

INSPECTION REPORT

TIMBERTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warley, West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103966

Headteacher: Mr M Lever

Reporting inspector: Mrs S E Hall
21750

Dates of inspection: 2nd- 5th July 2001

Inspection number: 192909

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Valley Road Cradley Heath West Midlands
Postcode:	B64 7LT
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr A Southall
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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21750	Mrs S E Hall	Registered inspector	Music Religious education	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What could the school do to improve further?
10478	Mrs A Smith	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. The care of pupils. Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers.
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	
3751	Mrs T Cotton	Team inspector	English Art and design Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	
22624	Mrs S Kaminsky-Gaze	Team inspector	Geography History The Foundation Stage	
18709	Mrs N Bee	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	Quality and range of curricular and other opportunities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Timbertree Primary School is in Cradley Heath in the West Midlands. There are 249 pupils on roll, which is an average size, and includes the equivalent of 49 full time children aged three and four who attend the nursery. An existing nursery, which is a mile away from the main building, has been added to the school since the previous inspection. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic heritage and no full time pupils are identified as speaking English as an additional language. There are 57 pupils eligible for free school meals, which is slightly above the national average. There are 32 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is well below average; three pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school is in an area of average economic circumstances. The attainment of pupils on entry to full time education is wide ranging but generally average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school which provides a satisfactory quality of education. Standards of attainment are average and have recently risen from the often low levels of previous years. The teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Whilst expenditure per pupil is high, taking all these factors into account the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Behaviour and relationships are very good and a strength of the school and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- The provision for the pupils' social and moral development is good.
- The pastoral care of pupils is good.
- The school has effective links with parents whose views of the school are positive.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment information to inform the planning of lessons to better meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.
- The direct involvement of the governing body in the work and development of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory overall improvement since the previous inspection of 1997. Teaching is often good and in the current year standards of attainment at the end of both key stages have risen and are now average. In the previous inspection key issues identified for improvement included the management role of governors in the development and monitoring of standards, the quality of education, policy and procedures in the school. There has been very little change in the direct involvement of governors in the work of the school, and this remains a key issue for improvement. A further issue was to boost development planning to provide a continuous and longer-term overview of school priorities. Development planning now covers a three-year period and is satisfactory. There was an identified need to sharpen the direct monitoring of standards and the curriculum so that all possible information is used to set clear learning targets for every pupil. Although the school has made some improvement in the setting of targets and the monitoring and evaluation of standards in English and mathematics, more remains to be done and this is still a key issue. An additional development area was the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT), and there has been satisfactory improvement in this subject. Following the previous inspection, progress in resolving some issues has been relatively slow but better in the current year. Staff work together in a co-operative manner and the school has the capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	B	D	C
Mathematics	D	C	E	E
Science	B	E	D	C

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

The National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven in 2000 show that attainment in English and science was below the national average but average when compared to schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards in mathematics were well below both the national average and similar schools. Standards in English and mathematics fell from those of 1999 and trends over time have been inconsistent. Early indications are that recently completed national tests for 2001 show a significant rise in the proportion of pupils attaining the national expectation in mathematics. Inspection findings are that standards for the group of pupils now in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. The school sets targets that are below the national average. Targets for 2001 for 66% of pupils to meet the national expectation in English have not been met, but those for 69% to reach the expectation in mathematics have been exceeded. Most pupils make steady progress and achieve appropriately, with faster progress in Years 5 and 6. However, some higher attaining pupils are capable of making better progress as they move through the junior stage.

National tests for pupils aged seven show that in 2000 standards were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When attainment is compared to schools with similar features, standards were also well below average. Some aspects of attainment have been well below average in each year's test results since 1997 and overall standards have been too low. Over time there has been only a limited upward trend in improvement until the current year. However, the national tests of 2001 indicate considerable improvement in both the proportions of pupils achieving the national standard and those achieving at the higher levels. Inspection findings are that at the age of seven pupils' current attainment matches the national expectation in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in both key stages have risen because the school has now implemented the National Numeracy Strategy alongside the Literacy Strategy thoroughly and pupils have had two years of good teaching based on the national guidance. At the age of seven and eleven standards are average in all other subjects. Children enter the school with average attainment in most areas of their development. The satisfactory progress that the youngest children make ensures that most are on target to achieve the national targets for this age-group. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils on the register of special educational need and they make appropriate progress towards targets identified for them in their individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show good levels of interest and enjoyment in learning throughout the range of school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, including in lessons, assemblies and during break times. A notable feature during the period of inspection was the maintenance of high levels of very good behaviour in a heatwave.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities that they are given and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils arrive punctually and attend regularly but the education of some pupils is disrupted by the taking of holidays in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. Teaching is a fine balance between that which is satisfactory and that which is good. Overall teaching is good and, during the inspection, this enabled most pupils to learn well. During the week of inspection teaching was excellent in two per cent of lessons seen, very good in eight per cent, good in 43 per cent and satisfactory in 46 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons because the occasionally ineffective organisation of pupils in Year 4 limits what the pupils learn. Teaching is most consistent in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are offered a good level of challenge to meet the needs of those who make different rates of progress. A strength in most classes is in the very good management of pupils, which ensures that lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly manner. This boosts the quality of pupils' learning. Many teachers make good use of open-ended questions to encourage pupils to contribute their ideas, but the marking of pupils' work is limited and there is extensive use of worksheets in many activities that limits the further development of writing skills. The support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The teaching of the skills of literacy and numeracy is often good and this enables pupils to make mostly good progress in these subjects. However, the planning of lessons, particularly in the Foundation Stage, lacks clarity in identifying exactly what skills are to be taught and in linking the planning in the nursery and reception classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is planned satisfactorily. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the school is in the process of reviewing the schemes of work in all other subjects thoroughly and linking these to national guidance. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage lacks clarity in identifying the skills to be developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils benefit from appropriate systems of support when they are placed on the register of special educational need. However, the school does not place all the pupils that it could on the register and this limits the support available. Although individual education plans are sometimes good they are very variable and not always specific enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils of compulsory school age who speak English as an additional language. The school makes no additional provision for the very small number of children in the nursery who do not have English as their first language.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good. The school provides good opportunities to enhance pupils' self confidence. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, but staff miss opportunities to further extend pupils' experiences in these areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good pastoral care of pupils and procedures for supporting pupils' welfare. School assessment procedures are satisfactory, but the use of this information is ineffective in ensuring different work is planned for groups of pupils who make different rates of progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	The school has established good relationships with parents and works to involve them in the education of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher manage the school efficiently and work with staff in defining areas for development. However, many procedures lack rigour in identifying and addressing specific areas for improvement in order to raise attainment further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school but have not developed a direct involvement in the work of the school, development planning or rigorous evaluation procedures. This is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is beginning to make use of an appropriate range of information to track pupil progress and to set individual and collective targets for further improvement. However the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning lacks rigour and is ineffective in identifying areas for further development in some subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has a good number of staff and makes appropriate use of all funding it receives. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Day-to-day administration is efficient. The principles of attaining the best value for money are applied to purchases in a suitable manner.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children's progress and the quality of teaching in school. • That the school is seen as friendly and welcoming and staff approachable. • That children are happy, like coming to school and are encouraged to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities outside lessons. • Improved playground facilities and more competitive sports. • More effective use of homework.

Inspectors generally agree with the views of parents. This is a friendly and welcoming community where teaching is generally good and most pupils make appropriate progress. There are relatively few extra-curricular activities, and, whilst homework is satisfactory, there are some inconsistencies in its use. The playground is not very stimulating. The reports that parents receive of the progress their children make are very brief and unspecific. These require improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards achieved in English, mathematics and science are currently average at the age of seven and eleven. The overall findings of this inspection largely reflect those of the previous inspection of the school. However, in the years between these inspections standards have often dipped; they have been very variable and often too low, particularly at the age of seven. Whilst overall improvement since the last inspection has generally been satisfactory, improvement in raising standards until recently has been slow. The school has not achieved consistent improvement year-on-year and has found it difficult to tackle some aspects of underachievement purposefully.

2. Attainment has risen in the current year from the low levels of the last three years in several subject areas in both key stages. The achievement of most pupils is now generally appropriate. The findings of this inspection reflect the very recent improvements seen in several areas of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. There is now not only a better number of pupils achieving the national expectation than previously, but also more pupils achieving standards above the average especially in mathematics. Whilst there is no information yet available to compare the attainment of these pupils to standards nationally, attainment has risen since last year for pupils aged eleven both in mathematics and science, but has fallen in English. Standards for pupils aged seven have considerably improved since 2000.

3. The pupils' attainment in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds was below the national average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. When taking the performance of boys and girls together over the last three years standards in mathematics and science fell below the national average. Until this year standards in English have generally been slightly better, and over three years the attainment of girls slightly exceeded the national average for girls. When the Key Stage 2 national test results are compared to schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals; attainment in 2000 was well below average in mathematics, but average in English and science.

4. Whilst there has been a slight upward trend in some years and improvement in some subjects, there has been no consistent trend in improvement year-on-year. This is because the school does not make enough use of the assessment information that is available to plan different activities for different groups of pupils. Progress is limited by the overuse of worksheets that constrain the further development of writing skills across the curriculum. A factor that may have depressed standards of achievement is that in some year groups, as in last year's Year 6 group, forty per cent of pupils changed school during the key stage. Several pupils arrived in school with levels of attainment that are lower than pupils who had been in the school for some time.

5. The results of the national tests for pupils aged seven in 2000 indicated standards that were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When these results are compared to schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment was well below average in each of the three areas. Over a three-year period standards have been well below the national average in at least one area of reading, writing or mathematics and too low.

6. Early indications of the standards of attainment in the national tests for pupils aged seven in 2001 show that a greater number of pupils than previously achieved at least the

expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. There is currently a much better proportion of pupils reaching the higher than in 2000. This is because of the school's good implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies resulting in two years of well-planned and focused teaching in the infant stage. There is a well-considered programme of activities to encourage the reading of a range of fiction and non-fiction materials. Of particular note has been the improvement in standards of writing since 2000, so that in the current year there has been a rise to twenty four per cent of pupils exceeding the national average whereas only three per cent of pupils did so last year.

7. By the age of seven and eleven standards of attainment in speaking are average and pupils listen well. Listening skills are good and from starting school pupils are attentive and listen carefully to the information that teachers give them in the full range of subjects. Some teachers, and especially in Year 6, plan good opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and experiences. But as a whole the school does not make sufficient use of opportunities for pupils to make presentations to their classmates or take part in drama activities.

8. Standards of reading are average in both key stages. Higher attaining pupils develop an appropriate range of strategies to work out what unfamiliar words say, but some average and lower attaining pupils have less secure skills and confidence in this area. Attainment in writing is average across the school. Teachers have recently prioritised the development of writing skills but writing across the curriculum including in science and religious education is sometimes inhibited by the overuse of worksheets requiring little more than filling in a missing word.

9. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably in the current year and more pupils are attaining both at the expected level and at the higher level at the end of both key stages and particularly at the age of eleven. Through the implementation of activities based upon the National Numeracy Strategy many pupils are now confident in mental calculations and are often able to work out quite complicated calculations accurately. The teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics is consistently good and boosts the rate of progress that pupils make. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures is average, as is their knowledge of data handling.

10. Standards in science are average which indicates a fall from the previous inspection. In part this dip is due to the overuse of worksheets and the lack of subject development due to the major emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Most pupils are able to carry out practical investigations into a number of scientific ideas including materials and forces. The pupils understand that any scientific test must be a fair one and they make sensible predictions as to what might happen.

11. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and all other subjects is average. The school has improved provision in ICT and has well advanced plans to extend the number, range and use of computers to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. With standards in art, music and religious education now being average, there are indications that standards have fallen since the previous inspection. This is because formal and informal assessment information is not used sufficiently to set work that challenges groups of pupils who make different rates of progress. There has been limited development in these subjects recently and a lack of monitoring and evaluation of standards to identify areas for improvement.

12. Children enter the nursery at the age of three or four with levels of attainment that, while wide ranging, are broadly similar to other children of this age. There are few children with above average attainment on entry. Children settle well to school routines and in most areas of their learning they make satisfactory progress in their first years in school. The

majority of children are on line to reach the nationally recognised benchmark at the end of their time in reception, although few are likely to exceed these goals except in personal and social development. In some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world children do not make enough progress and the quality of their learning is limited by ineffective structure and planning of activities.

13. Taking all factors into account the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress over time in most subjects. When teaching and learning are good, as in many English, science, religious education and history lessons during the inspection, progress improves. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum in a generally suitable manner. Whilst standards are not always as high as they should be, considerable improvement has been made in the current year. The quality of pupils' learning as they move through the school is variable but the majority of pupils make adequate progress, with achievement appropriate to their abilities. Although higher attaining pupils generally make suitable progress some pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, are capable of achieving more when activities contain an appropriately high level of challenge. The most rapid progress is made in Years 5 and 6, where the quality of teaching is consistently good. The school sets targets for pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 in line with national requirements. Recent targets have not been particularly challenging and below recent national averages. In 2001 the target for 66% of pupils to meet the national expectation in English has not been met, but the target for 69% to reach the expectation in mathematics has been exceeded.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in the classroom because their learning is broken down into easier steps. Work in the literacy hour is a good example, when pupils are able to work alongside others in the class because work is matched to their need. During one day each week, the special needs co-ordinator supports pupils in small groups. This work is well planned and progress checked. However, not all pupils who might benefit from additional support are placed on the lower stages of the school's register of special educational need and this limits the support they receive and the progress that they make. No pupils in the main school are identified as speaking English as an additional language. The very tiny proportion of pupils identified as gifted or talented in the nursery receive appropriate support and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. In the great majority of lessons pupils show a keen interest in their work and demonstrate good attitudes towards learning. Pupils pay careful attention to their teachers. This was demonstrated in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, in which pupils listened with care to instructions, used resources well and completed the task with good attention to accuracy and neatness. Pupils are ready to answer questions and to voice their own opinions. A good example was seen in a Year 1 lesson exploring how to keep healthy. In this lesson pupils were eager to answer questions, to discuss with their friends and finally say what they had learnt. Pupils take pride in their achievements and like to please their teachers. Pupils' good attitudes to their learning have been maintained since the first inspection of the school and have a positive impact upon the quality of their learning.

16. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is very good. This was a particular achievement in the very hot weather conditions experienced during the course of the inspection. Pupils are well used to classroom routines and little time is wasted in class. They concentrate well and respond to their teacher's expectations. Pupils are confident, courteous and friendly to visitors. Movement around school is sensible. Years 3 and 4 were very well behaved during a swimming lesson held in the nearby leisure pool, even when they had to wait as pool staff were unavailable. The large playground is shared between all ages and pupils play happily alongside each other. No evidence of bullying or racism was seen during the inspection. The

level of exclusion is typically very low and only two fixed-period exclusions were applied within the last year.

17. Pupils form constructive friendships and work happily together in pairs and small groups. This can be seen from the nursery, where the youngest children share toys and activities sensibly, through to group work in a Year 6 history lesson where pupils worked together to extend their knowledge of Ancient Egypt. This one form entry school is small enough for pupils to know and be known well by staff. Relationships between pupils and adults are a very positive feature of the school.

18. Procedures for fostering the personal development of the pupils are good and the school is successful in fostering such aspects. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes settle quickly and are encouraged to grow in self-confidence. They learn to co-operate with others and soon become familiar with the daily routines of school life. Older pupils return registers to the school office, and throughout the school pupils help with the organisation of class resources. In Year 6 all pupils provide help each day to a classroom teacher; the responsibilities vary but are undertaken in a ready and willing manner.

19. The school encourages regular attendance and the current rate of attendance is approaching the national average, which is similar to that seen in the previous inspection. The rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average and much of this is attributable to the increasing number of family holidays taken during term-time. Most children in the main school arrive on time for the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is a fine balance between that which is satisfactory and that which is good. The improvement made in pupils' levels of attainment this year supports the judgement that the quality of teaching is generally good overall, maintaining the findings of the previous inspection. In the lessons observed during this inspection teaching was excellent in two per cent, very good in eight per cent, good in 43 per cent, satisfactory in 46 per cent and unsatisfactory in less than two per cent of lessons. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and that in the infant and junior departments is mostly good. The generally good teaching results in the pupils' good levels of learning. Pupils usually make adequate progress as they move through the school and this is most consistent in Years 5 and 6 where teaching and learning is almost always good.

21. The main strength in teaching is that teachers generally manage their classes very well. This results in a calm and purposeful learning environment where behaviour is usually very good. Effective examples of this were observed in Year 6 lessons in most subjects. In these lessons behaviour was managed very effectively because the teacher had established a very good relationship with the pupils and an understanding of what they must do, when and how. When the teacher required pupils to listen to the information she was giving they did this well. If asked a question many pupils were keen to offer their ideas. However, in the very small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory and in a small number of lessons that were otherwise satisfactory in Year 4, the organisation of activities and management of pupils was less effective and this impinged upon the learning of other pupils.

22. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good across the school and this helps to create an ethos that is conducive to learning. The atmosphere that is prevalent in most lessons enables pupils to feel secure and be self-critical. Consequently pupils do not feel threatened when others evaluate their work. In most lessons a good balance is struck between discussion time and recording. However, the potential for independent study and research is not fully exploited and this limits the quality of learning in some activities.

23. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects and of the needs of the pupils that they teach is usually good, and most teachers have good expectations of what the pupils will achieve. Recent training on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has helped improve teachers' subject knowledge and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers make clear to pupils that they expect them to work hard and maintain their concentration. The teachers generally use a good range of methods to keep the interest of pupils. For example in an excellent Year 1 lesson, effective planning matched the pupils' abilities to their interests and stimulated discussion and writing when a toy bear was found in school. This led to pupils asking questions about the bear and listening to each other's ideas very intently. The teacher then used the pupils' answers and ideas as the text that they then studied in a very effective manner. The development of questioning not only established what the pupils knew but also extended their awareness of how their own ideas then became the basis of a story. These strategies ensured the pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and very keen to succeed. This led to very good progress being made in looking at non-fiction texts and writing facts about a bear.

24. Whilst the teachers' subject knowledge in the main subjects of the curriculum is generally good there is some limitation in teachers' confidence and competence in other subjects. Some staff are not fully confident in using information and communication technology and music as a part of everyday learning or in planning for the range of school activities and these weaknesses affect the quality of pupils' learning. Opportunities are missed in some lessons to extend pupils' learning by using computers across the range of subjects. In music there is only limited evidence of some staff teaching the skills of musical composition and appraising music. There has been only limited recent subject development to extend planning and teaching in some subjects.

25. Staff have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. The teaching of literacy is good overall and the teaching of the skills of numeracy is good at the end of both key stages. The teachers are using the nationally recommended strategies for both subjects effectively in their planning. Staff acknowledge that this structure and organisation of teaching has had a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' learning in the last two years. The main strengths in pupils' learning throughout the school are in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

26. The teaching of basic skills is generally good. Pupils are acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well because these skills are planned and taught effectively. Teachers organise activities that encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills in a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to offer and discuss their ideas, and good use is made of direct questions to different groups to encourage the less confident to offer their ideas. Because both teachers and other pupils value their contributions, the large majority make good strides in the development of these basic skills. The teaching of handwriting, spelling, reading and using numbers is generally good.

27. The planning of lessons is satisfactory and sometimes good, but there are inconsistencies. There is a common school format for planning but the quality of lesson planning is variable and sometimes very brief. In the best lessons teachers identify the purposes of each lesson very clearly. This is most effective in literacy and numeracy lessons when these objectives are shared with the pupils. However, the planning of some activities is vague and does not identify the specific skill or area of knowledge or understanding to be developed. This is epitomised in the planning for some activities in the Foundation Stage and this limits the quality of children's learning. Here planning, although completed very conscientiously, lacks clarity in identifying exactly what the children are to learn. An example of this is that children will make a paper boat. Planning does not identify the skills to be developed in drawing or shaping the materials or the cutting or gluing skills they will develop. Because the planning does not make this clear, the activity is not fully effective, as children

simply stick together pre-shaped pieces of paper without the opportunity to make choices about the shapes, sizes, colours or materials to use.

28. The planning of a range of activities to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress is satisfactory overall and often good, particularly in numeracy activities in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is good, teachers plan activities that take account of the different levels of achievement of the pupils and this has been particularly effective in raising the standards in mathematics. Teachers have begun to identify the specific needs of pupils with higher levels of attainment and plan more challenging activities for these pupils. Only one child in the nursery is identified as gifted and talented in early reading and suitable activities are provided. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within the classroom with work which is planned well to meet their specific needs. This work is linked successfully to ongoing work in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. Pupils are aware of the progress they are making and this motivates them to do even better. However, overall not enough is done in some lessons to provide a specific and appropriate level of challenge for different groups of pupils by using the available assessment information to match work specifically to pupils' levels of attainment.

29. Teachers generally use a satisfactory range of teaching methods and resources to extend pupils' learning. However, on too many occasions there is an over use of worksheets that are often the same or very similar for all pupils in a class. This takes little account of pupils' prior learning and sometimes limits the further development of writing skills. The overuse of worksheets was an area identified in the previous inspection report and the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning has failed to identify and rectify the situation.

30. The on-going assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory with some areas of strength and others of weakness. Pupils are often given good verbal feedback by teachers on what they are doing well or what they need to do to improve their work. This is epitomised in Year 5 lessons where the teacher has established effective methods in moving around the groups of pupils when they are involved in tasks and offering very precise and supportive comments on the quality of pupils' work. In an art lesson, for instance, the teacher made very clear points about how the pupils could improve their op-art pictures by checking the alignment and spacing of the different parts of their black and white designs. However, on other occasions teachers praise pupils' work which would benefit from more critical assessment of what they have achieved. Although the school is moving towards individual target setting with pupils this is not yet fully established and pupils are often unsure exactly what they need to do to improve their work. The marking of pupils' work is often very brief and cursory. There are few detailed examples of identifying any misconceptions or of steering pupils to clearer understanding.

31. The use of homework is satisfactory overall and is best in the Foundation Stage. Here children are encouraged to take home a range of early reading materials and other activities, and staff have established a good dialogue with parents through the use of home/school journals. Elsewhere in the school, whilst there are some good examples of the use of homework to support learning, this is more variable. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents highlighted these inconsistencies and a wish for this to be more systematic.

32. The overall quality of teaching has remained very similar to that seen in the first inspection of the school. Senior staff have introduced a programme of monitoring the quality of planning, teaching and learning, usually in English and mathematics. There is much potential and opportunity for involving all these staff and other subject co-ordinators in a thoroughly planned and rigorous evaluation of standards of teaching and learning. However, whilst current monitoring has been effective in identifying weaknesses in provision in English

and mathematics most staff do not yet have the opportunity to observe teaching in the range of subjects or the highest quality teaching in other schools.

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

33. Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall, which largely maintains the position seen in the previous inspection of the school. The school provides a sound range of worthwhile opportunities within the curriculum, which are relevant to the pupils' needs. The curriculum is well balanced and meets the statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. During the last inspection the provision for information and communication technology was an issue, but this is now satisfactory.

34. Established schemes of work are in place for English and mathematics based upon national guidance. In other subjects, some schemes, such as design and technology and music, are due for review. The planning for music lacks sufficient guidance to maintain a continuous development of the skills of composing and appraising music. In the range of subjects teachers are using either the new national guidelines to plan lessons or the school's own tailor-made schemes, which have been influenced by the new national guidelines. The school has developed a process whereby the senior management team monitors the curricular opportunities to ensure that they generally match the needs of pupils and that all teachers follow whole-school procedures. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, but the monitoring of such planning lacks sufficient rigour to identify issues within subjects such as music.

35. The curriculum generally provides equality of opportunity and access in order for all pupils to make progress. The school policy is in line with appropriate guidance and there are no specific gender issues. Boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and monitors' roles. Boys and girls generally achieve as well as each other. The very small number of children in the nursery speaking English as an additional language have informal support to allow them access to the range of activities.

36. The school has a below average number of pupils on the school's register of special educational need. Since the last inspection it has maintained its good support of pupils within the classroom and has provided training for support staff to raise their expertise. Provision for pupils with special educational needs meets the Code of Practice requirements. At present the special needs co-ordinator is evaluating the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs and the quality and usefulness of pupils' individual education plans.

37. The provision for pupils with statements for their special needs is good. Pupils are well supported within the classroom with work which is planned effectively to meet their specific needs. This work is linked successfully to ongoing work in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy. In a similar way provision for pupils with physical and speech and language difficulties is also good and supports pupils' access to the curriculum. Very good links with the speech therapist means that expert advice is helping to guide the targets for learning in the pupils' individual education plans.

38. Provision for the vast majority of pupils on other stages of the special needs register is broadly satisfactory and enables them to make sound progress. However, the school has not placed on the register of special educational need a number of pupils who would benefit from additional support and this limits the availability of extra support in some lessons. Several of these pupils have difficulties with reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers know their pupils well and sometimes plan different levels of work in class lessons and this is helping pupils to work at the correct level. However, targets set for their learning in

individual education plans are often vague, and not specific enough to meet their learning needs. Although targets are reviewed, findings are not used to help plan the next step in work in lessons.

39. The school has good strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The staff have worked hard to implement the national strategies in the school curriculum and this is beginning to have a significant impact upon raising standards in these subjects. The skills gained by the pupils in literacy and numeracy are frequently reinforced in other subject areas, particularly in science and history.

40. The policy to guide curriculum planning for the Foundation Stage is fairly new. It promotes structured play inside and out, and the extension of play and talk. However, the identification of exactly what the children are to learn in each activity lacks clarity and is at times vague and this impacts upon the children's learning. The current organisation does not lend itself to the implementation of the full Foundation Stage curriculum and appropriate learning experiences for children. The identification of the six areas of learning as a 'stand alone' curriculum upon which children's future learning is based is not clear enough.

41. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good. Visitors such as the nurse are invited into school to promote this area. There are appropriate policies for sex education and to make pupils aware of the dangers of drugs misuse. Pupils discuss the dangerous aspects of life such as smoking. In Year 6, pupils spoke maturely about their knowledge of drugs and how, although some drugs are harmful, others are not. Relevant issues such as the importance of having a healthy lifestyle are included in the weekly sessions in all year groups.

42. Cross-curricular work, which makes pupils aware of connections between the subjects they study, is a sound feature of many subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 2 linked information and communication technology with mathematics as they collated data from a recent traffic survey and developed pie charts and bar charts using the computer. In religious education, whilst studying Sikhism, pupils linked their discussion with mathematics as they used centimetres to measure the length of the material in a turban.

43. Satisfactory community links have been established. The Parents' Association regularly raises funds for the school during events such as the Summer Fair. The residents from a local nursing home are invited into school to listen to plays and concerts, and the pupils visit them to sing and play recorders. Pupils have taken part in a Christmas Community Concert in which they performed *The Twelve Days of Christmas* using a local Black Country dialect.

44. Planned educational visits enrich many curriculum areas and are a good feature of the curriculum. Year 1 visit Haden Hill Park, which promotes the science and the geography curriculum. In Year 2, pupils visit Warwick Castle and the Worcester County Museum, which makes the history skills they learn in the classroom come to life. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop geographical skills when they visit the Wyre Forest. In Years 5 and 6, all pupils have the opportunity to visit Edgmond Hall Residential Centre, which greatly enhances the geography and history curriculum. Year 6 pupils visit a local hospital and take part in an injury minimisation programme, which prepares them for how to act in an emergency. The pupils talk very enthusiastically about this visit. Visitors enrich the curriculum further; for example theatre groups are invited in which promote the English, drama and science curriculum. Other theatre groups have come into school and reinforced concepts about Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, which the pupils have studied in religious education lessons.

45. The parents' questionnaire showed that only 63 per cent of parents think that there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team found that the range is limited in the areas of sporting and musical activities, but overall a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is offered. At certain times of the year boys and girls have the opportunity to take part in mixed football, art, gardening, drama and cross-stitch. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils have the opportunity to complete a cycling proficiency course. These activities make a satisfactory contribution to extending pupils' learning and experiences.

46. Mutual benefits have been developed from constructive relationships with partner institutions such as the four local secondary schools. Year 6 pupils recently visited the local secondary school where they are due to start next term. One local high school allows pupils in Year 6 to use their information and communication technology suite to further enhance the information and communication technology curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 have visited the teacher training development centre to develop information and communication technology skills

47. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This judgement indicates that standards in this area have been maintained since the previous inspection of the school.

48. The school makes satisfactory provision for the development of spiritual awareness but staff sometimes miss opportunities to extend this further. Appropriate use is made of assemblies to reflect on the importance of being part of wider world community, showing respect for others and their beliefs. Infant and junior pupils join together to enact a story from the Old Testament and are told to have belief in their own abilities if their courage fails. In lessons, pupils are asked to put themselves in other people's shoes when they write stories about the homeless and to suggest ways in which they can help. They are encouraged to listen quietly to prayers in collective worship and to reflect on the wonder and beauty of nature in poems and in lessons in science. Pupils take great pleasure in sharing their own creative work on sunflowers in art, but also praise and value the contributions of others.

49. The provision for moral development is good. Assemblies almost always contain a moral issue and this is one of the ways through which the school teaches right from wrong. The school creates an atmosphere where fair play, honesty and respect play an important part in daily life. The behaviour policy is clear and well understood. Rewards and sanctions, such as 'well done rewards' are used well to promote positive behaviour and achievement. Pupils respect and take care of the school's resources and environment well. From the time they enter school, they are taught what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and follow this code of behaviour throughout the school day. Parents respect the school's values and attitudes and believe they have a positive effect on the way their children behave.

50. Provision for social development is good. A good level of social development is fostered by the example set by all staff. Pupils are encouraged to be polite to each other and to adults. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to use their good social skills and to work well together. Pupils are good listeners, who are able to listen to the points of view of others in discussions as well as putting forward their own. Older pupils are encouraged to look after younger ones at lunch time and befriend others at playtime.

51. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school and its pupils are proud of their local heritage and celebrate its richness through sharing stories and poems in Black Country dialect and visits to places of local historical interest. Pupils also study other cultures and beliefs and learn about the wider cultural diversity found in Britain. Displays and resources within school reflect this learning. However, while some music in

assemblies offers a wider choice than classical European pieces, overall insufficient use is made of music and singing in daily worship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. Overall, the school provides a good level of care for its pupils, which maintains the findings of the previous report. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide caring and thoughtful support to pupils. They know their pupils well and respond to their needs. The school has established a suitable personal, social and health education programme (PSHE). This is a comprehensive programme taught to each class on a weekly basis. The school nurse visits regularly and her contribution to the programme is much valued by the school. Self-assessment in PSHE lessons has helped older pupils identify what they want to get better at. An accident prevention programme has run recently for Year 6 pupils. This has included a range of activities, speakers and visits, and pupils have found it an informative and interesting experience as they prepare for their transfer to secondary school.

53. The school is successful in establishing clear expectations of behaviour, including an effective anti-bullying stance, and pupils respond very positively to these emphases. Rewards for good behaviour, work and effort are well known and pupils are keen to earn them. Pupils understand what is right and wrong, that there are choices in life and that they are responsible for their own decisions. The school reinforces an ethos of respect for others and for oneself, and this is reflected in the positive attitudes and behaviour displayed by pupils.

54. The health, safety and well-being of pupils are given an appropriately high priority by the school and its staff. Arrangements are in hand to deal with accidents and sick children. The site manager is a qualified first aider, as is the teacher based at the nursery, and the school is wisely considering extending the number of staff with such qualifications. Child protection matters are handled carefully and good links exist with the appropriate external agencies. Lunchtime arrangements are well organised at both sites and appropriate care is taken with arrangements for collecting younger pupils.

55. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established satisfactory procedures for supporting pupils. Individual education plans are reviewed, but are not specific enough to meet individual needs. The co-ordinator draws on advice from outside experts including the speech therapist and the local education authority learning support teacher, and uses this well to support pupils. Pupils are aware of the progress they are making and parents are also well informed.

56. Requirements for recording and reporting pupils' attendance are fully met. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer in order to follow up any persistent cases of absenteeism. Pupils respond well to a variety of awards that are given to encourage good attendance.

57. The co-ordinators have developed a clear policy for the assessment of pupils' academic attainment and progress. Procedures for assessing attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are good, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. However, as noted in the last inspection, there are no formal, whole-school procedures for assessment in other subjects and this largely remains the position four years later. This makes it difficult for staff to plan work to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress.

58. The subject co-ordinators have worked hard to devise a useful system for tracking the progress which the pupils make during the year in English, mathematics and science. Staff who support pupils with special educational needs also track the progress made. Whilst

the school has introduced assessment and monitoring procedures to evaluate the progress that pupils make as they move through the school, these procedures lack rigour and clarity of purpose. Information about individual pupils is assembled carefully, although as yet the school does not make full use of electronic formats for the management of such information. At the end of the year, class teachers predict, from this information, which National Curriculum levels of attainment the pupils should achieve. However, information is not broken down into small steps as targets for individual improvement. The teachers pass individual pupil information on to the next teacher. The accuracy of teachers' assessments is, however, variable. For example, in the most recent end of Key Stage 1 mathematics national tests, seventeen pupils achieved the higher Level 3, whilst teacher assessment indicated that only seven would do so. Similarly in the junior stage some school targets for pupils to achieve the national expectation were not met and others were exceeded. Overall insufficient use is made of assessment data to track carefully the small steps of progress that pupils make and to set and continually refine individual targets for improvement and inform lesson planning.

59. There is a whole school collection of samples of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels in writing. This is proving useful in supporting the accuracy and consistency of teachers' assessments in this aspect of literacy, but there are no such collections in mathematics or science. However, the main weakness is that information gained from assessment is not being used sharply enough to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress. Too often all pupils receive the same work, with higher attaining pupils being expected to produce better results. On many occasions the same or a very similar worksheet is used for a whole class and does not adequately meet the needs of pupils with higher or lower attainment. The careful analysis of assessment information which is clearly going on is not yet targeted very precisely to what the pupils need to do to achieve the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parents' views of the school are good. The replies to the pre-inspection questionnaires, attendance at the parents' meeting and discussions with parents during the inspection indicate that the majority of parents who responded have positive views of this school.

61. The nursery establishes strong links with parents and carers as children enter the school. All staff are available at the beginning and end of each session and parents are encouraged to enter the nursery with their children. At this stage close daily contact with parents helps children settle to routines and supports their learning well. As children progress through the school, parents are involved with their reading, spellings and tables. Home/school agreements are in place and have been acknowledged by the parents and carers, although several would like more consistent use of homework. The school holds occasional curriculum meetings to introduce parents to new initiatives and developments; these meetings are well attended. However, the school does not at present provide the detailed curriculum and topic information which would further inform parents about their children's schoolwork.

62. The last inspection report identified that parents wished to return to a previous format of three consultation evenings per year; this has taken place. Consultation evenings are attended well by parents and judged to be helpful. Parents are also very satisfied with the accessibility of teaching staff. They appreciate that they are encouraged to approach school with any questions or problems. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved appropriately in the different areas of support for their children.

63. The nursery and school brochures give parents and carers a wide range of useful information and regular newsletters keep them informed of the daily routines of school life. However, as in the last inspection report, the annual report of governors to parents continues to lack evidence of the governing body's input into the school. The annual reports on pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. They meet statutory reporting requirements but are very limited in the amount of information they provide for parents. Comments are often restricted to single statements on pupils' experience or their attitudes and occasionally on their achievements. Generally the reports lack individualised targets for future improvement.

64. An active parent-teacher association is supported well by the parents in its fund-raising activities. These are mainly social events and have been successful in contributing towards the recent purchase of physical education equipment and new curtaining for the hall. The experiences of children in the school and nursery also benefit from the relatively small number of parents who provide regular classroom help. In the nursery some parents help with the organisation of books and in the main school they support a range of class-based activities. Parent helpers feel welcomed and valued by the school and its staff and contribute to the quality of pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. Organisation and management routines are smooth and efficient, and day-to-day management of the school is good. The school has appropriate aims and values, which are clearly reflected in its work. The staff work well together and are very committed to the school. Many staff have served the school well over a number of years, share the aims and values of the school, and there is the capacity to succeed further. The pastoral strengths in management noted in the previous inspection have been maintained. The strengths of the headteacher's leadership are in the development and maintenance of very good behaviour and relationships. Parents are very appreciative of the quality of care of their children. Virtually all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that their children are happy coming to school. Parents think that the school is well-led and managed and they would feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns.

66. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very closely together and have developed satisfactory routines that are based upon their complementary skills. The headteacher carries the responsibilities for day-to-day organisation and administration soundly. Efficient office staff and the development of appropriate routines ably support this. The delegation of areas of responsibility to staff with management responsibilities is becoming increasingly effective, and in the last year management links to standards of attainment have become more effective. All staff are involved in planning for school improvement. Senior staff have an appropriate vision for the development of the school, but have found it difficult to bring about improvement in the raising of standards since the last inspection. Until very recently standards of attainment at the end of both key stages and particularly in the infants have been too low and the school has not always taken sufficient action to bring about improvement. Staff have found it difficult to grasp the nettle of this underachievement and bring about rapid and focused improvement, believing that pupils have achieved as well as they are able.

67. In the first inspection of the school a key issue for development was to sharpen the direct monitoring of standards and the curriculum so that all possible information was used to set clear learning targets for every pupil. A start has been made in improving the monitoring of the work of the school and this is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science and has helped to bring about recent improvements in these subjects. Senior staff monitor the quality of planning in all subjects, but these routines lack rigour and effectiveness in identifying and addressing areas for improvement. This is exemplified in music where

monitoring has failed to address a weakness in the balance of activities within the curriculum and this has resulted in relatively few opportunities for pupils to compose their own pieces of music or appreciate the music of others.

68. The school has introduced some monitoring of teaching and of learning and this links appropriately to arrangements for appraisal and performance management. The deputy headteacher is often involved in monitoring and working alongside colleagues, and this is an effective strategy. However, occasionally senior staff are unclear about what exactly is needed to improve the teaching and learning in the school further, believing that pupils are achieving what they are capable of. For instance senior staff do not sufficiently monitor whether the extensive use of worksheets that require little other than filling in a missing word is a factor in depressing the attainment of the pupils in the most recent end of key stage tests. Some subject co-ordinators have had few or no opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in subjects for which they hold responsibility, and this makes it very difficult for them to be aware of areas for further development.

69. An existing nursery has been attached to the school since the time of the last inspection. The school has worked conscientiously to integrate the nursery within the school and to link this provision with that in the reception class in the main school. Partly due to the nursery being a mile from the main school, this has been difficult to achieve and is an area for further development. There is limited expertise in, or direct involvement of, the senior management team in provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Ineffective monitoring of the planning for these groups of children has resulted in planning being vague and unspecific in identifying exactly what the children are to learn.

70. The school has begun to set targets for improvement in overall standards of attainment in line with national initiatives. A start has been made on the identification of individual targets for pupils. However, the use of individualised targets to boost pupils' achievement is limited. Targets are not always broken down into small steps to identify and bring about improvements in performance and such targets are rarely shared with pupils or parents so that they know exactly what the pupils need to do to improve.

71. Another key issue identified for improvement in the inspection in 1997 was to boost development planning so that it provides a continuous and longer-term overview of school priorities. In 2000 the school produced a three-year rolling programme for school development and this is satisfactory. The development of ICT skills was also identified as a key issue in the last inspection. Overall there has been satisfactory progress in the development of the subject, but there remain areas where the school could exploit the benefits of new technology to improve further attainment and efficiency. For instance the format and contents of the school development plan, whilst satisfactory, are not produced using a computerised format. This does not appear to give the plan the status it deserves or act as a model for the further development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

72. The primary key issue for development identified in the first inspection of the school was to improve the management role of governors in the development and monitoring of standards, the quality of education, policy and procedures. There has been only minimal change or improvement in the involvement of the governing body in the work of the school. This is unsatisfactory and remains a key issue requiring considerable improvement.

73. The governing body is very supportive of the school and, with the help of senior staff, generally fulfils its statutory duties. The chair of governors, who is also the chair of the finance committee, has served the school faithfully over a number of years. However, the chair and most members of the governing body are very reliant upon the headteacher and staff to inform them about the work of the school. This puts a very heavy burden of additional

administrative responsibility upon the headteacher and limits the amount of time available for him to be involved in the direct monitoring of the quality of teaching or learning. Very few governors have visited the school recently or regularly to become acquainted at first hand with curriculum developments, standards of achievement or the quality of teaching and learning. This has made it difficult for governors to shape the direction of the school or understand the strengths and weaknesses of what the school provides.

74. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages this aspect efficiently and is up-to-date with all requirements. She has one day per week to support identified pupils and keeps track of their progress. However, the school does not place all pupils that might be eligible for additional support on the lower stages of the school's register of special educational need. However, overall equality of opportunity is generally achieved.

75. The school has a good number of teaching staff. Unusually in a school of this size not only does the headteacher have no regular teaching commitment but the deputy headteacher has only a relatively small regular class teaching commitment. From September the school will also have a further member of staff available for curriculum support work for two days a week. This allows the flexibility for senior staff to work alongside colleagues and considerable potential for developing more effective monitoring of the work of the school. The school has a smaller number of classroom support assistants than is often seen but those in place work efficiently and effectively in supporting pupils' learning in individual and group work. Particularly effective are some senior staff in the nursery who make a much-valued contribution to the effectiveness of what the school provides.

76. The school has adequate accommodation. While some classrooms are very cramped there is a large school hall and the previously open-plan classrooms have been adapted to provide a quieter environment for learning. The reception class is particularly cramped and this limits the development of practical learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage. The school is aware of this situation and has plans to partially address the issue through the further development of outdoor facilities. There are extensive school grounds although little outdoor equipment or seating and, during the heatwave at the time of the inspection, little shade for pupils to sit quietly.

77. The educational resources in schools are satisfactory in range and number. Although some physical education equipment is well-used the school has a replacement programme for this. The strategic use of resources is satisfactory overall. There is at least one computer in all classrooms and there are well-advanced plans for the development of an information and communication technology suite in school later this year. However, the current use of computers to support learning is variable and some staff miss many important opportunities to use computers in day-to-day activities.

78. Financial management of the school is appropriate. The principles of seeking best value when making purchases are applied in a satisfactory manner. Specific grants and other funding are used appropriately. The headteacher manages the budget efficiently and informs the governing body of current financial concerns. As in other areas, governors have delegated large areas of responsibility to the headteacher and are not aware of the current financial position in any detail. The income and expenditure per pupil is generous and above the national average. Taking all factors into account, including the standards of attainment, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- (1) Extend the use of assessment information to inform planning to set challenging targets for all pupils and carefully track the progress that individuals and groups of pupils make toward the next level of achievement (paragraphs 4, 11, 28, 57-59, 70);
- (2). Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by:
 - clarifying the responsibilities of senior staff and subject co-ordinators through developing their roles in regular and rigorous monitoring of all aspects of planning, teaching and learning (paragraphs 32, 67-69, 131, 136, 143, 147, 157, 164, 172, 178, 186);
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of planning and learning for children in the Foundation Stage of learning (paragraphs 12, 27, 40, 68);
 - ensuring a consistent approach to the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs (paragraphs 14, 38, 74);
 - improving the quality of the marking of pupils' work and the use of worksheets to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress (paragraphs 8, 29, 30, 106);
 - improving the quality of the reports of pupils' progress (paragraph 63).
- (3) Extending the direct involvement of the Governing Body in the work of the school and in development planning (paragraphs 72, 73, 78).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

61

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

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.6%	8.1%	42.6%	45.9%	1.6%	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	249
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	57
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.2
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	18	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	13	13	15
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (76)	77 (62)	84 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	14	15	17
	Total	25	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (72)	84 (90)	90 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	12
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	18	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (70)	63 (73)	81 (63)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	18	17	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (70)	63 (77)	78 (70)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	49

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

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

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	551,418
Total expenditure	535,308
Expenditure per pupil	2,124
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,000
Balance carried forward to next year	54,110

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	40	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	52	0	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	12	2	0
The teaching is good.	60	37	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	46	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	54	5	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	44	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	47	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	44	13	15	9

Other issues raised by parents

No specific issues were identified other than of an individual nature.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

79. On entry to nursery, the attainment of the three-year-olds is similar to others of their age and similar to that noted in the first inspection. Their rate of learning throughout the nursery is satisfactory in most areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They achieve satisfactorily and their levels of attainment on entry to the reception class are typical of their age. They continue to make adequate gains in their learning in this class. The majority of children are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development, by the time they enter Year 1. Many children exceed the goals in personal and social development, but their levels of attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world are below average. At the end of the Foundation Stage higher achieving children begin to work towards the early stages of the National Curriculum, particularly in reading and writing. The accommodation in the nursery is good and outside areas are used well, but the reception class is cramped and full use is not made of the outside space available.

Personal and social education

80. Throughout the Foundation Stage children make very good gains in their personal and social development and meet the Early Learning Goals in this area very well. Children know when they have behaved well or misbehaved. They know that washing and cleaning teeth contributes to a healthy body and can identify things which are precious to them. To avert an argument between three girls in the nursery a member of the support staff talked effectively to them about the importance of friendship. Provision for their development is good and all adults support and guide children well even though planning to promote learning in this area are not consistently clear and precise.

81. Children in both classes behave very well and are familiar with routines and procedures. In the nursery they respond immediately to the 'stand still' bell at the end of playtime and walk sensibly to their group place at the sound of the second bell. At the sound of the 'tidy away' music, children begin to put things away often helping each other. Children learn to be responsible, giving out the drinks while others wait patiently while the mid-morning snack is given out. Outside they happily take turns on the tricycles and wait for a turn on the climbing apparatus. Confidence was demonstrated in the self-assured manner in which a conversation was initiated by a nursery child about her holiday in Spain. Children enjoy eating croissants at snack time and exclaim that it's like 'sausage rolls or bread, lovely!'

Communication, language and literacy

82. By the end of the Foundation Stage children make satisfactory gains in their learning and meet the Early Learning Goals because teaching is sound. Children recognise initial letters and write them in short words. Most can put letters in alphabetical order and match rhyming words such as 'cat/hat' and 'peg/leg'. The higher attaining children in the reception class work towards Level 2 of the National Curriculum. They use capital letters, full stops and sensible spelling. Children are set targets that are displayed in the front of their writing books. These clearly contribute to the good gains in early writing skills because the teacher can focus precisely on the next stage of learning. More able readers read confidently, with a sight vocabulary of more than twenty words and sometimes uses initial letter sounds as a clue to when reading unfamiliar words.

83. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes ensure that children are given appropriate opportunities to develop their early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Sometimes support staff use opportunities to extend further children's speaking skills. A nursery nurse engaged in an effective conversation about going on holiday and fishing was encouraging use of new vocabulary, seeking the child's opinions and giving opportunity for the development of thinking skills. However, sometimes children are not given the opportunity to develop their linguistic skills because the task is too adult-directed. Insufficient time was given to children to talk about a seaside poem, which inhibited their development of self-expression.

84. At the beginning of the nursery year children make marks on paper to represent 'Mom'. They make satisfactory progress and later they draw a recognisable face with eyes, nose, mouth, ears and hair. During outdoor activities, a boy became engrossed in 'reading' a Thomas the Tank Engine story, making up a simple story line and using his voice expressively for the sound effects. Facial expressions and body language were used well to communicate. A child 'scrunched up his face' when trying to explain that the clay was hard and difficult to manipulate. Four-year-olds produce and identify 's' sounds. Higher attaining children write recognisable letter 's'. A talented child wrote 'I pickt same shells' demonstrating excellent progress and attainment. At the end of their time in the reception class children begin to use capital letters and full stops and read with confidence showing satisfactory progress.

85. Most children in the reception class produce recognisable writing, often forming letters correctly grouped together as words. Early reading skills are developing satisfactorily. Children hold the book correctly, turn the pages and distinguish text from pictures. With encouragement they talk about the pictures. A talented child chooses her own book and reads it with ease. However, teachers do not always have a specific enough focus in each lesson.

86. Teaching is satisfactory in both classes, as is the quality of children's learning and most children achieve appropriately. During a reception class literacy lesson emphasis on having a 'good guess' results in almost all the class confidently and accurately predicting the covered word. Group activities are well planned according to the needs of the children, which allows children of all abilities to achieve. Higher attaining children sequence nursery rhymes and read them to the group.

Mathematics

87. Children make satisfactory gains in mathematics and achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage because teaching is satisfactory. Children estimate and then investigate how many times in the space of a minute they can jump over a hoop, hop on one leg and record their findings on a simple chart. They are able to add and subtract within 10. They weigh and measure themselves, know their shoe size and sequence their telephone number correctly. Nursery children count forwards and backwards between numbers 1 to 20 and make good attempts to write numbers 1 to 11.

88. Children recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and use everyday words such as 'next to' and 'under' to describe their position. The teacher encourages repetition of shape words, which effectively consolidates learning. However, planning is often too broad and this makes the assessment of the progress made imprecise. This makes planning for the next stages of learning difficult and does not give a clear focus for the lesson. This is shown in a lesson on early measuring skills in the reception class, where accuracy in measuring and understanding more and less were both lesson objectives. The assessment task only focused on accuracy of measurement, which most children were unable to achieve.

89. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, occasionally teaching is good because activities are well differentiated, resources are well chosen and the plenary session lively. During a reception lesson about totalling to 10, children of all abilities achieved well because tasks matched their ability. The skilful use of domino cards reinforced number recognition effectively and a speedy number game during the plenary session emphasising more, less and number order moved learning forwards.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. Children do not meet the Early Learning Goals for this area because often the choice of activity and resources do not promote learning, adult intervention is inadequate and on other occasions too directive. The purpose of the lesson is often unclear making teaching unsatisfactory.

91. In the nursery, three jigsaw puzzles with pictures of the growth of a tadpole into a newt, a child getting dressed and a family were provided for the promotion of knowledge and understanding of the world. Limited conversation between adult and child centred on the choice of puzzle pieces fitting together. Clay work based on the seaside was adult-directed, children being given a pre-made star fish and fish to copy, inhibiting their own exploration of the properties of clay. A very general objective 'experience playing with wet and dry sand' does not give a clear learning intention or vocabulary to be promoted. Without adult intervention children enjoy playing with dry sand watching it pour through the holes of a toy farm vehicle and later comment that cement is being mixed to make bricks to make a digger yard. This was a missed learning opportunity in which children could have learned much about the properties of wet and dry sand.

92. During an activity to make boats, the tasks were heavily adult-directed. Boats were all the same, having been previously cut out, which inhibited the development of children's scissors skills and imagination. Adults handed out pre-cut sellotape even though a child was desperate to cut his own, and adults wrote the children's names on the boats. There were limited planned opportunities for the reception class to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children learn that sight is one of five senses and people whose eyes do not work so well have to wear glasses, which makes things bigger.

Physical development

93. By the end of the Foundation Stage children attain the Early Learning Goals. In the nursery the teacher ensures that children have appropriate opportunities to develop a full range of skills to develop their co-ordination. The enclosed outside play area, recently refurbished, is well resourced and contributes well to children's development. Children use their bodies in a controlled way to climb up over, round and through the climbing apparatus. They use large wheeled toys efficiently, pushing the pedals and steering, negotiating the space and adjusting their speed accordingly. Children play chasing games and show good body awareness by avoiding other children and using the space well. The reception class does not have a safe enclosed play area although they have access to the school playground and therefore some appropriate experiences. Recently purchased large wheeled toys, bats, balls and skipping ropes help to promote physical skills satisfactorily. Children move outside with confidence but their imaginative play is underdeveloped because planning and teaching have not helped develop this area sufficiently.

Creative development

94. Children attain the Early Learning Goals in creative development by the time they finish the Foundation Stage and teaching is satisfactory. In both the nursery and reception class children undertake an adequate range of activities from painting, singing, drawing, collage and music making. However, children do not experience an extensive or imaginative range of creative experiences.

95. Children build up a repertoire of well known songs and nursery rhymes, which they know well and clap in time to the beat of the clock in *Hickory Dickory Dock*. Adults model the words and actions well in the reception class, which leads to almost all the children making good progress. However, also in the reception class an activity chosen to develop creative skills resulted in limited progress because it was too teacher-directed. Cardboard glasses frames were identical, pre-cut and the range of resources to decorate them was limited. Whilst the 'Lobster Pot Café' in the nursery provides an opportunity for creative play, learning is not maximised by adult intervention. Children mostly talk alongside each other and often use gestures to communicate meaning. A child demonstrated to another how to take the money from a customer and put it in the cash till, but they were unsure of how to play in role.

96. Whilst the quality of teaching and children's learning is almost always satisfactory staff miss opportunities to ensure the quality of learning is even better. The environment of the Foundation Stage is pleasant, supportive and calm but lacking in the vibrancy and 'buzz' of exploration, investigation and creativity associated with young children's learning. Their natural curiosity has not been harnessed and maximised to urge their learning forwards. Many opportunities to enrich children's learning are missed.

97. Teachers and support staff plan conscientiously but plans are rarely tied in tightly to the 'stepping stones' stages of learning which lead to the Early Learning Goals. Observations to assess children's learning are regular but records are general and wide ranging and do not reflect progress towards or achievement of the 'stepping stones' learning stages. This makes planning for the next stages of children's learning more difficult because assessment lacks clarity. Recently developed record of achievement books do not show the full range of children's development covered in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Opportunities for children to reflect on their own learning are limited. Useful information is available about children's learning on entry and exit to and from the nursery and reception classes and provides a vital link with planning the curriculum.

ENGLISH

98. At the age of eleven pupils' results in the national tests in English have varied from above to below average over time. The 2001 national test results remain unpublished, but suggest a similar position to that of 2000, which showed attainment to be below the national average, but average when compared to similar schools. Present inspection findings show that overall standards in English are similar to national levels for 11-year olds, with standards of speaking and listening somewhat higher than literacy. Standards remain largely as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Whilst school targets are below national averages, staff have begun to identify and plan how to raise attainment further.

99. Although attainment in the national tests for 7-year-olds has remained stubbornly low in recent years, there is evidence that pupils are now making better progress. In 2000 standards were well below the national average and when compared to similar schools. Last year no pupils achieved higher levels with their writing, but in 2001 nearly a quarter of all 7-year-olds in the school did so. Reading shows similar improvement, with more capable

readers making good progress with their reading in English and in other subjects. Good teaching in each year group and a clear focus on improving literacy skills, particularly in writing, is moving learning on. Present inspection findings reflect this improvement and indicate that by the time pupils are 7 years old their attainment is now close to the national average.

100. The quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make is good. The achievement of the large majority of pupils is appropriate to their abilities. Throughout the school, there is no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are learning as well as others in their class. Pupils with statements for their special educational needs make good progress and are well supported with individual work that matches their needs. Other pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but targets in their individual plans are not always specific enough to provided the small steps needed for their learning.

101. From the start of school, pupils' listening skills are good. Their ability to listen in larger groups and work in co-operation with others in small groups or in pairs is of benefit to learning in the literacy hour and in other subjects. Work in the juniors builds on these skills, enabling pupils to discuss finer points, give opinions and make group decisions. Year 4 pupils show just how well a whole class group can listen to each other as they identify persuasive language in advertisements, write slogans and read through and improve their work in a writing lesson.

102. Speaking skills are average but some pupils do not develop a wide and descriptive vocabulary and some speak in only short sentences that lack description and detail. However, many pupils are confident speakers with the skills to ask and answer questions and, because their responses are valued, they talk more readily in lessons and make good progress. The main thrust for developing speaking skills is through teachers' use of questioning and planned opportunities for pupils to talk and discuss in smaller groups. Year 2 pupils reply eagerly to 'why' and 'how' questions about two characters in a favourite story. Pupils talk confidently about their strange appearance, with 'cruel thin lips and boiled cabbage face'. In Year 6, pupils develop greater competency with their speaking skills. They begin to be more precise in their choice of vocabulary, as they explore a range of poetry and describe and explain clearly their feelings of empathy with a leopard trapped in a cage. A dramatic performance of 'David and Goliath' in assembly, was an example of how well different year groups can perform for a wider range of audience when given the chance. However, overall there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to make presentations to the class or take part in drama activities.

103. Standards in reading are close to average by the ages of 7 years and 11 years. Throughout the school, more capable readers reach higher levels with their reading and make good progress. In the infants they respond in a personal way to characters and story lines. For instance, a pupil in Year 2 suggests that the *The Cat in the Crypt* is not really a funny book, it's about real life and it's sad at times'. By Year 6, pupils' exploration of a wide range of books is whetting their appetite for reading. One very capable reader brings her own selection of Harry Potter books to read in school, stating she enjoys 'the author's strange language of magic and fantasy'. Skills with skimming and scanning for information are developed well, but the use of the computer for researching and retrieving information is limited.

104. Readers achieving average levels read with accuracy, fluency and understanding. However, pupils reaching just below average are not reading in a fluent way. They use a limited range of strategies to find out unknown words, and are dependent on recalling words by sight and linking letters with sounds. Few pupils make a 'good guess' at unknown words or use the whole sentence for help. Although less able readers are well supported in small

groups in literacy lessons, many find reading a struggle when reading independently, because they are still developing accuracy and read word by word. As yet, there is limited diagnostic assessment of pupils' individual skills as readers and no clear records showing this information. The use of assessment information to support planning to improve the progress of just below and below average readers is under-developed. The school has improved the range and quality of resources for reading, including the library, since the last inspection and they are used well and accessible in lessons.

105. The school's focus on improving writing is paying dividends. Teachers in the infants are modelling writing skills well and as a result pupils organise their ideas in sentences that make sense and learn how to write simple stories. Pupils in Year 1 reflect the enthusiasm for writing found within the school, as they write their own questions and respond to letters about an 'old bear' found in a school cupboard. In the juniors, pupils regularly shape and read through their writing and add interest for the reader by their use of descriptive language and similes. Writing in Year 3 about loneliness provides an example: 'Abandoned boy, sitting behind the dustbin, crying and alone, he looked like a stray'.

106. Standards in writing in both key stages are close to the national average but are often limited by the overuse of worksheets across the curriculum. The extensive use of worksheets that are often the same or very similar for all pupils does little to develop the depth and range of writing skills and limits the progress pupils make in this area. In all classes pupils' writing is well presented and neat and tidy. The expertise and support of the English co-ordinator is helping teachers to plan some effective lessons in modelling and developing writing. Identifying different purposes for writing such as creating advertisements for sweets, or studying and creating different forms of poetry such as Haiku, provides a range of relevant and interesting experiences in writing for older pupils.

107. In Year 2, plans for stories are used well to focus on structure and to plan the beginning, middle and the end of narrative writing. Teachers assess spelling on a regular basis and make good use of this information to plan individually for each pupil. Having the confidence to try to spell words adds to the pace and quality of writing in all year groups. Year 1 pupils are very confident when identifying simple spelling rules and patterns and use them consistently in their own work. As yet, teachers are not taking up all the opportunities offered in other subjects, such as science and history, to develop different forms of writing.

108. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in English and most pupils make good progress. Lessons are well planned and paced and benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge. Some high quality teaching provides challenging work and there is an expectation for all to work hard and do well. In Year 6, for instance, work is planned at different levels to meet a range of learning needs. A pupil with a statement for special educational needs has individual work linked to a shared poem on cats, whilst pupils learning at a faster rate research Latin and Greek roots of words, such as shingle and furtive, as they decide on unusual names for cats. Teachers manage lessons well and, because they hold the pupils' interest, behaviour and concentration are good and pupils achieve well.

109. The basic skills in English are taught well in each year group and as a result most pupils read and spell words and construct sentences that are grammatically correct. Teachers have a clear understanding of what skills are to be taught in class lessons and during feedback time in the literacy hour, and so progress is good. As yet, teachers are less skilful in providing opportunities in guided reading time to help pupils who are nearly reaching average levels with their reading to become more fluent and expressive readers.

110. A contributory factor to the improved standards is that the management of English is good. The literacy co-ordinator has the expertise and commitment to help raise standards. A

clear plan of action for the development of writing is working well and provides a useful model for the development of reading. The school has begun to carry out the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of planning, teaching and learning. This focus upon improving the quality of lesson planning is having an important effect upon the raising of standards.

MATHEMATICS

111. Standards achieved in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds were well below the national average. When compared to the results of similar schools attainment was also well below average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below average and until recently there has been no consistent trend in improvement. These low results for pupils' aged eleven in 2000 were linked to approximately forty per cent of new pupils arriving in the year group during the junior stage. Half of these pupils had special educational needs and were working at a low level. There was similar picture of low attainment in the infant stage. Standards achieved by seven-year-old pupils for the same year were well below average and when compared to those of similar schools were also well below average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 at the age of seven was low.

112. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been an improvement this year at the end of both key stages. By the age of eleven, attainment is average overall. The achievement of different groups of pupils including those from different ethnic groups and those with special educational needs is generally appropriate. The 2001 national tests indicate a marked improvement in the number of pupils reaching the expected level, with 66 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4 in 2001 compared with 44 per cent in 2000. The school has exceeded the targets set for this group of pupils because of improvements in the planning of lessons to meet the needs of groups of pupils who make different rates of progress. Booster classes have taken place weekly and have contributed to this improvement. The inspection findings are similar those reported in the previous inspection in the infants, but slightly lower at the junior stage than previously.

113. By the age of seven the number of pupils who reach Level 2 or above is average. The scrutiny of work shows average standards and this reflects the teacher's assessments. Work in Year 2 clearly indicates that there is a greater proportion of the class who are working at the higher Level 3 than in previous year groups. Recent test results reflect these findings. There has been an upward trend and significant improvement at the age of seven since last year and this is because of the impact of the numeracy hour. When lessons are carefully planned, as was seen in Year 2 with work, which is matched accurately to all pupils' individual needs, learning is sometimes very good

114. Taking the average scores in national tests over the last few years the attainment in mathematics of boys and girls at the end of the junior stage has varied. In 2000 boys scored better than girls did but the opposite was true in 1999. From 1997-1999 girls generally did better than boys. However, there is a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls at the age of seven over the same period of time. The boys did better than the girls. The school has analysed these results and is endeavouring to identify whether there are reasons for the apparent differences other than differences within cohorts.

115. Pupils at the end of Year 2 round up numbers to the nearest ten and double and halve numbers with confidence. This was demonstrated clearly during a mental mathematics session at the beginning of a lesson. Pupils have a sound knowledge of basic multiplication and division facts and many order numbers to 1000 and beyond. Some lower attainers have difficulty ordering numbers but are given satisfactory guidance to develop this, in particular with regard to writing numbers with correct formation. In work on fractions pupils recognise halves, quarters and thirds and know that all parts must be of equal size. In their work on

shape and measuring, pupils identify common two and three-dimensional shapes appropriately and they begin to identify properties within these shapes, for example the number of sides and corners they have. Pupils use centimetres to measure lines with good accuracy.

116. Most pupils apply their knowledge of number to solve simple word problems and use the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and symbols well. For example, pupils in Year 1 work confidently as they work out money problems using amounts up to 20 pence. Many have a sound idea of giving change. Pupils collect information and record it using tally charts and then display it in graph form. Good links were seen between mathematics, information and communication technology and science, as pupils in Year 2 developed bar and pie charts using the computer after collating information from a traffic survey. Lesson observations in Key Stage 1 and a scrutiny of their work suggests that the progress they make over time is satisfactory. However, in some Year 2 lessons, very good progress is made.

117. By the end of the junior stage most pupils develop a sound idea of the relationship between percentages, fractions and decimals. Almost all understand that a half is the same as 50 per cent. More able pupils have secure knowledge that this can be written as 0.5 and lower attaining pupils make appropriate progress. Pupils use their sound awareness of place value, multiplying numbers by 10 and 100 quickly and use this knowledge competently when working out mathematical tasks. The pupils' understanding of basic mathematical concepts is reinforced in each year group. In Year 3 pupils sequence fractions such as a quarter, half and three-quarters on a 'fraction number line'. Pupils in Year 4 consolidate their understanding of what 'the difference between two numbers' means as they develop their understanding of number sequences and basic mathematical vocabulary such as what 'consecutive' and 'product' mean. Pupils' basic number skills are built on soundly in Year 5 as they learn which numbers are prime numbers.

118. All pupils are given appropriate opportunities to develop information in many different forms such as Venn diagrams and block and line graphs. When discussing shape pupils can identify different kinds of triangles and define their characteristics. Mathematical displays vary in quality but in some classrooms they promote learning well. A good display was seen in Year 5 showing 'Mathematical Shapes in Nature and Architecture'. This promoted cultural development and linked well with the geography curriculum as it showed examples from all over the world such as Le Pont du Gard in France and the Pyramids in Egypt. The scrutiny of work clearly indicates that progress and achievement in the junior stage are satisfactory over time but lesson observations reveal that some pupils in particular in Years 5 and 6 have made good progress recently.

119. Teachers are enthusiastic about the National Numeracy Strategy and feel that it has helped them to improve their planning and teaching in mathematics and has contributed to improvement in standards. The satisfactory progress made by pupils in both key stages is directly linked to the school's improving provision for the subject. Teachers keep records of what pupils are achieving and assess their work regularly. Results are used to form ability groups within the classrooms and to predict the level individuals are likely to achieve. However, a weakness is that at present only pupils with special educational needs work to individual targets. The co-ordinator is aware of the benefit of developing targets for all pupils. A strong element in the progress of pupils is the good relationships that teachers maintain with their classes; this enables pupils to talk freely about their work and the things that they find difficult.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes very good in Year 2, and is consistently good in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is good or very good, mathematical vocabulary is continually promoted well. This emphasis on vocabulary enables

pupils to discuss their work with more confidence and consistently promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers use resources well, for example, in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher used whiteboards efficiently for pupils to record their findings whilst working on tasks. They use their good subject knowledge well and have high expectations regarding behaviour and the completion of the task. Weaknesses in teaching occur when teachers do not manage their class well and allow pupils to shout out whilst they are speaking. In some classes work is not well matched to pupils' individual needs and this impacts on learning during the lesson. On some occasions pupils of differing abilities are given the same or very similar worksheets, which limits the level of challenge for some.

121. The use of information and communication technology is beginning to be used well within the mathematics curriculum. The school recognises the need to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to extend their work on computers in this area. Good examples were seen in Year 5 as pupils developed their idea of telling the time using a twenty-four hour clock and in Year 6 where pupils were multiplying two-digit numbers by 1.5. Numeracy skills across the curriculum are developed through an appropriate range of activities including in science and design and technology.

122. The management of the subject is good and an important feature of this is the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator. There has been a good level of improvement in the school's provision for the subject since the previous inspection, and results of tests are carefully analysed by the co-ordinator and used when planning group activities. The impact of recent developments can be seen in the significant improvement in the school's test results in particular at the end of the infant stage. The co-ordinator monitors planning and this has had a significant effect on raising the expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

SCIENCE

123. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are currently average. This is not as good as the finding of the previous inspection, which judged standards to be above average. This dip in attainment is largely because the school has concentrated most of its efforts in recent years on raising attainment in English and mathematics and there has been limited in-service training to maintain a focus on the development of scientific activities. Attainment in the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 national tests was below the national average, though average when compared with similar schools. Trends over time have been inconsistent. Standards have risen as a result of consistently good teaching. Most pupils in both key stages are making steady progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those from different ethnic groups are making similar progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys or girls.

124. Standards by the end of Year 2 have risen from those shown in teacher assessment last year. These standards were below average compared with schools nationally and compared with similar schools, largely because no pupils achieved the higher curriculum level 3. Early indications from the school's 2001 assessments indicate continued improvement. This is a result of teaching which is consistently good.

125. By the age of seven, the pupils are able to carry out practical investigations competently into a number of scientific ideas, such as the absorbency of different materials and the effect of distance from the source of a sound on its loudness. They have an appropriate understanding of what plants and animals need to stay alive and they know how to investigate the habitats of small animals in the school grounds. They have satisfactory knowledge that heating and cooling can cause materials to change in character. The pupils understand that any scientific test must be a fair one and they try to make sensible predictions as to what might happen. They make good use of their mathematical skills in science, for example in constructing clear block graphs of the length of shadows at different

times of the day. They make effective use of their literacy skills, for example in describing objects as 'rough', 'flexible', 'soft' or 'smooth'.

126. The quality of teaching is good in the infant stage. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and an understanding of how to make activities interesting and relevant to the age and experience of the pupils. In a very effective Year 1 lesson the teacher placed a strong emphasis on the development of the pupils' skills of practical scientific enquiry, as they investigated the waterproof qualities of four different materials. In making the task 'keeping teddy dry', and in showing them waterproof items, such as a plastic raincoat and pram cover, the teacher made the investigation really interesting for the pupils and relevant to everyday life and this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. She emphasised the danger of plastic items to young children. She ended the lesson with good use of a computer program on waterproof clothing, which consolidated learning, and she suggested that the pupils might bring in some waterproof items from home, but not necessarily dad's waterproof watch.

127. By the age of eleven, the pupils name the major organs of the human body and of flowering plants. They have a satisfactory understanding of the concept of food chains. They name the planets of the solar system and know about the orbits of the earth and the moon. In work linked to design and technology, the pupils have investigated how forces act on different kinds of bridges and the effect of air resistance on parachutes. They have also made motorised buggies, incorporating an electrical circuit. These activities interest the pupils and support the development of positive attitudes to learning in an effective manner. The pupils often use their mathematical skills well in recording their findings. For example, they have drawn accurate line graphs to record the rate of growth of nasturtiums in the classroom. However, they make insufficient use of their literacy skills in recording, as much of this work is on worksheets requiring little more than the filling in of words or phrases.

128. The quality of teaching and learning in the junior stage is good. The teachers plan their lessons well and share learning objectives with the pupils, so that they know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson. The teachers place a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in practical investigations. In a Year 6 lesson held outside, the teacher used this approach well in helping the pupils investigate the relationship between two variables, such as whether the length of leg affects the distance jumped. She encouraged the pupils to develop an hypothesis before beginning their investigation and this helped their development as young scientists.

129. In an effective Year 5 lesson, the teacher based learning on pond-dipping which the pupils had carried out during a visit to Edgmond Hall. The teacher explained clearly how the pupils should frame their questions in making and using an animal identification key, so that the questions needed just a 'yes' or 'no' answer and this impacted well on their learning. The teacher then helped some pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills effectively as they used the computer to generate a branching database. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher maintained a good balance between direct teaching and practical enquiry and this helped the pupils to investigate which materials are good conductors of electricity. She provided plugs for the pupils to unscrew and to observe and draw the interior features. She stressed the need to be very careful with plugs at home and this drew the pupils' attention to the potential dangers of electricity. The teacher made effective use of a CD-Rom to consolidate learning.

130. A weakness in teaching lies in the quality of the marking of pupils' work, which is inconsistent. There is evidence of some unmarked work in the junior stage and of marking which is cursory and not particularly helpful in guiding the pupils to improve further. At times, assessment is not used sufficiently to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils who make different rates of progress. Because the use of assessment information is limited, on too

many occasions all pupils in the class use the same or very similar activities and worksheets. This does not sufficiently meet the needs of pupils with higher or lower attainment.

131. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She recognises that the scheme of work requires updating to take full account of recent national guidance. Through observing the teaching of science in other classes, she monitors and evaluates the subject's performance and has taken effective action to share good practice, with a view to raising standards further. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, though the information gained from this is not focused sufficiently sharply on matching work to pupils' varying needs in lessons. There are adequate resources to support learning and these are enhanced by worthwhile visits to places such as Haden Hill Park, Ash End House Farm, Sandwell Valley Park, Edmond Hall and Wyre Forest. The teachers make effective use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, such as the school nurse, Severn Trent Water and a theatre group. In encouraging collaborative work in lessons and respect for the environment and for living things, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

ART AND DESIGN

132. Only a few lessons were observed in art and design and so evidence has been used from pupils' previous work, displays and teachers' planning to help make judgements. In both the infant and junior stages, standards in art and design are similar to those expected nationally. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be good. The school has moved its focus from art to other subject areas, but present displays reflect appropriate coverage of a range of creative and imaginative experiences. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was an over-emphasis on work in paint, pencil and crayon.

133. Pupils are making steady progress with their learning and there are pockets of creative and imaginative work of a good standard. Different groups of pupils generally achieve appropriately. In the infant department, pupils experiment with pastel, paint and collage as they produce bold images of 'Daniel in the Lion's Den'. They also work more precisely with finer detail as they reflect the use of 'pointillism' in their paintings of mini-beasts or produce replicas of ornate shields. Pupils' portraits of adults working in the school indicate that they are developing greater accuracy with their drawing skills and a growing awareness of the use of proportion.

134. Artwork linked to other subjects, such as science, also has strengths. Pupils in Year 3 study plants in depth and draw from their understanding of shape and form to create delicate images of flowers and leaves in charcoal and pastel. Planting sunflower seeds and watching them grow provides inspiration for modelling flower-heads in clay. Work is planned in stages, so that skills and techniques with different tools are developed appropriately and improved as work progresses. In Year 5, pupils study 1960s art and experiment with the use of patterns and shapes which confuse the vision. By the end of the junior stage pupils can follow an idea through and modify and improve their work. A good example is in Year 6, when pupils are introduced to work by Modigliani, use his techniques in their own work, and finally produce a competent sculptured head reflecting his image of *Girl with Pigtails*.

135. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in art and keen to experiment. They concentrate well on more difficult tasks, such as rolling out a specific thickness of clay suitable for making sunflower petals. Different groups within the class work well together and share resources amicably. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make steady progress with their learning.

136. Teaching is satisfactory, as is the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to use a range of different materials and techniques. Teachers' planning shows coverage of the subject, but there is limited opportunity for work with textiles and this limits the progress that pupils make. Consequently there is less consistency in teachers' expectations of standards and skills in this aspect of art. Lessons are lively and well paced and hold the pupils' interest. Assessment of work varies: at best teachers have portfolios of examples of pupils' work but do not make full use of these or other information to improve provision. There is very limited monitoring of the quality of planning, teaching and learning. The lack of monitoring makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to be aware whether teaching builds in a consistent manner on what the pupils know, understand and can do or identify an imbalance in emphasis within the curriculum. Work on display around the school is often attractive but in several instances the work is adult-generated and does little to reflect the standard of work of the pupils or raise their self-esteem.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

137. Standards in design and technology are in line with those expected by the ages of seven and eleven. Progress is satisfactory for all pupils as they move through the school. These judgements are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one lesson, in Year 5, was observed during the course of the inspection. Inspection evidence is drawn from this lesson, discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of previous work, photographic evidence and teachers' planning.

138. Teaching is satisfactory. It was good in the lesson seen, and the scrutiny of planning and work previously undertaken indicates satisfactory teaching over time. The design and technology work in folders in most classes show that pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of designing, planning, making and evaluating, and that an appropriate amount of work has been completed. However this is not apparent in Year 4 where the level of work seen was below that expected and the amount of work in the sample submitted was limited.

139. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory because the pupils develop an appropriate understanding of the different aspects of the curriculum. Planning and the sample of pupils' work show a satisfactory range of activities which develops an average level of skill in designing, making and evaluating a range of items. Questioning is used well to reinforce words specifically related to the subject such as 'cams', 'axles' and 'rotary motion'. In a Year 5 lesson pupils are well organised and the pace of the lesson brisk, which enables the pupils to develop their understanding of how cams and axles work effectively. Lessons are well resourced within the class and the pupils are encouraged to give out materials quickly and responsibly. Learning is enhanced because all pupils are enthusiastic and responsive to the teacher and relationships within the class are good.

140. Previous work clearly indicates that pupils in Year 1 have made dogs from card with moving heads and tails, showing a satisfactory level of skill. They have planned, designed, made and evaluated a safety helmet. The Year 2 pupils made sandwiches as they studied food technology. This activity was linked closely and effectively to English as skills taught in literacy lessons were used to develop booklets around this task. These booklets show good knowledge of parts of a book such as the contents page and the index. By the end of the infant stage pupils show a satisfactory understanding of planning, designing, making and evaluating as they work with a range of tools and materials. There are appropriate links to the development of numeracy skills when measuring materials to be used.

141. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject continue to develop satisfactorily at the beginning of the junior stage. In Year 3 pupils look at how items are packaged as they take boxes apart and look at the different 'nets' used to make boxes. They

design, make and evaluate their own boxes of seeds, which is linked to their science topic about plants and growth. In Year 4 previous designs show how pupils have looked at adventure playgrounds. Plans are at a basic level, however, and do not consistently identify the material and tools to be used. There are good links with art and design in Year 5 as pupils look at 'circus artwork' before they make a satisfactory range of model circus vehicles.

142. By the end of the junior stage, standards are in line with those expected nationally and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Eleven year-olds talk confidently about the electric motorised buggies they make. Pupils use vocabulary which is specific to the subject well, which demonstrates satisfactory understanding. They know about the importance of planning and then evaluating their designs and proudly show the photographic evidence of their efforts.

143. The subject is satisfactorily led although there has been no monitoring of teaching and learning either by classroom observations or by the co-ordinator scrutinising work produced in all classes. The guidelines that teachers use to plan lessons are to be reviewed and the co-ordinator is looking towards linking these school-specific guidelines with the new national guidance. Resources are sound and work in design and technology links well other subjects such as English and science. Food technology activities help to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. There is little evidence to suggest that information and communication technology is used to support the design area of the curriculum and this is an area for development. The subject supports pupils' social development well, as pupils work together in groups.

GEOGRAPHY

144. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for seven and 11-year-olds. This maintains the judgements made in the previous inspection of the school. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory, as is the quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make. The achievement of most groups of pupils is appropriate.

145. In Year 2 pupils label areas on a school plan and use a simple key to identify leisure, work and living areas on an Ordnance Survey map with an average level of understanding. Based on a visit to Warwick pupils compare the town with their local environment, successfully identifying differences and similarities in housing, street names, buildings, landscape and leisure. A well-chosen activity where pupils had to guess in which area the photograph was taken encouraged speaking and listening skills and sharing of opinions successfully. The pupils with special educational needs were well supported throughout the lesson and given plenty of opportunity to develop their expressive language. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall, in some activities where the use of resources particularly interests pupils the quality of their learning is good.

146. Pupils' skills of comparison are developed satisfactorily in Year 3 when they compare Cradely Heath with Kenya. Good use is made of photographs and pupils identify differences in lifestyle, leisure activities, employment, land use and shops and made satisfactory gains in their learning. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about their residential visit to Edgmond Hall, where they carried out an orienteering survey of the type of shops and parking provision. Following satisfactory analysis of data they concluded that the most popular shops were clothes shops and banks and the least common were supermarkets, though these provided the most parking space. This, with the use of the computer to produce a graph, provided good links between subjects and enhanced pupils' learning appropriately. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and there is an appropriate range of activities. The expectations of teachers are appropriate although too many worksheets that require limited responses are used.

147. The scheme of work has not been reviewed and updated since the last inspection. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to do so. There are some weaknesses in provision. Resources particularly in Key Stage 1 are inadequate, but good use is made of 'topic boxes', field trips and the local environment to enrich learning. Professional development for all staff including co-ordinators has not been provided for more than four years. This does not keep staff knowledge of developments in the subject at a high level and this has a negative effect on pupils' learning. The co-ordinators have not been allocated any time to monitor standards of geography across the school and this makes it difficult for them to ensure that teaching builds in a continuous manner on what the pupils know, understand and can do.

HISTORY

148. At the end of both key stages pupils' attainment meets expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds and a good proportion of pupils exceed these standards in some areas of their learning. Standards were broadly average in the previous inspection of the school. Teaching is good and teachers provide an interesting range of activities using artefacts and resources that promote lots of discussion and interest in the subject. Pupils, including those from different ethnic groups and those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning as they move through the school.

149. Year 2 pupils sequence pictures of castles chronologically by identifying their features. They show appropriate factual knowledge of Victorian times describing what life would be like without electricity and some of the tasks that 'boot room boys' and 'scullery maids' would have to carry out. Teachers make useful links between literacy and history. Pupils satisfactorily retell the story of the Battle of Hastings using a writing frame, following studies of the Bayeux Tapestry. They give confident accounts of the Plague and the Fire of London. Teachers give opportunities for pupils to research; they use the Internet to investigate the Bubonic Plague.

150. Visits to local historical sites are used very well to enrich pupils' learning. This is a strength of the subject. Following a visit to Warwick Castle pupils identified facts about Normans and Saxons. They graphically empathised with King Harold's feelings of anger when William the Conqueror invaded and made good progress in developing appropriate understanding of historical events. Higher attaining pupils explained how the Saxons felt and why the Normans built castles. Almost all the pupils know that the first castles were built on a hill on a motte and bailey plan, and that they would be difficult to invade. They identify the Domesday Book as a valuable source of evidence and develop research skills at an appropriate level.

151. In Year 2 the teacher's subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the topic inspired confident answers in response to questions about what would be needed in a siege. More direct questioning techniques were used successfully to involve quieter pupils. Good use was made of pictures of weapons and specific vocabulary, which enhanced learning about their use in a siege. The use of paired work effectively promoted discussion of ideas about what they would need as an 'attacker' or 'defender'. This task was well considered and led to the majority of pupils making good progress. Higher attaining pupils made very good progress when they used the correct terminology in challenging discussions. Average attainers made good progress because they used historical vocabulary correctly when writing about what they would shoot from a magazine. The brisk pace and use of historical vocabulary promoted good quality learning.

152. Year 6 pupils made good progress when they learned how the role of gods and goddesses shaped the lives of the Egyptians. They confidently recalled previous learning about the afterlife and named tombs, mummies and paintings as examples of evidence sources. A wall display was used well to promote consideration of possible reasons to

include a boat in a tomb. Opportunities to research using books and computer helped pupils to develop independent learning. Clearly differentiated tasks, which took account of different learning styles, allowed all pupils to learn well. Clear instructions and the use of praise promoted high standards of behaviour and learning successfully. Pupils were referred to as 'historians', and they were urged to consider the evidence and its interpretation.

153. Year 5 pupils make good gains in their knowledge about local history using secondary evidence. They compare maps from 1898 and 1919, extract information about housing, road names, employment and industry drawing conclusions about life at the time and how it has changed. They place World War 2 on a time line and use historical vocabulary such as pre/post and interwar years confidently. Cross-curricular links are used well to enhance learning. They express enjoyment about their performance of a play about evacuees and which has helped them to understand what life was like.

154. In most lessons pupils' attitudes are very good. They are motivated; listen to and discuss with each other; keep focused on the tasks throughout the lesson and talk about their work enthusiastically. This is a strength of the subject and has a significant impact upon the quality of pupils' learning.

155. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and a strength of the subject. The use of the local environment is also good and enriches the curriculum. Good links are made between subjects giving pupils the opportunity to transfer their skills, particularly in literacy and geography.

156. In Year 4 teaching is satisfactory overall but lessons sometimes lack clarity and pupils are not kept well focused on their tasks. Pupils do not respond immediately to instructions because these are not clear. Group work is less successful because some pupils are unable to listen carefully to the ideas of others.

157. Responsibility for the management of the subject was shared until recently. Appropriate long-term plans have been reviewed and developed with a clear emphasis on skills. Along with the policy, this gives teachers a clear framework for their planning. However, apart from annual reporting, assessment opportunities are not identified. In consequence planning for building on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding based on previous learning, is not accurate enough and does not promote maximum achievement. The subject co-ordinator has not been allocated any time to monitor the subject across the school or received professional development time for her subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

158. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in information and communication technology are similar to those seen in other schools. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. However, the overall planning and provision for the subject has improved since then and is no longer a key issue for development. In both key stages, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic groups, are making satisfactory progress. Boys and girls attain equally. Unsurprisingly there is some evidence that pupils who have the use of computers at home make better progress than those without such access.

159. By the age of seven, the pupils identify the disk drive, keyboard, monitor and printer. They have satisfactory word processing skills, which they use to present work in literacy. They know how to change the size and style of fonts. They have made satisfactory use of a paint program to generate effective pictures of their homes. At the local Teachers' Development Centre, the pupils have used computers to write about the Plague, which they

have learnt about in history. With adult help, they save and print their work. The pupils know how to program a floor robot.

160. By the age of eleven, the pupils combine text and graphics satisfactorily. At the local high school's computer suite, the Year 6 pupils have produced effective laminated leaflets on the dangers of smoking and designed their own web pages. The pupils are using ICT effectively to enhance their learning in different subjects. In science, they have produced accurate graphs of water temperatures in a heated kettle at various time intervals and they have monitored sound levels in their classroom. In mathematics, the pupils have used a function machine program satisfactorily to enhance learning of the four operations of number and they have controlled equipment by means of a series of instructions. In history, they have used CD-ROMs effectively to research information about the ancient Egyptians. However, in some other subjects including music, staff miss opportunities to enable pupils to develop skills in areas such as musical composition.

161. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory, although some staff miss opportunities to extend the quality of pupils' learning further. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher made effective links with geography, literacy and numeracy, as the pupils entered data from the previous week's traffic survey on Barrs Road to generate bar charts and pie charts. With just one computer in the classroom, the teacher enabled as many pupils as possible to gain hands-on computer experience, whilst others engaged in paper-based graph work. This helped to develop the pupils' confidence with a computer program and extend their mathematical learning.

162. The quality of teaching in the juniors is satisfactory and some teachers make good use of available computers. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave clear explanations of relevant formulae, which enabled the pupils to understand the use of spreadsheets. When one pupil met a problem by using the wrong type of brackets, the teacher made good use of this mistake as a teaching point and this helped to develop the pupils' understanding of the need for care with the keyboard. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used questioning effectively, which made the pupils think carefully about 'fields' and the relevant database for the 'Year 5 Olympics'. The teacher made satisfactory links with mathematics and this helped the pupils to appreciate the data provided in bar charts and pie charts.

163. The school has generally successfully addressed the key issue from the previous inspection to improve provision for information and communication technology. Although there is currently only one computer per classroom on average, which is a low number, the school has purchased two floor robots, a digital camera and a collection of CD-Rom. Good use is made of the digital camera in some classes to record the activities of the pupils. The school has well advanced plans to enhance provision significantly with the building of a dedicated ICT suite for September.

164. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity yet to monitor and evaluate the subject's performance. This has made it difficult for him to be aware whether teaching builds in a consistent manner on what the pupils know, understand and can do. In some lessons staff miss the opportunity to extend pupils' learning by planning activities using computers in lessons where this would be entirely appropriate. There are no formal, whole-school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and this again limits the monitoring of standards and planning to raise attainment further. The co-ordinator has applied for New Opportunities Fund training for staff, including those in senior roles, in order to improve further their expertise and to keep pace with national developments in ICT.

MUSIC

165. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are very broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs, make adequate progress in singing. Since the last inspection standards have fallen and are no longer high, nor is progress good. This is largely because music does not pervade the life of the school and teachers' subject knowledge is not of a high level. Staff miss numerous opportunities to use music in a range of interesting and imaginative ways in assemblies, in daily activities, special activities and other areas of school life.

166. Pupils' achievement and the quality of their learning is very broadly satisfactory overall but is limited by the relatively low proportion of time available to create, develop and record musical ideas through composing and performing pupils' own pieces of music at more than a basic level. Similarly there are very few well organised opportunities to appraise a range of different types of music, and musical appreciation is barely adequate. There is no record in the sample of pupils' work of any work in music having taken place. Whilst musical activities undoubtedly do take place on a regular basis these are mainly singing practices. There is no system to collect together work in composing or appraising music into a record that moves through the school with pupils and this makes it difficult for teachers to match the level of work to the pupils' prior learning.

167. By the end of both key stages pupils sing to a satisfactory standard and older pupils have some understanding of terminology including 'ostinato' and 'drone'. In Year 1 they develop a satisfactory awareness of musical phrasing by practising long and short sounds and they can sing, clap and make suitable hand movements to a range of songs including *This Old Man*. A small number of higher attaining pupils sing their response when the teacher sings a question including their name. In Year 1 and 2 pupils follow pictorial symbols or simple musical scores to emphasise the length of notes. Most compose very simple musical phrases using a suitable range of percussion instruments. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to perform these extremely basic pieces of music with their own conductors to their classmates.

168. In the junior stage pupils make generally satisfactory progress in some areas of music. In Year 4 pupils attempt to sing songs in unison and practise keeping to a steady beat with varying success. They look at rhythmic patterns and clap or tap to a beat with reasonable accuracy. Pupils in Year 6 sing simple rounds but are not very familiar with the words of such songs as *Frere Jacques* and this limits the progress of some lower attaining pupils. Pupils who have additional musical tuition with brass instruments make better progress because of the much higher level of musical expertise of a visiting peripatetic music teacher.

169. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The main strengths are in the good management of pupils that ensures that most lessons are conducted in an orderly manner where staff appreciate the efforts of pupils. Teachers use appropriate musical vocabulary and planning is satisfactory. Peripatetic teachers have good subject knowledge and impart their skills to the pupils well. Whilst the teaching of music is satisfactory overall, few teachers have good subject knowledge and most are dependent upon the skills of an experienced pianist to boost the quality of teaching. Many opportunities are missed to develop musical understanding and appreciation throughout the school. For instance, no music was played in most of the assemblies observed. No tapes or recorded music were used for pupils to sing to and this limits pupils' experiences of a wide range of musical styles and hampers the progress they make. This lack of music in school also serves to make the learning environment at some acts of collective worship sterile and uninspiring and does not build a spiritual element into such activities.

170. There has been only very limited in-service training in the subject in recent years and some teaching lacks sufficient knowledge, pace or enthusiasm to really motivate the pupils. Whilst teachers plan lessons thoroughly, at times they lack the understanding of exactly what the pupils need to do to improve or how to move the pupils on in their learning. Teachers make good use of praise to motivate the pupils but evaluation of performance is underdeveloped. Pupils do not often receive informed criticism and specific information about how to improve their singing or musical performance.

171. Pupils' attitudes to music are good; most involve themselves enthusiastically in lessons. Younger pupils respond positively to teaching staff and most try quite hard to improve their work. A small minority of pupils behave inappropriately in Year 4 and this affects the learning of other pupils.

172. The music co-ordinator oversees the curriculum and gives advice to colleagues but has few opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The time allocation for the subject is not used well and this results in an imbalance in the different aspects of the musical curriculum. The school offers some additional brass tuition in lesson time but unusually there are no arrangements for extra-curricular music clubs, tuition or choir to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. There are relatively few performances for parents to enjoy and parents note the lack of a range of musical activities with disappointment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

173. Pupils reach standards in physical education which are expected for their ages at seven and eleven. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The majority of pupils achieve appropriately. These judgements are similar to those reported in the previous inspection.

174. Pupils begin to develop a satisfactory knowledge of how exercise affects their bodies; this was clearly noted in a Year 1 lesson when the teacher said 'Tell me what is happening to your bodies?' Pupils learn how to bounce balls and higher attaining pupils manage to do this whilst moving backwards and forwards. By the end of the infant stage, pupils demonstrate sound control of movement and balance as they use dance to tell a story. There was good consolidation of historical facts and use of music as pupils relived the story of the Battle of Hastings.

175. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to swim. Records show that the majority of pupils achieve the expected distance of 25 metres during their swimming course in school. However, approximately one third of each class do not. There are no opportunities for these pupils to continue to develop their swimming skills because of financial restraints, but the school is wisely considering the implications of this decision in the light of currently generous funding. Pupils in Year 3 show sound development of skills needed to play hockey and begin to work well together as a team. In Year 4 pupils continue to build on skills in dance activities. However, learning was unsatisfactory when the teacher did not promote listening skills and did not develop the quality of movement effectively during one lesson. These weaknesses in teaching hinder progress.

176. Planning and discussions with pupils show that in Years 5 and 6 pupils continue to develop skills in all aspects of physical education although it was not possible to observe work in all areas. They work through units from the new national guidelines, which cover gymnastics, athletics, dance, outdoor and adventurous activities, and games.

177. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. In a successful lesson seen in Year 2, the lesson was well thought out and skills, knowledge and understanding were reinforced consistently. The teacher had high expectations

regarding behaviour and listening to instructions. Learning objectives were carefully and cleverly linked to reinforce ideas taught in other subjects. One lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not develop satisfactory listening skills; she allowed pupils to mutter whilst she was giving instructions and did not insist on high enough standards of work. There were too few opportunities for pupils to develop the quality of their movement by stopping and looking at good examples within the lesson. Lessons are generally satisfactorily planned, and teachers develop good relationships with the pupils. This was particularly noticed in a Year 3 lesson where enthusiastic pupils playing hockey participated well as they worked well together as a team. Most listen well to instructions, generally work together and support each other in all activities.

178. The subject is satisfactorily led; however, there have been no opportunities to monitor the variations in teaching throughout the school. The quality and amount of small apparatus is satisfactory but some gymnastic apparatus is old and in the process of being replaced. The whole school was recently involved in an 'Olympic Day', which was a fund-raising event for physical education equipment. This day linked well with skills and knowledge pupils had gained in geography and music as they identified flags from around the world and moved in a procession around the school. Some parents have expressed a wish for more competitive sports and a greater number and range of extra-curricular activities. There are opportunities for pupils to play mixed football after school but few other opportunities. Accommodation is good for physical education lessons and consists of a spacious hall and a large playground and field.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. By the end of both key stages the pupils attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The achievement of most pupils is appropriate to their level of ability. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make generally good progress in using their knowledge of different Bible stories and faiths in a range of appropriate activities. This is epitomised when in a whole school assembly pupils are able to offer ideas of what the story of David and Goliath represents. The school makes good use of theatre groups who reinforce concepts about Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism, which the pupils have studied in religious education lessons.

180. At the age of seven pupils have satisfactory awareness that there are at least three world religions and know about some of the features and stories associated with Christianity and Judaism. They make generally good progress in learning about special books and special places of worship. Pupils recognise how important their family is to them and identify some things they can do to help and care for their family. They study with interest the story of Joseph and his amazing coat. They recognise some of the main features of an Anglican Church, a Jewish synagogue and a Sikh Gurdwara. In Year 1 pupils make good progress in their awareness of the beauty of the world around them and in how they have changed since they were babies. They understand some parts of the story of the Good Samaritan and other Bible stories and recognise whether some well-known stories are from the Old or New Testament.

181. Progress at the beginning of the junior stage is satisfactory and in Years 5 and 6 progress is good because older pupils develop a good level of understanding of a range of religious beliefs and are able to use this knowledge in discussions. At the beginning of the junior stage pupils discuss and write about friendship and why they are friends with some people but not others and they learn factual information about aspects of life in China. However, whilst these activities are of interest to the pupils, the sample of work indicates to some extent an emphasis on everyday life rather than on religious festivals or beliefs. In

Year 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in knowing about Christianity and of the life of Jesus.

182. Pupils in Year 5 often make good progress and are interested in the study of the Jewish religion and in celebrations in other religions. By the end of the junior stage pupils have a sound knowledge base of the main features of several different religions and recognise and discuss the use of some Jewish artefacts. They are aware of symbolism related to different religions. Although there is only limited recording of what the pupils know and have found out in Year 6, subject planning indicates a good range of activities linked to drama and discussion, and pupils in Year 6 make good progress. Pupils can often articulate their own thoughts and ideas about religion and the place of religion in the lives of believers. The overall quality of learning of most pupils in each key stage is predominantly good and some higher attaining pupils achieve well.

183. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and listen well to stories. They are enthusiastic when they talk about artefacts. Some younger pupils express a particular interest in finding out more about different places of worship that they have seen in the locality. Pupils concentrate well. Those in Year 6 ask questions in lessons to clarify their own understanding and show interest in the use of religious artefacts. The discussions of the older pupils are sensible and show a growing maturity in their understanding of the importance of belief in the lives of many people.

184. The quality of teaching is mostly good across both key stages and teachers' subject knowledge is often good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of a range of faiths and make good use of artefacts to promote both recognition and discussion about their uses and significance. There is a suitable range of work offered, and, in some classes teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in discussions and compare and contrast what they know about different religions. There are opportunities to link work to personal experiences and for pupils to make their own responses especially in Year 6. Where these opportunities exist good progress is made.

185. A relative weakness in the further development of standards is that teaching in some activities including in Years 3 and 4 often involves the use of worksheets requiring little more than the filling in of missing words. This limits the quality of pupils' learning and the development of writing skills, and progress is not always as good as it is in more open-ended activities. The marking of work is very variable and in some classes there is little or no evidence of teachers indicating to pupils whether their responses are accurate or how they could improve their work. This does not always provide an appropriate level of challenge for higher or lower attaining pupils or help to clarify if pupils are confused about the different aspects of the religions that they study. Quite a lot of the pupils' work is undated and this makes it difficult to assess whether learning is continuous and progressive

186. To a large extent curriculum coverage remains similar to that in the first inspection and the school makes good attempts to extend the pupils' understanding of religions beyond their own experiences. There is a good range of visits and visitors to the school who talk about their beliefs and this is a good strategy to interest the pupils in the ideals of others. Whilst there has been a slight fall from the standards seen in the first inspection of the school this is because occasionally the planning of work lacks a sharp focus on exactly what the pupils are to learn.

187. As there is only limited monitoring of planning, teaching and learning in the subject the newly appointed subject co-ordinator has not been able to establish current strengths and weaknesses in provision. Although the scheme of work identifies opportunities for assessment this is not yet in place to ensure progression of knowledge and an appropriate development of skills. Because there is little assessment or direct monitoring of planning,

teaching and learning in the school development in the subject has been limited. There has been little in-service training to help staff make full use of recent national guidelines in the subject.