or wrong and they insist on good manners. In religious education, the pupils learn about the moral teachings of Jesus and Mohammed. The pupils' personal development is supported by an effective system of house points, merit awards, praise certificates and praise assemblies and most parents feel that their children appreciate these.
30. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. A School Council gives some pupils the opportunity to participate in decision making and all the pupils can post suggestions for consideration. The pupils support a number of local and national charities, including Christian Outreach, which sends books to Lebanon, Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Beacon Centre for the Blind and the local hospital's baby care unit. All the pupils have the opportunity to take part in school productions, which have recently included Oliver, The Lady and the Tramp and The Three Little Pigs. The pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to develop social skills during a residential stay in Herefordshire. They are also given opportunities to show responsibility, through carrying out a wide range of tasks in school, including helping in assemblies and corridors, in the library, with registers and collecting house points, in taking messages from the office and in helping with the younger pupils during breaks and lunchtimes. In all classes, the pupils are encouraged to carry out tasks as monitors.

31. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is also very good. The teachers develop in the pupils an awareness of both national and Black Country culture. A creative arts week in June has included visiting artists, storytellers and a Black Country poet. The school celebrated World Book Day recently by inviting an author into school. The school choirs and orchestra participate in the Dudley Festival of Music, Dance and Drama. The orchestra won first prize in 1998 and has consistently performed well at the festival.
32. The pupils are encouraged to appreciate the cultural diversity of modern British society, as well as that worldwide. Last year, as part of a multicultural arts fortnight, a traditional Indian dancer visited the school and performed some Kathak dancing. The school has a good selection of multicultural musical instruments and some good multicultural big books for use in the literacy hour. Many of the classrooms display greetings in a variety of languages. Reception children are made aware of the current Chinese New Year of the Dragon and, during the inspection; they listened to some Chinese music.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

33. There are good arrangements for dealing with child protection issues. An experienced senior teacher is the person with responsibility for these and she attends regular training courses and disseminates information to other staff.
34. Suitable policies and procedures are in place covering the requirements of health and safety legislation. Fire risk assessments have been carried out and the school has good first aid provision, including a medical room. The school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils.
35. Good attendance records are maintained and regularly monitored. The school has adopted a number of measures to promote attendance including individual certificates and class cups. Unexplained absences are rigorously followed up. These measures have been effective in further improving high levels of attendance.
36. The school is currently refining and developing its system for monitoring academic progress and targeting pupils who need additional help. Pupils undertake a variety of statutory and non-statutory tests. Some staff training has been arranged to ensure consistency in judging standards. Weekly planning sheets are now used to identify over or under-performing pupils so that the activities for the following week can be adjusted to reflect their needs. Pupils' portfolios containing relevant examples of pupils' work have been introduced and will follow them as they progress through the school. Many of these initiatives are at an early stage and are much further advanced in English and Mathematics than in other core or foundation subjects, where work remains to be done.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

37. The school's 'Partners in Progress' statement includes the aim of developing an effective partnership with parents and the majority of parents believe that the school does work well with them.
38. The school provides some good quality information including a regular and detailed curriculum newsletter. Parents meetings are held each term and resources have been developed for parents and their children to work on jointly. Annual reports on pupils' progress are informative and personalised. Similarly a more consistent application of the homework policy would make it easier for parents to get better involved with work at home.

39. A number of parents help in school on a regular basis, including some encouraged by the school to gain National Vocational Qualifications as classroom assistants. There is also an active home school association, which each year raises large sums of money, which have been used to purchase many items including sports and music equipment and playground furniture. Pupils benefit directly from the additional resources generated in this way and teacher and pupil involvement in the activities of the home school association helps cement the bond between school and home.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

40. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The head teacher provides sound, caring leadership, suitably supported by key staff. This leadership effectively promotes the teaching and learning throughout the school. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
41. The Governing Body is effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. The Governors have appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are suitably involved in shaping its direction. A key issue of the last inspection was establishing closer Governor involvement in agreeing aims and development plans and these have been successfully introduced.
42. The school development plan is a sound document, which clearly identifies targets. These are costed, have appropriate strategies for action and criteria by which the school can judge success in raising standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when this, too, was a key issue.
43. The school has satisfactorily monitored and evaluated its performance but this has not been fully developed into effective action. This is particularly the case in the monitoring of teaching which lacks rigour. Curriculum co-ordinators are insufficiently involved in the monitoring of teaching in their subjects.
44. The school makes good use of resources including grants and other funding. Good financial planning facilitates the educational priorities. Good use is made of information technology to monitor attendance and Special Educational Needs for example. This has a positive impact on the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
45. The principles of best value are effectively applied. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

46. In order to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

##### **Improve the achievements of able pupils** (Paragraphs 2,3,7,19,57,59,64,65,68,69 and 76) **by:**

- matching work more carefully to the needs of individuals within existing ability groups;
- teachers having higher expectations of what pupils can do and understand;
- setting individual targets to help in identifying those pupils who should exceed expected standards in national tests;
- providing more opportunities for independent investigative work in science.

##### **Improve the arrangements for homework** (Paragraphs 20 and 38) **by:**



- reviewing the existing policy to form agreed expectations;
- ensuring consistent implementation of the developed policy.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 98 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 16 |

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 3         | 25        | 41   | 25           | 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*

| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>                               | R-Y6 |
|--|------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 454  |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals        | 35   |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

| <b>Special educational needs</b>                                    | R-Y6 |
|---|------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 3    |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 36   |

| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0            |

| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 20           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 15           |

### *Attendance*

| <b>Authorised absence</b> | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> | %   |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| School data                 | 0.1 |
| 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 | 33    | 33    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 26      | 29      | 30          |
|   | Girls    | 29      | 32      | 32          |
|   | Total    | 55      | 61      | 62          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 83 (94) | 92 (97) | 94 (97)     |
|   | National | 82(77)  | 83 (81) | 87(84)      |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 27      | 29          | 27      |
|   | Girls    | 30      | 30          | 30      |
|   | Total    | 57      | 59          | 57      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 86(95)  | 89(98)      | 86(97)  |
|   | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85)     | 87(85)  |

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 | 34    | 34    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 26      | 26          | 28      |
|   | Girls    | 28      | 23          | 30      |
|   | Total    | 54      | 49          | 58      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 79(71)  | 72(74)      | 85(85)  |
|   | National | 70(65)  | 69(59)      | 78(69)  |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 25      | 27          | 26      |
|   | Girls    | 27      | 24          | 29      |
|   | Total    | 52      | 51          | 55      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 76(75)  | 75(69)      | 81(82)  |
|   | National | 68(65)  | 69(65)      | 75(71)  |

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 1            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 3            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 372          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 14           |

*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) | 21.2     |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 22.5 : 1 |
| Average class size                       | 28.4     |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 193 |

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Financial year                             | 1998/99 |
|  | £       |
| Total income                               | 779,014 |
| Total expenditure                          | 751,422 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1,623   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 573     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 28,165  |

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 454 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 196 |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 56             | 40            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 50             | 41            | 6                | 2                 | 2          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 41             | 54            | 3                | 1                 | 1          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 28             | 54            | 15               | 3                 | 1          |
| The teaching is good.  | 50             | 42            | 3                | 1                 | 4          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 37             | 48            | 10               | 2                 | 2          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 66             | 28            | 3                | 2                 | 1          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 64             | 34            | 2                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 44             | 42            | 9                | 2                 | 3          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 55             | 32            | 6                | 2                 | 5          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 53             | 39            | 4                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 54             | 32            | 9                | 1                 | 3          |

## **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**

47. Provision for children in the reception classes is good. The standards achieved are above those expected for children of their age in all subjects. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvements in provision for creative areas or subjects whilst maintaining above-average standards in the rest of the curriculum.
  
48. When children enter the reception classes in September and in January they show attainment which is above the expected levels of the desirable learning outcomes and almost half the children begin work on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study where they continue to make good progress. By the age of five almost all children achieve the learning goals expected for their age. Two thirds of pupils achieve above average standards and of these one third achieve well above the expected standards. Virtually all the pupils have made good progress in the early stages of all National Curriculum subjects by the end of the reception year. This is due to good teaching and a supportive, secure learning environment.
  
49. On entry children are happy to leave their parents and eager to explore all the activities planned for the day. They work hard and play together, relate positively to their peers and to adults and take part in activities with confidence. For example, they dance creatively together in teams as Chinese dragons showing enormous enjoyment as they swish and move the material up and down to the music. They are courteous towards each other ensuring that all members of the team move with safety around the hall.
  
50. All children speak confidently about matters of immediate interest such as what they did on Mother's Day and they listen attentively to stories, poems and rhymes. Children know that print carries meaning and they have a good knowledge and understanding of letter names and their associated sounds. Almost all the children use this knowledge of letter sounds as a strategy to help them to word build in reading and writing activities. For example, as part of a topic on animals, they write about pets they have at home and animals that are seen on a farm, and they make lists of animals in Noah's Ark. Almost all children are reading for meaning and confidently recall a story and talk about the main events. Children enjoy using the computer to write their names and high frequency words and comment effectively upon where they can make improvements.
  
51. Children's mathematical development is good. They recognise numbers and number values to twenty and older children use objects and number symbols to calculate simple addition successfully. Children count forwards and backwards in ones, two and tens and recognise numbers in between. They understand technical language such as 'more than', 'less than', 'altogether' and 'count on' and show increasing skill in recording their answers. Through playing number games using a dice and the shop role-play area, children gain a good understanding of number and are beginning to solve simple number stories.
  
52. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children are aware of seasonal changes, know the conditions necessary to grow seeds, name the parts of a plant and know the names of many animals and their babies. They talk confidently about different characteristics of animals and birds such as feathers, fur and scales and sort each group into sets. Children recognise a map of Great Britain and identify England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland by different coloured markers. They accurately link the red dragon to the Welsh flag; drawing and flooding their pictures with colour using a computer paint programme.

53. In art and design and technology, children make dragons out of boxes and sticky paper and they experiment with paint to create illustrations of farm and pet animals for a classroom display. They mix flour, salt and water to make dough, which they mould into different shapes, such as fish to support a topic about the sea.
54. Children's physical development is good. They are provided with opportunities to cut and fold, to build with construction kits, to explore materials, including sand and water, to climb, to ride, push and to pull and to dance and balance. There are appropriate opportunities to use the school hall and the excellent outdoor play area. All children achieve increasing control of their movements when building, writing and colouring.
55. The quality of teaching is good. The three Reception class teachers and two classroom assistants work well together as a team and all have high expectations of attainment and behaviour. Activities are well planned using strategies that are exciting yet well directed towards children's achievements across the curriculum. Teachers manage the children well and lessons are taken at a brisk pace. Medium and long-term assessment is good and is used effectively to set children in language and literacy and mathematics according to their achievements.

## **ENGLISH**

56. The inspection finding is that attainment is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
57. For the three years from 1996 to 1998 the standard of pupils' reading and writing was well above the national average in Key Stage 1. However, the results were less good in 1999. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was above the national average in writing and in line with the national average in reading. A comparison with the results of schools in similar circumstances suggests that these pupils might be capable of performing even further above the national level. The inspection observations bear this out, especially where more able pupils are concerned. The Key Stage 2 results are very similar except that a somewhat higher proportion reached the level higher than expected nationally.
58. The pupils who join reception have above average standards in language and literacy. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are average, reflecting the 1999 Key Stage 1 results. Pupils read well together in the introductions to the Literacy Hour but individual reading levels are lower than might be expected.
59. Most pupils in Year 2 can use sentences and recognise verbs in exercises. However, very few pupils write in a clear, organised or imaginative way. Similarly only a small number can use sentences effectively in sequence to develop a story. Thus standards of writing are average overall, with more talented pupils rarely fulfilling their potential.
60. Standards of handwriting and spelling are also average. The level of care given to presentation is below what might be expected and pupils are not always sufficiently encouraged to take a pride in their work.
61. In both key stages pupils speak well and listen carefully both to each other and the teacher during introductions to the Literacy Hour. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are particularly responsive to lively questioning and give perceptive responses. When working in groups, pupils are able to collaborate, listening to each other's views and developing important points together.
62. The improvement in the quality of writing is particularly noticeable in Year 5 where pupils' work features interesting descriptive writing. The pupils' work in the final two years is

marked by effective styles of writing; there are examples of pupils experimenting with genre and a range of non-fiction writing and extended stories. Standards are good by the time the pupils leave the school.

63. Standards of reading also improve by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils in Year 5 can recognise the difference between scanning and skimming. One-fifth year group were able to use the Dewey System to locate books they wanted in the library. They were also able to use reference books on a variety of topics to answer questions they had previously posed. Year 6 pupils can discuss authors confidently and read fluently.
64. Girls tend to do better than boys but less so than is the case nationally. More able pupils also achieve lower standards than might reasonably be expected at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs achieve sufficiently well throughout the school.
65. The quality of teaching is good or better in two-thirds of lessons. It is only unsatisfactory in one lesson in twenty. All teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well with clear objectives. The teaching of the pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 is a real strength. It is characterised by lively introductions, penetrating questions and mutual respect. The teaching is very good in over half of these lessons, causing an acceleration in the pupils' learning to reach above average standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. The least effective teaching is of able pupils in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 and Year 4 where insufficient challenge is given to the pupils. Ability grouping alone, is not an effective response to the needs of those pupils. Thus in Year 2 no greater demands are often made of higher ability pupils than those of the middle group. In other lessons with higher ability groups teaching does not have sufficient pace and teachers' expectations are too low. When the teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because significant minorities of pupils' disrupt the learning of others and the teacher's response is ineffective.
66. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model for others. She has organised in-service training and performed effective monitoring of planning and resources. She has a good grasp of the priorities and has soundly introduced the National Literacy Strategy. Clear targets have been set for the future. However, insufficient analysis has been made of previous Standard Assessment results to devise effective strategies to ensure these standards are met.
67. The school has good accommodation, including a new separate library. Resources are generally sound, although many dictionaries are in poor condition. There are reflective assessment procedures both in place and planned for the future. The subject has a balanced curriculum, including regular drama performances and a weekly drama club held after school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

68. Standards at the end of both key stages are average. National Tests in 1999 show that the number of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics at Key Stage 1 was above the national average but that the number of pupils achieving the higher grades was well below the national figure. The school's overall performance at Key Stage 1 in 1999 was well below that of schools in similar circumstances.
69. Classroom observation and the scrutiny of this year's work at Key Stage 1 reflect the 1999 test findings. Whilst most pupils are working at the expected level for their age, there are too few tackling more advanced tasks. Scrutiny of the books of the most able pupils shows that they rarely make mistakes and are not sufficiently challenged by their work.



70. The 1999 tests at Key Stage 2 showed the number of pupils reaching the expected level to be close to the national average and that the number of pupils achieving the higher grades was above average. The school's overall performance at Key Stage 2 was well below similar schools but the number of pupils achieving higher grades was comparable. These Key Stage 2 results are similar to the last inspection when standards were judged to be at the national average.
71. Most of the pupils at Key Stage 2 are working at the level expected for their age and, about one third of them are working at a higher level. The pupils in Year 6 are able to add and subtract three digit numbers and the most able can tackle problems involving several calculations including long multiplication. They have a good knowledge of the metric system and are able to make accurate comparisons with imperial measurements.
72. The school adopted the National Numeracy Strategy in September and this has resulted in some changes in the organisation of the curriculum and important changes in teaching methods. The school is adapting its previous commercially produced maths schemes to cover the framework of the Strategy. Teachers' long term and daily planning is thorough but there is not yet a whole school scheme of work for progression while avoiding unnecessary repetition. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better with a majority of lessons being good and sometimes very good. The only unsatisfactory lessons occurred at Key Stage 1. During these lessons teachers' expectations were inappropriate and all pupils were not fully involved or challenged in the mental arithmetic session and most found the subsequent written work ill-matched to their abilities. In contrast the good lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6 feature rapid and enjoyable mental activities using innovative techniques, such as digit cards and number fans, so that all pupils could respond to each question.
73. The subject co-ordinator was appointed in September and has organised in service training and overseen the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. There is satisfactory day-to-day assessment, and yearly testing to monitor whole school progress and to set pupils.
74. Mathematics makes a valuable contribution to other areas of the curriculum. Computer data handling, such as using surveys and graphs, for geography, plays an increasingly useful part in mathematics lessons. The new emphasis on mental and oral mathematics extends pupils' vocabularies and encourages the accurate use of language.

## SCIENCE

75. At Key Stage 2, standards were average when compared to National Results, but well below results attained in similar schools. There has been an improvement in the Key Stage 2 results over the last three years. Currently standards at the end of both Key Stages are at the expected level for pupils of seven and eleven. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous report. At Key Stage 1 teachers plan work to cover the full range of the curriculum. However, it is clear from previous work that, too often worksheets are given to all pupils in Year 2 irrespective of their ability. The marking of work is kept up-to-date but the quality is variable. Too often work of different quality is given the same grade. Comments do not always explain to pupils how they can improve their work.
76. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is sound overall. The teachers plan work effectively to give pupils experience of the full curriculum for science. The achievements of the majority are satisfactory at the end of the Key Stage. However, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 could make better progress in learning to plan their own experiments and to check theories about the work covered. They should develop higher skills in considering the likely outcomes of experiments and deciding what equipment they

need to use. There has been some progress in developing these skills since the previous report raised it as a key issue. However, achievements in this aspect of science are still not good enough.

77. The management of the subject is currently good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision for raising standards in science. Teachers have had training to improve their knowledge and understanding of science and further training is planned in the near future to improve their confidence. The co-ordinator has audited resources and arranged them so that teachers can easily get what they need for each lesson. Her monitoring has identified inconsistencies in teachers' assessments of pupil progress and there are plans to review this aspect of the subject in the near future.

## **ART**

78. The standards in art throughout the school are higher than average. By the age of seven the pupils are able to work skilfully and imaginatively with materials, tools and techniques. Their finished work, which includes paintings, prints, collages and three-dimensional models is crafted competently and is attractive to look at. Higher attainers in the reception year show excellent drawing skills in their sketches of scenes from the story of St George and the Dragon and pupils generally draw with confidence. The display on the theme of fireworks shows that the pupils can cut shapes accurately and use different kinds of paint to good effect. The pupils recognise different methods and approaches, and can create similar effects in their own work. For instance, the pupils in a Year 1 class successfully experimented with thickened paint and combs to create swirled patterns of different textures in the style of Van Gogh. The pupils are able to suggest ways in which their work can be improved and they readily accept suggestions from their teachers and classmates.
79. By the age of eleven the pupils have a well-developed awareness of the use of tone, colour, shape and texture, and they record their observations very effectively. The pupils in a Year 3 class were impressed by the subtle graduations in colour in the paintings of Monet, and their own small scale sketches and larger pictures of different areas of Monet's garden showed that they had firm control of their pastels and paint brushes in the delicate shading of colours. Year 6 pupils enjoy learning about modern art and in their pictures in the style of Roy Lichtenstein they demonstrate their ability to experiment successfully with the use of dots. In their discussions about art the pupils use technical vocabulary accurately and fluently. They express themselves clearly when explaining how they have approached their tasks and they are shrewd in their assessments of their finished work.
80. Teaching is good overall. The teachers show an enthusiasm for the subject and encourage the pupils to give of their best. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and use their technical expertise to give a clear idea of how to achieve a high standard in the chosen task. They plan their lessons carefully and enable their pupils to use resources effectively in the practical work. As a result the pupils usually work purposefully and speedily and show a pride in their finished work. They are ready to help each other and they behave well, sharing equipment sensibly and looking after it in a responsible way. In almost all lessons the teachers have a pleasant relationship with their pupils and manage them well so there is a good working atmosphere and the teachers and support staff are able to move around the work area efficiently, giving individual help to pupils with special educational needs and showing less confident pupils how to develop their techniques. Activities are carefully timed so that before the end of the lesson pupils can study each other's work and reflect on what they have learnt. Occasionally a lesson is not successful. This is usually because the teacher does not have firm class control so pupils talk out of turn and do not concentrate on the task in hand. Sometimes the teacher's questions are not challenging enough to move the pupils on to

understand what they are aiming for in their practical work and so achievement is lower than what was hoped for. However, the quality of teaching is mainly good and the pupils achieve well.

81. Art is now a strength of the school. It is vigorously promoted by the subject co-ordinator and standards have risen since the last inspection when they were judged to be average. The revised programme of study ensures a continuous development of skills throughout the two key stages and the consistent use of sketch-books from the reception year onwards makes a constructive contribution to this development. The work and achievement of the pupils is regularly monitored and recorded. However, the monitoring of the teaching is not carried out in a sufficiently vigorous way and so shortcomings are not identified and put right. Achievement in art is celebrated. The pupils receive praise certificates and merit awards for good work and they are encouraged to use their artistic skills in other subjects as, for example, in their geographical maps, and in illustrating their work in history and religious education. There are now many more resources available for the subject. These include workshops given by the artist in residence, and sessions with a professional artist at the Barber Institute. The vibrant displays of art work around the school demonstrate the high standards achieved by the pupils in a range of techniques such as glass painting, still life drawing, and making of three dimensional masks, ceramic tiles and Grecian pots. Events such as the creative arts festival give the pupils excellent opportunities to discover and enjoy the art of many different cultures and the school's links with the local community are strengthened through exhibitions of the pupils' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

82. Standards of attainment are satisfactory in both key stages.
83. Provision for the teaching of design and technology has improved since the last inspection. The teachers have developed their subject knowledge through the successful introduction of an appropriate new curriculum. An audit of stock to ensure resources are adequate for teaching the new study units has led to an improvement in the quality of these resources, particularly those that provide for the control section. This has had a beneficial effect on learning opportunities for all pupils across the school.
84. Only two lessons were observed during this inspection, both in Key Stage 1. Teaching in those lessons was good. Further evidence was gained by discussion with the pupils, looking at pupils' work in books and on display, and in the extensive portfolios of previous work.
85. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are given suitable opportunities to practise the skills they need for making products, such as cutting out the pieces of a multi-coloured coat and joining them together in a way that would fit a miniature Joseph. Striking displays all round the school of recent work value and promote design and technology well, giving the pupils opportunities to think about the style and use of some of the items displayed. The variety of individual interpretations of, for example, the Millennium souvenirs helps the pupils to understand how products might be made differently, and to evaluate the quality of a finished article. The teachers provide challenging tasks, which enable the pupils to develop their knowledge of designing for a specific purpose. For example, Year 1 pupils were building dolls' furniture from card, and suggested a variety of ideas to overcome the difficulties of incorporating doors that opened. Similarly, Year 6 had encountered the problems of creating a bridge that could

bear the weight of passing traffic. Progress in developing skills is limited by the absence of records of attainment, however, which would indicate how well the pupils are achieving in the planned study units, and what the next individual learning targets need to be. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, however.

86. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and meticulous co-ordinator. Planning from the new curriculum is monitored, and study units evaluated. The quality of teaching has not yet been monitored. There is a comprehensive portfolio of annotated photographs which gives clear evidence of pupils' learning experiences, but the school has no method for ensuring that all pupils build up their learning systematically.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

87. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are above average for pupils of this age and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the location of other countries, such as India and of some basic facts about their geography. They use text and pictures to compare for instance, Wolverhampton with a rural Indian village. The pupils have a good understanding of the contrasts between settlements. For example, when, during a residential visit to Herefordshire, they compared Sedgley with the small rural town of Kington. They know how the nature of a river valley changes from source to mouth, with particular reference to the River Severn.
88. The quality of teaching and of the pupils' learning is good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of geography. For example, a teacher in Year 4 had very good local knowledge and illustrated the lesson with slides and colour prints, which he had taken. This really helped the pupils to identify the environmental problems facing this area and to think of ways in which the area might be improved. The teacher used open ended questions, such as "What sort of letter should it be, if we want to persuade the officers to listen to us?" and this made the pupils think carefully of the literacy skills which they would need to use in writing to the borough council's recreation department. All the teachers plan their lessons in great detail and they make the pupils aware of what is expected of them by the end of each lesson. They make effective use of fieldwork in the school grounds and the immediate locality to bring geography alive for the pupils and to help them to learn the skills of careful observation and recording. They make good links with information technology and mathematics through, for example, recording in computer generated bar charts and line graphs the results of a litter survey around the school.
89. The teachers in Key Stage 1 place an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' early mapping skills and the concept of a plan or map as an aerial view. The pupils are able to plot a simple map of their daily route to school and to list some of the features that they pass on the way. They can draw simple plans of their classrooms and they are beginning to understand the need for symbols to explain what they show on their plans. Again, the teachers make good links with mathematics, as the pupils record the results of a local traffic survey by means of accurate bar charts. The teachers encourage the pupils to observe daily weather carefully and to record it with appropriate symbols. The pupils understand how different types of weather throughout the world affect the way in which people dress. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct geographical vocabulary. Children in Reception are making a good start to learning in geography. They know where Australia is on a globe and they know about aborigines and some of the country's fauna. The teachers help them to learn about a farmer's typical day by visiting a farm.

90. There are adequate resources for learning, including a reasonable range of geography reference books in the school library. There is currently no whole school system for recording the pupils' attainment, but the two co-ordinators have compiled a useful collection of samples of the pupils' work as a guide to expected levels of attainment. The subject is making a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. For example, the teachers make the pupils aware of the destruction of Amazonian tropical rain forests, of environmental pollution on a local, national and worldwide scale and of the need for conservation.

## **HISTORY**

91. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are above average for pupils of this age and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Year 6 pupils use their literacy skills effectively to write well about the events leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War and of how everyday life in British cities was affected by bombing raids, for example. They observe wartime artefacts and they use local newspapers of the time to research information about wartime life in Dudley and, in particular, how the lives of children were affected. The pupils have a good knowledge of some of the famous personalities of the war years, including Hitler and Churchill.
92. The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of very good teaching. The quality of the pupils' learning is, as a consequence, good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of history. They plan their lessons very well and they make good use of resources. A Year 6 teacher wore an air raid warden's helmet to engender the right atmosphere; a Year 4 teacher gave the pupils the chance to write like the Tudors with quill and ink; teachers in Year 3 used information technology well to help the pupils learn more about life in ancient Egypt. School visits to Dudley Museum, Bewdley Museum, the Black Country Museum and Dudley Archives Centre also make history come alive for the pupils and helps them to learn.
93. The teachers maintain a good balance between giving information and providing opportunities for the pupils to find things out for themselves from books and other sources. This helps them to increase not only their knowledge of aspects of history, such as life in ancient Greece and in Victorian Britain and the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs, but also their research skills, using primary and secondary sources of evidence. The teachers make good links with other subjects, such as geography, for example in looking at the routes taken by the Viking invaders, and this help the pupils to learn how history and geography are closely connected. The teachers make particularly good use of the pupils' literacy skills, through extended writing exercises. For example, Year 2 pupils have written effective extracts from the diary of a Victorian maid and Year 3 pupils have done the same, in the role of an Egyptian pharaoh and an Egyptian child.
94. This good teaching is generating an enthusiasm for history amongst most of the pupils. Many of them look up additional information at home and some bring reference books of their own to school.
95. History displays in the school are of very high quality and they create an impressive learning environment. For example, the Millennium Timeline which stretches through the lower school building, illustrates good work which the pupils have done on events and personalities as diverse as the Battle of Hastings, man on the moon, the suffragettes, Elvis Presley and the Cadbury brothers. There are very good resources to support learning, with a wide range of history reference books in the school library and an impressive collection of historical

artefacts. There is currently no whole school system of recording the pupils' attainment, but there are good examples of the teachers' assessment of the pupils' progress being used well to plan subsequent work. The subject is making a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. For example, it is helping them to become aware of the rich historical culture that exists in the Black Country and of the legacies of the Vikings, the Tudors and the Victorians to modern Britain.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

96. The standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are in line with those expected for pupils' aged seven and 11 years. Since the last inspection there has been significant development in the provision for information technology which has resulted in the development of a computer suite, three smaller work stations of four computers, laptop computers for all teachers and a new computer in all classrooms. All computers including the laptops held by the teachers are linked to the Dudley Grid for Learning. This is a valuable resource, which is helping to raise standards. However, these developments have only been in place for a short time and whilst improvements have been made, the full impact is yet to be seen. Overall, the school has maintained the standards achieved in the last inspection.
  
97. Pupils from a young age have their own password to access computers and are familiar with several programmes. They type in simple sentences, change the size of font, save and print their work. In work on graphics the pupils draw pictures and patterns using the mouse. They confidently use icons for different tools such as, changing brush sizes, rubbing out, clicking and dragging shapes, choosing appropriate colours and using spray to produce good quality work. In data handling pupils create picture graphs to show which party foods they like best and successfully interpret the information printed on a bar chart.
  
98. At Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards that are above the expected level in using information technology for communication but in handling information, control technology and modelling standards are average. The work in word processing and the use of graphics is good. The pupils experiment with font style, size and justification, import images using an art package and incorporate illustrations from clip-art re-sizing where necessary. For example, they create reports transferring their literacy skills to punctuate the text effectively. The school's link to the Dudley Grid for Learning is used constantly by all pupils to research work for history, geography, science and art lessons. They confidently log-on, choose a suitable programme, skim and scan a range of aspects and carefully record evidence for future use in the classroom. In mathematics pupils enter into a spreadsheet data, such as the length and breadth of rectangles and carefully use the formula function to carry out simple calculations. Electronic mail is used efficiently by pupils and teachers to send messages to each other. This provision is a very effective way of communicating across a split site campus. The control aspects of information technology are taught as specific modules once per year. This approach eases the management of the provision and helps the school support achievement across the key stage.
  
99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements. Although only one lesson of direct teaching was seen, it is evident in most classrooms and in the computer suite that the use of information technology is well managed and being used by pupils for learning across the curriculum. For example, pupils' researched programmes on Egypt and space without a teacher being present. However, there is regular checking of pupils' work to ensure that they understand what they are doing. The pupils enjoy information technology. They concentrate on their work, share ideas and provide support to each other as they work on new

skills. The positive attitudes and good standards of behaviour allow the teacher to help other pupils.

100. Teachers benefit greatly from their own individual laptop computers. These computers enable all teachers to access the school's Intranet and central planning systems. As a result of training and everyday access to a computer, most teachers have at least satisfactory subject knowledge and understanding to teach with confidence. Whilst planning for information technology is often integrated into other subjects, learning objectives for this area are less secure or not mentioned. Assessment is unsatisfactory. There is not yet an assessment policy in place for the subject and this prevents teachers from having sufficient knowledge to plan for pupils' systematic development of skills. The school is aware of this difficulty and has identified assessment as a priority in the school development plan. Monitoring of curriculum planning is undertaken by the co-ordinator.

## MUSIC

101. Good standards have been maintained in music since the last inspection. It is above average in both key stages.
102. There is very good provision for the pupils to develop their enjoyment and understanding of music. In Key Stage 1, they learn about pitch and tempo through the musical interpretation of stories such as The Three Bears, which the children are able to incorporate into a rendition of a 3-part song with confidence and accuracy. They sing enthusiastically in hymn practice sessions, learning the words of new songs with ease as the teacher introduces them in a delightfully appropriate manner. Good teaching encourages the pupils to be aware of voice control, and to have confidence when performing in front of others. There is a choir for younger pupils, which rehearses weekly, giving a good model to the singing in assemblies. Knowledge of a wide range of musical instruments is developed over the key stage, giving pupils the opportunity to learn how to blend the sounds they make into different textures.
103. In Key Stage 2, the pupils build rapidly on this early development, enabling Year 4 to put together some effective original compositions, interpreting mood by the use of instruments, body percussion and voice. Again, good teaching helps pupils to develop an appreciation of how music can create an effect. This is further developed in Year 6 as groups of pupils set the theme of Spring to music, composing a three-part score each with varied tempo and using a range of orchestral and percussion instruments. Some groups were able to follow a conductor, and all groups made good attempts at recording their music on paper. The pupils are knowledgeable about composers and are developing an appropriate musical vocabulary. Inspired teaching contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through well-designed opportunities to work collaboratively on different aspects of the expressive arts. The children make very good progress across the key stage, including pupils with special educational needs, who have excellent support.
104. There is a thriving school orchestra of forty pupils, whose success at music festivals is well known locally. Pupils' talents are appropriately encouraged through learning to play brass, woodwind and string instruments, as well as the guitar and keyboard. The Upper School choir practises weekly, and performs both in school and for the local community at different venues.
105. The quality of resources has been much improved recently through the purchase of a wide range of new stock, including multi-cultural instruments. The co-ordinator monitors the curriculum regularly. There are no systems set up to assess and record the progress of

individual pupils in music, and therefore to ensure that the planned curriculum is appropriate for every child's needs.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

106. The standards in the lessons observed are in line with those seen nationally. Pupils in Year 5 are able to plan their own and group dance activities understanding the need for aerobic exercise. They can consider their own performance and make suggestions for improvement. Pupils in Year 2 know a variety of balance positions in gymnastics, which they are learning to combine into a routine. In swimming 90 per cent of pupils in Years 5 and 6 have achieved the national target of 25 metres.
107. The emphasis on higher standards in literacy and numeracy in recent years has meant that physical education is given a relatively low priority in the school's timetable. This has meant that one school hall is often used as a classroom and is unavailable for physical activities. In addition physical education sessions are sometimes cancelled in favour of other activities. In consequence pupils do not experience the full range of the national curriculum and do not receive sufficient exercise or skills practice.
108. The subject co-ordinator, appointed last September, provides enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership, which goes far to make up for these deficiencies. There is now an excellent range of extra curricular sports clubs and this has led to success in individual and team competitions. Participation in physical education lessons and in these clubs, with their ethos of effort, fair play and co-operation, makes an important contribution to pupils' happiness and social and moral development.
109. There are appropriate playgrounds; a sports field and two good sized halls with large and small apparatus for games and gymnastics as well as a full range of sports equipment. All of these are underused at present.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

110. Pupils' attainment at ages seven and eleven matches the expected standards as set out in the Dudley Agreed Syllabus and exceeds them in some areas.
111. The pupils have a sound knowledge of stories from the Old Testament about prominent figures such as Moses and Daniel and they understand clearly the need for rules in society exemplified in the Ten Commandments and in their own rules for living in school and in the community. They can give examples of parables and miracles from the ministry of Jesus, and apply some of the lessons of the parables to their own experiences. They are aware of the significance for Christians of the events leading up to Easter Sunday. By the time they reach the age of eleven the older pupils have gained a firm understanding of beliefs and practices in Christianity and a basic knowledge of other major world religions. They recognise religious symbols from Sikhism and Buddhism and they can explain what the Five Pillars of Islam represent. Pupils of all ages appreciate the importance of prayer and praise in collective worship and their class collections of original prayers show a well-developed understanding of the spiritual dimension to life. The pupils record what they have learnt in a variety of ways which include personal responses, descriptions and illustrations of important happenings, and dramatic presentations for assemblies. Much of the work in exercise books is written in a lively way, but there are too many examples of copying from worksheets and sometimes there is a lack of focus in the narrative work so the pupils cannot adapt their style to the intended reader.



112. Teaching is sound overall. The teachers gain the attention of their pupils because they are confident in their subject knowledge. The pupils listen intently and show their interest and understanding in the quality of their responses. After hearing the teacher's expressive reading of the Easter story, the pupils in a Year 2 class spoke eloquently about the parts of the story, which were special to them. Children in reception explored their feelings well with good language skills as their teacher recounted the story of St George and the Dragon. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good but sometimes when there are aspects of the lesson, which lack variety, such as overlong introductory sessions, the pupils become restless and start to talk among themselves. Occasionally the teacher's class control is not firm enough so some pupils do not concentrate on their work and waste time. This results in unsatisfactory learning because work is left unfinished at the end of the lesson. Usually, however, teacher's plan for a variety of purposeful activities aimed at deepening knowledge and developing literacy skills. Tasks are carefully matched to different levels of attainment so that all the pupils are able to achieve a reasonable degree of success.
113. The subject is managed competently. There will soon be a new local syllabus for religious education, and the co-ordinator has made efficient preparations for its introduction. Resources of books, learning materials and artefacts have been increased and the arrangements for assessing pupils' work will meet the new national reporting requirements.
114. Art, dance and music make an effective contribution to the pupils' understanding of religious faith. For example, the pupils have contributed work on the development of world religions to the Millennium Gallery at a local shopping centre and have video recorded the school millennium song in celebration of the birth of Jesus together with a dance representing the many religions and cultures of the community.