

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST. ANDREW'S J I SCHOOL**

Bordesley Village, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103153

Headteacher: Mr Alan Bamber

Reporting inspector: Mr Colin Henderson  
23742

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 192201

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Andrew's Road Bordesley Village Birmingham
Postcode:	B9 4NG
Telephone number:	0121 772 1392
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W. Pegg
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson 23742	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Physical education	How high are standards? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Len Shipman 14061	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
George Logan 11810	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Equal opportunities	
Jean Peek 25281	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Pupils for whom English is an additional language	
John Griffiths 20097	Team inspector	Science Art Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Bob Battey 2866	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Andrew's J I School is situated in the Heartlands Development Scheme, approximately one mile from Birmingham city centre. During the regeneration of the local area, the school roll fell to below 100 then rose to the current numbers of 414 (212 boys and 202 girls). The school is larger than average and is almost fully subscribed. Most pupils live near the school in a community of mixed backgrounds, housed in rented and owner-occupied accommodation, with a significant level of social and economic need. There is still a higher than average proportion of pupils who move in and out of the area during their primary years and this affects standards of attainment. The school has a broad ethnic-mix with 40 per cent of pupils coming from different ethnic minority groups. There are 93 pupils (23 per cent) for whom English is an additional language, which is well above the national average. Sixty-three pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties. Four pupils (1 per cent) have statements of need, which is below the average of similar schools. Forty-six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well above the national average. Most pupils attend the school nursery before entering the reception classes. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. Children make good progress and, although attainment varies considerably, assessment information shows that entry to reception broadly meets national expectations.

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

St. Andrew's J I School is a harmonious and caring, multi-racial community. Attainment is beginning to improve, although standards are still below the national average. Relationships are good and pupils behave well. The quality of teaching and learning are sound overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher and staff work effectively with a supportive governing body. The school gives sound value for money.

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

- It has good provision for children in the nursery.
- It has excellent procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- Good procedures promote high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to work.
- It works effectively with a supportive and active governing body.
- Good relationships promote a caring, diverse and harmonious school community

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Levels of pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements.
- The use of assessment information to match learning activities to the differing needs of pupils.
- The use of homework to involve parents more effectively in supporting their child's learning.

*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 made sound progress since the last inspection in February 1997. It has made some progress on all the key issues. Good progress has been made in working with the Education Welfare Officer to improve attendance, although pupils' punctuality is still a concern. Assessment procedures have been improved, but the information is not being consistently used to inform teaching plans. The school has established a homework policy, although it is not being consistently used to improve attainment. Provision for special educational needs has continued to be at least sound with some aspects that are now good. National test results have improved. Teaching is still sound overall, although there is significantly less unsatisfactory teaching. The school has improved its curriculum planning and makes effective use of national subject guidance. The school has further developed the high standard of accommodation, which provides an attractive and stimulating working environment.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	C	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average         D well below average    E very low                    E *
Mathematics	E*	E	E	C	
Science	E*	E*	D	C	

*(Similar schools are those that have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals)  
E\* indicates that the school's standards are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally.*

The results of the national tests for 11 year olds show that standards have been gradually improving over the last three years, although are still below or well below the national average. The school has implemented its strategies for literacy and numeracy soundly and these are beginning to improve standards. The school has set targets for the 2001 tests for 11 year olds of 75 per cent to achieve Level 4 or above in English and 70 per cent in mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving in English and mathematics. They are below, rather than well below, the national average. The school is unlikely to achieve these challenging targets. Standards in science remain below average.

Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills, especially reading, and the inconsistent use of assessment information to ensure that learning activities are matched closely to pupils' needs restrict pupils' progress. Teachers do not always challenge more able pupils, particularly in mathematics, and this limits the standards attained. Attainment in information and communication technology is below nationally expected levels. Some pupils are benefiting from improved resources, but these opportunities are not enough to enable all pupils to develop their skills consistently. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of assistance in their classes from support staff. They make sound progress towards their learning targets. Pupils learning English as an additional language make sound progress and achieve appropriate standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes. They are keen to come to school and respond enthusiastically to interesting activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good. Most pupils work and play together happily. They are courteous, friendly and show respect.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good, especially between different groups of pupils. Pupils respond well when given responsibility, although there are limited opportunities to take the initiative in developing their own ideas.
Attendance	Attendance rates are improving considerably, but are still below the national average. A significant number of pupils arrive late for school.

Behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection and pupils have more positive attitudes to work. These are promoting improvement. Low attendance and poor punctuality limit the involvement of some pupils. The low attendance levels are partly a result of the school's caring ethos as staff do not remove pupils from the register until they know their new school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
77 lessons seen overall	good	sound	sound

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

Teaching in the nursery is often very good and enables children to make good progress. Teaching is sound throughout the school, although it varies significantly which results in some inconsistencies in pupils' learning. Teaching was good in 28 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 12 per cent. Five per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. English and mathematics are taught soundly overall to develop pupils' skills, although teachers do not consistently challenge pupils, especially the more able, to extend and apply these skills in other subjects. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage them effectively to maintain their interest and attention. Although some teachers provide challenging work, others do not have consistently high expectations of pupils. They do not always ensure that the learning activity is closely matched to the range of pupils' needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is sound overall. It is good in the nursery. The curriculum is sound for infant and junior pupils and is enhanced effectively by visits and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The quality of provision is sound. There are effective assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported in classes by teaching assistants, but teachers do not always modify tasks to ensure that they meet pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound overall, with good support for pupils' personal development. The skills of the specialist teacher are not always used effectively in supporting pupils' learning when working with the class teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The moral and social provision is good and promotes good relationships and pupils' understanding of right and wrong. The spiritual and cultural development is sound. Good emphasis is given to pupils' understanding of multi-cultural beliefs and traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff know their pupils well and provide good care and support. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Those for improving attendance are excellent.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The partnership with parents is sound overall. They are kept informed about what is happening in school, although they are not involved enough in working with the school to contribute to their child's learning.

All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, although teachers do not always ensure that they are matched to the needs of pupils of different ability. The good provision for pupils' moral and social development promotes the school's caring and supportive ethos.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is soundly managed overall. The headteacher has been particularly successful in providing clear leadership to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school. A clear focus on raising standards of attainment is not yet established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound overall. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are not yet fully involved in rigorously targeting school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is beginning to use the analysis of test results and some monitoring and evaluation procedures to target improvement. They are not rigorous enough to improve attainment significantly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses resources efficiently, linked closely to improvement planning. It implements the principles of best value effectively when purchasing goods and services and comparing its attainment and spending levels with other similar schools locally.

The headteacher, working closely with his influential acting deputy headteacher, sound senior management team and supportive governing body, has established an effective team approach. Some subject co-ordinators have monitored and evaluated teaching and learning, but this is not sufficiently focused on raising standards of attainment. There is an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The accommodation is good and maintained to a high standard. Learning resources are adequate overall. Those for information and communication technology have been improved recently, but do not enable all pupils to have enough opportunities to practise their skills in all required aspects.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like their school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount and regularity of homework set.</li> <li>• Improvement in the level of extra activities</li> </ul>

This table takes into account parental responses from 49 questionnaires returned (17 per cent) and from the seven parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting with members of the inspection team. In addition a wide cross section of parents were interviewed at random during the inspection week. Inspection evidence confirms many of the parents' positive views of the school, although it does not support the views that the school has high expectations. Teaching during the inspection was sound overall. Inspectors confirm that homework is not set consistently well. The range of extra-curricular activities was sound overall, with some good opportunities for sporting activities.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below average. Through good teaching across all the learning areas, children make good progress in the nursery. They achieve standards mostly in line with those expected for their age, except for their creative development, which is above expected standards. The attainment on entry to reception is broadly in line with standards expected, but varies considerably. Whilst most pupils come up from the nursery, a significant minority join the two reception classes with different pre-school experience ranging from other nurseries to no experience at all. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of the reception year, they are likely to meet the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> set for most areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. They are slightly below expectations in communications, language and literacy due to lower than expected standards in reading.
2. Standards in English are below the national average at the ages of 7 and 11 years. The results of the 2000 national tests showed that standards at 7 in reading were well below average nationally and in line with the average of similar schools. Standards in writing met the national average and were well above the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher than the nationally expected Level 2 was well below average in reading and above average in writing. The results of the 2000 English tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards were well below the national average and in line with the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving above the nationally expected Level 4 was well below average. Test results over the last three years for 11 year olds show an improving trend which is similar to that nationally. Boys' achievements were lower than those of girls, especially at 11 years of age.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards are gradually improving. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this is promoting pupils' skills soundly. However, the rate of progress between 7 and 11 years of age is slowed by teachers not using assessment information consistently to ensure that learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs. Speaking and listening skills meet expected standards. Most pupils listen carefully and use increasingly complex vocabulary in their spoken answers. Teachers use the opportunities effectively in the introductory and feedback activities of the literacy hour to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils' reading is below average. Younger pupils develop their word-building skills soundly, but they are not effectively built on later in the school. Older pupils do not have a good range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Reading is not consistently developed. Pupils' reading books are not always matched well to their ability and they do not take their books home frequently enough to read with their parents. Although reading tests are used to monitor progress, they are not used consistently to identify targets for improvement. Pupils' writing skills are generally soundly developed across the school, although teachers do not expect enough in content and presentation of their work and this limits standards. Handwriting skills do not meet expected standards. Pupils are not consistently required to seek to improve the quality of their written presentation. This restricts standards to below average levels. The school has set a target of 75 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is unlikely to achieve this target.

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<sup>1</sup> [Early Learning Goals – these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.](#)

4. The results of the 2000 national tests in mathematics showed that standards at 7 and 11 were well below the national average. They were in line with the average of similar schools. The test results over the last three years show gradual improvement. Boys do not achieve as well as girls, although both attain standards at the age of 11 which are well below the national average. The school has set a target for 2001 for 70 per cent of pupils aged 11 to achieve Level 4 or above. Inspection evidence shows that standards are well below average at 7 and below average at 11. The school is unlikely to achieve its target, especially as few pupils attain above average standards. Pupils generally achieve soundly with the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy supporting sound teaching. Pupils' skills are built on soundly in the juniors, although the pace and challenge to more able pupils are not always sufficient to enable them to extend their skills and knowledge.
5. The 2000 teacher assessments in science for pupils aged 7 showed that standards were broadly in line with the national average and above average compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving above nationally expected levels was above average. The 2000 test results for 11-year-olds showed that standards were below the national average and in line with the average of similar schools, both for the number of pupils who achieved the expected Level 4 and those who achieved Level 5. Test results for 11-year-olds over the last three years show standards are improving, although they still remain below average. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average at 7 and 11 years old. There are significant weaknesses in pupils' presentation of their results and in using their literacy skills to produce accurate, clearly written scientific descriptions. Their knowledge and understanding of fair testing are sound, but their standards of recording investigations are below those expected of their age.
6. Attainment in information and communication technology is below national expectations at the ages of 7 and 11. Pupils do not make consistent progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 2 and 5 have benefited from using very recently improved facilities and resources. They have had more opportunities to extend their skills, and promoted by good teachers' subject knowledge, their standards in finding information, word processing and handling data are close to those expected nationally. Pupils in other years have not yet had the same opportunities and their skills have not been developed enough to meet expected standards. Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills and the lack of enough opportunities to regularly practise their skills restrict pupils' progress.
7. Attainment in religious education, by the ages of 7 and 11, meets the standards set out in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. Pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other religions. Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills, especially in written work, restrict the detail and accuracy of their written work. Pupils use their sound speaking and listening skills effectively to discuss religious aspects and their responses to different real-life situations.
8. Standards overall have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the juniors, although there is significant variation between subjects. Attainment meets national expectations at the ages of 7 and 11 in art and design, music and physical education. Standards in design and technology are in line with expectations at 7, but below at 11. Attainment in history and geography are below expectations throughout the school. Although there are examples of skills being soundly developed, for example in mapwork, pupils' skills are not consistently built on prior knowledge and understanding and teachers do not always ensure that the activity is closely matched to the range of pupils' needs. These restrict the standards attained.

9. Pupils make sound progress in both the infants and juniors. Sound quality teaching and the effective implementation of the school's literacy and numeracy strategies are promoting pupils' learning and the development of their skills. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Pupils' weak literacy skills, especially in reading, and teachers not using assessment information to consistently match learning activities to pupils' needs limits progress. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall. Pupils receive good levels of assistance in their classes from support staff. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills. Good attention is given to support and improve the pupils' attitudes towards their tasks. Pupils learning English as an additional language make sound progress and achieve appropriate standards. The school's monitoring of test results and inspection evidence show that there is no significant difference in standards of different ethnic groups. The current number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is too small to signify trends.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. There has been considerable improvement in attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection. Parents have expressed their satisfaction with the standards of behaviour. Levels of attendance have risen significantly, though they still remain unsatisfactory.
11. Most children come to school with a positive attitude. In the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> parents take their children into the nursery. This creates confidence and the willingness to learn from an early age. For the remainder of the pupils, some of the younger ones run in eagerly to meet their friends. Others were observed with arms around each other and children from different cultures were seen chatting happily. They settle quickly and quietly into class with quiet reading or other activity. This creates a positive atmosphere for learning.
12. In lessons where the teaching is good and stimulating, the standards of behaviour are good. Pupils are capable of working independently or quietly in pairs, sharing ideas. For example, in an English lesson, one girl helped another, which triggered off her thought process and she began to write down her ideas. Where good behaviour was observed, the lessons flowed and pupils learnt effectively. In a very few lessons there were some unacceptable standards of behaviour which had an adverse effect on both the lesson and the learning of others. Where the pace of the lesson slowed, pupils did not maintain their interest or their active involvement. The learning support assistants are used effectively to manage those pupils who misbehave. For example, in one class, the assistant removed two boys for a short duration without disruption to the lesson. They then returned and took part in the lesson.
13. Movement in and around school and behaviour are consistently good. Pupils walk in an orderly way down flights of stairs or through corridors. Politeness was often observed. For example, a little girl said, 'Excuse me, can we come through?' Behaviour in the playground was usually good, though at times boisterous. Girls played with boys. Pupils from different cultures played cheerfully with each other. The boys tended to monopolise the centre of the playground with their footballs. However, due to a lack of playtime resources, activities are limited and restricted, in some cases, to chasing or mock wrestling, which occasionally leads to aggression. At present, there is one child excluded temporarily.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.](#)

14. Pupils respect their school and each other's property. Valuable items of found property are handed in quickly. The pupils respect the staff who provide good role models for the pupils to imitate. Staff remind them of good manners and praise positive behaviour. For example, a little girl interrupted a conversation. The teacher touched the girl for reassurance, asked what she should say and then listened carefully to what was asked. Praise was then given.
15. The formal opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are limited in class or around the school. Routine tasks are allocated such as taking the registers to the office. When asked to tidy up after a particular lesson or after lunch, it was usually the girls who performed those tasks. There is a school council to enable pupils to have a voice, although this has not been taking place recently due to staffing difficulties.
16. Informally pupils are happy and easily relate to adults. Rudeness, bad language or impoliteness were not observed or heard during the course of the inspection. Pupils support each other. For example, a little boy was carrying a crate of lunch boxes and they fell to the floor. Spontaneously, two or three children stopped and helped pick them up.
17. Levels of attendance have now risen to over 90 per cent and unauthorised absence reduced to a little over 3 per cent. The high number of pupils leaving the school and the local area is one of the reasons for poor attendance. The school does not remove pupils from the registers until they know their new school.
18. Registration is taken quickly and promptly with a minimum of fuss. This creates a positive effect on the attitudes to learning. Registers are then taken by monitors to the office for daily analysis and for checking those who are late or absent.
19. Poor punctuality is now the main problem with many pupils arriving well into the first lesson. This is a sensitive issue and one that the school is carefully considering a strategy towards solving. However, some parents do not take a responsible attitude towards attendance and punctuality. An improvement would lead to their children making better progress, especially in the first periods of numeracy or literacy.

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

20. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Although the standard is similar to that reported in the last inspection, improvements have significantly reduced the amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching was sound in 55 per cent of lessons. It was good in 28 per cent and a further 12 per cent was very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons observed. It is good, overall, at the Foundation Stage. It is very good in the nursery which enables children to make a very good start and be effectively prepared for school life and routines. Teaching is sound, overall, throughout the school, although it varies significantly within different year groups. There was very good teaching in most years, although some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 2, 3 and 4 does not ensure that pupils make consistent progress in their learning. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' standards and they do not give sufficient guidance on ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their work. These restrict the standards achieved. The teaching of English and mathematics is sound overall with some good features. This enables pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills soundly. Some teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to use these skills effectively to support work in some other subjects, for example history and science. However, this is not consistently done in a wide range of subjects for pupils to apply and extend their literacy and numeracy skills. This does not enable them to apply their skills frequently and does not promote higher standards.

21. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and most manage the pupils effectively to enable them to sustain interest and concentration. They make good use of detailed curriculum planning, for example the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks and national subject guidance, to identify learning objectives as a focus for their teaching during the term. However, teachers do not plan consistently in their short-term lesson planning. They do not always clearly identify the specific lesson objectives or show how pupils' learning builds upon prior attainment. This leads to inconsistencies in pupils' progress. For example, in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, the teacher had used the National Numeracy Framework very effectively to provide a clear focus for each lesson and to build closely on what had been covered in previous lessons. However, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher's planning was very brief, did not build clearly on what had been covered earlier and did not provide a firm structure for developing pupils' learning.
22. Where teaching was good or very good, teachers used good subject knowledge and effective, interesting teaching methods to gain pupils' attention and extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a very good Year 3 history lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to use their research skills to find out the differences between the ways of life of the Celts and the Romans. He provided a very good range of resources to enable pupils to apply their research skills. The teacher used good subject knowledge to support and guide pupils, especially those with special educational needs and those of lower attainment. Pupils were very interested and motivated by the task and worked hard throughout the lesson. The feedback activity at the end of the lesson showed clearly that all pupils had gained very good knowledge and understanding of the lives of Celts and Romans.
23. Teachers work very successfully with support staff to enable pupils, especially those of lower attainment, to be given effective support in their work. This enables them to be aware of what is required and to make sound and often good progress in their learning. However, teachers do not use assessment information consistently to ensure that the learning activity is matched closely to the needs of the range of pupils in the class. Where there is little or no support available, this does not allow pupils to make sound progress in their learning. Teachers do not challenge higher attaining pupils enough to apply their skills and extend their knowledge. They do not ensure that the activity is organised so that pupils of all abilities can participate fully. For example, in a Year 2 geography lesson, all pupils were required to complete the same mapping activity. The teacher used one country at a time before moving on to the next question. This restricted the pace of the lesson and did not enable higher attaining pupils to achieve as much as they should. Lower attainers and pupils for whom English is an additional language were not able to read the names on the map, for example 'Europe' and 'The Netherlands'. They waited until the teacher was able to offer further guidance, but did not achieve very much in the lesson.
24. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' standards of work and behaviour. Where they are high, pupils respond very positively and are keen to succeed. For example, in a very good Year 6 music lesson, the teacher challenged the pupils to work in groups and produce a musical composition linked to the story of the 'grey lady ghost'. She had high expectations that they would organise themselves and select from a good range of tuned and untuned instruments to compose their work. The pupils responded very effectively and clearly enjoyed the practical music-making activity. They co-operated well in their groups and took pride in what they achieved. Where teachers' expectations are not high enough, pupils do not sustain their interest and concentration and this limits attainment. For example, in an unsatisfactory physical education lesson, the teacher directed each activity and restricted the opportunity for pupils to become actively involved. This lack of involvement led to some disinterest and lack of effort. The

very limited opportunity to practise their skills did not promote high standards.

25. Some teachers use homework effectively to support aspects of work covered in class, for example when Year 5 pupils gathered information to use on a spreadsheet in a information and technology lesson. Most teachers use homework to reinforce basic skills in spelling and multiplication tables, especially in the juniors. However, there was little evidence either in the lessons observed or in the scrutiny of pupils' work to show that homework is being used consistently in all classes, in line with the school policy, to promote higher standards. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although they do not always identify ways in which higher standards could be achieved.
26. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good across all areas. It is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good in the nursery where children benefit from the nursery teacher's good knowledge and experience. Teachers have very good control and management of children. They expect and achieve high standards of behaviour. This supports children's personal and social development very well, as they feel happy and eager to learn. Their classrooms are attractive, well organised and prepared, so children are stimulated and effectively encouraged to take pride in their work.
27. Teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They ensure that children receive a carefully structured programme so that they achieve appropriate standards for their age in the early stages of mathematics and most aspects of literacy. Reading in reception is an area for development. For instance, strategies to support home reading are not as strong as in the nursery, affecting the children's attitudes and their progress. Teachers plan the curriculum effectively as a team under the direction of the head of the Foundation Stage. They set clear objectives for the activities, which are controlled by adults, to promote the six areas of learning. The planning for free-choice activities in reception is less effective as these often lack a specific learning focus to challenge and inspire the higher attaining pupils. Teachers have recognised this in literacy and numeracy and plan different activities to meet children's different needs. For example, children with special educational needs or English as an additional language often work in small groups with adults and receive effective support in their learning. Children receive a well organised, stimulating range of activities with a mix of free choice and more structured activities led by the teacher. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team, using a wide range of resources effectively to capture children's interest in their learning.
28. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall. Teachers do not consistently modify their methods and resources to meet the needs of these pupils, as defined in their good individual education plans. However, pupils with special educational needs learn effectively alongside other pupils, due to the good levels of support they receive from teaching assistants. These pupils have satisfactory opportunities for small group work. For example, younger pupils with learning difficulties in literacy successfully discuss their work with the support staff and complete partly prepared sentences with good levels of understanding and accuracy. This support enables them to complete similar work to the other pupils in the group who are able to write sentences unaided.
29. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is sound. They receive effective models of spoken and written language from their teachers that supports their learning successfully. All staff create a welcoming environment in the multi-racial school in which these pupils feel confident to contribute. Due to the skills of the specialist teacher the small group of pupils at an early stage of speaking English make good progress in speaking, reading and writing during their withdrawal session. However, her

skills are not always so effective in whole class activities; for example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, she did not focus so clearly on developing the English language skills of these pupils. They are more advanced, but still need support with developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Their learning in lessons is sound overall, although it varies considerably according to the support received. It is least effective when planning and teaching takes no account of their language needs, such as in a geography lesson, so that they learned little..

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

30. The school plans an appropriate curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. It covers the required areas of learning and is relevant to children's needs. The curriculum contributes effectively to all aspects of their development and prepares them satisfactorily for Year 1.
31. The curriculum for pupils between the ages of 5 and 11 years is satisfactory. It includes a full range of subjects and meets statutory requirements in all subjects. The school provides pupils with special educational needs with an appropriate curriculum, mainly within their classes, and fully meets the requirements of the nationally agreed Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. Led by the good management of the co-ordinator for special educational needs, supported by class teachers and support staff, individual education plans identify pupils' needs well. Pupils with English as an additional language have their needs identified early and receive additional support with the aim of ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum. This is not fully successful, as those at an early stage of learning English do not always receive sufficient support and appropriate work in subjects such as history and geography, which affects their learning. The curriculum offered promotes the diverse cultures of multi-ethnic pupils in a positive and sensitive way.
32. **The school ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. Generally, all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. However, a small number of Year 2 pupils, for whom English is an additional language, are regularly withdrawn from some mathematics lessons in order to support their language development, rather than receiving appropriate extra help during English. This does not enable them to receive the full mathematics curriculum and restricts their progress. A policy for able and gifted pupils has recently been developed, although it is still to be implemented.**
33. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and all pupils have the required daily amount of time of one hour. Although teachers include some activities that extend numeracy skills in other subjects, for example the use of graphs in science investigations, numeracy skills are not consistently promoted in all subjects. The school has developed its strategy for teaching the skills of literacy soundly, although teachers do not consistently extend pupils' skills in other subjects to promote higher standards.
34. The provision for personal, social and health education throughout the school is in its early stages. The school is planning to appoint a co-ordinator for this area of the curriculum who will develop a coherent programme for the school to ensure all aspects, including health and drugs awareness issues, are covered effectively. All classes spend time each week discussing a wide range of topics linked with their personal development. A class of Year 6 pupils was seen discussing how well prepared they felt to enter their

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.



next stage of education at secondary school. They confidently expressed their views and listened to what others had to say. All these pupils stated how much the school had helped and supported them with their academic learning and personal development.

35. Curriculum planning is based on national guidelines in all subjects except for music and religious education. Music planning is satisfactorily guided by a commercial scheme. The curriculum for religious education has been soundly drawn up in accordance with the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for the subject. The appropriate emphasis on numeracy and literacy has meant that other subjects have not been the main focus for development. However, although it is currently an inconsistent practice, teachers and subject managers are beginning to analyse what is taught in order to ensure curriculum coverage. In addition, in some subjects such as science, analysis of school and national tests are also used to review what is taught to pupils.
36. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate in a range of physical activities and competitive sports. There is a sound range of clubs and groups including football, netball, cricket and games in the hall at lunch-times led by a youth group leader. Visits are made to Birmingham City Football club after school including seeing the England under 21 side play. Pupils make visits to museums and other places of interest. Year 1 pupils walk and survey the local environment in connection with their geography project. Year 2 pupils visit a butterfly museum. Year 3 pupils visit Lunt Fort during their Roman history topic. Year 4 pupils make a variety of trips including Birmingham Museum, Symphony Hall and a canal trip in the summer term. Year 5 pupils have visited a working farm linked with their geography topic. The 'Out of Hours Learning Club' is a strong feature of extra-curricular provision. It gives opportunities for a wide variety of activities such as homework, science, mathematics, English and Spanish. They are well supported by pupils. A camping trip is being organised later this year for older pupils to provide opportunity for residential experience to enhance social skills.
37. The local community makes a satisfactory contribution to learning. Birmingham City Football Club ground is adjacent to the school and pupils are invited to information and communication technology activities at its Study Centre. In addition, members of the team visit the school and assist with training. Successful bids for grants have been made to the New Opportunities Fund with support from the Bordesley Village Community Association and the Bourneville Village Trust. This has enabled the Phoenix Kids Club to be started to provide before and after school provision for pupils.
38. The school has good constructive relations with partner institutions. These include other local primary schools in a cluster group arrangement. The school benefits from this close liaison for sharing and enhancing expertise, for example training programmes for mentors and learning support assistants. Initial teacher training students from the University of Central England are well supported by the school.
39. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is sound and has been maintained since the last inspection. Religious education makes a significant contribution towards pupils' spiritual development as it provides opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge and insight into different faiths. Teachers encourage pupils effectively to think about and show respect for values and beliefs, such as an understanding why Muslims fast during Ramadan. All staff set a good example to pupils by valuing their ideas across the whole curriculum, for example in their writing and art. They make effective displays of work, such as paintings, around the school. Acts of worship meet statutory requirements, but opportunities are missed to develop spirituality, for example when developing aspects of the Easter story.

40. Moral and social development are good and strengths of the school. Since the last inspection the school has successfully improved moral development. It puts a high priority on good behaviour. All staff strongly promote principles to help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Even the youngest children in the nursery are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Staff have worked together effectively with pupils to draw up sets of rules for the classroom, lunchtime and playtimes. This moral code is well promoted with clear sanctions and rewards to celebrate achievement, for instance, the Rainbow Awards given out in weekly assemblies. Staff provide good role models in fostering values in pupils such as good manners, including at lunch, politeness, honesty, respect, fairness and sharing. Teachers provide some good opportunities to discuss wider social and moral issues, for example when Year 5 consider the impact of traffic pollution on the local environment.
41. The school has maintained its good provision for pupils' social development, reflecting the good quality of relationships in the school. It is increasingly improving opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. A school council has been established to help pupils develop an understanding of citizenship. Members are elected from each class to give pupils a voice in running the school. The school has acted upon pupils' opinions, for example, to improve toilets and to have a seating area with tables in the playground. Pupils willingly offer help in the organisation of their class. Year 6 pupils are given extra responsibility and help in the day-to-day running of the school, such as acting as leaders at playtimes, available to help younger children if needed. A group of Year 6 pupils have a very good opportunity to work together with a group of physically handicapped pupils under the Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied annual holiday scheme. After-school clubs, such as the sports clubs, successfully encourage teamwork. Pupils effectively develop an understanding of life beyond school through fund-raising events for charities, such as Comic Relief Day. Opportunities to join in the study skills group at Birmingham City football ground positively promote understanding of living in a community, as do activities such as litter picking and seed planting.
42. Provision for cultural development has been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. It is sound overall, with a strength in the pride the school places on the rich ethnic diversity of its pupils and staff. This prepares pupils effectively for living in Britain's multi-cultural society, a reason that many parents choose to send their children to the school. For example, pupils respect the diverse range of home languages and cultural identities. They celebrate a range of religious festivals, such as the Muslim Eid festival and Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. The school effectively enriches culture in the curriculum through drama and art. Pupils go to theatre performances and the annual Year 6 musical production is a highlight of the school year. Pupils worked with artists to paint a striking selection of wall murals, both inside and outside school. Opportunities to enrich cultural development through music are less well developed. There are satisfactory opportunities to make educational visits, for example to a museum in history.

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

43. Since the previous inspection the school continues to provide a caring ethos for all pupils. Parents have expressed their appreciation of the care and support the children receive. All the areas of concern from that report have been fully addressed.
44. Provision for child protection is good. The acting deputy head teacher is the designated member of staff for all aspects of child protection, with two other members of staff who are fully trained. Locally agreed procedures have been adopted. Teaching staff have been provided with good guidance on how to share any concerns that may arise. All aspects of health and safety are now good, with regular risk assessments and maintenance checks recorded. The role of the caretaker is being developed in

conjunction with the 'premises' sub-committee of the governing body. The safety and security arrangements for the staff are implemented well. There is a designated member of staff for first aid and procedures are secure. However there are insufficient members of staff who are fully trained. This is an area that is to be developed within the next few months.

45. Procedures to monitor and improve behaviour are good and contribute to improved standards. The school has introduced a detailed and realistic behaviour policy that is implemented consistently well throughout the school. Senior members of staff monitor all aspects of anti-social behaviour. At an early stage, parents of those children who behave badly are informed quickly. The midday supervisors have their own effective system of awarding 'yellow' cards to deter unacceptable behaviour. They are fully aware of the school policy and have contributed to any changes which have been required to maintain its effectiveness.
46. Procedures to monitor and improve levels of attendance are now excellent. Levels of attendance have now risen, though the unauthorised absence is still too high. The school enjoys a very effective working relationship with the education welfare officer, who checks the registers every fortnight. There is a small but significant number of parents who persistently fail to send their children to school. Prosecution is an option that is used effectively in isolated cases. An analysis of attendance figures shows that pupils leave and do not keep the school informed. This effects the attendance levels. In addition the school checks the registers daily as well as weekly. The learning support mentor is equally involved in following up absence or lateness. To encourage higher levels of attendance, there are certificates awarded in assemblies.
47. Punctuality is now recognised as more of a problem than attendance. Strict procedures are in place to monitor this. The school office has devolved a simple but effective system of quickly recognising regular lateness. To address this concern, a joint strategy involving all the agencies is being planned.
48. Procedures to monitor and promote the pupils' personal development are good. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds, so the school has worked hard to achieve harmony. This is reflected clearly in the school's ethos. There is a lack of formal monitoring, though it is effectively achieved informally in class or around the school. The class teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. A strength of the provision for ethnic minority pupils is that newly admitted children at the early stages of learning English are given a special 'buddy' at school, if possible with a pupil who speaks the same mother tongue. This effectively helps them to settle happily, to develop confidence and supports their personal development well.
49. Assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage are good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception where they are not as well developed. Teachers assess children's skills thoroughly on entry to nursery and reception and plans to assess them again at the end of the year are appropriate and will help to measure progress. Since the last inspection, procedures have improved as they now include individual targets set for literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The targets are discussed with parents and reviewed termly. Teachers use the results of assessments and the starting point tests effectively to group children, monitor progress and plan future lessons. This good practice is not sustained throughout the school.
50. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound, with some arrangements in place in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. There is some effective use of testing, for example in science. There are assessment procedures in some, but not all, non-core subjects and this is a continuing weakness. Pupils are assessed, using a nationally devised test, on

entry and when leaving the nursery and when they enter the reception year. The school is planning to retest children when they leave the reception class. In addition to the national tests in English and mathematics and teacher assessments in these subjects and science at the age of 7, pupils are assessed in writing, reading and phonics. Group targets are set from reading tests undertaken. In English and mathematics, optional national tests are used at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils are tested in reading regularly. All non-core subjects have class record sheets, which identify specific targets for the end of each unit of work and pupils are assessed against these targets.

51. Recently a tracking system has been introduced for mathematics, which is based on the key objectives for numeracy. Test results are analysed to identify pupils who need more support and to set targets for all pupils in English and mathematics. This is good feature of the assessment process. From the analysis of information, weaknesses are identified and prioritised. A new data analysis system is being introduced. The weakness is that the good amount of data available in the key areas such as English mathematics and science is not used sufficiently to guide the planning of the curriculum. Day-to-day assessment is not developed effectively, although isolated examples of good practice were noted during the inspection, for example in mathematics. The evaluation of teachers' plans is often very generalised and provides little sharp information about individual pupils to guide the planning of future work. The lack of use of assessment in this way limits pupils' progress. In particular, higher and lower attaining pupils are adversely affected. Higher attainers, for example, are not always well enough challenged through sufficiently demanding work, whilst tasks set for some lower attainers are too difficult. The weakness in the use of assessment was identified at the previous inspection and has yet to be tackled successfully.
52. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported in classes through the school's effective systems. The school has appropriate procedures to recognise and provide for these pupils. It effectively uses test results, target setting and concerns expressed by class teachers to decide where extra support should be introduced. The procedures to assess the skills of pupils with English as an additional language are good. The information is well used to highlight those pupils needing extra support. It is not fully effective in guiding teachers' planning so that there is an appropriate learning focus in all lessons. Since the last inspection the school has improved its monitoring of test results and now identifies strengths and weaknesses in standards under ethnicity.
53. The 'Phoenix' after school club is due to open soon and will provide support for both the personal and academic aspects of the children's development. For a large school, with such a diversity of children, racial harmony is good. There are good systems in place to prevent bullying or taunting. As one parent remarked, 'There is a good mix, that mixes well. That is why parents send their children here'.

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

54. Links with the parents and carers are sound. Since the last inspection the school has tried very hard to encourage and attract more parents into the life of the school. The vast majority of parents who answered the questionnaires or attended the parents' evening expressed their satisfaction with the school. To obtain a more representative parental viewpoint, a large sample was interviewed during the inspection. Their opinions confirmed those earlier pre-inspection views.
55. Links with parents and children commence effectively with an induction process, introduced by the deputy headteacher. In the Foundation Stage, parents are more closely involved with their children's education. For example, a parent came into class to show how to feed a baby. The parental involvement of those with older children is less obvious.

56. Newsletters are sent home regularly and include curriculum topics to be taught. These are not multi-lingual though there are multi-lingual members of staff available to assist if need be. Through the education welfare office, access to interpreters or other languages is available. The governors' annual report to parents also contains a questionnaire to seek ideas how to improve on links with parents. Most of the school's annual reports are detailed and give good information on what each pupil has achieved. However, they do not consistently contain targets to provide parents with a clear picture of where their child needs to improve.
57. Parents are well informed on the progress of their children with special educational needs. They make good contacts with teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Regular reviews of individual education plans and the yearly reviews of statements give further comprehensive information.
58. A recent initiative that is having a significant impact, both in links with parents and welfare, is that of the 'learning support mentor'. Any parent or child who has a concern can speak in confidence. Parents are provided with feedback. This is particularly important should parents have perceived problems on bullying. One parent whose children recently transferred to this school met the mentor. Already he felt they had settled in happily and, in his view, they were making better progress compared to their previous school.
59. Despite their efforts, the school has been unable to attract more parents to help within the school, such as with reading. Some do help, for example with the school play, in decorations or costume making. There are no 'friends of the school' or 'parent teacher association' to provide an extra tier of communication between the school and parents. A greater input would have an impact on raising the quality of education. To address the lack of parent involvement the governing body is trying to be more pro-active; for example, by making themselves available when parents congregate in the playground before or after school. The school has in effect an 'open door' policy for any parent seeking answers to concerns or to enable them to monitor their children's work. At the end of the school day the class teacher leads the class out into the playground. This allows parents to have an informal opportunity to meet their child's teacher.
60. In the Foundation Stage, the parental involvement is good. However, for the older children, many parents feel homework is either not set or inconsistently allocated. To help raise standards many feel more homework ought to be given. Inspection evidence does support their concerns. Scrutiny of the homework diaries indicates the school does not consistently try to improve parental co-operation in ensuring homework is completed.

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

61. The school is soundly led and managed. The school has made sound improvement, overall, since the last inspection. Good progress has been made on some of the key issues; for example, links with the education welfare officer have improved significantly. They are improving levels of attendance, although pupils' punctuality is still a concern. The school has re-evaluated and improved assessment procedures. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to target improvement and inform planning. The school has appointed a co-ordinator for English who has benefited from additional training and is beginning to improve standards of teaching and learning. The school has developed a homework policy, although it is not being applied consistently throughout the school. The results of national tests for 11 year-olds show that standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection. The procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching have been improved since the last

inspection. They have contributed to improvement and have reduced considerably the level of unsatisfactory teaching. However, they are not focused enough on raising standards of pupils' learning.

62. The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership, as reported in the last inspection, in promoting a positive school ethos and encouraging a strong team approach. Since taking up his post just before the last inspection, the headteacher has focused successfully on improving behaviour and creating a positive and purposeful approach to learning. This was clearly recognised by most parents in their responses in the meeting and in their questionnaires. The school's aims and mission statement are clearly set out and provide a good focus for the work of the school. Those relating to relationships and personal development are reflected clearly in the work of the school and promote a caring and supportive community. The aims which emphasise that each individual will be encouraged to achieve their personal best have yet to be fully established. Parents are supportive of the values of the school, which enables their children to enjoy school and helps them to mature and be more responsible.
63. The headteacher has been successful in establishing an effective team approach. This was recognised when the school received its 'Investors in People' award in December 2000. The headteacher, who works well with a strong and effective seconded deputy headteacher, continues to work closely with an influential acting deputy headteacher, a sound senior management team and a supportive governing body. Since the last inspection, they have improved the procedures by which the school evaluates its own performance, for example, by analysing the results of national assessment tests and increasing opportunities for monitoring and evaluating teaching. However, they are not focused rigorously enough on raising standards of attainment. Although the school has set targets for pupils' attainment at the age of 11 in English and mathematics in 2001, they are not accurately based on reliable assessment information and are not being used effectively to target improvement. The school is beginning to introduce individual pupil, group and class target setting, but they are not yet sufficiently developed to contribute to improvement.
64. The leadership for the Foundation Stage is strong, with good support provided for teachers' planning. There is a clear, shared commitment amongst the early years team to improvement. This is not fully reflected in the action plan, as it lacks appropriate targets regarding teaching and learning and children's standards.
65. Some subject managers have had some opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Some have identified good practice, but opportunities for teachers to focus carefully on how their teaching promotes improvements in pupils' achievements are not clearly established. All subject managers contribute effectively to the School Improvement Plan by evaluating progress made in their subjects during the last school year. However, many describe resources, accommodation or planning issues and do not link closely development priorities to the expected improvement in pupils' attainment. Some subject managers look carefully at teaching plans and samples of pupils' work within their subjects, but this is not consistently done in all subjects. Although staff work successfully as a team and are aware of the need to raise standards, the contributions of those with management responsibilities are not focused strongly enough on ways in which this can be achieved. There are significant variations in the effectiveness of subject managers in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. This restricts the capacity of the school to raise standards rapidly.
66. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are supportive of the school and are soundly involved in working with the headteacher and senior staff to keep fully informed and plan for the school's development. Governors

visit the school frequently and some have observed and evaluated lessons, for example in literacy. They have clearly defined areas of responsibility, through the effective committee structure and linking governors to specific subjects, for example information and communication technology, or aspects, for example pupils' welfare. Some have benefited from good quality training by the local education authority, for example, in performance management or by their local schools' consortium. This has enabled them to contribute soundly to school development. The governing body fully meets its requirements. They are involved effectively in working with the headteacher and staff to shape the direction of the work of the school, although a clear and rigorous focus on targeting pupils' attainment is not sufficiently developed.

67. The governing body, working closely with the headteacher and the school administrative and financial secretary, has established good procedures for financial planning and management. The budget process is efficiently managed. Governors monitor the budget each month and are kept fully informed of any changes. They use the finances successfully to support priorities in the School Improvement Plan, for example science and information and communication technology. Governors make efficient use of any carry-forward funds to support staffing or resource issues arising from the high level of changes in pupil numbers. Specific grants, for example those in the Standards Fund, have been used soundly to target improvement priorities. These have improved staff subject knowledge and resources and have contributed to raising standards, although the procedures to monitor cost effectiveness are not always clearly established. For example, improvement planning does not consistently identify specific learning outcomes against which spending decisions can be evaluated. The school makes good use of the principles of best value to ensure that it makes efficient use of its funds. For example, the headteacher and governors use financial and attainment information from the local education authority to compare the school's performance with other similar schools locally. The good quality school and financial administration and regular monitoring of spending levels contribute to the smooth running of the school and give sound value for money.
68. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils with special educational needs across the school. There is only one teaching assistant delegated specifically to work with pupils with special educational needs. Her awareness of what pupils need and the support she provides are very good. The other teaching assistants deployed in classes across the school are unsure about their role and the provision for pupils with special educational needs in their classes, but offer good levels of support to all the pupils under their care.
69. The senior staff of the school fully recognise the need to support pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups. They recognise and promote respect for pupils' mother tongues and cultural identities; for example, there are bilingual labels in school. The additional grant received is effectively used for the stated purpose. The policy for supporting bilingual pupils is good. The roles of the class teacher and specialist when working together do not always follow the guidelines to provide effective support with a clear learning focus for pupils learning English as an additional language. Their roles are not clearly established in this aspect.
70. There is an adequate number of teaching staff with a sound range of experience and expertise to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational and those for whom English is an additional language, are taught effectively. The number of support staff is good. They are knowledgeable and are used effectively to support lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with teaching and support staff and gives appropriate guidance

when needed, although this is restricted by her full-time class teacher role. The school has sound procedures for appraisal and performance management. These are enhanced by good procedures for staff professional development which are linked closely to school improvement priorities, for example improving staff expertise in literacy and information and communication technology. They contribute successfully to the effectiveness of improvement planning and to raising standards. The school has sound induction procedures for staff new to the school. These have proved effective, for example, in ensuring that an American exchange teacher receives good support in settling into school and is fully aware of expectations and routines. They limit any inconsistencies which could occur in developing pupils' learning.

71. The school's accommodation is good despite being an old building. Many of the architectural features have been retained or are in the process of being renovated. It provides an attractive learning environment and enables the full curriculum to be taught. Storage space for resources is a constant problem. The governing body is aware of the limitations and are seeking alternatives, such as reducing the size of cloakrooms. Internally the décor is bright and stimulating. The school makes good use of wall displays to celebrate achievements, such as awards for good attendance, and to promote values such as tolerance for others and anti-racist attitudes, in conjunction with Birmingham City Football Club. A pre-first world war school desk is a reminder of their heritage. Classrooms are spacious and well laid out for ease of supervision by staff. Class teachers can move quickly and effortlessly to give individual children time. This helps improve the children's learning. The corridors and halls are free of clutter or obstruction. The building is maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and is free of graffiti or damage.
72. Formal lessons in the library encourage the children to research or exchange reading books. However, at times the library was kept locked and there was little evidence of it being used to promote standards. Externally, the perimeter fence provides good security for the children without being oppressive. Within the spacious grounds, good use is made of trees and shrubs to improve the outlook. There are good outdoor play areas, although there is an absence of playtime resources, especially for the girls. This has an effect on the children's playtime activities; for example, some boys can become boisterous as they chase each other at break-times.
73. Resources for learning are sound overall. There have been some recent improvements for information and technology and they are beginning to be used effectively to raise standards in some classes. However, the range and level of resources in information and communication technology are not enough to enable all pupils to have frequent opportunities to extend and apply their skills.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to raise standards and improve the school's effectiveness, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) raise standards in English by more consistent teaching of reading, spelling and handwriting;  
(paragraphs 3, 93-95, 100-101 and 103)
  - (2) raise standards in mathematics by consistently challenging more able pupils to extend and apply their skills; and using pupils' skills in information and communication technology more effectively to promote numeracy;  
(paragraphs 4, 109 and 113)
  - (3) raise standards in science by ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' recording skills;  
(paragraphs 5, 117 and 120)
  - (4) raise standards in information and communication technology by enabling all pupils to have more frequent opportunities to apply and extend their skills and knowledge;  
(paragraphs 6, 152 and 155-156)
  - (5) continue to use the excellent procedures to improve attendance and punctuality;  
(paragraphs 17 and 19)
  - (6) use assessment information consistently to match work accurately to the learning needs of different groups of pupils;  
(paragraphs 23, 51, 61 and 113)
  - (7) improve the monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils achieve;  
(paragraphs 24, 61, 63 and 65)
  - (8) improve the use of homework by setting it consistently in all classes in line with the school policy; involving parents more effectively in supporting their children's learning.  
(paragraphs 25, 27 and 59)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	12	28	55	5	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)	37	414
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		190

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	93

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	62
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	108

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
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
	2000	29	27	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	25
	Girls	24	25	26
	Total	46	48	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (71)	86 (75)	91 (80)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	25
	Girls	26	25	26
	Total	46	46	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (64)	82 (68)	91 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	2000	21	22	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	16
	Girls	16	13	18
	Total	28	25	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (45)	59 (52)	79 (32)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	14	16	12
	Total	25	26	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (50)	60 (53)	53 (28)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	41
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	12
Pakistani	51
Bangladeshi	21
Chinese	0
White	114
Any other minority ethnic group	60

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	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.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26.5

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	928,510
Total expenditure	903,631
Expenditure per pupil	2,146
Balance brought forward from previous year	99,801
Balance carried forward to next year	123,795

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 17.2%

Number of questionnaires sent out	285
Number of questionnaires returned	49

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	47	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	43	16	6	0
The teaching is good.	49	49	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	45	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	50	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	35	45	6	2	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	51	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	31	12	4	16

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**

75. There have been considerable improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. During the inspection the nursery teacher was absent. The acting deputy headteacher, who is also Foundation Stage manager, and a supply teacher, both known to the children, taught the class. Standards have been maintained due to the good teaching, which has had a positive impact on children's learning. Parents appreciate the good start given to their children.
76. Assessment shows that on entry to the nursery aged three, the children's skills and attainment levels are below average, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Children receive good teaching in the nursery, make good progress in all the learning areas and achieve standards expected for their age. They achieve better than average standards in their creative development. This means that standards on entry to the two reception classes in September are broadly in line with standards expected nationally. Most children entering reception have attended the school's nursery or have had other pre-school experience, although a significant minority has not. Children make sound progress and by the end of the reception year they are likely to reach the early learning goals set for children aged five in almost all the learning areas. Standards of reading are slightly below those expected.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

77. Nearly all children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception class they achieve the early learning goals set for this area. This shows good progress and reflects the skilful teaching in both the nursery and reception classes from staff who know their children's needs well. Children with English as an additional language or with special educational needs receive effective support from teaching and support staff to help them make good progress.
78. Children feel secure in the welcoming atmosphere and happily settle into the learning routines in both year groups. They are keen to learn and staff successfully encourage them to join in all activities, giving the less confident extra time and encouragement to explore new situations. This leads to trusting relationships and children play and work together well. They show consideration towards each other and are helped effectively to understand the need to share and take turns. Staff promote children's personal development effectively by ensuring resources are carefully organised, labelled and easily accessible. There is a good balance between children's self-selected activities and those directed by the teacher. This helps them to develop independence in selecting activities and resources. Children in both years show independence in dressing themselves and in personal hygiene.
79. The adults provide good role models for children. They set clear, high expectations for behaviour and always treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. Children in the nursery and reception classes respond well and their behaviour is very good. They use 'please' and 'thank you' and are eager to help. The adults effectively develop children's understanding of the need for class rules and to look after equipment carefully. For example, when the nursery children heard in a story that bear had broken his bowl, they made him a new bowl out of clay very enthusiastically.

**Communication, language and literacy**

80. Children in the nursery communicate confidently, make good progress and achieve appropriately for their age. For example, a boy dictated his story about a lion for the

teacher to write in the class book on animals, 'The lion's head is all hairy.' The teacher using questions skilfully to clarify and extend his vocabulary by using the word 'mane'. In reception, a significant minority of pupils require encouragement to answer and ask questions and contribute to whole class discussions. By the time the children end the reception year the majority make sound progress, speaking clearly to other children and adults. The children with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress so that they communicate simply but confidently. Staff take care in lessons to identify and explain new vocabulary. Children listen carefully and carry out instructions accurately. For instance, they quickly respond to 'lift the parachute up, now down' in a nursery movement lesson. All adults talk to the children effectively and are sympathetic listeners, showing children that they value their efforts at communicating.

81. Teachers have organised interesting writing areas in all classrooms. This means that nursery children often choose to practise writing patterns and enjoy copying the teacher's writing. In the reception classes, children receive good teaching about letter sounds and blends and accurately link the sounds and names of letters. They use this knowledge well to sound out words when they are spelling and writing. They form most of their letters accurately. Most children achieve the early learning goal by the end of reception. Some higher attaining children confidently spell simple words correctly and are starting to express their ideas in sentences in their independent writing. They exceed expected standards in writing.
82. In both the nursery and reception classes, children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They handle books carefully. Even three year olds in the nursery soon understand that print carries meaning and goes from left to right. They point to pictures in information books and ask 'What's this?' The nursery children's enjoyment of reading is promoted very effectively by having a weekly 'book share' for parents and children to select two books to read together at home. This encourages the children's progress in reading, which is good. In the reception classes the system changes and teachers do not promote home reading as effectively. There are considerably fewer books to attract children in the class book corners. Although children take home books from the school library as well as their readers, teachers do not continue to give sufficient emphasis to establish the habit of daily reading. The result is that reception children's progress is too slow and they do not fully achieve the range of reading skills expected. They successfully read a range of familiar words, but they find it difficult to describe key events and the main characters in a story. In contrast, they are skilled at using a picture dictionary to find words independently, such as the names of fruits. They copy the words accurately next to the appropriate fruit in their own books.
83. The reception teachers are using parts of the literacy framework to prepare children appropriately for the National Literacy Hour in Year 1.

### **Mathematics**

84. Children receive good teaching and make good progress in developing numeracy skills in the nursery. They enjoy playing number games, especially when the nursery teacher uses fun methods, such as guessing the shapes in a kangaroo puppet's pouch and singing counting rhymes. In reception, teaching and learning are sound. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to reach the standards expected for mathematics and a few will exceed them. They all count to 10 and many count well beyond.
85. Reception teachers build effectively on children's knowledge and provide good opportunities to discover new knowledge through practical experience. Children know the names of the shapes square, rectangle, circle and triangle and enjoy making shape and colour patterns. Teachers make good use of literacy links to promote numeracy

successfully throughout the day. For example, using a story about a girl with fruits in her basket, they asked a number questions such as, 'She took one away, how many were left?' This successfully encouraged children to reply using words such as 'more' and 'less' when they solved the problem. The teachers reinforced understanding of weight well: 'Was her basket lighter or heavier at the end when she had none left?' Children learned effectively by weighing toy fruits on a balance.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

86. Children in the nursery are confident investigators. They show much curiosity when identifying features of things they observe. Teachers use this enthusiastic approach effectively and provide a wide variety of learning experiences. For instance, children were very interested to watch a visiting mother bathing her baby. They reasoned that a baby could not wash himself because his hands were too small. They make appropriate observations about where they live. For example, following a visit to the nearest pedestrian crossing, they discussed how to cross the road safely.
87. In the reception classes many children start with some basic general knowledge. Teachers recognise this and provide a good range of practical experiences to develop their understanding appropriately, such as baking biscuits and testing waterproof material. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and most children are likely to achieve expected standards. In a discussion after smelling and naming tropical fruits, the teacher used questions effectively to improve children's observation of ripening fruits. They reasoned that a banana skin turned black, because 'it's burnt' and 'it's all dirty cos it's all melted from the sun'. Less effective teaching occurred when children were asked to show an awareness of change by comparing the time taken to grow sunflower seeds and cress seeds when they were not planted simultaneously.
88. Children confidently use equipment such as a computer to support their learning. They use the mouse independently in both year groups to support their learning, such as matching letters to pictures and drawing pictures of houses with walls, windows, door and a roof, which they print with support. In both year groups, children select resources and use tools safely to construct and build.

### **Physical development**

89. Nursery children make good progress in their physical development and have already reached expected standards through receiving good teaching. Teachers appropriately develop children's awareness of moving safely in large spaces such as the hall and outdoor play area. They ensure that nursery children have an effective mix of free play and structured activities and provide a wide range of opportunities. For instance, children worked co-operatively together with a parachute as a class group, confidently pedalled and steered wheeled toys and climbed on large outdoor apparatus in the well-equipped nursery play area.
90. In reception, children receive sound teaching which is reflected in their learning. They have reached the required standards, but are not being challenged fully to develop their skills further. They run, jump, skip, hop and balance. They move confidently in gymnastic lessons showing good control travelling along benches, exploring different ways of using their hands and feet, for instance like a 'bouncy bunny'. Teachers train children to carry apparatus safely. The progress made in lessons was reduced by the length of time children had to sit and wait for their turn, rather than improving their skills. Changing took too long. Staff help children appropriately to gain control of the finer movements required for skills such as cutting and threading.



## **Creative development**

91. The nursery children's creative development exceeds standards expected. They make good progress in learning in all aspects. Teaching and learning in reception are sound, the children achieve their learning goals. In both year groups many art activities are completed under the close guidance of an adult. This means the finished results are of a good quality. However, this restricts the range of opportunities for children to experiment and be imaginative. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to experience a range of media and materials. Children in both year groups confidently draw, paint and print to create a desired effect, such as a repeating pattern in black and white. They mix colours under controlled conditions. For instance, reception children worked in small groups to mix red and yellow. Nursery children enjoyed modelling with clay to make a thumb pot, which they decorated with marks. All children try hard to work carefully and show good concentration.
92. Children in both year groups enjoy making music. They sing a range of simple songs from memory, adding actions where appropriate. They choose and play percussion instruments rhythmically. Many nursery children confidently sing a solo to the class of a favourite or invented song. All children confidently take part in imaginative play, such as acting as workers in the reception class café, cooking, taking orders and serving food.

## **ENGLISH**

93. Standards have improved slightly since the last inspection. Just after the inspection, the results of the 1997 national tests for 7-year olds showed that standards were below average in reading and average in writing. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards for 7-year-olds are well below the national average in reading and average in writing. Attainment is above the average of similar schools in writing and in line with the average for reading. Inspection evidence shows that standards are just below the national average overall. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average at 7 years of age. Standards in reading and writing are below average. Pupils build soundly in Year 1 on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage, although their progress is not consistently maintained throughout the school.
94. National test results at the age of 11 at the time of the last inspection showed that attainment was well below the national average. The results of the 2000 national tests show that standards for 11-year-olds were maintained at this level. Standards were in line with the average of similar schools. Although test results show that standards have remained well below the national average, they clearly show that the school has increased year on year the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4. Inspection findings show that attainment at the age of 11 is beginning to improve. It is below average nationally, rather than well below.
95. Pupils enter the school at broadly average levels of attainment. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage due to good teaching. By the ages of 7 and 11, they progress soundly overall, although not consistently in all year groups. Standards of attainment are broadly average by the age of 6, but are below average by the ages of 7 and 11. A key factor influencing the fall in pupils' attainments between the ages of 7 and 11 is that assessment information is insufficiently used to identify and support the development of pupils' individual skills. The school has identified the development of writing as a priority and inspection evidence showed some improvement in the standards being achieved by 7-year-olds. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are soundly developed in most classes, with the good use of question and answer. Reading is given too low a priority. Word spellings are learnt weekly, but are not directly applied to pupils' daily work. Evidence from pupils' previous work shows much work unfinished and unsatisfactorily presented. Teachers provide very few opportunities for pupils to correct or redraft their work to

improve their standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language progress soundly at similar rates to other pupils. There is no significant variation between the rates of progress of boys and girls. The school enables all pupils to be included in the full range of activities.

96. Teachers show increasing confidence and consistency in successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy. This is having a pronounced impact on the gradual rise in standards. Pupils are given some opportunities to use these writing, reading and speaking skills in subjects such as history and geography. However, written standards in all subjects are adversely affected by work being uncompleted. Marking usually rewards effort. When teachers correct pupils' written work and suggest further ideas for development, they do not ensure that pupils follow these suggestions. Many mistakes remain uncorrected and work is unsatisfactorily presented.
97. Standards in speaking and listening are average across the school. Most pupils are good listeners and listen carefully to what is said. They respond appropriately, using an increasingly complex vocabulary as they move through the school. There are good opportunities in the introductory part of the literacy hour to talk about their ideas. During group work, pupils are usually satisfactorily encouraged to discuss their work and its development amongst themselves. Sometimes these opportunities are lost with the teacher taking too long over the introduction. High quality discussions were seen during the inspection. For example, in Year 6, pupils described accurately the meaning and context of unfamiliar words used in a story. Here the teacher successfully enabled pupils to make an analysis of the text and encouraged pupils to develop their ideas using the conventions of Standard English. The use of an increasingly complex vocabulary and suitable resources improved their knowledge and understanding.
98. Pupils across the school are achieving below average levels expected of their age in reading. Too few make sound progress in developing their skills. The youngest are provided with regular practice in the use of sounds made by letters and how they combine in words. Many older pupils do not effectively apply these skills. They do not have the same confidence to establish the meaning of words they find difficult to read by using these methods. Pupils are given texts to read which are sometimes insufficiently matched to their assessed needs. The range of books they read is sometimes limited to their own choice of fiction or non-fiction books, with insufficient guidance from teachers to match their levels of attainment. Reading records are underdeveloped. Far too few opportunities are taken for involving parents to aid the progress of their children. Pupils do not take reading books home frequently enough. The unsatisfactory reading records that do exist are insufficiently shared with parents to inform them on the developing skills and progress of their children. The school uses national tests to determine pupils' levels of reading attainment. It provides a score for each pupil, but insufficiently analyses the skills pupils need to acquire to make further progress.
99. Teachers provide too few opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to use books for research and reference. However, a good example was seen in a Year 3 history lesson on the Celts and the Romans. The teacher supplied a wide, relevant range of reference books for the pupils to conduct their investigations. He provided a very good range of resources for pupils to write down their findings, including the use of information and a CD-ROM. He frequently found it necessary to assist many of the pupils to access and understand their books. This illustrated the previously limited range of opportunities provided for pupils to use books to find out facts. This is hindering their progress in the range and complexity of text they can read. Arising from his awareness of pupils' difficulty to use books, a Year 6 teacher appropriately prepared a printed text for them to use. This supported well their use of the text to find the information they needed for their written work and improved their skills.

100. Writing skills are mainly soundly developed, with many pupils reaching satisfactory levels and some achieving above the expected standard for their age, especially in the juniors. The most able 7-year-olds wrote a detailed description of a Katie Morag story they had previously read. Here standards were well supported by the two teachers taking the class having previously prepared questions of a variety of difficulty, matched to pupils' needs, enabling them to discuss and provide their written answers. They made good progress. This was due to a good team approach between the two teachers and a teaching assistant involved in effectively developing and supporting pupils' progress across the class. This level and quality of support across the school is not always as consistent or as well staffed. There are examples in Year 1 where teachers have difficult children to manage, who have not yet reached adequate standards in their reading and writing and who are not so well supported through the increased level of staffing. This slows down their progress. Across the school the practice and means of developing pupils' writing skills is insufficiently supported by an informed assessment of what the pupils have achieved and what they now need to do to improve. By the time pupils reach Year 2, a significant number is still not achieving sufficiently for their age and standards are below average. The progress they make by the end of Year 2 is not consistently informed or developed by assessment across the school. Pupils make sound progress, overall, in the juniors, although it is not consistent in all years. Just over half of the Year 6 pupils achieve average standards, with a small number achieving above expected levels. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high enough expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work and this restricts attainment.
101. Standards of handwriting are inconsistently developed across the school. Pupils have infrequent handwriting lessons. Too often teachers accept unsatisfactory handwriting in pupils' work. They do not encourage them to rewrite poorly presented work or to draft and redraft their work to a final copy of a high standard. Where this is done, as seen in occasional displays across the school, there is a sound standard of handwriting and presentation. This is sometimes further supported by information and communication technology, for example, by the use of word processing. Across all curriculum areas, pupils' work shows in many cases, underdeveloped and untidy handwriting.
102. Teaching and learning in English are sound across the school with some good or occasionally very good teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching in English was seen during the period of the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example, of the class or group reading book and use it effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some teachers use a good range of resources to enable all pupils to be fully involved in the learning activities. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher provided different information sheets to different groups of pupils in order to encourage them all to contribute their opinions on the story on '*The Grey Lady of Aston Hall*'.
103. Samples of pupils' previous work did not show such effective teaching. Its content was inconsistently developed. For example, when pupils in Year 4 were writing letters and postcards about a holiday, the teachers did not allow enough time for pupils to progressively develop their letters with an appropriate structure and content before moving on to the next topic. Uncompleted stories and grammatical tasks in pupils' books show the same inconsistency of approach. Teachers do not sufficiently ask pupils to finish off tasks for homework. This is unevenly and inconsistently set across the school. Teachers plan literacy hours soundly and structure them effectively in most lessons. However, sometimes whole-class discussion goes on too long and pupils have insufficient time for their group tasks. Teachers group pupils in classes according to their abilities, but do not always sufficiently modify tasks to meet their needs. They do not use assessment information indicating pupils' standards sufficiently to influence the content of

further lessons. Target setting is insufficiently informed through an accurate analysis of National Test results and the assessment of pupils' competence. Teachers do not ensure that pupils' work and their resources are matched closely to their individual needs.

104. Pupils with special educational needs, who get support from the one special needs assistant employed by the school, receive a good input, well focused on the targets in their individual education plans. Other support assistants, support teachers and class teachers, do not sufficiently take account of the pupils' targets, clearly defined in their individual education plans. They do not modify tasks to match them to these targets.
105. Adults promote a calm, friendly atmosphere for learning and pupils respond to this with good attitudes and behaviour. They try hard, concentrate on their work and are motivated, interested learners. Teachers give good oral feedback to pupils on their work, but do not always match this to the defined targets pupils have displayed in their exercise books. Marking is mainly rewarding and insufficiently identifies errors and how pupils should develop their work further.
106. The English subject manager has successfully influenced the implementation of the school's literacy strategy. Through good training, she has improved her own subject knowledge and has used this to improve other teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. She has started to effectively monitor the planning of the curriculum, although has insufficient time to see teaching of the subject from year to year. The subject manager has analysed recent test results effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses, for example the standard of pupils' writing. The school then focused on raising writing standards and this is beginning to improve attainment. It has not yet sufficiently targeted and improved reading standards. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of English and its impact on pupils' learning are not sufficiently developed. They do not give a detailed awareness of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and how these influence planning. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to teach English and the literacy strategy. Teachers do not always use a sufficiently broad range of resources to match pupils' individual needs. The library is satisfactorily organised and stocked with fiction and non-fiction books and it is a pleasant environment. During the week of inspection the library was usually locked when not being used by teachers with their classes. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use it for independent research and study

## **MATHEMATICS**

107. When the school was last inspected, pupils' standards in mathematics were reported to be average at both 7 and 11 years. In the national tests in 1997, shortly after the inspection, this judgement was found to be accurate in relation to pupils aged 7, but over-optimistic for those aged 11, where the standards were well below average. Pupils were making good progress up to the age of 7, but more variable progress in the juniors, particularly for the higher attainers, who were at times achieving less well than they should. Investigative and oral work were particular weaknesses. A number of changes have occurred since that time, in particular the introduction of the daily numeracy lesson, which is having a steady and positive effect on standards, especially in the juniors.
108. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged 7 and 11, standards were well below average when compared to those being achieved nationally, but in line with those achieved in similar schools. There has been a steady rise in attainment in mathematics over a five year period and the 2000 test results for pupils aged 11 were the highest ever achieved. Although standards during the inspection indicate that pupils' attainment is still well below average by the age of 7 and below average by the age of 11, this masks the significant progress which has been made overall. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are

weakened mainly by the small proportion of pupils achieving at the challenging higher levels and the increased number of pupils with special educational needs and those of lower attainment. This reflects the particular characteristics of the year groups. They have changed considerably since the pupils first entered the school due to the significant number of pupils who have joined the groups during their primary years. Standards are similar to those achieved in the tests at the time of the last inspection. Progress, particularly in relation to implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, has been satisfactory overall, although not consistent throughout the school.

109. Standards are currently well below average for the 7 year olds and below average for the 11 year olds in numeracy and the other aspects of mathematics. Around three fifths of the current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve the expected Level 4 in the national tests, although very few are expected to achieve the higher Level 5. Overall, pupils are making steady progress in the juniors, although there is some inconsistency in their progress in the infants. From the below average levels of prior experience of mathematics evident when children enter the nursery, they make good progress through the Foundation Stage. Infant pupils do not make consistent progress, due mainly to teachers not always building effectively upon prior skills and knowledge. The progress made by the older pupils is now improving. However, the quality of teaching varies and does not always provide the challenge needed to raise attainment further, particularly for the more able pupils. Girls achieve better than boys, which reflects the national pattern. However, there is greater variation than the national average as boys achieve significantly below and girls achieve slightly better. Pupils with special educational needs are supported soundly and make similar progress to the others. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by the assigned support staff. These pupils are often well represented among higher attainers in their year groups.
110. By the age of 7, a small number of more able pupils understand place value to hundreds. They correctly add two digit numbers together. They estimate length and weight in appropriate units and then measure quantities accurately. Most pupils sequence in twos, fives and tens. They are learning simple tables bonds and the more confident are developing strategies for mental calculations involving addition and subtraction. They read simple clock faces accurately and some recognise odd and even numbers and simple fractions. They recognise key features of two-dimensional shapes. Most pupils use mathematical vocabulary such as 'longer' and 'shorter' accurately. At present, just over four-fifths of Year 2 pupils appear likely to achieve the expected standard, but with only a very small number achieving at the highest level. The positive benefits of the structured daily mathematics lessons are gradually beginning to move standards forward.
111. **In the juniors, there is evidence of more consistent improvement. By the age of 11, pupils are increasingly confident in their approach to mental calculations and many perform these accurately. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were developing efficient mental strategies for adding four single digit numbers and in a similar class where they were learning effective methods for adding ten, nine or eight. They have a growing ability to use fractions, decimals and percentages with increasing accuracy. They represent information correctly in block and conversion graphs and in pie charts. The most able pupils calculate area by formula, measure angles and recognise types of triangle. There are some opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils occasionally use computers, particularly spreadsheets, to extend their mathematical understanding, although this is not a consistently strong feature across the school. The most able pupils have covered an appropriate range of work. The range and quality of work observed was best for pupils in Year 5, particularly for the more able pupils.**

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have good class management and control skills. They use them well to ensure that pupils stay focused on their work. Many use questions effectively to challenge pupils to apply their knowledge, especially in oral mental activities. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher challenged other pupils with 'How did they do that?' and 'Any other ways to work out that problem?' to encourage pupils to listen to answers and extend their own thinking and number skills. Teaching varies significantly, especially in the infants, and this does not enable pupils to make consistently sound progress. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in the infants. Here, there was insufficient structure and management of the session to ensure that pupils knew what they were doing, resources were lacking and the session lacked pace. Elsewhere, the pace of learning is generally satisfactory overall, although with significant variation due to inconsistencies in teachers' expectations. Planning to meet individual needs was a positive feature in a few lessons, but staff awareness varies. There was little reference to the needs of pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language in teachers' daily planning. The quality of marking has been a recent focus for attention and there is a broadly consistent approach across the school. Marking is weaker, however, in identifying exactly what pupils need to do to improve their performance.
113. Most teachers use the closing few minutes of the lesson effectively, although occasionally, where the timing of the lesson is insecure, it is underdeveloped. They reinforce the use of correct mathematical vocabulary successfully. This helps to extend pupils' learning in literacy. Oral sessions support the development of improved mental skills and agility. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to meet the needs of the most able pupils. However, two positive examples were seen, in Year 3 and Year 4 lessons, when teachers were making observation notes during main activities. In addition, the school has identified one particularly able mathematician in the middle of the school and makes provision each week for that pupil to work with a higher year group. Teachers do not use information and communication technology enough to extend learning in mathematics. The school has been implementing comprehensive target-setting for year groups and is moving toward identifying targets for individuals.
114. The mathematics subject manager is providing sound leadership for the subject and has had opportunities to observe teaching. There are sound procedures for formal assessment in mathematics. A start has been made in the analysis of national and optional test information. This is helping teachers to track pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness across the school. The effective use of this information to raise standards is a priority for the co-ordinator. Record keeping provides teachers with an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils, but is updated infrequently and is insufficiently used to support planning.

## **SCIENCE**

115. The results of the most recent national assessments show that by the age of 7 pupils' standards in science are broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 2 was average and above average compared to standards in similar schools. The proportion achieving higher levels was above the national average. Pupils' attainment in the area of materials and their properties was weak. The test results for pupils at the age of 11 show that standards were low compared with the national average, but average when compared to similar schools. Standards for the higher levels of attainment were low compared to national standards, but average when compared to similar schools.
116. The school's priorities in the recent past for improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school and raising standards in literacy and numeracy have affected the rate of

improvement in standards in science. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science are below the national average for pupils at both the ages of 7 and 11, although evidence shows that there is no longer a particular weakness in the materials area of the subject. When compared directly with the judgements made at the last inspection when standards were judged to be at least in line with national standards, it appears that standards have deteriorated since that time. However, the test results shortly after the last inspection show that standards were well below the national average at both ages. Since 1997, standards have improved, especially in the last three years, from the lowest 5 per cent nationally to below the national average for pupils aged 11.

117. Throughout the school, pupils' presentation and clear, specific writing skills are insufficiently developed for science. Their diagrams and drawings are generally too small and do not fulfil their purpose of conveying information clearly. Pupils are developing a systematic approach to their investigative tasks and they have a satisfactory idea of what makes a test fair. There is insufficient use of charts and graphs in their written work and when they are present they are seldom referred to when pupils are writing up conclusions to their investigations. Computers are used in science, but at present the pupils' use of information and communication technology skills is not yet sufficient to effectively record and interpret data or to word process reports in science.
118. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year 1 correctly recalled and named the materials from which objects were made when exploring them with a magnet. More able pupils satisfactorily recorded the reaction of various materials to a magnet by writing whilst less able pupils cut out shapes to correspond to the materials used. Year 2 pupils measured and compared their hand spans and satisfactorily transferred their measurements to a graph in order to make comparisons. More able pupils carried these tasks out carefully whilst less able pupils found difficulty with numbers and scale in developing the graph. Overall, their presentation and writing skills are underdeveloped. Pupils confidently talk about what they are doing. However, their overall knowledge at the age of 7 is less than expected. Year 3 pupils correctly identified and named what a plant needs to grow, when developing a leaflet on plants. Year 4 pupils knew the symbols for components when recording a circuit they had made from bulbs, wires and batteries. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory and pupils know and explain science terminology. Pupils show satisfactory research skills when finding more information about electrical circuits from books.
119. In a good lesson about finding out information about the planets, Year 5 pupils satisfactorily explain and record the phases of the moon. In earlier work studying the sun, they have successfully used numeracy skills in their research findings when compiling and interpreting a graph of sunshine hours over a period of time. Year 6 pupils show that they have sound skills in testing when investigating the effect of temperature on dissolving different substances. However, they are less knowledgeable in identifying variables and less sure of the purpose of a control in an investigation. From the work seen in lessons, in books and on display, standards at the age of 11 are below the national average.
120. Whilst pupils use the correct terminology when it is taught to them, they have not sufficiently developed an understanding of the use of scientific language for recording data or writing reports. In all classes, recording and writing skills in science are underdeveloped. Pupils do not use tables and charts sufficiently to record information. Many reports use prose instead of clear and specific statements and diagrams generally are too small to readily convey information.
121. Although attainment is below the national average, pupils' progress in science is sound. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English

is an additional language is sound. Behaviour in lessons is good as a result of the good management techniques of the teachers and support staff. Any behavioural problem is dealt with quietly and efficiently so that pupils' learning is not disrupted. Pupils work well in groups and co-operate, sharing both ideas and resources. This contributes effectively to the standards achieved.

122. Teaching in science is sound throughout the school, with examples of good and very good teaching. Teachers plan lessons to ensure that pupils of the same year group have similar experiences. In well-planned lessons, teachers make good use of national subject guidelines to identify and develop pupils' skills. However, this is not a consistent practice throughout the school. In all lessons teachers make pupils aware of what the learning intentions are. Frequently these are written on the board. In most lessons, teachers return to these intentions at the end to review what has been learned. They match tasks effectively to the differing ability groups including the wide range of pupils with special educational needs. However, whilst the tasks are suited to include the higher attaining pupils, their learning is not sufficiently extended because teachers do not set high enough expectations and targets for them.
123. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of science and in all lessons they introduce the correct terminology where it is appropriate. Although some pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves, they are able to show that they understand these terms. Teachers skilfully question in order to make pupils think and explore the knowledge they have. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used questions effectively to reinforce then extend pupils' understanding of the orbit of the moon around the earth. Teachers are very clear in the way they give instructions to pupils and they check that pupils understand what they have to do. Pupils are organised and managed satisfactorily, but the pace of some lessons is too slow.
124. Currently, pupils have few opportunities to utilise and improve their skills in information and communication technology such as recording and interpreting data as well as word processing reports in science. Whilst teachers mark work diligently, there are insufficient comments to indicate how a pupil can improve. In addition, there is insufficient evidence to show that pupils follow up any marking comments such as finishing work.
125. Teachers make good use of nationally produced guidelines to ensure full coverage of the subject. Systems for monitoring and evaluating what is taught are in their early stages. The subject manager for science works hard to give a good lead to the subject. The manager has an effective system for analysing test results and assessments. At present, the results of these analyses are only beginning to be used to provide targets for individual pupils and modify what is taught.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

126. Standards and progress are in line with expectations overall for pupils at the ages of 7 and 11, although pupils' skills in drawing do not always meet expected standards. The amount of pupils' work on display throughout the school and in sketchbooks is sound and of satisfactory quality. Although sketchbooks have a variety of work in them, there is little evidence of the skills of drawing and painting being systematically developed through the school.
127. By the age of 7, Year 2 pupils show careful control in the use of pencil and crayon. They also show sound skills in designing their ideas before they make a mural using string, glue and Modroc. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils designed an effective display area where their murals would be placed after painting them. In their sketchbooks, pupils have made some good observational drawings of plants, although the detail is not carefully carried



out. Year 3 pupils make satisfactory drawings in their sketchbooks to develop perspective. Whilst many pupils are beginning to grasp the idea of perspective, the drawings are not carefully completed, as pencil skills are not sufficiently developed.

128. Year 4 pupils show good choice of colour and design when developing an abstract picture of their journey to school. The idea for the task came from looking at pictures by Paul Klee. They chose colours that had meaning for the picture and pupils were eager to explain the significance of the colours. One pupil, using a range of vertical coloured stripes, explained clearly that each colour represented a different type of weather encountered on the journey each day. Using paint and collage techniques they added significant landmarks to the background seen on the journey. Their results showed good design and creative skills. Display pictures of 'hairy dogs' developed by using a comb on wet paint show sound skills in mixing and using paint. Year 5 pupils have satisfactorily drawn and coloured pictures of Queen Elizabeth I in connection with their history project. Some of these and some other pictures in sketchbooks show insufficient care and control. In a high quality display Year 6 pupils have made masks and faces. Other Year 6 pupils have satisfactorily painted pictures inspired by Gainsborough and Hockney, although their care in using pencils is not sufficiently developed.
129. Art throughout the school is used soundly in displays and gives a pleasant and colourful look to classrooms and corridors. A visiting artist, working with groups of pupils in the school, has enhanced the playground and pupils' entrance hall successfully with very colourful murals.
130. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The behaviour of pupils is generally satisfactory and in most classes observed, pupils showed enjoyment of art in lessons. They are eager to answer questions and contribute ideas for discussion. Pupils work co-operatively and discuss how they will develop their tasks amongst themselves. Their positive approach contributes to standards of achievement.
131. The quality of teaching, overall, is generally sound. Teachers are confident and show a sound knowledge of the subject. They plan lessons effectively using a nationally produced framework. They share what is to be learned in the lesson with the pupils through writing these intentions on the board as well as discussing them. However, although teachers make their expectations for behaviour quite clear, they do not emphasise what pupils are to achieve by the end of the lesson. This does not ensure that pupils always develop their skills effectively. Although planning follows the guidelines in the national scheme, the skills to be developed within those guidelines do not systematically build upon prior learning, especially in drawing.
132. The subject manager gives a clear lead to developing pupils' skills and knowledge. He has improved the range of resources and organised them efficiently for staff and pupil use. Folders of art and design ideas have been provided for each year group to support teachers in developing pupils' skills. These contribute positively to enabling pupils to make sound progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

133. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was drawn from the scrutiny of pupils' work, artefacts displayed around the school, a detailed scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with staff. Standards in design and technology are in line with what is expected nationally by pupils at the age of 7, but below the expected level by those at the age of 11. This is a similar picture to that reported in the previous

inspection. The progress made since that time, other than in the comprehensive planning now available to support teachers, is unsatisfactory.

134. At the age of 7, pupils begin to form simple designs to make moving mechanisms and learn how to join different materials in a variety of ways. They create a design for a vehicle capable of carrying 20 cubes, identify the materials needed and sequence accurately the various stages in its construction. By the time pupils are 7 they have developed their cutting skills sufficiently to follow a pattern, cut out material and create a range of puppets, including glove puppets and finger puppets. They develop their literacy skills effectively in writing an account of their planned task. In the two lessons observed, in Year 1, which focused on food technology, pupils were learning about fruit and vegetables through a range of activities such as designing a fruit salad. While these sessions were to some extent successful and were carefully planned, they had weaknesses which affected pupils' learning. In one class, the tasks were over-directed by the adults. This meant that pupils had too few opportunities to be actively involved, to make decisions or to develop independence in their learning. The other session, which attempted to provide far more of these opportunities, was marred by indifferent behaviour and lack of attention by a few pupils.
135. At Key Stage 2, evidence was limited. The curriculum proposes a wide range of experiences for pupils. However, there was little indication that pupils complete many tasks or that they have had, over time, a consistent experience of the subject. On the evidence seen, the quality of their craft skills remains low through the key stage. Year 3 pupils have made pizzas and were observed in the early stages of a unit of work on the design and making of a free-standing picture frame. Inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' recording, incomplete work and a lack of other evidence indicates that pupils' experience of the subject in Year 4 is very limited. Recorded evidence in Year 5 is similarly sketchy and inconsistent both within and between classes. For example, the first piece of work recorded by one pupil is in the month prior to the inspection, while another has references to a task undertaken towards the end of the first term (designing a musical instrument). However, there is no evaluation or indication that this work was completed. Similarly, there is no evidence that the moving toys task, planned for the spring term, was undertaken. There are discrepancies between the two Year 6 classes, prior to the current term. In one, there is barely any written work and standards appear to have been very low. In the other, the pupils' planning book indicates that they made a shelter in the first term and designed a pair of slippers in the term prior to the inspection. A number of slippers are displayed in a classroom. Again, the craft skills are not strongly developed. As yet, neither design, making or evaluative skills are developed well and considerable work remains to be done if standards are to reach expected levels at the age of 11.
136. The quality of teaching was sound in the lessons observed. Short term planning has weaknesses because it does not always take into account pupils' previous knowledge and the extent to which they are ready to build on their previous skills. In a good lesson in Year 3 the teacher posed challenging questions so that pupils began to identify the likely constraints which would affect their construction of a picture frame with mounts. There was also evidence of the effective use of the digital camera to enable pupils to generate a photograph of their choosing to put into their frames when completed.
137. Design and technology makes a limited contribution to other subjects and there have been missed opportunities to develop this further.
138. The subject manager has taken over the subject very recently and recognises that a number of aspects of the subject require to be improved. She has already reorganised and audited the resources. She provides advice to colleagues and is forming an overview on standards in the subject. The school has an extremely detailed scheme of

work based on national guidance, which provides a clear framework for the teaching of both knowledge and skills. Assessment opportunities are limited and are not used to inform planning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

139. Attainment is below the standards expected of pupils aged 7 and 11. It is below the levels reported in the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mapwork are similar to the standards expected at both 7 and 11. Their mapping skills are developed soundly throughout the school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of contrasting locations and environmental issues are not consistently developed. The geography curriculum is planned, linked closely with history, to be taught in different topics. Although these topics cover the required aspects, they do not always build on prior learning. Pupils' work shows a significant variation in the work covered between classes in the same year group. This creates uncertainties and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding which restrict their learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work vary considerably. They do not consistently match the learning activity to pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs and more able pupils. This results in some pupils not finishing their work or not being extended enough to meet the standard of which they are capable. Although pupils make sound progress in mapwork, they do not make sound progress, overall, in other aspects of their work in geography.
140. Most Year 1 pupils develop their early mapping skills effectively by accurately locating different features on a simple map of the classroom. They build on this successfully in Year 2 by using a map of the local area to locate and describe some of its main features. Many pupils correctly use appropriate vocabulary, for example roads, railways and canals, to describe different forms of transport in the locality. Although they are beginning to show some knowledge and understanding of localities different to that of their own city environment, few pupils have clear ideas of the main local features and why their environment is different from others, for example a rural village. Some Year 2 pupils are beginning to show a sound knowledge and understanding of the world, for example knowing that 'a continent is a group of countries' and identifying the United Kingdom on a map of Europe.
141. Pupils' mapping skills are built on soundly, for example, when Year 4 pupils accurately locate India and the West Indies on a world map as part of their studies of the Indian village of Chembakoli and the island of St. Lucia. Year 5 pupils make effective use of photographs to locate and provide accurate two-figure map co-ordinates for key features on a local map. They show a good understanding of the range of farming activities after visiting and writing about life on Middleton Farm. Many pupils apply their field work skills successfully, for example, to make accurate sketch maps of the farm and its surrounding fields. Some more able Year 5 pupils describe in detail the life of a child living in Chembakoli and make some good comparisons with their lives, for example when getting food and water for the family. Many Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the West Midlands area, for example, to locate main geographical features such as Birmingham city centre and the surrounding cities and towns. However, few realise or describe the detailed impact on their environment of such features as increasing traffic levels and poor housing conditions. Pupils' knowledge of how physical processes and human influences change different types of settlement is not developed enough.
142. Teaching was sound in the two lessons observed, although evidence from looking at pupils' work showed that the quality varied significantly throughout the school. Teachers control their classes effectively to ensure that most pupils are focused on their activity.

They use questions successfully to involve pupils actively in their learning, although they do not consistently challenge pupils, especially the more able, to extend their answers. This does not improve the quality of pupils' replies and restricts the standards attained. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used questions well to focus pupils' attention on their traffic survey results. However, the teacher did not take the opportunity to challenge pupils to develop their answers and consider the impact of traffic on their local environment. Some teachers use information and communication technology effectively to promote pupils' achievements in geography. They use their good subject knowledge to guide pupils to attain some good work. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher's good knowledge of spreadsheets enabled clear guidance to be given over how to enter data and present the results of their local traffic survey.

143. Teachers do not consistently ensure that learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities. This restricts the standards attained and limits the progress made. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on the map of Europe, pupils of all abilities were given the same task of identifying, naming and colouring individual countries. Some pupils with special educational needs and some for whom English is an additional language could not read the names of such countries as Germany and the Netherlands. They were unable to understand what was required of them and completed very little work in the time available. Inspection evidence gained from looking at a range of pupils' work shows that teachers' expectations of pupils' standards are frequently too low. Much work is not finished and literacy skills are not being used accurately to promote higher standards. Teachers' marking is not consistent and too often it does not identify ways in which the pupil should try to improve the quality of the work. These inconsistencies in teaching limit standards of attainment and the progress pupils make.
144. The subject manager has included a broader range of fieldwork activities to enable pupils to apply their skills and this is contributing to standards, especially in mapwork. Some use is being made of national subject guidance, although it is not sufficiently linked in with the established scheme of work to ensure that pupils' skills always build on prior knowledge and understanding. The subject manager has monitored some teaching and learning, although these have not been sufficiently frequent or focused on the standards achieved by pupils. The subject manager does not frequently monitor teaching plans to ensure that skills are being developed soundly. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, for example, at the end of different units of work. However, the results are not passed through to the subject manager to enable her to gain a clearer understanding of standards or to inform geography planning. There is no clear focus on raising standards. Teaching resources are sound overall, although the range of maps and of information and communication technology resources are limited. They do not allow teachers to plan to use these sufficiently frequently to improve skills consistently.

## **HISTORY**

145. No teaching of infant pupils was observed during the inspection. Four lessons were seen in the juniors. Additional evidence was obtained from pupils' previous work, from talking to pupils about what they had done, from teachers' planning and displays around the school. Standards are below national expectations at the age of 7 and 11. Pupils do not make consistent progress in their learning.
146. During the last inspection, only two history lessons were observed across both Key Stages 1 and 2. History is now more widely taught across the school than at the time of the last inspection. However, pupils' work is insufficiently developed. They start tasks and do not always complete them before moving on to the next task. This affects their understanding; standards have not improved since the last inspection and are now below average.

147. By the age of 7, pupils are starting to develop their knowledge and understanding soundly of the lives of people in the past, for example the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole and Samuel Pepys. They show a growing understanding of life in Victoria hospitals.
148. History is taught more thoroughly in the juniors. A very well taught lesson in Year 3 enabled pupils to record, with very good levels of understanding, information about how the Celts and Romans lived. Here they reached sound levels of attainment. Standards were supported by a good classroom display, prepared by the teacher, illustrating the ways of life of the Celts and the Romans. The use of a wide range of books, supported by the use of information and communication technology and the support the teacher gave the pupils across the class, aided their very good progress and achievements.
149. At both key stages, pupils' sense of time is developing soundly. Infant pupils show this when they talk about their parents and grandparents and what their lives have been like in the past. Pupils in Year 4 know how the second world war affected the lives of their grandparents. Here their understanding has been further aided by a person visiting the school to talk about experiences at the time. In Year 6, pupils show a sound awareness of the life of Cleopatra and clothing worn at the time. Across the two Year 6 classes, the learning and progress of the pupils varied. Pupils' learning was better in one class. Here the teacher challenged them with a well prepared story to read and discuss, outlining the life of Cleopatra. Pupils had a range of questions to discuss together, before providing their written answers. In the other class, the teacher had a good range of pictures illustrating clothing at the time, but provided the pupils with too few opportunities to discuss and write about their findings. Here they were insufficiently challenged when asked to write a suitable caption for their drawings. Across the school, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to research their findings and to collaboratively discuss and write about them. Teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to research and complete their work at home, or to visit places of historical interest near the school.
150. Teaching and learning were sound in the lessons observed. Work is suitably planned, based on the National Curriculum. Teaching usually motivates the pupils, who apply themselves well and show much interest in their work. Good relationships are seen and teachers manage behaviour effectively. As a result, pupils make good use of their time. When opportunities are provided, they co-operate well with each other and this promotes standards. However, a scrutiny of work indicates that teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and this does not enable pupils to achieve high enough standards. Work that is recorded in pupils' books is often limited and under developed and does not reflect the quality of their discussions. Teachers' marking does not always indicate how pupils should improve their work. When this is done, pupils do not redraft or add to their work to raise the standard.
151. The subject manager has made effective use of national subject guidance to improve curriculum planning in history, for example, by ensuring good topic coverage by different year groups. The manager has improved resources and linked them efficiently to the various topics. The scheme of work provides a structure that teachers find useful in their planning. The subject manager has some time to assess the standard of work being achieved and see how the subject is taught. However, these are not sufficient to give a detailed understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and give a clear priority for the development of the subject. The procedures to assess pupils' understanding are not developed fully to be used effectively to inform teaching plans and target areas for improvement.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Pupils' attainment is below national expectations at the ages of 7 and 11. Standards are lower than those reported in the last inspection. Pupils do not make consistent progress throughout the school in developing their skills and knowledge. Very recently improved facilities and resources, supported by sound and occasionally good teachers' subject knowledge, are beginning to promote higher standards in Years 2 and 5. Pupils in these years have regular opportunities to extend their skills and achieve standards which are close to national expectations in the aspects of finding information, word-processing and handling and researching data. Pupils in other years do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. They do not currently benefit from using the improved range of resources and their attainment does not meet the levels expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs have some opportunities, on occasions guided by support staff, to develop their literacy skills, although these are not consistently built on in class activities. The school plans for all pupils to have similar opportunities to develop their skills and enable more consistent progress.
153. The school has bought new laptop computers and has established a new computer suite. A timetable has been established to enable all pupils to improve their skills in information and communication technology and then extend them through continued use of the portable computers back in class activities. For example, in one Year 5 class, pupils worked together in the suite to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to enter costs into a spreadsheet, use the program to calculate total amounts and then make comparisons between the different totals. A group of these pupils then brought some laptops into the classroom in a numeracy lesson and applied these skills to solve further shopping comparison problems. Many also extended their data-handling skills in geography by gathering information about the environmental disruption caused to the local area on days when the nearby football club were playing their home matches. They successfully entered the information on a spreadsheet, then used it to produce a range of different types of graphs, for example bar and pie charts, to clearly show their results.
154. Year 1 pupils develop their graphics and word processing skills soundly to support their work in literacy. For example, they use a computer program to 'paint' portraits of themselves and, some with support, successfully type short sentences describing themselves. Pupils build on these skills effectively in Year 2. They become confident in their knowledge and use of mouse and keyboard skills and in aspects of accessing, editing and saving their work. Pupils in other years have some opportunities, particularly in literacy, to extend their word processing skills. For example, Year 3 typed formal and informal styles of letters which were then extended further in Year 5 when pupils typed letters in response to some of the different characters in 'The Jolly Postman'. Pupils were generally confident in applying their word processing skills. However, the standards achieved were limited by weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills, for example the accurate use of punctuation.
155. Pupils begin to use information and communication technology effectively to search for information to support work in other subjects, for example, in geography and music. Year 3 pupils used a CD Rom successfully to find out more about the range of musical instruments. In a Year 6 library lesson, groups of pupils used the Internet effectively to gain information on topics such as 'hunger' and 'water'. They successfully used the search facility, with some further guidance from the class teacher, to gain specific information, for example, on 'water supplies in the West Midlands'. However, teachers do not use these opportunities consistently in all years due mainly to the limited access to suitable resources. Some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 talked about how they controlled the movements of a programmable robot or used their keyboard skills to create a shape on the screen. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of other aspects of control

technology are not up to the standard expected of their age. The school does not currently have the range of suitable resources to enable teachers to use information and communication technology to support work in other subjects such as science and design and technology.

156. The quality of teaching was sound overall in the three lessons observed. It was good in a Year 5 lesson when the teacher used his good subject knowledge to extend pupils' understanding of how to use spreadsheets to present and investigate information. The teacher controlled and managed the class successfully to ensure that they listened carefully and stayed focused on the task. For example, pupils responded quickly to his instructions to close the lids of their laptops in order to listen and not continue to use their keyboards while he gave further guidance. However, teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to apply their information and communication technology in a wide range of subjects. Teachers make good use of the Study Centre at the nearby Birmingham City Football Club to provide further opportunities for some Years 5 and 6 pupils to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. For example, they use programs to improve spelling and to solve number problems, and to use information and communication technology to present information in different ways. However, they do not regularly build on pupils' knowledge and understanding and this restricts standards. Teachers do not systematically plan such opportunities as part of the curriculum to extend pupils' skills effectively.
157. Two teachers are enthusiastically co-ordinating the subject temporarily during the absence of the permanent subject manager. They are making a positive impact by promoting increasing use of the new facilities. The monitoring and evaluation procedures are not rigorous enough to ensure that all teachers are planning to promote pupils' skills. There is no regular evaluation of standards being achieved throughout the school. This does not enable the co-ordinators to identify areas for development and target improvement.

## MUSIC

158. **Pupils at the age of 7 and 11 attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Progress is sound, overall, at both key stages, although there is some inconsistency among classes according to the amount of time spent on music lessons. They were often shorter than planned. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully included in music activities. Their different needs are met effectively by the practical approach of music and they make the same progress as other pupils.**
159. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained at a similar level at the age of 7. However, standards have improved for 11-year-olds and pupils' progress has improved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory overall. This is due to the school adopting a commercial scheme of work that has provided more guidance for non-specialist class teachers. More opportunities are provided now for pupils to sing at school events such as in acts of worship, although there was no choir at the time of the inspection and pupils no longer sing with Birmingham schools in the Symphony Hall. Due to timetable arrangements, it was not possible to make a judgement of the quality of singing achieved by pupils when taught by a visiting specialist teacher.
160. Pupils in the infant classes sing a range of songs confidently from memory, showing satisfactory control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. They enjoy adding appropriate actions. By the end of Year 2 they show composing skills. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils created musical ideas and performed sounds effectively using home-made percussion

instruments that they could shake or pluck. They recorded their ideas simply with symbols on a graphic chart. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson lacked experience playing percussion instruments and showed insufficient control because of behaviour problems.

161. In the junior classes pupils sing a wider range of songs in unison and two parts, although they do not always sing tunefully. This is because a few teachers lack the technical expertise to guide the quality of singing to help pupils maintain accurate pitch. Pupils listen carefully to music and describe the mood of different types of music appropriately. For example, Year 5 pupils recognised that some choral music was composed to be sung in church. However, they had insufficient knowledge of musical vocabulary, such as texture, when explaining their ideas. Pupils select from a wide range of instruments including electronic keyboards, to compose a desired effect. In Year 6, pupils enthusiastically worked together in groups to create a spooky effect. They knew that they had to practise to improve their performance before it could be presented to an audience.
162. **The quality of teaching and learning in music is satisfactory, overall, at both key stages. There is slight variation from class to class according to the skills and confidence of the teacher in their musical knowledge. In the very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher set a challenging task that captured the interest of pupils. The very good relationships and high expectations of work and behaviour were known and understood by the pupils. This meant that the whole focus of the lesson was to create music. Very good use was made of the extra space of the hall and a nearby empty classroom. Pupils clearly heard what they played as they experimented on their chosen instrument and effectively improved their compositions. The teacher's successful strategy of recording the work on tape encouraged pupils to try their hardest, evaluate the effect and provided the basis for future work. Less effective aspects of teaching occur when time is insufficient to produce good quality work so pupils' progress is affected. For example, the scheme intends that lessons last 45 minutes, but actual teaching time was about half of this, so teachers ran out of time to cover the plan. Also, when teachers spent too much time in managing behaviour of a few pupils, the rest lost interest so that little learning took place for much of the lesson.**
163. The present music co-ordinator is new to the position and has not yet had time to develop the role. Opportunities to monitor teaching and learning are insufficient to raise standards, such as procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. There is a lack of assessment information to guide curricular planning. Pupils effectively gain confidence when they take part in whole school performances, such as the Year 6 annual musical productions that have included 'Oliver' and 'Bugsy Malone'. The school recognises that the lack of opportunities to learn to play the recorder or funding for instrumental tuition affects music standards, especially to extend the musical experience of higher attainers. Plans are underway to introduce guitar tuition.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. During the inspection, the focus was on games and athletics. Attainment meets national expectations for pupils aged 7 and 11. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in developing their skills and knowledge. An effectively planned curriculum programme, supported by a sound quality of teaching and some good extra-curricular sports activities, enable standards of performance to be achieved which meet expectations for pupils' age and ability.
165. Many Years 1 and 2 pupils show good co-ordination in controlling a ball. They improve their hand-eye co-ordination effectively by throwing and catching with increasing



confidence. These skills are built on soundly throughout the school. For example, most Year 5 pupils extend their throwing and catching skills successfully in cricket. A small number have above average skills in handling a cricket bat and hitting a ball confidently. Many Year 6 pupils control a ball successfully with their feet. They stop the ball effectively with one foot before moving with the ball in a different direction. They generally show a sound knowledge of the correct technique to be used; for example, many knew that the direction in which they were going to turn influenced whether they used the inside or the outside of their foot. Teachers provide a good range of activities to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. Pupils are keen to participate and clearly enjoy physical activities. These contribute to raising standards. However, too few pupils show a secure knowledge of how to evaluate their own performance or that of others and to identify ways in which to improve the quality of their performance. This did not enable them to improve the standard of their performance.

166. Teaching is sound overall, although it ranged from good to unsatisfactory in the four lessons observed. Teachers organise their lessons effectively to ensure that activities build successfully on prior attainment. For example, in a Year 5 cricket lesson, the teacher organised a good range of partner and group activities to enable pupils to practise their skills before applying them in a competitive team activity. Teachers manage their classes successfully to ensure that pupils remain attentive and focused on what they are trying to achieve. Teachers use good subject knowledge successfully to improve pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, in a Year 6 games lesson, the teacher's clear demonstration of the 'drag-back' when turning with the ball in football focused pupils' attention and enabled them to gain a clear understanding of the technique involved. Teachers do not maintain an effective pace to lessons and do not always ensure that pupils are given enough opportunities to practise and extend their skills. For example, in an unsatisfactory Year 3 athletics lesson, the teacher spent too much time talking about the different activities. Pupils were required to sit for long periods and they became inattentive and began to lose their initial enthusiasm. The teacher lined up the class in order to complete one long-jump each. This significantly reduced the opportunity for pupils to remain actively involved and led to the rest of the group having to sit and wait for their turn. This did not enable the pupils to be involved enough in the lesson or to achieve sufficiently high standards.
167. The new subject co-ordinator has contributed significantly to the development of the subject. Working closely with staff and a small number of parents, he has enthusiastically promoted the development of the subject, for example, by encouraging the school's involvement in sporting competitions in the local area. Teams compete in a range of local competitions, for example in football, netball and swimming. This enhanced range of opportunities extends skills of a small but significant number of pupils and contributes to raising standards. The co-ordinator is reviewing the subject's scheme of work to ensure that there is a better balance to the overall programme and pupils' skills and knowledge always build on prior attainment. The co-ordinator has had some opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of pupils' work, but this had not been developed enough to promote improvement.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

168. Pupils' attainments are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the age of 7 and also by the age of 11 years. Standards of attainment in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection. Whilst pupils' attainments in speaking are satisfactory, the limited amount of written work in the subject does not give sufficient opportunity for pupils to express their thoughts and knowledge in writing. By the age of 11, most pupils are developing an increasing knowledge of Christianity and the other major faiths that they study in lessons including Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Sikhism.

169. Pupils in Year 1 are given the opportunity to reflect upon their responses to real life situations. Following questions from the teacher, they discuss what would they do if they found an injured bird in the street. Most pupils respond positively in the lesson. However, due to limited language ability, a small number of lower attaining pupils have difficulty in expressing their ideas satisfactorily. Year 2 pupils look at a variety of pictures of religious buildings such as mosques, churches and temples, in order to decide what makes them special. They use books soundly to identify the main features of the building and the important events they are used for. The group studying the mosques knew that worshippers removed their footwear before entering and the group studying the churches knew that a cross was an important symbol in the church.
170. Year 4 pupils have been studying the story of Moses leading the Jews in the desert as well as the story of Easter in the Christian calendar. Whilst there is evidence of sound knowledge in what pupils have written, their writing skills and use of drawing limit their expression. Most Year 5 pupils know about Diwali and Hanukah. They have also listed and compared the main beliefs of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism to identify the similarities and differences between them. Year 5 pupils looked at a small section of the school playground or grassed area to observe what is there in order to express some views about the environment in which they live. In the discussion that followed, several pupils were satisfactorily beginning to express concern about covering green areas with buildings and roads and its implications for other living things. Year 6 pupils devise a local religious directory after researching a variety of sources to gather information. They make and present a booklet that could be used by a newcomer to the area. Pupils' speaking skills show satisfactory thought and knowledge. However, presentation skills in both writing and drawing are underdeveloped in this subject. Teachers do not consistently promote pupils' literacy skills in religious education. Behaviour and co-operation amongst pupils in the lessons observed are sound and sometimes good. In a sound lesson, Year 6 pupils spontaneously helped one another during the making of a booklet. They listened well to one another as well as to the teacher. This improved their knowledge and understanding,
171. The overall quality of teaching was sound in all lessons seen. Teachers prepare lessons in detail and match the tasks to suit the needs of the differing ability groups in the class. At present, the amount of written work is insufficient and whilst marking is carried out consistently, there is little evidence of pupils finishing or correcting work to improve its quality. The subject manager has established clear procedures to assess pupils' attainment, but they are not yet consistently implemented. Teachers satisfactorily organise discussion in class and small groups, allowing pupils to come to terms with themselves, their beliefs and their aspirations. These opportunities for discussion and reflection occur in both religious education and during personal, health and social education sessions. Throughout the school pupils are given appropriate time for quiet reflection, particularly in the discussion groups known as 'circle time'. After discussing how well the school had prepared them for secondary education, Year 6 pupils were able to quietly reflect on what they had learned whilst they had been in the school.
172. The school has used the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus as a basis for teachers' planning in religious education. The focus on literacy and numeracy has meant that the monitoring and evaluation of what is taught is in its early stages. A strong and visible element of the school's provision for religious education is in the way teachers and pupils show respect for each other as well as for the faiths of different cultures around the world.