

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEARWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Smethwick

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103933

Headteacher: Mr. R. Broadbent

Reporting inspector: Mr. I. T. Pratt  
13626

Dates of inspection: 27 - 31 March 2000

Inspection number: 189582

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bearwood Road Smethwick West Midlands
Postcode:	B66 4HB
Telephone number:	0121 434 4499
Fax number:	0121 434 4799
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor S. Eling
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Pratt	Registered inspector	Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it?
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			The quality of teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			What should the school do to improve further?
Jim Griffin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Care, support and guidance of pupils
			Partnership with parents and carers
Jenny Clayphan	Team inspector	Mathematics	The curricular opportunities offered to pupils
		Information Technology	
Catherine Davey	Team inspector	Science	
		Design and technology	
		Provision for children under the age of five	
Peter Laverick	Team inspector	English	Assessment
		Music	Staffing
Jackie Johnson	Team inspector	Geography	Accommodation
		History	
		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
Christine Perrett	Team inspector	Religious education	Resources for learning
		Physical education	
		Art	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Associates Ltd

Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset DT2 9PU

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>13</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bearwood Primary is a mixed school of well above average size, serving 479 pupils aged between four and eleven years of age. In addition, 80 children attend the school's nursery on a part-time basis. Children are admitted to the nursery at the beginning of the year in which they have their fourth birthday. Older children transfer to the reception classes in September and younger children in January during the year in which they become five years of age. Each year there is an influx into the reception classes of about 30 per cent of children who have not attended the nursery class. The attainments of a large majority of children entering the nursery are well below expected levels in all areas of their learning. Their speaking skills are particularly low. Most children make good progress throughout the nursery and reception classes, and at the age of five years their attainments are below those expected of children of this age, although their physical development reaches expected standards.

The school has an almost equal numbers of boys and girls, and whilst the size of the school's population has not changed since the last inspection, it now has considerably more pupils with special educational needs. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has a high proportion of pupils who leave or join the school during the year. For example, in Year 6, 40 per cent of pupils did not start their primary education at Bearwood.

The school serves a very diverse urban area of mixed private, council and privately rented housing. The social and economic background of pupils varies considerably. Whilst some come from relatively advantaged backgrounds, the circumstances of many pupils are moderately disadvantaged, with around 40 per cent of pupils living in an area of where there are high levels of deprivation. The level of disadvantage is not accurately reflected in the proportion of pupils that are eligible for free school meals. Fifteen per cent are eligible; broadly average for similar schools nationally.

The school community reflects the racial characteristics of this area; 44 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. Forty per cent of pupils are white, 31 per cent Indian, 11 per cent Pakistani, 10 per cent Black - Caribbean and eight per cent other ethnic groups. Fifteen per cent of pupils receive support from the Language Enrichment Team, although this figure does not reflect the true level of need in the school, which is much higher. From mid-April 2000, the amount of language support available to the school will reduce by a half, due to changed funding arrangements. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a figure above the national average, although the proportion of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, one per cent, is below the national picture.

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

Bearwood Primary is an effective school. It provides a sound, all round education for its pupils and serves its community well. Whilst the standards attained by pupils are below the national averages, they achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their attainments on intake to the school, which are well below the national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress because of their good attitudes to learning and in response to the generally satisfactory teaching they receive. The headteacher provides satisfactory, secure leadership and management for the school, and is supported effectively by the governors in steadily improving the work of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Provides good quality teaching for children under the age of five, enabling them to make good progress;
- Fosters very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults, and this results in a harmonious, multi-cultural community where oppressive behaviour is absent;
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to learning;
- Provides good care and guidance for the pupils from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds;
- Promotes reading and writing effectively across the subjects of the curriculum;
- The school has good procedures for assessing the attainments of its pupils;
- The school's aims of being "hardworking, caring and safe", are reflected well in its work;
- Works in close partnership with its parents and the multi-cultural community it serves;
- Provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the pupils' learning opportunities well.

### What could be improved

- The development of the pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of language in speaking and writing is not sufficiently well developed across all subjects of the curriculum;
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology are not sufficiently high by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2;
- Teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 do not consistently use assessment information to plan work that is suitably challenging for high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs;
- The quality of teaching in Year 4 is not of a consistently satisfactory quality;
- Attendance levels are below the national average;
- The roles, responsibilities and accountability of senior and middle managers are not sufficiently well defined to enable them to take a full part in raising standards and improving the quality of education;
- The school development plan does not give clear guidance about the school's priorities for improvement.

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

**The school has many significant strengths that outweigh its weaknesses.**

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

The school has improved satisfactorily overall since its last inspection in February 1997. It has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which are starting to raise the standards that the pupils achieve. Standards in English, at the end of Key Stage 2, have improved at a rate faster than the national picture, and in mathematics and science, standards have improved at a rate similar to the national scene. The quality of teaching has improved satisfactorily. Issues concerning the challenge for high attainers and the consistency of teaching in Key Stage 2 still remain, but at an improved level. The methods used to assess the pupils' attainments are now good, but assessment data is not used consistently to set targets and to guide teaching and curriculum planning. Art teaching is now good at Key Stage 2, and this promotes good learning. The school has revised its development planning procedures twice since the last inspection, but the plan still lacks sufficiently clear focus because targets are not prioritised. The new Millennium Room has improved accommodation, but the quality of accommodation for one reception class remains unsatisfactory.

### 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	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	D	C	B	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	E	E	D	
Science	E	E	D	C	

The grades for similar schools, shown above, and referred to in the text below, differ from those suggested by OFSTED because there is substantial and compelling evidence that the socio-economic circumstances of the school's population is more disadvantaged than the free school meals figure would indicate. In accordance with OFSTED guidance, the grades that compare attainments in this school with similar schools can be, and have been upgraded by the Registered Inspector, to give a more accurate picture of the standards achieved.

Children enter the nursery at the age of three with skills, knowledge and understanding well below the expectations for children of this age, and their language skills are very low. They make good progress in the



nursery and reception classes, and at the age of five, attain below expected standards in all areas of learning, except physical development, where standards are in line with those expected of five year olds.

The 1999 National Curriculum assessments for seven year olds show that the pupils achieve standards in reading and writing below the national average, although they are in line with the average for similar schools. In mathematics, the results are well below the national average and below those of similar schools. These standards are broadly confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. Whilst standards are below expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage, the pupils' achievements are broadly satisfactory in relation to their previous learning and in relation to their language difficulties.

Results in the 1999 tests for 11 year olds, show standards in English are in line with the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. This is a notable achievement in view of the language and learning difficulties encountered by many pupils, and the fact that around 40 per cent of the pupils in that cohort did not start in the school's reception classes. In mathematics, the results are well below the national average and below average compared to similar schools. In science, standards are below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Work seen during the inspection broadly confirms the test results, indicating below the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. The apparent mismatch in English standards is accounted for by the lower proportion of pupils who will attain high grades this year. The improvement in mathematics is due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy which is increasing the pupils' confidence in manipulating numbers.

At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English have risen at a rate faster than the national trend over the past four years, and in mathematics and science standards have risen at a rate similar to the national picture. Boys generally attain less well than girls in the tests, but work seen during the inspection did not confirm this picture. The school's targets for improvement in the test results over the next two years are not sufficiently challenging, because they do nothing to close the gap between the schools performance and the standards achieved nationally. Standards of literacy and numeracy are below expected levels, although the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are starting to move standards forward. Pupils attain below expected standards in information technology because the school has only recently provided sufficient, up-to-date equipment to cover all aspects of the curriculum. A large majority of pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in their learning as a result of mainly satisfactory teaching, but at both key stages, high attainers are not consistently given sufficient challenge to enable them to attain the standards of which they are capable.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good; Pupils like school and most are keen to learn
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, reliable behaviour contributes significantly to pupils' learning. The school is a harmonious place
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, although not enough independence and initiative is shown in learning.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. Most pupils come to school on time

The pupils' positive attitudes to learning, and to the school, create a pleasant atmosphere and purposeful climate for learning. Behaviour is usually good, and it is frequently very good in lessons and around the school. Only in Year 1 and occasionally in Year 4, does the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils interfere with the pace of learning. The relationships between pupils and with adults are a major strength of the school, and result in a calm, orderly and friendly school community, free from oppressive behaviour. In Year 6, many pupils show mature and responsible attitudes to their learning and carry out their duties within the school to a high standard. In other parts of Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 1, pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and are not independent enough, as is shown in the amount of copying that goes on whilst the pupils are working in class. Attendance is unsatisfactory and has deteriorated since the previous inspection. The main reasons for this are extended holidays in term time and parents removing their children from school without informing the school that they are leaving.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in 52 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 12 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in six per cent of lessons. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes was predominantly good, whilst at Key Stages 1 and 2 it was satisfactory.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught soundly across the subjects of the curriculum, and the whole-class teaching at the start of literacy and numeracy lessons is being used effectively to help pupils learn basic skills. However, mental mathematics sessions in numeracy hours do not always have sufficient pace and challenge to maintain a brisk rate of learning for all pupils. Most lessons are planned carefully, and the sharing of learning objectives motivates pupils to learn what is intended. The management of the pupils is mainly good, but in a few classes, where the range of behaviour management strategies is limited, the pace of learning is adversely affected by frequent interruptions. Assessment information is not used consistently well to plan what the pupils will learn next. This results, on some occasions, in all pupils being set the same work, with the high attainers being under-challenged and low attainers being over-challenged. The school fully accepts that the use of homework is too inconsistent across the school, a point raised by parents before the inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for children under five. Satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, but with some weaknesses in information and communication technology due until very recently to lack of adequate hardware. Priority given to literacy and numeracy where there is appropriate implementation of the national strategies, and satisfactory application in subjects across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Good individual support provided, but some of the pupils' targets for learning are too vague to guide teachers in planning work to meet their needs, and this makes the evaluation of progress very difficult.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory overall. Whilst the additional support from the Language Enrichment Team is of good quality and is at times very good, there is too little of it to meet the needs of the pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with very good provision for cultural development and good provision for social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	In pastoral terms, care is good. Whilst procedures for assessing the pupils' attainments are good, the use of assessment data to raise standards is weak.

The school works in close partnership with parents. Communication with parents is generally good. Pupils have good extra-curricular opportunities in a wide range of sporting, musical and other activities. All staff provide very caring support for the pupils, and know the individual needs of pupils well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have set a clear educational direction for the school, focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. The roles and responsibilities of other senior managers and middle managers are not sufficiently well defined to move the school forward at a good pace.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are interested and involved in the work of the school and support it well in its efforts to improve standards and quality.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Much is done by senior staff to monitor the quality of teaching and the standards of the pupils' work, but subject managers are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funds are used effectively to promote satisfactory learning. The school is generously staffed with teachers at present, and therefore cannot set a balanced budget for the next financial year, although in negotiation with the local education authority (LEA), it has firm plans to bring the budget back into surplus within three years.

The headteacher and senior staff responded positively to the last inspection report and have moved the school forward satisfactorily over the past three years. The monitoring of teaching is particularly strong, and this has contributed well to the improvements in teaching in the school. Weaknesses in management include lack of clarity, scope and accountability in the roles of key stage and subject managers, and the overload on some staff who take responsibility for major aspects of the school's work. Whilst the school has taken action to improve the focus of its school development plan, targets are not prioritised, and the strategy of allowing subject managers to decide on their own priorities for development, does not lead to a cohesive and consistent approach to school improvement. The budget is planned satisfactorily, even though the school will enter into a planned deficit for the next three years, with the full approval of the LEA. The school ensures that it applies the principles of 'best value' in its purchases of goods. Office staff make a good contribution to the day-to-day administration of the school and the caretaker and cleaners maintain the building well.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are happy and like school</li> <li>• Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible, make good progress and are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• School is well led and managed</li> <li>• The good range of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework levels to be higher and more consistent across classes and year groups in Key Stage 2</li> <li>• Better information about pupils' progress – particularly more personalised reports in all subjects and inclusion of all parents in the spring consultation</li> <li>• More communication in other languages</li> </ul>

The inspection findings confirm most of the positive views of parents. Inspectors agree that the level of homework is inconsistent at Key Stage 2 and as a result pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently or to build on classroom learning. Whilst the pupils' annual reports are of generally good quality in English, mathematics and science, the school accepts the need to improve reporting in other subjects, the spring consultation arrangements with parents and its communications to parents in other languages.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the nursery at the age of three with skills, knowledge and understanding well below the expectations for children of this age, and their language skills are very low. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, although there is an influx into the reception class of about 30 per cent of children who have not attended the nursery class. At the age of five, children attain below expected standards in all areas of learning, except physical development, where standards are in line with those expected of five year olds.
2. In judging the standards attained by pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the school's average National Curriculum points scores are used. These provide a more accurate picture of the pupils' attainments than simply calculating the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 and Level 4.
3. The 1999 National Curriculum assessments for seven year olds show that the pupils achieve standards in reading and writing below the national average, although they are in line with the average for similar schools. In mathematics and science, the results are well below the national average and below those of similar schools. Since 1996, there has been a trend of rising standards in reading at a rate similar to the national trend, whilst in writing and mathematics standards have risen faster than the national picture. Results also show that girls and boys attain very similar standards.
4. The Key Stage 1 standards achieved in the 1999 assessments are broadly confirmed by the pupils' work seen during the inspection, which shows that standards are below expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage. The pupils' work also shows that they achieve below expected standards in information technology but in line with the national expectations in religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
5. Results in the 1999 tests for 11 year olds, show standards in English are in line with the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. This is a notable achievement in view of the language and learning difficulties encountered by many pupils, and the fact that around 40 per cent of the pupils in that cohort did not start in the reception classes. In mathematics, the results are well below the national average and below compared to similar schools, whilst in science, standards are below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Since 1996, standards in English have risen at a rate faster than the national trend, and in mathematics and science standards have risen at a rate similar to the national picture. Boys generally attain less well than girls in the tests, but work seen during the inspection did not confirm this picture.
6. The school's targets for improving their Key Stage 2 results over the next two years are not sufficiently challenging, because they do nothing to close the gap between the schools performance and the standards achieved nationally.
7. Work seen during the inspection broadly confirms the test results, indicating below the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. The apparent mismatch in English standards, is accounted for by the lower proportion of high attaining pupils who will attain higher levels this year. The improvement in mathematics is due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy which is increasing the pupils' confidence in manipulating numbers. The pupils' work shows that in information technology, standards are below expected levels, but that standards meet expectations in religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
8. Standards of literacy and numeracy are below expected levels, although the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are starting to move standards forward. Literacy standards are promoted effectively across the subjects of the curriculum. Writing is particularly well used in many subjects, although the content and standards achieved are hindered by the pupils' lack of understanding and use of a rich and interesting vocabulary. Reading accuracy is broadly in line with expectations, but understanding of what is read lags well behind, due to the difficulties experienced by many pupils in understanding the language used.

Speaking skills are similarly hindered by the lack of sufficiently well developed language skills, which results in pupils finding it very difficult to express themselves accurately, fluently and confidently. Numeracy skills are promoted well in science and geography, through the use of tables and graphs.

9. Pupils attain below expected standards in information technology because the school has only recently provided sufficient, up-to-date equipment to cover all aspects of the curriculum effectively, and is still establishing how to use the equipment to benefit the pupils' learning.
10. In both key stages, the pupils achievements are broadly satisfactory in relation to their previous learning and in relation to the language and learning difficulties of many. High attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall in relation to their prior attainment. This has been maintained since the last inspection. When withdrawn for one-to-one work related to individual targets, pupils often make good progress. However progress in lessons is more variable because teachers do not consistently provide work that is matched closely to the pupils' learning needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning overall, and when they receive additional support from specialist teachers they make good or very good progress. This support is in short supply, however, and is concentrated in classes up to Year 3, therefore pupils in Year 4 upwards do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

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

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are good overall. Pupils are proud of their school, which most enjoy attending. The great majority show interest in their work in lessons. Most pupils settle to their work without delay at the start of the day and at the end of break-times. In all year groups, most pupils listen attentively and are comfortable answering and asking questions of their teachers. During practical activities, in particular, most pupils show good concentration, perseverance and enthusiasm. The best attitudes occur in art, design technology and religious education lessons. Most pupils enjoy reading. During literacy and numeracy hours, the majority of pupils work well in their groups when the teacher is working with another group. However, in a significant minority of mathematics lessons, during group work, a sizeable proportion of pupils show unsatisfactory attitudes. These pupils show little interest in using the methods needed to get the correct answer. They are merely interested in the answer, which they copy from others, leading to unsatisfactory learning. Special educational needs pupils mostly show good attitudes to learning. They work hard and enjoy the extra individual help they receive. The clear and consistent approach of teachers to behaviour and classroom routines provides pupils with a secure base from which to develop their liking for school and interest in learning.
12. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunch-time and playtimes is good. Behaviour generally improves as pupils progress through the school and become more mature. In lessons, nearly all pupils are well behaved. Prior to moving in groups, pupils routinely form orderly queues and move about without running or jostling. During the inspection, the behaviour of pupils at lunch-time and playtimes was good. There was no sign of any bullying, racism or sexism. Pupils, however, confirm that the rare incidents of bullying or other antisocial behaviour occur in the playground. Pupils are clear that they would inform adults in such an event. The rare incidents of poor behaviour mostly involve boys. There was no exclusion in the previous three school years. Based on questionnaire responses, the great majority of parents are positive about pupils' behaviour. The good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils helps create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils take good care of property and resources and help keep the school in attractive condition.
13. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are very good. Adults in the school act as very good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. The pupils respond in a positive manner. Pupils show caring and considerate attitudes towards each other and adults in the school community. Most pupils work well in pairs and small groups. They become more able to collaborate as they move through school. Parents are very positive about the way in which all pupils are valued and supported by their peers. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs are fully accepted during lessons and playtime.

14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Most pupils enjoy speaking with visitors. Nearly all pupils show respect for rules and others. Pupils are involved in making rules for their classroom. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to help and take responsibility in the day-to-day running of the school. For example, Year 6 pupils are effective as stair monitors during break-times and lunch-time, whilst generally pupils tidy up and help, as needed, in their classrooms. Wider opportunities for pupils to have their views heard on matters, such as, the playground and school lunches are limited. Pupils compete in the inter-school sports, boys and girls football, swimming galas, music and dance competitions. These events help develop pupils' discipline, personal application, team spirit, a sense of fair play and a wider knowledge of surrounding areas.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The attendance level is below the national average and has fallen, by one per cent, since the year of the previous inspection. Holidays during term time and absence associated with a significant number of leavers, who do not inform school, are the main reasons for the unsatisfactory attendance. Unauthorised absence is under-represented in the figures, as all absence associated with leavers is currently authorised. Punctuality is satisfactory overall. Most pupils get to school on time, leading to an orderly and calm start to most lessons.

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

16. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in 52 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 12 per cent of lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in six per cent of lessons, and is mainly concentrated in Year 4. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is predominantly good, whilst at Key Stages 1 and 2 it is satisfactory. More good, very good and unsatisfactory teaching occurs at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection.
17. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed their satisfaction at the quality of teaching that occurs, and inspection findings largely support their positive views. The satisfactory and good quality of teaching contributes well to the pupils' learning and their levels of attainment. Teachers use effective methods and strategies for teaching the pupils. For example, in many mathematics lessons the lively mental sessions at the start of most lessons engage all pupils in thinking, answering questions and practising their numeracy skills. Other effective methods used across the curriculum are clear explanations and demonstrations, and good use of the board to organise ideas. Teachers use whole class teaching effectively in most subjects. However, the use of short spells of small group tuition, to teach a particular point whilst the rest of the class is engaged in independent work, is mainly confined to literacy lessons, and is not used as fully as it might be in other subjects.
18. Teachers generally settle their classes quickly, have clear and appropriate expectations of the pupils' behaviour, and by their calm and efficient manner, consistently set a positive atmosphere in which learning can take place effectively. Because of the good management of pupils in most lessons, little time is lost, pupils concentrate well and maintain interest in their work. This is not always the case, however, and when control is weak time is wasted. Teachers have largely appropriate expectations of pupils' academic work, although not enough is expected of high attaining pupils. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this, linked with their enthusiasm, results in interesting and lively lessons, in which pupils make sound gains in knowledge, understanding and skill.
19. The quality of the teachers' planning is satisfactory. Teachers are generally clear about the learning objectives for each lesson and many share this information with the pupils to enable them to understand what they are trying to achieve. Very rarely, however, do teachers refer to the learning aims at the end of the lesson to enable the pupils to evaluate how much they have learned. In a significant number of lessons, however, learning aims are a little vague, at times detailing what the teacher will do, rather than what the pupils will learn. This prevents them from evaluating the extent of learning accurately, and does not provide them with good information on which to plan the pupils' next steps in learning.
20. Whilst teachers frequently identify in their planning how they will meet the needs of lower attaining pupils, they are not sufficiently clear about how the needs of high attaining pupils will be met, and as a result, these pupils are not sufficiently challenged, and therefore do not make the progress of which they are capable. This stems from generally unsatisfactory use of assessment information to plan what pupils need to learn next.

21. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting, and those returning the questionnaire, expressed some concern about the consistency with which homework is set. The inspection finds that there is inconsistency, and that it is not sufficiently used to contribute to the pupils' learning. The school is fully aware of this weakness and has clear plans to rectify the matter.
22. The quality of teaching is good overall in English, religious education and art, and in these subjects almost all pupils make good gains in their learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall in mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and music, and in these subjects, the pupils' learning is promoted soundly.
23. The teaching of literacy is generally effective. The school has implemented the literacy hour well, but does not place sufficient emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding and use of a wide and rich vocabulary across all aspects of the curriculum. The teaching of numeracy is effective. The school has implemented all parts of the numeracy hour, although the quality of a few mental mathematics sessions at the start of each daily lesson is not sufficiently high to challenge the learning of pupils of all abilities. Nevertheless, quick-fire questions and other mental maths tasks are helping to give the pupils more confidence with numbers.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported when withdrawn for individual help and when receiving individual support in class. Here pupils' activities are generally appropriate for their needs. However when no extra support is available, provision in class is variable. Pupils cannot always tackle tasks without extra help, particularly in English and mathematics, and mistakes are made while the class teacher is supporting other groups within the class. This is particularly evident when tasks are not well matched to individual pupils' needs. Targets identified in individual education plans are sometimes not specific enough to guide teachers in planning work for the pupils.
25. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good, and at times very good teaching support from additional, specialist staff, and in these lessons they make good progress. These teachers have high expectations of what the pupils will achieve, and use every opportunity to develop the pupils' understanding and use of language. Too little support of this nature is available in the school, and when no support is present, the pupils make satisfactory progress.

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

26. The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, but with some weaknesses in information technology. New computers have been installed recently and are enabling pupils to experience all aspects of the subject, and as a result, standards are beginning to rise.
27. The curriculum overall is broadly based, meets the statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum, and it conforms with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Long term planning is mainly satisfactory. The school has adopted some the schemes of work suggested by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) or is adapting existing schemes to include the QCA guidance, and this is enabling pupils to build progressively on their previous learning. In a few subjects, however, the lack of a comprehensive year on year plan inhibits learning. For example, there are instances of scientific topics being taught in more than one year group and therefore pupils repeat work already covered. A further example is that block graphs are used in all year groups, rather than introducing line and pie charts throughout Key Stage 2 to illustrate data. Teachers write detailed half-termly plans, which are well amplified in weekly plans. The weekly plans are monitored by the headteacher each week but not yet systematically evaluated by the teachers to ascertain the learning levels that have been achieved and the next steps in learning that need to be tackled.
28. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and there are indications that standards are rising slowly as a result. The school keeps detailed records, analyses test results, and is working to strengthen areas of particular weakness, for example standards in writing. However, lesson plans do not yet regularly include work to challenge higher achievers to extend their learning at higher levels in every class. Each year group has general targets to achieve during the year, but teachers do not yet set individual learning targets for their pupils, and pupils are not fully aware of the extent

of their own learning. In addition to the hour devoted daily to each subject, literacy and numeracy are used effectively to support other subjects across the curriculum. Literacy is well used, for instance, in design technology where pupils write instructions to explain how to play the board games they have made. Numeracy is used effectively in collating data on graphs in science, and using co-ordinates in geography.

29. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities for pupils in both key stages. As well as sports, there are music clubs and language clubs and an environmental group meets once a week. The school provides opportunities for pupils to go on educational visits and become involved in projects, such as the rejuvenation of the local Warley Woods, and these are very effective in enriching the pupils' experiences.
30. The school has achieved an excellent atmosphere where pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities are valued highly. However, although lower attainers and those for whom English is an additional language are well catered for in lessons where they have adult support, they do not receive enough support throughout the school and throughout the day to make good progress. At both key stages, high attainers are not consistently challenged to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
31. The school makes sound provision for health education and pupils have good understanding of health issues such as the importance of eating healthy food. The school nurse visits to give lessons on sex education in Year 6. She also tackles subjects such as the danger of using drugs and careless use of medicines, so that pupils are well aware of the implications of misuse.
32. The school has established valuable and effective links with the local community. There is a Saturday Youth club run by students from the local churches. Pupils visit the nearby old people's home at Christmas and there is close liaison with the local churches, Sikh temple, synagogue and other places of worship. Pupils are invited to make window displays in nearby shops. The Sandwell Education Business Partnerships provide good opportunities for factory visits, and the school is involved with the Smethwick Heritage Group.
33. There are satisfactory links with local schools. Pupils go to seventeen different secondary schools in the area which makes it hard to maintain close links with them all, but the school joins with a nearby High school in the new opportunities fund project. The school participates in a dance festival with local primary schools and a joint sports day. The Warley Woods rejuvenation project is organised in connection with other primary schools. Parents' help is welcomed by the school.

#### **Provision for the pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34. The provision for the personal development of pupils remains as it was at the last inspection and is good overall. Whilst in some acts of collective worship opportunities for spiritual development are good, this is not consistent in all assemblies, and in some acts of collective worship, statutory requirements are not fully met. Although opportunities for spiritual development are not systematically planned for, pupils are encouraged to value the beliefs and ideas of others in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were encouraged to share their differing religious rituals with the class, and opportunities such as these foster tolerance and understanding of different religious beliefs.
35. Opportunities for pupils' moral and social development are good. Pupils respond positively to the Bearwood Code of Conduct, and this ensures that all pupils understand the principles of right and wrong. The school motto of providing a hardworking, caring and safe world, promotes caring behaviour, where pupils are aware of the needs of others. Adults set good role models for the pupils, and they effectively promote very good relationships throughout the school. Good opportunities are given for pupils to work co-operatively: sharing their ideas, and helping and supporting each other. Pupils act as class monitors, and stair and corridor monitors contribute to the well-being of the pupils, by ensuring that appropriate care is taken when moving around the school. Good opportunities are provided for the older pupils to attend residential camps thus enhancing their social development further.
36. Provision for the cultural development of the pupils is very good, and is a strength of the school. Western culture is effectively promoted through art, music and literature, alongside the other cultures that are represented in the school and the community. Very good use is made of the pupils' own experiences, and of visits to different places of worship during religious knowledge lessons, when pupils study various world



faiths. Different cultures are studied in geography, for example when pupils learn about life in St. Lucia. Very good use is made of the diverse ethnic school community, where different faiths and customs are celebrated throughout the year, resulting in pupils having a very clear understanding of what life is like in a multi-cultural society.

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

37. At the time of the last inspection, the arrangements for promoting the welfare of pupils, including matters of health and safety, were good overall. This position has been maintained in general terms, although there has been less progress than might be expected in terms of using academic assessment information to promote the pupils' progress
38. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' well being are good. Pupils are effectively encouraged to be sensible, to help, to respect and care for others. This leads to a calm and supportive atmosphere in school and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils confirmed when spoken to, that they are well cared for if they are ill or otherwise distressed. School has good arrangements for induction to the nursery and reception classes. Year 6 pupils, who typically transfer to any of a dozen schools, are effectively supported in their move to secondary education.
39. Procedures to ensure the pupils' health and safety are satisfactory overall. The health and safety policy adequately defines responsibilities in school. Regular health and safety inspections are reported to a governing body sub-committee. Teachers usually make pupils aware of health and safety issues in practical lessons, such as design technology and science. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety conscious attitude among them. However, in a physical education lesson, unsatisfactory pupil management led to unsafe situations, for example, when Year 4 pupils were handling apparatus. Regular evacuation drills are carried out and are carefully evaluated by the headteacher. The school plans to introduce a log book to formally record these exercises. Fire alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out by external agencies. The practical arrangements, including first aid, to deal with any incidents or accidents, are well established and appropriate. The staggering of morning playtime and lunch-time for infant and junior pupils, makes the small playground an inherently calmer and safer place.
40. Child protection procedures are good. Linked to local area guidelines, the school's arrangements and responsibilities are clearly defined in the staff handbook. There is a trained, experienced, designated staff member to co-ordinate provision. Arrangements are known to staff and there is a system of recording any concerns. Pupils are made appropriately aware of this issue during the focus week on healthy living.
41. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are good. As a result the school's atmosphere provides good conditions for learning. A clear policy on behaviour and discipline is generally applied consistently across the school. The main emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and nearly all pupils have responded positively. A clear range of rewards and sanctions are in routine operation. In lessons, teachers use praise effectively and maintain clear and consistent boundaries between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Links between lunch-time and teaching staff are good. Lunch-time staff routinely record cases of poor behaviour in the playground and report these to staff. As a result the lunch-time staff feel well supported and pupils are in no doubt that all staff operate to similar shared expectations about behaviour.
42. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying, are good overall. The small minority of pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are clearly identified. Their needs are systematically addressed. Parents and outside support services are effectively involved in defining the source and nature of their problems. Individual behaviour plans are put in place and carefully monitored until behaviour improves. Pupils confirm that bullying incidents are rare and that such incidents, once disclosed to staff, are effectively handled.
43. Procedures to monitor attendance are now good, but these have not been successful in improving attendance rates. Registers are fully completed. Notes from parents are sought for all absences. Pupils with an attendance level below 80 per cent are identified and carefully monitored. Attendance data is updated on a monthly basis. Measures to monitor and address lateness and truancy are also good. The Educational Welfare Officer is effectively involved in following up cases of persistent absence and lateness. Parents are

clear on the need to inform school when pupils are absent and are well aware of school's views and rules about holidays during term time. Recognition and rewards are given for full attendance, over a school year.

44. The school uses a good range of standardised tests and the records of these tests are well kept. The procedures for the national tests are implemented properly and the teachers also assess the pupils' performance in other subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the assessment and records for speaking and listening are not regularly maintained and this is an area of weakness in English. Baseline assessment is administered and used efficiently. The procedures for monitoring the pupils, where English is an additional language, are meticulous. The insufficient use of data for promoting higher standards is a weakness of the school. Some results are used to set targets for the school and groups of pupils, but the assessment information is not used rigorously to plan the next step in pupils' learning.
45. The identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly, however, individual targets are not always specific enough to guide teachers with forward planning or to be able to show pupils that they are making sound progress. Reading tests are carried out regularly.
46. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. As a result, pupils and their needs are well known to staff. Good work and attitudes are regularly celebrated in assemblies. This recognition and reward provides pupils with frequent and public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. The assemblies also provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on the lives and needs of others. Parents value highly the rounded education provided, and consider that the work on pupils' personal development is an important part.

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

47. Overall the school's partnership with parents makes a good contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. The good links identified at the previous inspection are broadly maintained.
48. Seventy-three parents replied to the questionnaire and 24 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. Based on the parents' meeting and questionnaire returns, parents are positive about what the school provides and achieves. Nearly all feel comfortable approaching school with questions or concerns. Most parents agree that the school is well led and managed, has high expectations, helps pupils become mature and responsible and teaching is good. They confirm that most pupils like school, behave well and make good progress, and that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspection findings support the parents' positive views about the school. However, based on the questionnaire returns, over a quarter of parents are dissatisfied with the low and variable levels of homework, especially in Key Stage 2. For example, even within year groups, they report a wide variation between classes in the levels of set homework. Inspectors support the parents' views about homework and find that too little is set to provide appropriate opportunities to regularly practice and apply classroom learning. The school is aware of this weakness in its work and has plans to improve matters in the near future. Nearly a quarter of parents consider they are not kept well informed about how pupils are getting on, and are critical about annual progress reports and consultation arrangements half-way through the school year. The school is aware of the parents' concerns and is currently reviewing its arrangements for reporting and consultation. Inspectors find that the quality of the pupils' written annual reports is good overall. Most reports give a realistic view of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and give clear advice on areas for improvement, especially for the average and below average pupils. The inclusion of pupils' personal and social progress, with some advice, and the comments of parents and pupils are further positive features. Inspection findings do, however, support parental concerns about the quality of reporting in the other subjects of the curriculum, where the school merely describes the curriculum areas covered without sufficient indication of pupils' progress or areas for improvement. The school is aware of this weakness in its procedures.
49. The quality and range of school's links with parents are good overall. School is sensitive to the language needs of parents for whom English is not their first language. For example, important written information is also provided in Urdu and Punjabi. Where needed, school helps organise translators for parents consultation evenings. School related information, in the nursery booklet and prospectus, is of good quality. Parents get a clear impression of the school's expectations and character. There are also useful outlines on the curriculum and on how to support pupils' learning. Newsletters keep parents very well informed on school life and raise important issues, such as, the taking of holidays during term time. Also half-termly class newsletters inform

parents about the curriculum topics to be covered . This information, produced in response to parental requests at the annual curriculum explanation evening, gives parents a valuable overview on their children's schoolwork. The school has been informed on the additional elements needed to make the governors' annual report to parents fully compliant with latest requirements. Information and other links with parents of special education needs pupils are satisfactory overall.

50. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. School uses an open, consultative style in discussions with parents. This approach is effective in engaging parents and deepening their involvement in their pupils' learning. For example, the comments of parents were openly sought and reflected in the final version of the home-school-child agreement. As a result, most parents have signed the agreement, more aware and committed to their role in supporting pupils' learning. A summary sheet, for parents, on how to effectively support on homework was issued as part of the introduction of the new homework policy. Discussions with pupils indicate that most parents check that homework is done and help where appropriate. The school has generally good arrangements to maximise parental attendance at termly consultation evenings. Two sessions are held on two evenings, which means that most parents attend. However, the practice of not automatically including all parents in the spring consultation is disliked by those parents who are not invited. These parents regard the spring consultation as the most important. By getting a view on progress half-way through the year, there is still time to influence outcomes for the year. The practice of holding curriculum explanation evenings, for all year groups, early in the school year, is a very effective way of engaging parents with their pupils' learning and sharing views on general issues and concerns. For example, these meetings led to the introduction of the half-termly curriculum newsletters. The level of regular adult helpers is low for a school of this size. Nevertheless, the parents' visits enrich pupils' learning about other cultures and faiths. Christmas and summer performances, and sports days are well attended. Parents also readily help with transport to local events and performances. All parent governors positions are filled, sometimes after elections, which is an indication of parents' interest in supporting the school. There is an active Friends of Bearwood School Association which supports the school well. They organise and run a wide range of fundraising and social events. The active involvement of staff, parents and pupils in many of their events helps create and maintain informal links between home and school. They also run a 'Playscheme' for four weeks during the summer holidays and provide the refreshments during consultation evenings. Recent funds have helped provide recording equipment, a planter for the playground and games for the after-school creche.

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

51. The satisfactory and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have set a clear educational direction for the school, focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. The headteacher and senior staff responded positively to the last inspection report and over the last three years have made satisfactory progress in improving the areas of the school that were deemed to have weaknesses. The school has also successfully implemented national initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This steady development in the school's work has led to a trend of improving standards at the end of both key stages. This is of particular note because the level of support for pupils with English as an additional language has reduced significantly during this period. A particular strength of management is the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' written work, principally by the headteacher, but also by other senior staff. This has contributed strongly to the improvements in the quality of teaching in the school as a whole.
52. A weakness in the school's management is the lack of clarity, scope and accountability in the roles and responsibilities of key stage and subject managers. At present they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and raising standards, are not set performance targets and are not held accountable for the standards achieved in the subject. In addition, there is an overload of work on some staff who take responsibility for major aspects of the school's work, whilst at the same time others have no responsibilities beyond their classroom duties. A further weakness in management is the school development plan. Whilst the school has taken action to improve the focus of its school development plan, the school's priorities for development are still not clearly defined in the document. In addition, the strategy of allowing subject managers to decide on their own priorities for development does not lead to a cohesive and consistent approach to school improvement.
53. The governors show a high level of interest and support for the school. An effective committee structure deals efficiently with a wide range of management issues. Governors are supplied with much, up-to-date

information by the headteacher, and this enables them to make well informed decisions. Governors are involved appropriately in development and budget planning processes, but are not as active as they might be in checking that their decisions are having a positive effect on the standards achieved and the quality of education provided. Almost all statutory requirements are met, although the school does not always provide a daily act of collective worship for all of its pupils and the annual governors' report to parents does not contain all required information.

54. The school achieves a good match between its stated aims and values, and its everyday work. This is due to the generally high level of commitment from staff to promote a positive learning environment.
55. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory, and the funds received by the school are used effectively to promote satisfactory learning and a satisfactory quality of education overall. The school is, however, temporarily generously staffed with teachers, which results in it being unable to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year. In negotiation with the LEA, the school has entered a planned deficit that will be returned to surplus within three years. The financial services provided by the local authority are of good quality, and together with the headteacher and governors, the school's expenditure is monitored closely against the planned budget. The school is careful to ensure that it purchases goods and services at competitive rates, and applies the principles of best value. The school makes good use of administrative staff and the site manager, all of whom make a valuable contribution to the work of the school. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology.
56. There are a good number of teaching staff and the school benefits from having three teachers without class responsibilities. They are therefore available to provide specialist teaching in Information Technology and music as well as cover for absent teachers. The staffing provision though is unsatisfactory because there are insufficient numbers of classroom assistants to help pupils with Special Educational Needs and for who English is an additional language. In a significant number of lessons the progress of these pupils is restricted because extra support is not available. The teaching and non-teaching staff are suitably qualified and adequate provision is made for in-service training. This is organised to support the initiatives outlined in the school development plan. Within the staff there is a good balance of gender, ethnicity and experience. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and speak highly of the guidance that they receive. However, there is sometimes insufficient classroom assistance in the reception class where a newly qualified teacher is deployed. Volunteers including parents help to support teachers and this alleviates the problem to some extent. The performance of staff is monitored but the appraisal system is 'on-hold' whilst the school awaits guidance on the introduction of the national scheme. The staff work well as a team and there is a sense of purpose in the school community.
57. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The school occupies a site in a built up area and does not have a playing field, although the playground is of an adequate size and is marked out appropriately for team games. The play areas around the school are not as stimulating an environment as the inside areas although the school has started to improve these with wall paintings and flower planters. There is an adequate secure play area for the under fives in the nursery but pupils who are under five in the three reception classes do not have direct access to this. The site is secure. The school has a pleasant environmental area in its near vicinity and this supports pupils' learning well. The classrooms are pleasant. Most are of adequate size and have water and sink facilities. A few are rather small, however and water and sink facilities are located in the nearby corridor. These smaller rooms do not adversely affect learning this year as they house small classes. One reception classroom is sited at one end of the Key Stage 1 hall and is used as a thoroughfare by adults and pupils. This makes it extremely difficult at times for the teacher to keep the pupils' attention on her or their work. The class has to move into a small art area when the children in the nursery have physical education in the other half of the hall. This situation does have an adverse affect on pupils' learning in this reception class. A new permanent classroom and small group work area have been built since the last inspection and houses a Year 1 class in good quality accommodation. Withdrawal support for pupils with special educational needs takes place in a small room or the corridor area. The two key stage libraries are also in corridor areas. As well as having limited space, these areas are open to potential distractions, severely restricting their use as resource areas for pupils. The Key Stage 2 hall is of good size. The school makes effective use of the corridors as display areas for pupils' work. The school is a satisfactory learning environment for the pupils.
58. Resources in most areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. Resources for physical education are good. There are insufficient dictionaries in Key Stage 2 for regular use, and the quantity and range of fiction books are

insufficient to enable the pupils to enjoy real choice. The location of the school library in the corridor, and the very limited range of books, do not provide pupils with enough opportunities for personal research and study. The school does however benefit from a loan scheme with Sandwell Schools Library Service which helps to compensate for the low book stock. There is a lack of artefacts for use in history to enable pupils to learn from first-hand experience. Many musical instruments need replacing, and there are not enough percussion instruments for large groups of pupils to play. There is a lack of multicultural musical instruments to complement the school's rich cultural diversity.

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

In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governors and staff should now consider the following key issues, which relate to weaknesses identified in the report paragraphs shown:

- Improve the pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of the English language in speaking and writing by: (paragraphs 1, 8, 10, 25, 61, 63, 64, 75, 76, 77, 78, 95)
  - providing sufficient additional support for pupils with English as an additional language and other in need of support;
  - planning and teaching the development of subject specific language and concepts throughout the curriculum;
  - increasing the teachers' expectations that the pupils will use suitably correct and complex language in their speaking and written work;
  - providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all ages to speak and listen;
- Improve the standards pupils attain in English, mathematics, science and information technology by the end of Key Stage 2 by: (paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 16, 19, 20, 23, 28, 30, 44, 74, 75, 76, 77, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 94, 95)
  - setting demanding targets for the school to attain in English, mathematics and science over the next four years, to close the gap between the schools performance and that of schools nationally;
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information consistently and effectively to set suitably challenging work for pupils of all abilities;
  - ensuring that the quality of teaching in Year 4 is of at least adequate quality;
  - using assessment information to set realistic but demanding targets for individual pupils to achieve by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and rigorously monitoring their progress towards the achievement of the targets;
- Increasing the contribution of senior and middle managers in raising standards and improving the quality of education provided by: (paragraphs 52, 103, 117, 122)
  - clearly defining the roles of the key stage and subject managers, and other staff with management responsibilities;
  - setting all managers clear and challenging performance targets, and evaluating their work against these;
  - ensuring that managers at all levels have the skills, time and resources to carry out their roles effectively;
- Ensure that the school development plan clearly identifies the priorities of the school and the strategy by which school improvement will be brought about by: (paragraphs 52, 85, 103)
  - focussing the plan on whole school issues, for example, 'raising standards' or 'developing pupils' language across the curriculum', rather than letting subjects define their own focus;
  - prioritising the issues for development so that all staff and governors know where the greatest efforts need to be placed;
  - making a clearer distinction between maintenance issues and development issues;

- Improve the level of attendance at the school. (paragraphs 15, 43)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs: (to be added at final draft)

- Improving the accommodation for the reception class currently taught in the infant hall, which acts as a thoroughfare for the rest of the school; (paragraphs 57, 72)
- Increasing the consistency with which homework is set, ensuring that it extends learning and independence; (paragraphs 21, 84, 91)
- Increasing the level of independence and initiative that pupils show in their learning, by clamping down on copying work from others and by grouping pupils for tasks and activities that maximising their personal learning opportunities; (paragraph 11)
- Improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs so that they guide teachers in their planning, and make the evaluation of progress against the plans more easily identifiable; (paragraphs 24, 45)
- Ensure that the daily assemblies incorporate an act of collective worship for all of its pupils. (paragraph 34)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	112
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
2	10	40	42	5	1	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	479
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	76

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	127

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	211

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	47
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

### *Attendance*



**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	41	28	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	30	32
	Girls	21	23	23
	Total	52	53	55
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	75	77	80
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	25
	Girls	20	22	18
	Total	46	52	43
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	67	75	62
	National	82	86	87

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	27	35	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science
---------------------------------------	---------	-------------	---------

Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	16	21
	Girls	21	18	20
	Total	40	34	41
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	65	55	66
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	22
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	40	39	44
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	65	63	71
	National	68	69	75

#### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	40
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	4
Indian	126
Pakistani	43
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	29

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

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

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

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

#### *Teachers and classes*

#### *Financial information*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	28.2

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	1998/1999
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	813989
Total expenditure	827565
Expenditure per pupil	1494
Balance brought forward from previous year	31135
Balance carried forward to next year	17559

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

Number of questionnaires sent out:

519

Number of questionnaires returned:

73

Percentage return

14.1%

**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes the school	48	44	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school	42	48	8	0	3
Behaviour in school is good	33	58	6	3	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	30	38	15	14	3
The teaching is good	47	40	11	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	33	43	16	7	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems	41	49	7	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	58	37	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents	36	47	12	3	3
The school is well led and managed	33	48	8	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	37	51	8	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	43	37	7	3	11

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

**PROVISION FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE**

60. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part time basis at the beginning of the year in which they have their fourth birthday. Older children transfer to the reception classes in September and younger children in January during the year in which they become five years of age. At the time of the inspection the majority of children under five were accommodated in the nursery and in one of the three reception classes. Approximately one third of entrants to the reception classes have not attended the school's nursery class. Evidence from assessments carried out during the first six weeks of entry into the nursery, together with inspection evidence, shows that the attainments of a large majority of children are well below expected levels in all areas of learning. Their speaking and other language skills are particularly low. Most children make good progress throughout the nursery and reception classes as a result of the good teaching they experience; an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they reach statutory school age, their attainment is below what is expected in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development, and is in line with that expected in physical development. Higher attaining children achieve well. Although standards appear to have fallen since the last inspection this is explained by the higher proportion of children on the special needs register, and the fact that English is an additional language for 40 per cent of children under five. Although progress for these children is satisfactory, work is not always planned sufficiently to meet their needs. This, together with insufficient classroom support, is inhibiting the progress that these children make.
61. Children have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through the provision of well planned opportunities to work together in small groups and in the whole class plenary sessions where teachers encourage children to share what they have been doing with others. The quality of teaching is good, which enables children to make good gains in their learning. Children co-operate happily during snack time, saying please and thank you when receiving their milk and biscuits. Children know classroom routines well and the organisation of these children, whether they are occupied in the many varied class activities or within their own small family group, contributes positively to their social skills. They are given good opportunities to show kindness and concern towards others, as was evident during a special assembly to celebrate Mothers Day, and in making special cards, when they listed things they could do to make mums happy. They behave well and play harmoniously together because they know that teachers expect good behaviour. The very good relationships displayed between children and staff are rapidly increasing their confidence and feeling of security.
62. The standards attained in literacy are below those expected nationally for five year olds. Although teaching in this area of the curriculum is good, the children's lack of understanding of the English language is affecting their attainment in other areas of the curriculum. Many varied opportunities are provided for children to practise speaking and listening skills. For example, during a very good lesson on asking and answering questions about plants, children asked questions such as, "How do flowers make seeds?". Good use of a plenary session after a lesson increased the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them and enabled them to explain how to use a tape recorder. Teachers work hard to extend the children's vocabulary, and as a result, their knowledge of words and command of language is increasing rapidly. Children listen carefully to instructions; this enables them to settle to group tasks quickly and purposefully.
63. All children show interest and enjoyment in books. Both fiction and non-fiction books are taken home regularly and big books are used well in literacy lessons to enhance and extend the children's reading. Stories are told imaginatively, which capture children's attention from the start, and guided reading sessions are well organised and further increase children's experience. Children in the nursery 'pretend' to read stories and know that print carries meaning, whilst older children read simple books accurately, at the same time demonstrating recognition of a small number of frequently used words. They identify the author and title of the book they are reading, and are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to decode unfamiliar words because these skills have been well taught. More able children recognise a significant number of words both in and out of context, and are becoming accurate, confident readers of simple text. Nevertheless many children find great difficulty in talking about what they have read, despite the teachers' efforts to increase their knowledge and understanding of stories.

64. Writing skills are well taught. Younger children happily write shopping lists in the 'pretend' flower shop and attempt to write their names on pictures, although pencil control is often poor and children find difficulty in forming letter shapes correctly even though this is well taught. Children make rapid gains in their writing skills so that by the age of five they make good attempts at writing simple sentences and show some understanding of capital letters and full stops; they sometimes incorporate known words into their writing. Handwriting, though sometimes erratic in size, is well formed. More able children write correctly sequenced sentences and use their well developed phonic skills to identify rhyming words such as 'floor' and 'door' in their writing.
65. Attainment in mathematics is below that expected by the age of five, although a significant minority of children achieve standards in line with and sometimes above that of five year olds generally. Children learn to count by singing number rhymes and from the regular counting sessions at the beginning of lessons. The quality of teaching is good and teachers find innovative ways of making learning fun. For example, during a sorting and counting lesson, children prepared a dolls' tea party and carefully and accurately counted the number of cups and plates needed for all the 'guests'. Younger children print repeating patterns of flowers and the more able incorporate more than one colour into their pattern and carefully count and record the number of flowers they have made. Most children sort objects accurately by colour, shape and size, and decide what size of paper to choose for their paintings. Older children buy items from the pretend garden centre and find more than one way of selecting coins to pay for an item costing five pence. They use their well developed counting skills to solve simple addition and subtraction problems sometimes using the computer.
66. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below that expected by the age of five. The quality of teaching is good and children make rapid gains in their learning. Nevertheless children's command of relevant vocabulary is below expectations, although teachers work hard to introduce and consolidate new words. In one lesson, for example, the teacher carefully introduced the word 'experiment' when children were trying to find out how plants took in water. Younger children know that plants have flowers and leaves whilst older children look carefully at the beans they have grown and identify roots, shoots and stems. Most children know the name of their street and the number of their house and are aware that there are shops and other buildings in the vicinity because visits are sometimes made into the community. They are developing an awareness of the need to take care of the world around them. They use equipment such as magnifying glasses sensibly to look closely at different parts of plants and operate the mouse successfully in order to play games on the computer. They know how to operate a tape recorder. Older children know that some things such as spiders are living and others such as houses are not and are able to sequence the order of tasks when boiling an egg for example.
67. Children's creative development is below that expected at five years old. Teachers throughout the foundation years plan worthwhile experiences by which children can develop skills such as cutting, painting and sticking. During a well-planned activity in the nursery, children were using these skills with increasing success, which enabled them to make a flower catalogue for their flower shop. Good teaching enabled them to look carefully at a picture by Monet and then use sponges and paint to produce their own interpretations. Older children mix their own paint and produce patterns and pictures that take account of size and colour. They enjoy participating in nursery rhymes and songs and sing rhythmically and often tunefully and move spontaneously in time to the music. In a good lesson in the nursery children were able to copy rhythmic patterns of flower names, following a good demonstration by the teacher. Children participate happily in role play in the home corner and although they attempt to communicate with each other their speech is sometimes unclear and sentences are often ungrammatical.
68. By the age of five children's physical development is in line with that of the average five year old. They steer and control wheeled vehicles such as bicycles and toy tractors with skill and dexterity and show an awareness of space in outside play and in physical education lessons in the hall. They are aware of the need to take care because teachers carefully emphasise the importance of health and safety, and listen carefully to and follow instructions in order to participate fully in each activity. They understand how to go under and over and through equipment such as benches and trestles, and climb, run and jump with increasing skill and dexterity. Teachers often use other children effectively to demonstrate good practice although occasionally opportunities to capitalise on this are missed in some activities. Warm relationships and praise and encouragement are very effective in giving children confidence to try harder.

69. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning. Teachers know the children well and usually plan lessons carefully so that all can make the progress of which they are capable. However, in a small minority of lessons this is not the case, and results in some below average children not making adequate progress. Teachers and support assistants work well together as a team, and plan work together to ensure consistency. Activities have clear learning purposes and are planned to ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum, and that all adults know what children are expected to learn. The scheme of work is delivered through a series of topics that are carefully linked to all areas of the curriculum.
70. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers keep detailed records of the children's progress, and baseline and other forms of school assessment are analysed carefully to show the rate of progress children are making. Children are set homework in mathematics and language and literacy each week and reading books are taken home regularly, although home/school reading books, which form a regular dialogue between the school and parents, are not always used effectively to set small achievable targets for the children to achieve. The 'early years' coordinator is well informed and knows what the school needs to do next in order to improve. There are effective systems in place to enable children to make a smooth transition from home to school and parents are given useful booklets to keep them well informed about what goes on in school.
71. Resources are satisfactory and well used by all. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall, one reception class is taught in the hall and is subjected to constant interruptions by both adults and pupils walking through it. This is sometimes noisy and invariably disturbs the children's concentration, which results in them not being able to make the progress of which they were capable. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest such as Calthorpe Haven and the school makes good use of people from the local community such as firemen and the school crossing patrol lady. The contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teachers tell stories in English and Punjabi, to more fully involve children for whom English is a second language. The harmonious atmosphere which pervades classrooms sets a scene which is conducive to good learning. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong and are carefully taught to show respect and care for the world around them.

## ENGLISH

72. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' standards of attainment in reading and writing were below the national average but in line with the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Since 1996, standards in reading have risen steadily, at a rate similar to the national trend, whilst in writing standards were rising much faster than the national picture until they dipped sharply in 1999. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards in all aspects of English are below the national expectations. Significant factors that restrict attainment are the high proportion of pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language, and the high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register. This means that many pupils have a considerable amount of ground to catch up in order to meet national standards, and whilst many do so, a significant proportion do not.
73. The end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1999 show that standards are in line with the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. This is a significant achievement for the school in view of the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and on the special educational needs register. The test results since 1996 show that standards in English have risen at a rate significantly faster than the national trend. Results since 1996 also show that girls achieve higher standards than boys, although this was not evident in work seen during the inspection.
74. Pupils listen well by the end of both key stages and they make good progress in developing this aspect of English. However, standards of speaking are well below average at the end of both key stages, and throughout the school, a significant number of pupils find it hard to express themselves clearly. Their vocabulary is weak, and even the most able pupils in Year 6 struggle to find appropriate words to describe the meaning of things. For example, they tend to use words such as 'stuff' and expressions which include 'it's hard to explain' and 'you know what I mean.' Pupils speak quietly in class discussions, and many are lacking in confidence to volunteer responses to teachers' questions. High attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 show more eagerness to speak, for example, in Year 5 one pupil provided good details when describing 'The Hobbit'. However, at the end of the key stage there remains a lack of confidence to answer teachers' questions. Teachers have to work hard to elicit suitable responses from their pupils.

75. At the end of both stages a large proportion of pupils read accurately and reach standards appropriate for their age. In the reception class there is a wide range in pupils' levels of attainment. Higher attaining pupils are able to use their knowledge of phonics in order to tackle new words. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. However, they are not confident to talk about books and their recall of what they read is weak. Lower attaining pupils recognise a few words and enjoy the experience of looking at books. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in developing their accuracy in reading but find it hard explain what is happening or predict the plot of a story. Their understanding of words is weak for example; one pupil of average attainment was able to read the word 'sniff' but was unable to say what it meant. Lower attaining pupils use pictures to guess what is happening in the story. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils read with confidence and are able to use the index and contents pages of books. They are developing skills in using the library and show some confidence in trying to locate books. Pupils' enthusiasm for books continues into Years 3 and 4. The higher attaining pupils are able to name their favourite authors; for example, Dick King Smith, and are reading at a level above their chronological age. Year 5 pupils are confident and accurate in their reading but lower attaining pupils do not have a secure knowledge of alphabetical order to enable them to use dictionaries efficiently. The reading material for higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently challenging for pupils in both Years 5 and 6. This results in these pupils not encountering texts which will enrich their vocabulary and provide examples of detailed and descriptive writing which would help them to develop their own skills in writing. At the end of the key stage, pupils are quick and confident in the use of the school library. However, the range of both fiction and non-fiction books is limited and this restricts the development of their language and research skills. Throughout the school, the pupils' skills in understanding and discussing books are less well developed than their accuracy in reading text.
76. The standard of writing is below the national expectations at the end of both key stages. In Year 2 there are an insufficient number of pupils reaching the expected level especially in the structure and amount of writing that they produce. Very few pupils reach high standards in their writing. In Year 6, the writing of many pupils lacks detail and does not contain vocabulary of a sufficiently high standard. This is especially the case in the writing of the high attaining pupils. The school is aware of this weakness and is gaining some success in improving the extended writing skills of some pupils, as for example the Year 6 pupil who wrote about 'a fox lying still, unmoving except for a few hairs quivering in the wind.' The standard of handwriting is satisfactory and there are some very good examples in Year 3. This is not maintained in Year 4 where the work often appears untidy and incorrectly spelt. Overall, spelling is broadly satisfactory, but needs to be further developed especially in the regular use of dictionaries. Few pupils refer to a thesaurus to enrich their writing. Pupils are able to use their writing skills in a wide range of situations and this is a strength of the school and a significant improvement since the last inspection. In a reception class, for example, pupils learn to make a good collection of words related to bats. Pupils in the early years are able to write simple accounts such as the story of Ganesha. In Year 2 pupils learn how to use speech marks and write reviews of books. Pupils are able to write good descriptions of a Chinese tale in Year 3 and the standard of work on display is of an above average standard. Pupils in Year 4 write in the style of different authors, for example Janet and Alan Ahlberg, and make simple notes on the rainforests. Year 5 pupils use their writing skills well in geography and science to describe how they made a model volcano and investigated chromatography. By the end of the key stage most pupils are able to write in a legible and generally effective style. Overall, pupils make good progress in developing their skills in writing but further work is needed to develop their vocabulary and ability to write in greater length and detail.
77. The progress of pupils with special educational need varies depending upon the level and quality of support. Overall, progress is satisfactory in lessons and it is good when the special needs staff supports the pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress overall, and make good and occasionally very good progress when they receive additional support. However, the amount of classroom support for these pupils is too little, and this restricts their learning. Some individual pupils have made excellent progress in settling into the school routine and developing skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing.
78. Most pupils are positive in their approach to the subject and behave well in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about books, as is seen, for example, in their excitement and interest at the 'book fair'. They try hard to meet the expectations of the teachers although they need to be vigorously encouraged to work quickly and to produce more written work. Where there is not positive support or clear instructions, the pupils' rate of progress and behaviour deteriorates. Such lessons were seen in Years 1 and 4 where pupils were inattentive and noisy.



79. The quality of teaching varies between very good and poor. This variation is also reflected in the quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make. Fifteen percent of the lessons were very good, 45 percent good, 30 percent satisfactory, 5 percent unsatisfactory and 5 percent poor. Overall the quality of teaching is good but the weaker lessons have a significant impact upon the progress which pupils make over time and the standards that they eventually achieve at the end of Key Stage 2.
80. In the best lessons, teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and are effective in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The objectives for pupils' learning are clearly identified in the planning and the targets for the lessons are shared with the pupils. In these lessons the activities are well organised, the range of tasks appropriate and challenging to all pupils, and the pace of learning is brisk. Examples of such lessons were seen in both key stages. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher constantly monitored pupils' progress and kept urging them to give more detail and produce more written work. Pupils were reminded of the time in which they had to complete the task. This was done in a supportive and encouraging manner and most pupils responded by producing work of an appropriate standard. In Year 6, pupils were required to create writing plans to enable them to structure their stories well. The teachers set strict time limits and when pupils did not work quickly enough, the task had to be repeated.
81. At the end of both key stages, pupils learn to work quickly and to increase the amount of work they produce. They also learn to listen carefully to instructions and develop their span of concentration. Another feature of these good and very good lessons, is the teachers' expectations for pupils to produce neat and legible writing and to behave in an appropriate manner. The work of pupils is attractively displayed and this also sets a good standard for pupils to work towards or maintained. The teachers provide a wide range of interesting writing activities to stimulate and develop the pupils' skills in writing. For example, in Year 2, pupils learn to sequence texts when writing fairy stories from around the world. They learn to write letters to Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and to use speech marks, for example, to demarcate what seabirds might say about the lighthouse keeper's lunch. In Year 6, pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop the technique of persuasive writing, for example, in letters to government ministers. A strong feature of the good teaching is the sense of purpose which teachers instill in their pupils. The teachers achieve this by providing clear guidance and structure throughout the lesson. This was seen in Year 3 where pupils were taught how to make the introduction to stories more interesting. In the same class, pupils' handwriting was well developed and the teacher expected high standards of presentation. This standard of achievement and the pace at which pupils were expected to work is not maintained consistently in Year 4. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 work hard to restore pupils' progress in learning and, at the time of the inspection, the evidence shows that a significant number of pupils are approaching national standards.
82. The weakness in teaching is mainly represented in Year 4, but also in parts of some Key Stage 1 lessons. In Year 1, there is insufficient assertive control of pupils. In one lesson, the constant monitoring of behaviour prevented the teacher from concentrating on a group of pupils for their guided reading session. In other lessons, the pace of learning was slowed by the frequent need for the teacher to remind pupils about how to behave properly. This was also seen in the lessons in Year 4. In these lessons, the rate of pupils' learning is slow and pupils achieve little in the given time. A further reason for pupils' slow progress is the lack of challenge provided for the high attaining pupils. For example, in one lesson, when these pupils quickly finished their work, they were given jobs to do, complete worksheets, or told to 'just read.' This lack of proper provision for the high attaining pupils hinders the school from reaching higher standards in the national tests. Low attaining pupils make good progress when supported by a senior member of staff in Year 4.
83. The literacy strategy is effectively implemented in most classes. A strength of the curriculum is the wide range of writing opportunities provided in other subjects, for example, in religious education, history and geography. Homework is set and the provision for links between home and school for reading in Key Stage 1 is good. There is, however, some inconsistency in the use of homework in Key Stage 2 and parents expressed their concern during the meeting held before the inspection. There is insufficient use of information technology, although where it is provided, it helps to develop pupils' skills in word processing.
84. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and has led to overall satisfactory improvements in standards and the quality of provision in the subject. The outcome of tests is monitored, and samples of pupils' work are reviewed regularly. This enables the school to be aware of its weaknesses and use the outcome of monitoring to plan for the development of the subject, for example, writing skills. However, the data is not

used sufficiently to promote individual pupil's progress. Subject guidelines are dated, and do not give sufficient support to the teachers because they make insufficient reference to the National Literacy Strategy. The subject is featured in the school development plan, but the targets are vague and there is insufficient detail of what specific action is to be taken. Effective recording systems have been introduced, although the speaking and listening records are not well maintained. There is sufficient reading scheme material, although some books in Key Stage 1 have pages missing. The weakness in the school's provision is the lack of a good range of books in the library, insufficient dictionaries, and an unsatisfactory selection of fiction books in Key Stage 2. This shortage of resources restricts the development of reading and other language skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1 show the overall performance of pupils to be well below the national average. These results are below those for similar schools. There has been an improving trend in results since 1996, at a rate faster than the national trend. The results of the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 show that attainment is well below the national average and below that of similar schools. Improving trends over the past four years are similar to the national picture.
86. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are generally in line with the national expectations. There are, however, some weaknesses in aspects of mathematics which require pupils to demonstrate a good knowledge of English by reading problems and applying their knowledge of number in order to solve them. In Year 1, pupils count in ones to 100, and begin to understand the concept of addition. In Year 2, pupils are sure of which numbers are odd and which are even. They mentally double and halve numbers with ease up to 20, and in tens to 100. In one class, the average and high attaining pupils find strategies to halve larger numbers such as 32 or 46 successfully, and the high attainers explain that an odd number can be halved and the answer has half a number at the end. Pupils explain their strategies, but sometimes find difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and using correct language fluently. They demonstrate accurate knowledge of the two times table during a mental session and touch on elements of the five and ten times tables. However, in a lesson where pupils had to read problems and decide which strategies to use in order to solve them, standards were unsatisfactory, due to lack of true understanding of the questions and uncertainty about how to solve them. Pupils recognise two dimensional shapes by their properties, and some know about right angles. They measure carefully and draw lines accurately in centimetres. They construct bar graphs and pictograms to show information about themselves.
87. Work seen during the inspection shows that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are a little below the national expectations, but close them. Few pupils work consistently at levels above those expected for their age. In Year 3, pupils work hard to solve money problems. Average attaining pupils add and subtract pence to one pound while high attainers solve problems within five pounds. In Year 4, pupils recognise angles which are right-, acute or obtuse, and discuss the degrees between the hands of a clock, for example at three o'clock. In Year 5, pupils collate data about the weather on graphs, but only in one class are pupils extended to use line graphs rather than bar charts. In Year 6, pupils analyse data accurately on line graphs. The high attaining pupils apply their knowledge to solve problems independently from past test papers, but find the task very challenging. Throughout the school low attainers work well in lessons where they have adult support, and in those sessions they make good progress. However, where adult support is insufficient, because the class teacher is focusing on another group, or where there is no additional support, the progress of low attainers and those who need help in understanding English, is unsatisfactory.
88. Analysis of work produced during the school year indicates that pupils cover all aspects of mathematics, but that there is little work done beyond the basic level expected for pupils to attain in each year. The school is aware that the next step is to extend the high attaining pupils further in each year group.
89. The main change since the last inspection has been the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy in Key Stage 1 in September 1998, and its implementation throughout the school in September 1999. Lessons now have a clear structure with a daily mental session that quickens pupils' responses and improves their accuracy in manipulating numbers. The introduction of a "time / personal best" targets in one Year 6 class has improved the speed and accuracy of tables by pupils of all abilities, most markedly by those of lower ability. Teachers particularly at Key Stage 1 emphasise mathematical vocabulary well, in order to ensure that all pupils understand new words. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be well below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has made progress

in raising standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and has kept broadly in step with national improvements at the end of Key Stage 2. Booster classes, for pupils in Year 6 who need help in order to raise their attainment to match the national average, are proving to be extremely popular and successful. Presentation at both key stages is usually neat, and that of lower attainers is of particular note. However, pupils throughout the school still do not develop flexible thinking in their approach to problem solving.

90. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is almost always at least satisfactory, and around a third of teaching is good. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is always satisfactory; a third of lessons are good and one lesson was excellent. The quality of learning usually mirrors teaching. Features of good teaching include clear explanations that ensure all pupils understand what is being taught and therefore listen and concentrate carefully. Teachers adapt questions skilfully so that varying groups of pupils answer correctly at appropriate levels. They adopt strategies that involve all their pupils during the mental sessions. The lessons proceed at a brisk pace with appropriate change of activities that keep everyone interested and involved, and pupils are aware of how much time they have to complete a task. The main tasks in each lesson are carefully adapted to challenge the different groups of pupils appropriately. Often in lessons judged to be good, there are additional adults who give valuable support to lower attainers and pupils needing help with English, or teachers choose to focus their attention on these groups. These pupils then maintain good levels of concentration because they understand their tasks and make good progress during the sessions. Where teachers have a narrower range of attainment to teach, learning is often of higher quality, because the teachers' focus is more concentrated. Homework was mentioned by some teachers, but did not hold high profile during the inspection week.
91. In less successful lessons, teachers do not use strategies that involve all pupils fully during the mental mathematics sessions in order to improve further their levels of mental agility. Teachers are aware that their pupils need lots of practice to aid their understanding of how to solve problems, but not enough emphasis is yet placed on systematic teaching of these strategies. There are carefully differentiated tasks planned in some lessons, but the scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that too often pupils of all abilities do the same tasks. The high attaining pupils produce a greater quantity than other pupils, and are not sufficiently challenged to think at more advanced levels. In several classes pupils who are unsure of how to answer a question copy answers rather than being encouraged to think independently.
92. Mathematics skills are used appropriately across the curriculum. Bar and line graphs display information that pupils gather and distil in geography and science. Mathematical knowledge was used well by Year 6 in design and technology when they make board games with a mathematical content.
93. The subject is led by an experienced and competent post-holder who has ensured that the staff understand and feel competent in the delivery of the lesson structures and programme of the National Numeracy Strategy. Demonstration lessons have been given to staff and there has been monitoring of lessons. At present the school uses the guidelines provided by the Strategy as a scheme of work. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and is carefully recorded. Assessment is used effectively to place pupils accurately in ability groups, however, not enough use is made of assessment information to plan work that challenges all pupils to raise their standards further. Each year group has a set of general targets to work towards, but personal targets have not yet been discussed and agreed between staff and pupils. Teachers' weekly plans are monitored regularly and pupils' work is scrutinised. Resources are satisfactory and are used well.

## **SCIENCE**

94. Results of the National Curriculum teacher assessments for 1999 show that that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are well below the national average and below that of similar schools. No pupils exceeded the expected level 2 in 1999. By the end of Key Stage 2, test results show that standards are below those attained nationally and but in line with the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well below the national picture. Trends over the last three years show that standards are rising at a similar rate to the national picture.
95. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards at the end of both key stages have improved since last year, although pupils are still in line to achieve standards below those expected nationally. This improvement is attributed to teachers' increased confidence in and better knowledge and understanding of the new nationally available scheme of work, which is being implemented across the school. Average and above average pupils are in line to achieve appropriately by the end of Key Stage 1, although there is a

significant proportion of less able pupils in both key stages who will not achieve the required level. There is some duplication of work in different year groups throughout Key Stage 2 due to the lack of a whole school overview of what teachers need to teach, and when and how to teach it. This results in a reduction of opportunity for Year 6 to revisit and revise previous work, therefore work is not always sufficiently consolidated to enable pupils to achieve their potential by the end of the key stage. Although tasks are carefully explained and good questions enable pupils to show their understanding of the main points of lessons, they find difficulty in retaining key words and a significant proportion of pupils find difficulty in demonstrating their understanding in written work.

96. The pace of learning is satisfactory overall throughout both key stages, although in some lessons it is good and occasionally very good. Pupils in Year 1 observe the changes that occur when the seeds they have planted start to grow, and comment on size, colour, roots and shoots. They know that light comes from different sources, such as the sun and electricity. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils could identify the changes that occur when heat is applied to objects, such as an egg or a candle, and recognise that some changes are irreversible. They show a good awareness that sleep, diet and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle, and record their findings accurately, sometimes using bar graphs and charts. Teachers do not depend heavily on ready prepared recording sheets and pupils are being taught to record their findings in a scientific manner.
97. Learning accelerated considerably in a Year 3 lesson on fair testing. Excellent teaching enabled pupils of all abilities to decide that to conduct an experiment to find the material which was most absorbent, the experiment had to be timed, the material pieces had to be of the same size and the amount of water used had to be consistent. In developing their understanding of everyday materials they sort them according to their properties, and compare those that are natural and those that are man made. Year 4 pupils know that the human body has a skeletal structure for support and explain how muscles are needed for movement. After investigating the effects of insulation they had to design a fair test to prevent water from cooling down. Nevertheless, there is variation in the standard of work expected between the two Year 4 classes, and insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to develop their own understanding of how to present their work scientifically. Teachers work hard to introduce and consolidate new vocabulary. This was especially evident in a Year 5 class on evaporation and condensation when the teacher used questions, diagrams and charts effectively to increase pupils' understanding. Pupils explore ways of producing gas by mixing liquids and solids, such as vinegar and baking powder, and then demonstrate their understanding by recording results using tables and charts. In further increasing their understanding of fair tests, they set up experiments to show the rate of evaporation if the surface area is changed. During a visit to Calthorpe Haven, an environmental area which the school has worked hard to create, very good teaching was demonstrated with a Year 6 class, when the teacher capitalised on every opportunity to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different parts of a flower and its functions. Pupils suggest ways of separating materials using floating, sinking and dissolving techniques and then devise experiments to test their predictions. The mixed ability grouping of pupils works well in science lessons where the more able help the less able, resulting in all pupils being involved in decision making.
98. Overall, progress is satisfactory although pupils make good progress in some lessons when questions are varied to suit all abilities, tasks are organised in mixed ability groups to enable all to make a contribution and teachers intervene well to accelerate learning. However, there is an over dependence on work sheets in some lessons where pupils of all abilities are given the same task. Therefore, some tasks are not sufficiently challenging for the more able, and less able pupils find them too difficult.
99. Pupils' good attitudes to science have been maintained since the last inspection. They take care when using tools and equipment because issues of health and safety are taught well. They show respect and tolerance for others' ideas, this being especially evident in mixed ability groups. They take pride in their work and presentation is usually neat. They listen attentively and are enthusiastic in discussion and when answering questions. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Principles of right and wrong are well taught in lessons and opportunities are given for pupils to experience awe and wonder. This was especially evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils described the pond as 'vibrating with the movement of tadpoles'. Pupils are encouraged to work harmoniously together when collaborating in practical work. This only lapses when tasks are not well suited to their needs.
100. Although the quality of teaching seen was good in most lessons observed, it is judged to be satisfactory overall at both key stages taking into consideration other factors such as analysis of pupils' work and

discussions with pupils and staff. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers display satisfactory and sometimes good subject knowledge although lapses were evident in the analysis of pupils work when pupils' incorrect use of symbols and circuit diagrams and descriptions on forces was marked as being acceptable. Lesson intentions are clearly displayed which pupils know about. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking across the school, although some good examples were seen. Teachers manage pupils well and respect for both pupils and staff is evident in all lessons. Teachers make good use of challenging questions which help pupils to think more carefully, good use is made of support staff and time is used effectively. At the end of lessons teachers give pupils good opportunities to review and inform others about what they have learned and the pace of lessons is usually brisk. The use of homework is inconsistent.

101. There is appropriate coverage of all aspects of the curriculum, including opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate. However, the absence of a whole school plan, showing what, how and when to teach elements of the science programme, results in duplication of some work, such as circuits, in different year groups. This results in a slowing of progress in some aspects of the pupils' learning in science. Science makes an effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils use graphs, tables and spreadsheets to record their findings, and regularly plan and evaluate their work through discussion and written tasks. Although the school has addressed some of the issues on its action plan there is insufficient planned focus on raising standards, the monitoring of lessons to ensure consistency is under developed and assessment procedures which tell teachers what to do next are not in place.

## **ART**

102. Attainment at the end of both the key stages is in line with the nationally expected standards, and pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at Key Stage 2 were judged to be below those expected by the time pupils reach the age of eleven. There has been an emphasis on developing artistic skills throughout the school, which has had a positive impact on standards. Standards of observational drawings throughout the school are above average.

103. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn at an early age to look carefully at what they are drawing, and are aware of the horizon, and that the sky meets the land. They use paint, pencil, charcoal and pastel very effectively to create pictures of trees, sunflowers using Van Gogh's picture as a stimulus, and in Year 2 produce realistic pastel seascapes in the style of Turner. They learn to blend and smudge pastels to obtain the colours and effects required. They examine moving figures, and are aware of the proportions of the body, and draw figures which look as though they are running.

104. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils' observational skills are systematically developed, and pupils are encouraged to draw and paint exactly what they see. By the end of the key stage pupils create realistic, accurate representations of their eye, using pastels and watercolours. Pupils in Year 4 use shading effectively to show texture, when drawing soft toys, and in Year 5 pupils look at the light falling on objects, and use shadow well to produce a three-dimensional effect. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language do the same activities as their peers, and produce very pleasing results.

105. Pupils enjoy their art lessons, and concentrate hard to achieve the task. They are interested in what they are doing, use equipment carefully, and mix paint sensibly. The oldest pupils are developing a self-critical approach to their work, and discuss how their efforts can be improved. All pupils clear away efficiently at the end of the lesson.

106. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 as no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' work displayed around the school clearly shows that teachers are focussing on the teaching of skills. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently good, an improvement since the last inspection when it was described as unsatisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and provide pupils with interesting and challenging tasks. This ensures that pupils are interested and absorbed in the task, and that their skills are continuously developed. Teachers give clear instructions and demonstrations, so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them, and time is well used to enable pupils to practise new skills. Pupils are encouraged to look at their work critically, and are given helpful suggestions as to how it might be improved. This ensures that pupils work hard, set themselves high standards, and that the results are pleasing and rewarding. This self-critical approach and the good teaching

have had a very positive impact on the standards of work achieved. Although good opportunities are given for the development of observational skills and three-dimensional art, activities are very prescribed, and there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their imagination and create pictures in response to moods and feelings.

107. The subject manager provides good leadership for the subject. She has worked hard to ensure that artistic skills are progressively developed through the school, and there is now an emphasis on the teaching of art for its own sake, rather than using it to service other curriculum areas. Effecting training has resulted in the improvement of teacher confidence and expertise, and an assessment sheet of skill acquisition has been developed. This gives teachers a clear picture of what pupils can do, but these results are not used to plan the next stage of learning. There are many examples of exciting three-dimensional work attractively displayed around the school, for example large collage portraits in the style of Gauguin, Aztec masks, and clay pots, which indicate that the weakness highlighted in the last report has been addressed. There is, however, a lack of multi-cultural art seen around the school and this does not reflect the rich cultural mix of the school community. There is insufficient use of information technology to support the subject

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. The satisfactory standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. This judgement is based on lesson observations, analysis of pupils work, photographic evidence of past activities and achievements and discussions with staff and pupils. The pace of learning is at least satisfactory and sometimes good because skills are taught in a careful sequence, lessons are well planned, and tasks focus on creating products of good quality which are designed for a specific purpose. For example, Year 1 pupils make body shapes with movable arms and legs and then use this knowledge to design their own shadow puppets. In planning and designing trucks as part of their topic on transport, Year 2 pupils measure, cut and saw accurately, at the same time taking account of the need to fix wheels to an axle to allow them to move freely. After investigating how picture frames are made, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 then design and make their own, selecting materials carefully to suit the purpose. They design and make body parts for their battery operated cars and take account of requirements, such as size and shape. Older pupils in the key stage generate their own designs for an Aztec house, but some find difficulty in talking about their work because they do not always retain key language. During one very good lesson, Year 6 pupils discussed their ideas for making a hinge then put their ideas into practice, modifying and changing their work in the light of experience.

109. Most pupils show keenness to participate in lessons because tasks are designed to capture their interest and enthusiasm. They share ideas sensibly and help each other to improve. This was especially evident in good lessons when pupils worked in mixed ability groups in which the more able supported the less able so that all achieved the aims of the lesson. They take care when using equipment because safety issues are well taught and persevere when tasks are challenging. Occasional lapses occur when groups are too large, lessons lack pace and where there is insufficient intervention by teachers.

110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages but with examples of good, and in one lesson, very good teaching. Teachers are well prepared, they know the pupils well and lessons are usually planned to meet the needs of all. Good questions are posed, which make pupils think carefully and frequent opportunities are given for pupils to plan, design and modify their work. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use resources effectively. In the very good lesson observed, pupils were continuously being challenged to improve their ideas by the use of thought provoking questions with very high expectations. However opportunities are occasionally missed in some lessons for pupils to solve problems for themselves and there was one occasion when the teacher placed too many restrictions on higher attainers which did not sufficiently allow them to proceed at their own pace. Good relationships are the norm in all lessons and teachers display care and concern for their pupils.

111. The subject coordinator is well informed and is keen to move the subject forward. The scheme of work is undergoing radical change in the light of new nationally recommended guidelines. Planning is detailed and shared and skills are well taught. Good opportunities are provided for parents to become involved in their children's learning. One notable example was the Pizza challenge when pupils enlisted the help of parents in designing a tasty pizza, designed and made the packaging and then determined how the product was to be marketed. The best ideas were then demonstrated to the whole school. The subject contributes very effectively to the development of pupils' literacy skills through the frequent opportunities which are

provided for pupils to plan, design and talk about their work through discussion and written tasks. Good use of numeracy skills was evident when Year 6 pupils designed and made board games involving the solving of mathematical problems.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations and progress is satisfactory, a very similar picture to that found at the last inspection. Throughout the key stage, pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of geography and in the development of geographical skills. Pupils in the reception classes gain an early understanding of the quality of an environment and link this to personal responsibility through their visits to the schools environment area, Calthorpe Haven. They understand that places can be represented on a plan and draw simple ones appropriately, for example, animal enclosures, linked to a visit to a safari park. Pupils gain increasing knowledge of their local environment in Year 1 and make sound assessments regarding the attractive and unattractive features of this. They read simple maps of their local area, with less able pupils needing support in this activity. In Year 2 pupils satisfactorily extend their map skills. They locate the school and their homes on large-scale maps and draw maps of their routes to school. Able pupils draw route maps of greater complexity and detail and include side roads and landmarks. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the differences and similarities between their own locality and a rural one and their visit to the Clent Hills supports this satisfactorily. By the end of the key stage, pupils are familiar with the physical and human features in their own environment, understand the use of symbols to represent things on a simple map and use a simple letter and number co-ordinate to locate a position on a grid.

113. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and progress is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of aspects of physical and human geography and their skills of analysis are further developed. Throughout the key stage, pupils further their understanding of symbols and scales and become more confident in their use of maps, as in Year 4 lessons where they use a plan of Calthorpe Haven to practise the use of four-figure grid references. This aspect of the subject is adequately supported by information technology. Pupils develop a sound vocabulary of geographical terms and can use them appropriately. During the key stage pupils examine settlements and use Bearwood Trail and Bridgnorth as other examples. They show an understanding of why settlements grew up where they did and can explain the important factors in their development. They compare British settlements with St. Lucia and understand the differences in climate, housing, travel and imports and exports. This is well supported by an E-mail link with a variety of inhabitants of St. Lucia. The use of mathematical skills is used appropriately, for example, through bar charts in the comparison of the climates, rainfall and travel in the United Kingdom and St. Lucia. Pupils show a healthy concern and understanding of environmental issues. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in the both key stages and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was reported that the provision in Key Stage 1 was not appropriate.

114. The quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers display sound, sometimes good subject knowledge and lessons are satisfactorily planned and resourced, ensuring that busy sessions run smoothly. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and, as in a Year 6 lesson for example, encourage them to use a range of resources in independent or group research in a mature manner. Teachers set tasks that are generally challenging and these captivate the interest of the majority of pupils, although do not often extend the most able. Teachers organise pupils well for group work where appropriate and this ensures that less able pupils and those with special educational needs receive some support from the group in lessons, where no extra classroom support is available. Teachers' questioning of pupils is generally perceptive and responsive, helping pupils to clarify their ideas and enhance their learning. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, when a pupil commented that she thought the map was wrong the teacher stopped the class, who were working at individual tasks, to ask the pupils to tell her when a map could be wrong. Wall displays are of good quality and pupils work is marked satisfactorily, encouraging continuing motivation on the part of the pupils.

115. Pupils respond well in lessons and this is a positive feature, enhancing learning. They enjoy lessons and have a sense of curiosity about the world around them. They concentrate on the work set and respond well to questions in class discussions, giving sensible suggestions when they do so. They take care with written

work and diagrams and are pleased to discuss their understanding of the topic in hand. Relationships in the classroom are good.

116. The scheme of work is limited in detail, but assessment procedures are good, although their use future planning is capable of further development. The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated and teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored appropriately, however the role of the co-ordinator has not yet been developed fully to include the monitoring of teaching and the support of colleagues in the classroom. Information technology is used to support learning but this is in the early stages of development. Accommodation and resources are generally adequate to support the delivery of the curriculum, however the accommodation of one reception class in the hall, which is used as a thoroughfare by adults and pupils is unsatisfactory. The libraries for both key stages are in corridors where space for research is limited.

## **HISTORY**

117. The attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of range and timing. They develop a clear appreciation of changes over time and sequencing, established in reception, for example, where pupils examine what they were like as babies. In Year 1, pupils investigate their own locality and recognise that some buildings are older than others. They know that homes today are different from Tudor and Saxon homes, for example. Able pupils in this year correctly place pictures of three toys on a time line relative to each other. Year 2 pupils have an appropriate understanding of how transport has changed over the ages and their knowledge of this and other events is well supported by a developing timeline, which stretches along the upstairs corridor of the school. Their knowledge of important people in history is also sound and the school's millennium display refers to the good variety of people studied by the various year groups in the school. Pupils' depth of knowledge is sound and progress is satisfactorily enhanced by the visits they make to places like the Black Country Museum.

118. In Key Stage 2 an appreciation of national history is satisfactorily developed. Pupils in Years 3, for example, examine entertainment and leisure in Victorian times and compare these with present day activities. Throughout the key stage, pupils gain experience of abstracting information from a range of sources, reproductions of old newspapers and photographs as well as the school log books, for example. However pupils' appreciation of the bias of various sources is less well developed. Year 4 pupils gain a clear appreciation of how other nations have played their part in British history through an investigation of the Roman Conquest, for example. A local historian is used as an effective resource, as are visits to an aircraft museum, for Year 4 pupils and Oak House, to support work on the Tudors in Year 5.

119. Pupils display satisfactory and often good attitudes to learning. They work well together in mixed ability groups where all pupils have a part to play and are valued. They listen carefully to instructions, answer questions clearly and settle down to written work quickly. Topic books are generally neat and contain appropriately organised work. Historical research is done with interest and concentration and pupils are competent at reporting back findings to the rest of the class, as in a Year 3 lesson where pupils investigate a variety of Victorian leisure activities. Behaviour is generally good.

120. No history lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, so no overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made. However, in the small number of lessons observed in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory, and is sometimes good. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and their exposition and questioning contain sufficient detail to hold the interest of the pupils and to develop in them a sound sense of inquiry, as in a Year 5 lesson where pupils settle quickly to the task of finding out about Aztec homes. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and demand a good quality output from them with respect to quality of work, oral response and behaviour. In these lessons, pupils are given resources of an appropriate level of difficulty to work from so that everyone can access the task in a motivated manner. Teachers make effective use of group work as in Year 3 where pupils worked well together to produce joint pieces of work based on Victorian leisure pursuits. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and contain a suitable variety of activities to enable the pupils to maintain concentration and interest, however the number of artifacts used to support learning is limited. Teachers' questions are generally succinct and probing and designed to assess and further learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour in a firm and sensitive manner. Good relationships exist in the classroom and this



encourages pupils to respond positively to teachers ' constructive comments and also enables them to ask for help when they are unsure. Teachers mark pupils work appropriately.

121. The curriculum contains sufficient breadth and balance and complies with national curriculum requirements. The scheme of work is of limited detail and gives teachers little guidance in planning work for pupils of all attainment levels. Pupils' work is assessed well, but the use of this information in forward planning is not as effectively implemented. The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated and pupils work is monitored appropriately. However, the monitoring of teaching and the support of colleagues in the classroom, by the co-ordinator, is not yet in place. Accommodation is satisfactory, although library space is limited. Resources are adequate. However, they are rarely supplemented by a range of artifacts borrowed from a lending service. The support of the subject by information technology is in the early stages of development. Good quality displays around the school effectively raise pupils' awareness of history.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. Standards of attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are below the national expectations, because the school has only recently been in a financial position to update its hardware. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils recognise where to find letters on the keyboard, but are slow to use them. They know the function of the mouse, cursor and the space bar, and pupils in a Year 1 class demonstrate confidence and accuracy using the arrow keys when working with an adventure program. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use word processing skills accurately and produce work using a variety of fonts and size of print. They use the spell check function to good effect. The majority of pupils are familiar with the meanings 'icon' and 'menu'. Pupils in Year 3 combine photographs of bollards and dustbins using the new digital camera with text in connection with the project to rejuvenate Warley Woods. Year 4 research grid references and practise map reading using a CD-ROM. Year 5 explore the control of series of lights. Year 6 use spreadsheets to collate detailed information about themselves, and use logo appropriately. They are just starting to explore the Internet, and send e-mails to children in St Lucia, in the Caribbean. Throughout the school pupils are given a satisfactory width of experiences, but at present their knowledge is limited and their skills are very underdeveloped so that activities are completed slowly. The staff still lack confidence in demonstrating some programs such as paintbox.
123. At the time of the previous inspection attainment in information technology was judged to be satisfactory with adequate resources. Since then many schools have installed computer suites which have helped teachers raise their pupils' level of skills considerably. Due to the constraints of the building, Bearwood School cannot do this, but efforts are being made to improve pupils' attainment since the installation of the new computers at the beginning of term. A new network is being installed in the next week. In the meantime, one teacher has brought his old machine into class to give his pupils more opportunity to refine and extend their skills.
124. During the inspection it was only possible to see one complete lesson in Key Stage 1. The teacher gave clear instructions, ensured that pupils had opportunities to identify cursor and spacebar and that half the class used the directional arrows accurately so that pupils made satisfactory progress during the session. Examples of word processing by Year 2 are on display but the small amount suggests that there has been insufficient practice possible until recently. Specialist teaching at Key Stage 2 is of good quality and enables pupils in Year 5 to think clearly for themselves about how to write a procedure to control a series of lights. Lower attaining pupils study the traffic lights near school and with help work out the sequence necessary to program coloured lights in the classroom. Time is well used to ensure that pupils have 'hands on' experience during specialist lessons while there are carefully designed tasks to take the rest of the class forward. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to choose to spend their break-times either visiting educational websites on the Internet, or designing invitation cards to a birthday party using a publisher program. Pupils concentrate well and try hard to extend their expertise, but it is evident that much basic work still has to be done to bring skills to a satisfactory level. Too few opportunities were found by teachers during the inspection for pupils to use the computers, and consideration needs to be given to making optimum use of them throughout the day.
125. Teachers increasingly encourage the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. It is used in Key Stage 1 to design houses that are then constructed accurately in junk materials. In Key Stage 2 it is used to access information on CD-ROMs for history projects and to improve geography

skills. In Year 6, it is used to compose instructions for the board games designed and made in design technology lessons.

126. The co-ordinator for the subject is enthusiastic and experienced. He is aware of the amount of work the pupils need to cover in order to build their skills to satisfactory levels, and of the problems raised because it is not possible to group the computers in order to give effective class lessons. Money has been put aside for training teachers later in the year in order to increase their own skills. The school follows the programme of study officially recommended but there is no overview for teachers to see at a glance which aspects they should teach and at what level. Teachers assess each pupil's abilities through a check list of their skills; but at present dated records of pupils' work on computers are not kept systematically in each room for pupils to complete.

## MUSIC

127. The standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

128. Evidence in Key Stage 1 is limited to one lesson and three assemblies. Pupils listen well and are provided with suitable opportunities to use untuned instruments. They are able to beat a simple rhythm and perform with reasonable confidence. In hymn practice pupils sing tunefully and usually with enthusiasm. They control the dynamics of their voices and can sing loudly and softly.

129. In Key Stage 2 pupils are provided with good opportunities to compose lyrics; for example, in Year 4 they successfully match words to a rhythm when making their own rap. A small number of pupils are able to evaluate their performance and suggest ways of improving their compositions. The singing of pupils is generally satisfactory. At the end of the key stage, pupils listen well but their knowledge of instruments is limited and they do not speak with confidence when answering questions. A group of pupils had composed their own song using a keyboard and this they tentatively performed to other members of the class with suitable expression and enthusiasm. The class listen in appreciation of the girls' music making. A weakness in the pupils' performance is their lack of enthusiasm when singing in school assemblies. In a Year 3 and 4 assembly a significant minority of pupils were not able to listen in an appropriate manner when a teacher sang a song. Pupils' response to music on these occasions is not satisfactory.

130. The overall attitude of pupils is good and in most lessons they behave well. They are enthusiastic and sometimes become over exuberant as seen, for example, when a teacher demonstrated an electric guitar. However, the same pupils appreciated the need for silence when preparing to make a recording of their song. They show a lot of interest in the performance of others and pupils in Year 6 appreciated hearing different styles of music. In community singing pupils in Key Stage 2 lack commitment in their performance.

131. The standard of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and are able to promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They provide interesting activities and use the appropriate terminology for the subject. Pupils are introduced to a good range of experiences for example opportunities to play instruments in Year 1, learn about guitars and amplifiers in Year 3, compose songs in Year 4 and discover the instruments of the orchestra in Year 6. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace although in Year 6 the session became over active due to the number of activities that were taking place. Teachers sometimes devote time to improving the performance of pupils but this is not always provided and results in pupils' singing lacking suitable expression and tone. This is especially evident during the singing of songs in the collective acts of worship.

132. The school takes part in community activities such as art festivals and singing of carols for elderly people at Christmas. Visits are organised for pupils to hear orchestras and bands. The school makes recordings of the pupils' performances and these are attractively presented and sold in order to raise funds for the school. Provision is made for pupils to learn individual instruments such as the violin and cornet. These sessions were not seen as pupils were taking exams at the time of the inspection. The subject co-ordinator is able to use his specialist knowledge by teaching a number of classes throughout the school. A number of staff have musical expertise and this is used well by the school. The resources are limited and the provision is unsatisfactory. They are not sufficient in number and quality and there is a shortage of ethnic instruments.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

133. Attainment at the end of both the key stages is in line with national expectations, maintaining the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is sound in relation to their attainment when they enter the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 no longer go swimming, as they did at the time of the last inspection, however, standards in swimming remain high at Key Stage 2, with well over 90 per cent of the pupils achieving the 25 metre standard, and many pupils achieve at a much higher level.
134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils perform gymnastic actions confidently and competently on floor and apparatus. They successfully link movements involving different body parts into smooth sequences with clear starts and finishes. Pupils devise interesting ways of moving, varying level, speed and shape. In dance lessons, pupils can move rhythmically to music using appropriate movements to create a dance sequence with a partner. Pupils can send and retrieve a ball with developing control, using rolling, throwing, bouncing and kicking.
135. By the age of eleven, pupils successfully use their well-developed ball skills in a game situation, paying due attention to the accepted rules. They pass and dribble the ball effectively, dodge and mark their opponents with a good awareness of space, and are developing effective teamwork. They use their gymnastic skills well to achieve a series of balances individually, in pairs and in small groups. All pupils enjoy their lessons, generally work hard to develop skills and improve performance, and the majority are well behaved and obedient, which all has a very positive impact on their learning. However, there are a few pupils who do not respond promptly to the commands of the teacher, resulting in high noise levels and a lack of attention to health and safety. In these situations learning is unsatisfactory.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However there is some very good teaching in Key Stage 1, and some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and lessons are well planned to include an appropriate warm-up to ensure that pupils are well prepared for exercise. Appropriate activities are set to build on pupils' prior experience and extend their skills. In the best lesson the teacher set high expectations of performance, and continuously helped and advised pupils on how to improve their performance. High expectations of behaviour resulted in pupils concentrating on their work, and making thoughtful decisions about their movements. The good use of appropriate praise motivated pupils, and stimulated them to try even harder. In the least successful lessons pupils were given inappropriate activities, and insufficient control of pupils resulted in high noise levels and casual attitudes about the quality of movement. A lack of order, and attention to health and safety when pupils were required to move apparatus, resulted in pupils putting each other at risk.
137. There is good leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator monitors the coverage of the subject to ensure that all the elements are covered. This results in a broad curriculum that is well enhanced by a good programme of extra-curricular activities. The school enjoys considerable success in competitive situations, such as inclusion in the local dance festival, when the performance of Year 5 pupils was highly commended. There is no school field, but the school makes good use of neighbouring grassed area to promote athletic activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. Standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with the expected standards prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements are sound in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the different world religions, but their understanding of what it means to hold particular religious beliefs is less well developed.
139. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure knowledge of Christianity. They know details of the Christmas story and Easter, and recognise the important features of a church. They learn about stories that are important to Hindus, and know that different religions have different places of worship. They are beginning to understand the significance of bread and wine to Christians. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand the meaning behind special days such as Good Friday, and the significance of hot cross buns to Christians. They learn about Judaism, and why the Torah is important to Jews. They are developing an

understanding of how religious beliefs affect everyday life. Pupils with special educational needs, and pupils whose mother tongue is not English make the same satisfactory progress as their peers.

140. Pupils have positive attitudes to religious education. They concentrate well, and show real interest in the subject. They listen attentively, and share their ideas willingly with the rest of the class.
141. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and use a variety of methods to present their lessons, ensuring that pupils remain interested and involved. Good use is made of the multi-faith school community. For example in Year 1, a Sikh parent came into school to explain the '5 Ks', and showed the pupils how boys tend their hair. This first-hand experience resulted in good gains in pupils' learning, and a real understanding of what is important to Sikhs. The pupils' own experiences are well used by teachers to bring relevance to the subject, and to make comparisons between the different world faiths. For example, in Year 5 a Turkish pupil was asked to describe the Easter customs in her country. Teachers use questions well to probe pupils' knowledge, for example 'Why are Christians happy at communion?' Teachers engender a calm, quiet atmosphere in lessons to enable pupils to reflect and think about, for example, the sadness of Good Friday. This enhances the spiritual development of the pupils.
142. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, and gives a clear direction for the subject. Teachers' planning is examined to ensure coverage of the subject, and the pupils' work is examined to check on standards. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to local places of worship, such as a mosque, synagogue and local church. Many different festivals are celebrated during the school year, acknowledging the multi-faith community, and using it well to further all the pupils' knowledge and understanding of different world faiths.