

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST. MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kingswinford

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103837

Headteacher: Brian Jones

Reporting inspector: Michael Best  
10413

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 193254

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                       |
| School category:             | Voluntary controlled                          |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4-11 years                                    |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| <br>                         |   |
| School address:              | Queen Street<br>Kingswinford<br>West Midlands |
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| <br>                         |   |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                                |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Rev Canon J Lungley                           |
| <br>                         |   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 17 <sup>th</sup> March 1997                   |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members              |                         | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Michael Best<br>10413     | Registered<br>inspector | Mathematics  | Characteristics of the school<br>The school's results and pupils' achievements<br>How well pupils are taught<br>How well the school is led and managed<br>What the school should do to improve further |
| Patricia Edwards<br>10965 | Lay inspector           | -  | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well the school cares for its pupils<br>How well the school works in partnership with parents  |
| Trudy Cotton<br>3751      | Team inspector          | English<br>Foundation Stage<br>Special educational needs<br>English as an additional language<br>Equality of opportunity | -  |
| Robert Isaac<br>23080     | Team inspector          | Information and communication technology<br>Geography<br>History<br>Religious education                                  | The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils   |
| Vivienne Wilson<br>25775  | Team inspector          | Science<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Physical education  | -  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Church of England Primary school is situated in Kingswinford on the edge of the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley. The school draws the majority of its pupils from a mixture of private and rented homes in the immediate area. There are also a number of pupils who attend the school from other parts of the borough. Over a third of the pupils in the junior classes have joined the school other than in the Reception class, the majority since the age of 7 years. There are currently 276 pupils on roll, 129 girls and 147 boys, aged between 4 and 11 years of age, all of whom attend on a full-time basis. The school is about the same size as most other primary schools in England. The promotion, retirement and ill health of key staff is currently having a significant impact on the school's work. Two of the ten classes have temporary teaching arrangements.

Numbers have increased since the time of the last inspection. There are currently 20 children in the Reception year. Attainment on entry to the school is above and many show attainment well above that found nationally. Fourteen pupils (5 per cent) have free school meals, which is well below the national average. Fifty-five pupils (20 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational need, which is similar to the national average. Of these, 12 pupils (5 per cent) on the register are at Stage 3 or above of the Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>; they have differing learning and behavioural needs. Four pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Fourteen pupils (6 per cent) speak English as an additional language but none are at the early stages of learning English.

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

This is a caring school that recognises its shortcomings and is working hard to address these. Improvements are evident and standards are rising. The quality of a high proportion of both teaching and learning is good. The attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils are good. The school provides a supportive and caring learning environment. Its commitment to improvement is good and its capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The school is working hard to raise standards in Year 2, particularly for those pupils who learn at faster rates. Standards in Year 6 are similar to the national average. The school has experienced considerable challenges since it was last inspected. These relate, in particular, to the learning and behavioural needs of the pupils it has admitted and to the effects of staff absence and changes. These are still having an impact on what it can achieve in the short-term. The leadership and management provided by key staff, some of whom are only recently in post, are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> is of high quality.
- The school highly values pupils' individual contributions.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs.
- The headteacher and staff are committed and determined to raise standards.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly for the more able pupils.
- The way in which the school manages pupils with challenging behavioural needs.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The rigour with which the work of the school is monitored and evaluated by the senior management team and governing body.

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

<sup>1</sup> The Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. Pupils at Stage 5 have a statement which details their needs and the support provided for them.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage begins at the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. It has made satisfactory progress in the period since the last inspection in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Teachers' planning now relates to attainment levels of the National Curriculum. It successfully outlines what is to be learnt in lessons. Learning outcomes are now shared with pupils. Procedures are in place for the more consistent and rigorous monitoring of standards of attainment and quality of education. This is being effective in raising standards although more work still needs to be done in order that standards can rise at least in line with the national trend. Improvements in the gathering and application of assessment information are evident. The match of work to pupils' needs is improved, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have not risen in line with the national trend. This must, however, be viewed in relation to the influx of pupils who have joined the school in this key stage, many of whom have made at least satisfactory and often good progress in their time in the school. The school is aware that it cannot be complacent. Its efforts at addressing these issues have been thwarted by staffing difficulties and by the challenges presented by a small but significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties. At the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils gaining the levels expected for pupils at this stage has improved overall but improvement in the proportion gaining the higher levels has been slower. The school has not, historically, responded rapidly enough to its changing circumstances. It has now recognised that this is a priority for development and has put in place strategies to deal with the issues.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | Compared with |      |      |                 | Key   |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
|                 | All schools   |      |      | Similar schools |   |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |   |
| English         | C             | C    | C    | C               | Well above average A<br>Above average B<br>Average C<br>Below average D<br>Well below average E |
| Mathematics     | B             | C    | C    | C               |   |
| Science         | A             | B    | C    | C               |   |

Comparative results for the 2001 tests and assessments were not available at the time of the inspection. The above table shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those achieved by all primary schools in England. The comparison with similar schools is based on pupils' free school meal entitlement. This is only one of a number of factors affecting this school.

Children's skills when they enter the Reception year are generally above average. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the vast majority of children achieve all the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup> in the six areas of learning. Results at the end of Year 2 are, over time, improving as the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels increases. Historically these results have been too low and pupils have not made the progress of which the school's own data showed them to be capable.

Inspection findings indicate that children make good progress in the reception class. Pupils in the infant and younger junior classes now make good progress. In the older junior classes, progress is far more variable. It is satisfactory overall. The disaffection of a small but significant minority of pupils is having an effect on the progress achievable by the vast majority of pupils. This situation is made worse by staffing difficulties.

Although just below average, the standards achieved by pupils in literacy are improving as a result of the more rigorous approaches recently introduced for the teaching of phonics and writing. Number skills are, for the majority of pupils, good but their application of these and other mathematical knowledge to problem-solving situations is weaker. Scientific knowledge is satisfactory but pupils have limited opportunities to independently plan, evaluate and interpret their investigative work.

<sup>3</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the six areas of learning (see previous footnote). There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

Standards are similar to those expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In information and communication technology, standards are above those expected in Year 2 and similar to those expected in Year 6. Attainment in religious education in Years 2 and 6 is similar to that outlined in the locally agreed syllabus.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are interested in their work. They enjoy coming to school and talk about their work with enthusiasm. A small but significant minority of pupils are poorly placed to value or partake in their own education. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Satisfactory overall. In the majority of lessons it is good or very good but a significant amount of challenging behaviour by a significant minority of pupils is evident in some classes and in the playgrounds.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Satisfactory overall. For the majority of pupils, relationships with each other and with adults are open and friendly.   |
| Attendance                             | Good. Above average. The majority of pupils arrive punctually.   |

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6  |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Quality of teaching    | Very good | Good        | Satisfactory |

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

The overall quality of teaching seen in the school during the inspection is good. This is making an important contribution to the school's work to raise standards. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work for the academic year shows good development throughout that period. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons seen. It was good or better in over half the lessons observed. Inspectors observed all teachers, including temporary and supply teachers. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good in English, mathematics, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. In science, art and music it is satisfactory. It was not possible to see enough lessons to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in design and technology.

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children are keen to learn both in school and at home. The learning atmosphere is good and relationships are good. Good teaching is evident in most subjects of the curriculum. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) is good. In Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) the quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. This very good and excellent teaching inspires pupils to work hard and achieve high standards. Working relationships are good and the vast majority of pupils are keen to learn. In literacy and numeracy teachers plan effectively for the needs of pupils who learn at different rates. This practice is less secure in other subjects. Lessons usually move at a good pace.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum             | The Foundation Stage curriculum is of high quality. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Literacy and numeracy strategies are established.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Pupils with physical needs are well supported but there is insufficient support available for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Some individual education plan targets are too general or vague. |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Satisfactory. All pupils have full access to the school's curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage are settling in well and communicate clearly.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory. The planned provision for social and moral development is good; for spiritual and cultural education it is satisfactory. There are some good examples of pupils' spiritual development but overall, insufficient time is made across the curriculum for reflection. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Satisfactory. The school works hard to provide a caring and supportive environment. Staff know the pupils well but many have not had the training to deal with pupils who have particularly challenging needs.  |

The school welcomes parents and encourages their involvement in the work of the school. Parents' involvement with the school is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory. The school is in a period of transition following staffing changes. The school has made every effort to address its staffing difficulties. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school and has the support of staff. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Satisfactory. Statutory duties are met. Governors are supportive of the school but rely heavily on the headteacher to guide them. The school's aims do not refer to its Church foundation.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Satisfactory. The school is aware of its shortcomings but has not always responded quickly enough to its changing circumstances.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Satisfactory. Priorities are linked to the budget. The school seeks to apply the principles of 'best value' to its purchases.  |

Apart from the hatted classroom, the school's accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory. There are insufficient numbers of support staff to meet the needs of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties.

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

Twenty-five parents attended a meeting before the inspection. Sixty (22 per cent) returned questionnaires.

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ethos of the school.</li> <li>Their children like school.</li> <li>Teaching is good.</li> <li>The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more consistent approach to homework.</li> <li>A minority of parents think the school does not work closely with them or keep them well informed about progress.</li> <li>The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul> |

In both the questionnaires and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents expressed a diverse range of views and opinions. A number of parents were concerned about the disruption caused in the school by a small minority of disaffected pupils. Inspectors share their concern. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments regarding the school's development of pupils' attitudes and maturity. There are some inconsistencies with the setting of homework that the school is seeking to address. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and there are appropriate arrangements made for discussing pupils' progress. Parents are welcome in school at any time.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1. Simple tests given to children when they first enter the reception class show that their attainment is above that expected for their ages. Personal, social and emotional development and language, and communication skills are particularly good, whilst skills with reading and mathematics are average.**
- 2. The findings of this inspection indicate that children in the Foundation Stage<sup>4</sup> achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>5</sup> by the start of Year 1 in each of the six areas of learning. Many exceed them in one or more areas of learning. Good use of ongoing checks and assessment help to build up a clear picture of children's achievements and help to track their progress through the stepping stones for learning. Children make good progress in their acquisition of basic skills. They make very good progress in communication, language and literacy development and in their personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in their mathematical and physical development and in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world. In their creative development they make satisfactory progress.**
3. Inspection evidence shows standards in speaking and listening are similar to those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6. In reading, standards in these year groups are just below average. More able pupils are making progress and reach the higher levels in their reading but less competent readers have too few strategies to help them find out the meaning of words. The learning targets for pupils at Stage 2 of the special educational needs Code of Practice are not focused clearly enough on the skills pupils need to learn.
4. Standards in writing are improving but remain below the national averages in Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, teachers now encourage pupils to experiment more with what they want to write. Pupils have a growing awareness of the correct use of grammar and punctuation. They are becoming more confident and independent in their writing. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' expectation of what pupils write have not, in the past, been high enough. They still do not write enough or shape, read through and improve their own work. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to write at length and for a wide range of different purposes across the curriculum.
5. There are two contributory factors to the recent improvements in reading and writing evident in the inspection. Firstly, the National Literacy Strategy has provided a more structured framework for teachers to develop literacy in the school and, following intensive work by the literacy co-ordinator and senior management team, teachers' expectations have been significantly raised. Secondly, the school has acknowledged that its former practices in teaching reading and writing were flawed and has taken appropriate action.
- 6. Standards in literacy are starting to rise because the basic skills in English are**

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<sup>4</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

<sup>5</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the six areas of learning (see previous footnote). There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

**being taught much more thoroughly. Some very challenging teaching is raising pupils' own expectations and interest.**

7. **In mathematics, standards seen during the inspection are similar to those found nationally levels in Years 2 and 6. The school has traditionally focused its teaching on number work and pupils' skills in basic computation are good. The National Numeracy Strategy is being successfully implemented. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work over the last twelve months shows the impact of in-service training and staff development.**
8. **Pupils' numeracy skills are developing satisfactorily. They enjoy mental mathematics and show speed and accuracy in their mental calculations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape and space and of measures is satisfactory. Proficiency with pencil and paper calculations and skills in problem solving are less consistently developed because the provision made by teachers is not consistent. As a result, standards in applying and using mathematics, whilst broadly satisfactory, are not secure enough to enable pupils to achieve higher standards.**
9. In science, inspection findings show that standards are similar to those found nationally in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are sound. However, over time there is limited recording in pupils' notebooks of individual preliminary work in planning their experiments and in making predictions as to the likely outcome of their investigative work. Because much of the thinking behind setting up an investigation has been undertaken as a teacher-directed activity, many pupils have difficulty in drawing their own conclusions and inferences from what they have learnt. The school's recent decision to abandon its previous practice of teaching science as part of a topic approach, in favour of dedicated science lessons, is successfully bringing about an improvement in standards.
10. In the 2000 National Curriculum statutory tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 (the end of Key Stage 1<sup>6</sup>) results in comparison with all other primary schools<sup>7</sup> were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Although 84 per cent of pupils reached or exceeded the level expected at this age in reading, fewer than could be expected reached the higher levels. Similarly, although 91 per cent reached the national standard in writing, the majority did not achieve the higher levels that could be expected. When compared with schools in similar contexts results were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science in 2000 were also below average compared with all schools.
11. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests became available during the inspection<sup>8</sup>. These show some improvement, overall, upon the results achieved in 2000, particularly in the proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels.
12. In the 2000 National Curriculum statutory tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 (the end of Key Stage 2<sup>9</sup>) results, in comparison with all schools, were similar to those achieved nationally in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, these results were average in English, in mathematics and science.

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<sup>6</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, are expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

<sup>7</sup> National Curriculum test and assessment results are compared with the national averages and schools in similar contexts at the ages of 7 and 11 years. The comparison with the national averages is with all schools in England. The comparison with similar schools is based on the proportion of pupils having free school meals. It does not take into account pupils' ethnic background or their attainment on entry to school. The similar school context is therefore one of a number of comparators.

<sup>8</sup> Although the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests were available, the national comparators were not. Comparison therefore has to be made with the 2000 national averages.

<sup>9</sup> At Key Stage 2 the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

13. The 2001 results show that the proportion of pupils reaching the standard expected for this age has remained the same in English and science and improved in mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels has declined in 2001 compared with 2000 in English, mathematics and science but, in comparison with previous results, this shows improvement.
14. For many pupils in the 2001 Year 6 group, these results indicate good progress. To a certain extent, this confirms that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not, historically, made the best possible progress. Comparing the achievements of all pupils at the end of Year 2 over time, pupils in this school have been nearly one term behind the national average in reading and mathematics and half a term behind the national average in writing.
15. Assessments of children when they enter the Reception class indicate that they have the potential to achieve above average standards. This is not reflected in the test results at the end of Year 6. Comparing the achievements of all pupils at the end of Year 6 over time, pupils are one term ahead of the national average in science and just ahead of the national average in English and mathematics. Over time, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have stayed reasonably constant whilst, nationally, results have risen.
16. Caution needs to be exercised when making such comparisons. In recent years, the school has admitted an increasing number of pupils into Years 3 to 6. Many of these pupils come from outside the school's immediate area and have learning or behavioural difficulties. They have joined the school for a 'Fresh Start'. At present, nearly a third of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 have joined the school other than at the usual time. In the present Years 5 and 6, nearly half the pupils have come from other schools. This is much higher than that found in the majority of schools.
17. The progress made by these pupils varies with their attitudes to learning. This was particularly evident in some lessons seen in Year 6 classes where teachers worked very hard to engage and maintain pupils' interest and to challenge them to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The school's efforts to be inclusive by taking in such a proportion of pupils with challenging needs are, at times, at the expense of the achievement of the majority.
18. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above that expected nationally in Year 2. Some areas of the information and communication technology curriculum are not fully developed and attainment in Year 6 is therefore only satisfactory overall at this age. Opportunities for applying these skills across the curriculum are yet to be fully realised but the achievement in the use, for example, of the Internet, shows the potential for improvement.
19. **Standards are similar to those expected in Years 2 and 6 in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, art and design, music and physical education. By Year 6, the majority of pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements in swimming. Attainment in religious education in Years 2 and 6 is similar to that outlined in the locally agreed syllabus.**
20. **In these subjects, and in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, inspection evidence indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are rising through the implementation of good curricular plans and as a result of teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve being significantly raised.**
21. **There is no doubt that the school's difficulties in replacing staff who have retired or fallen ill has affected some pupils' progress. One group of Year 6 pupils has been**

**taught by a large number of temporary teachers in the past year or so. Indeed, in the first four weeks of this term they have been taught by four teachers. The school is doing its best to minimise the ongoing effects of this. As a result, however, the deputy headteacher's planned programme of overhaul of the special educational needs provision has had to be placed on hold whilst she teaches this class. This knock-on effect is a cause for concern, particularly for those pupils whose individual education plans need to be revised.**

22. Where pupils are at Stage 3 or higher of the Code of Practice, teachers and classroom assistants successfully use pupils' individual learning targets to guide their learning in lessons. This enables pupils to achieve well in relation to the targets set for their learning in their individual education plans. Help in the classroom, particularly for those with physical needs, is well focused.
23. Individual education plans for pupils on Stage 2 of the Code of Practice are invariably vague or general and do not identify small enough steps in learning for pupils to make steady progress. The school has recognised this deficiency and planned appropriate action.
24. A small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. None of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Throughout the school, they make similar progress to other pupils.
25. **Inspection findings indicate that there is not a significantly large difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Analyses of statutory test results show that, over time, boys and girls in Year 6 made broadly similar progress in English and science. In mathematics, boys have traditionally outperformed girls by just over one term. At the end of Year 2, boys have lagged behind the girls in reading, writing and mathematics by over a term.**
26. **In conjunction with the local education authority, the school sets targets for pupils to achieve by the end of Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics. The targets, which were set some time ago, are not sufficiently challenging and are due to be revised.**
27. **At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress was satisfactory. Standards were judged to be similar to national averages in English and mathematics and above average in science at the end of Years 2 and 6. In design and technology and religious education attainment was above the expected levels in Years 2 and 6. In all other subjects, attainment was similar to that expected nationally at these ages.**

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

28. Throughout the school the vast majority of pupils' attitudes to school and interest in their work are good. The majority of parents are happy with their children's attitudes to school and feel they are encouraged to behave well and grown in maturity.
29. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and talk about their work with enthusiasm. They respond well and show interest in the activities provided. They sustain good levels of concentration. Children at the Foundation Stage quickly settle into the school routines. They enjoy their work and get on well with each other. For example, reception age children talking about the ingredients for a 'giant stew' were eager to offer their own suggestions and valued each other's contributions.

30. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was satisfactory overall. In most lessons, it was good or very good. However, a significant amount of challenging behaviour by a minority of pupils was noted in some classes and in the playgrounds. Several older pupils have less positive attitudes than the majority. A number of these pupils are recognised as having special needs.
31. Playtimes and lunchtimes are not always pleasant social occasions where pupils play well together and a significant amount of unacceptable behaviour, such as martial arts type games, was observed. Pupils report that incidents involving intimidation occur frequently. There were five fixed period exclusions in the last reporting year involving three boys, two of whom have now left the school.
32. Relationships between the majority of pupils are open and friendly and they feel comfortable when chatting to teachers about their work and personal issues. Pupils are honest and trustworthy. However, a small number of older pupils are not providing good role models in their relationships with other members of the school community.
33. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility. There is a school council with two elected members from Year 3 to Year 6. Pupils are able to use their initiative and examples of learning researched at home were observed during the inspection.
34. Attendance is good at 95 per cent and was above the national average for the last reporting year. However, the number of holidays taken during term time is increasing. The majority of pupils arrive punctually for school allowing lessons to start on time and continue without interruption.

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

35. Taking all the available evidence into account, the quality of teaching in the school is good. Teachers are working hard to implement a broad and balanced curriculum. In the last year or so, their expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen with the implementation of more rigorous schemes of work and the introduction of new teaching strategies and materials. Teachers' commitment and hard work is making a significant contribution to the drive to raise standards.
36. Seventy lessons or part lessons were observed during the inspection. In 99 per cent of these teaching was satisfactory or better. Teaching was good in 59 per cent of the lessons seen and very good in 15 per cent. Two excellent lessons (3 per cent) were observed. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen but no poor teaching was observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained.
37. In the last year, the school has experienced staffing difficulties due to teachers leaving on promotion and retirement or absent through ill health. Some of these issues are still facing the school. At the time of the inspection, two classes – one in Year 5, the other in Year 6 – were without permanent teachers. In line with the guidance issued by Ofsted, all teachers were observed but, in making judgements, appropriate account is taken of the school's difficulties in order not to distort the typical pattern of teaching in the school.
38. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children are keen to learn and quickly settle into the established routines of the Reception class. They make good progress in developing skills across the six areas of learning leading to the Early Learning Goals. High quality teaching in the development of communication and language provides children with a really good basis for the development of their literacy skills.

39. The learning environment in the Foundation Stage is good and the staff provide a comprehensive range of activities that sustain and motivate children's interest. Relationships are particularly strong between adults and children and this effectively promotes children's personal, social and emotional development. Children readily help each other and willingly take responsibility.
40. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good in English, mathematics, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. In science, art and music it is satisfactory. It was not possible to see enough lessons to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in design and technology.
41. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) is good. Good teaching is evident in most subjects of the curriculum. Working relationships are strong and pupils are keen to learn. In literacy and numeracy, which are taught in groups set by prior attainment, teachers plan effectively for the needs of pupils who learn at different rates. Lessons usually move at a good pace and pupils, including those who have demanding behavioural needs, are effectively managed.
42. In Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) the quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Overall, it is satisfactory. Across these year groups, good teaching is evident in English, mathematics, art and design, history, information and communication technology, geography, music and religious education. Some very good and excellent teaching is evident in these year groups and this inspires pupils to work hard and achieve high standards.
43. In the other year groups, including those classes where temporary teaching arrangements are in place, teaching is satisfactory. Given some of the challenging behaviour exhibited by some of these older pupils, class management is secure. There are, however, some shortcomings in the quality of some teachers' planning and in matching work successfully to pupils' needs. Some pupils need considerable motivation to participate positively in lessons; their potential disaffection has an effect on their own learning as well as that of others.
44. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are high. Pupils approach their learning enthusiastically and work hard to apply themselves to the tasks they are given. This was particularly evident in a numeracy lesson in a mixed Years 3 and 4 class on measurement where pupils immersed themselves in their group challenges. In such lessons, pupils work hard to meet the high expectations their teachers have of their work and behaviour. This was evident, for example, in a geography lesson in the same class where the teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and well-timed delivery proved infectious to pupils' learning.
45. In a Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson, the teacher's very clear command of different learning strategies helped to move pupils' skills on. This focused their attention and gave them confidence through praising and supporting their efforts. Likewise, in the Reception class, very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn is well used to plan and provide learning opportunities that encourage them to 'have a go' and take some responsibility for their own learning. This was particularly effective in a lesson seen where children were deciding what the rules there should be in the King's Castle.
46. Teachers work hard to involve all pupils in lessons. They include in discussions pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have special educational needs. Teachers' use of questioning to test and develop skills and understanding is secure and most pupils are keen to answer.

47. The vast majority of teachers effectively share the learning objectives for the lessons with pupils. This helps pupils to identify what they are going to do and learn. They also review what has been taught at the end of lessons and reinforce key learning points.
48. In the most effective practice, teachers not only revisit those objectives towards the end of the lesson but also ask pupils how they know the objectives have been met. Where this was evident, for example in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, it was particularly effective; pupils' attention was engaged in the opening moments and they were kept on board during the lesson by references to the objectives. This meant that even the reluctant learners – of which there were some – maintained their involvement and were able to identify what they had achieved. This is having a positive effect on their learning.
49. The vast majority of lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils are keen to work hard. They are fully conversant with class routines and the expectations their teachers have of their behaviour. Nearly all pupils conduct themselves properly and teachers manage their learning effectively.
50. However, on occasions, a small minority of pupils – mainly in Year 6 but also in other year groups - disrupt the learning of others. This was illustrated in a literacy lesson where a classic poem by Walter de la Mere was being discussed. The initial reaction of some pupils was, "*Don't like this – there's not enough action*". Notwithstanding, the teacher persevered and succeeded in helping pupils to peel back the different layers of understanding by asking questions such as who?, what? and how?. By the end of the lesson the same pupils commented, "*This is hard but it's making me think*".
51. Teaching and learning for pupils with physical disabilities is good. Support staff encourage and help pupils to participate successfully in lessons. The targets in pupils' individual education plans for those at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice are clear and staff make appropriate use of these in their lessons. Targets for pupils at Stage 2 are often too vague or general and the individual education plans are of limited use.
52. Some teachers actively involve support staff in the planning process. This gives them a clear picture of their role and enables them to engage with pupils throughout lessons. As a result, pupils' learning is enhanced. In some classes, however, this practice is underdeveloped and staff have not had sufficient training to meet pupils' specific needs.
53. The overall standard of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Literacy and numeracy skills are carefully planned for and, in the vast majority of lessons, well taught. A lot of work has been undertaken by staff to improve the quality of their planning in these areas of the curriculum. This is why expectations are higher and standards are rising.
54. Teachers' planning for other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. Links between the longer term and shorter term planning are improving due to the adoption of new schemes of work which clearly outline what will be taught and when it will be taught. There are examples of good and purposeful planning evident in the school. Planning undertaken by temporary staff is not always of this standard.
55. Teachers' planning shows an appropriate awareness of how information and communication technology can be used to develop pupils' learning. In the best practice, teachers are identifying meaningful and specific opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology skills as, for example, a means of researching information in history or geography.
56. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, when comments are included, they help them to develop their work further. There is a school assessment policy in place to guide



teachers and appropriate use is made of assessment information to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.

57. Homework is used appropriately to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding outside the classroom. There have recently been some irregularities in the amount of homework set, but the school is aware of these and has taken appropriate action.

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

58. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Detailed long-term plans are in place which include all the areas of learning that should be taught to children. Lesson planning is detailed and children have access to a wide range of suitable activities and learning experiences. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the children in their care and the curriculum is effectively tailored to meet their differing needs. Children have good opportunities for physical activity in the outdoor accommodation.
59. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The quality and range of learning opportunities in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) are good and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2). All statutory requirements are met. Teachers have concentrated resources and staff effort on establishing a secure curriculum in English and mathematics. In this, the school has been successful. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been established and make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.
60. All the subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education are taught and sufficient time is allocated for each. Opportunities to extend and consolidate literacy and numeracy skills systematically through other subjects have not yet been fully identified. There is not enough opportunity, for example, for pupils to develop writing skills through their study of religious education.
61. All pupils for whom English is an additional language have full access to the school's curriculum. There are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. Children in the Foundation Stage are settling in well and communicate clearly.
62. The school aims to provide pupils with special education needs with full access to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with provision for physical needs are well supported by support staff and enabled to participate in all activities. In the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons, the provision made for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory overall. However, pupils with reading difficulties do not have any extra targeted provision to help them to improve. The targets set in pupils' individual education plans at Stage 2 are often too general or vague. This is unsatisfactory. In science and the non-core<sup>10</sup> subjects, work is less clearly planned for different levels of learning and so the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties is variable.
63. The provision for extra-curricular activities is sound. Teachers give up some of their own time to support activities and members of the local community also come into school to provide opportunities that enrich the curriculum for pupils. There are good links between the work in lessons and the extra-curricular activities. There is a large choir for musical activities and a small recorder group.
64. The school's membership of the Dudley Sportslink has enhanced pupils' access to a range of sports both within the school day and after normal hours. Pupils have also

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<sup>10</sup> National Curriculum core subjects are English, mathematics and science. The non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, information and communications technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

benefited from the school's involvement in European Community projects such as Dudley Challenge Europa.

65. The school's partnership with other schools in the area is satisfactory. This not only forges links, but also provides pupils with other positive role models. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is sound. A small number of parents actively support teachers and pupils in classes. The school has enjoyed visits from a local Christian group and has close contacts with the nearby church and an Initial Teacher Training institution. The latter has resulted in the collaboration between students and a teacher to create a school website. The school makes good use of the local environment, for example, for geographical studies.
66. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education, alcohol and drugs education.
67. At the time of the last inspection, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was judged to be very good. The school has not developed its provision sufficiently in the intervening years. Collective worship has been inspected concurrently by the diocesan authorities under Section 23 and parents have been provided with a separate report.
68. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In art and music lessons, spiritual development is encouraged. In lessons seen in religious education, good provision was made for meaningful reflection. Teachers encourage pupils to share their ideas and feelings, and respect and value them. However, across the curriculum, too few opportunities are planned.
69. The school's overall provision for pupils' moral development is good. It is promoted through the school's discipline policy backed up by the home-school agreement. Pupils have opportunities to negotiate their own class rules, which are regularly discussed and prominently displayed. Pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong and they are encouraged to make positive decisions about their conduct and attitude.
70. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss wider moral issues such as the recent terrorist attacks in the United States of America. The vast majority of pupils show a good level of respect for each other and adults and are happy to share in each other's achievements. A small but significant minority do not and are not readily influenced by the school's positive efforts to improve their attitudes.
71. The provision for pupils' social development is good overall. The school council meets weekly with the head teacher to discuss issues such as the proposed playground improvements and fund raising for charity. However, it is not yet organised along formal lines and only discusses issues as they arise. Older pupils gain from opportunities to support younger pupils in paired reading.
72. Pupils gain valuable experience from the suitable range of educational visits, welcoming visitors to the school and from links with elderly residents in the area. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities and help to organise music in assembly, act as litter pickers and classroom helpers. These experiences help them to identify with the values of other people and to develop a stronger sense of community with each other.
73. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. They are developing an understanding of the beliefs and cultures of other people through work in religious education and topics in other subjects such as geography, for example, the work on Kenya. Pupils learn to empathise with people of other times in history, for instance, when studying the Victorians.

74. Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions is extended through visits to places of interest such as Worcester Cathedral but there is insufficient provision made for developing pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity in modern day Britain.

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

75. The school has tried hard to maintain the caring environment and effective support for pupils found at the time of the previous inspection. The teachers know their pupils well, and work hard to care for their individual needs. The quiet, unassuming respect adults and the vast majority of pupils show for each other is an important contribution to the school's ethos.
76. The majority of parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children. They value the caring reputation of the school. The procedures for introducing the children and their parents to the school effectively ensure that new children settle quickly into the routines of school life. Teachers closely monitor pupils' personal development both formally through pupils' individual records of achievement and informally through discussion.
77. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are used consistently by staff. The school's discipline policy clearly identifies standards and expectations with a range of rewards and sanctions. However, there are insufficient strategies in place to deal with the minority of pupils who have a diverse range of behavioural difficulties particularly for those who have been admitted to the school for a fresh start. Issues related to bullying, intimidation and other unacceptable behaviour are monitored carefully through activities such as 'circle time'<sup>11</sup>. However, parents and pupils report that incidents arising are not always dealt with effectively by the rewards and sanctions used by staff.
78. Lunchtime supervisors are reliable, long serving and hardworking but they have little awareness of playground good practice and have received little training in behaviour management. The Behaviour Support Service has good links with the school and offers support and guidance to pupils, their parents and teachers alike. They visit some pupils where there is perceived to be a need most days.
79. The school has good procedures in place for monitoring attendance. Registers are called at the beginning of every session. Parents are regularly reminded of the need for punctuality and good attendance. The education welfare officer works closely with the school where there is considered to be a problem with attendance.
80. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. Procedures comply with those of the area child protection committee and staff are aware of these procedures. Regular training has been undertaken.
81. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and the necessary checks on equipment are carried out. Regular risk assessment is undertaken. The arrangements for first aid, the recording of accidents and informing parents are good. Lessons on sex education and drug awareness form part of the programme for personal, social and health education. This is well supported by outside agencies.
82. The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. Teachers' use of assessment information to inform their planning and to monitor and support pupils'

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<sup>11</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

academic progress is sound. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and contribute to the caring approach of the school.

83. The analysis of statutory and non-statutory test results by the school has become more detailed of late. The information now available provides a good basis for setting targets for individual pupils and for further raising teachers' expectations of what pupils know and can do. The school has appropriate systems in place to track pupils' academic progress and personal development. Individual pupil targets are now being set and, from this term, pupils, parents and teachers will discuss these together at parents' consultation evenings. This is a good initiative but further, more specific, analysis and evaluation is required to raise standards to highest levels.
84. The arrangements for assessing pupils with special educational need are unsatisfactory at Stage 2 of the Code of Practice. These pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the targets set for them in their individual education plans are too vague. The arrangements at Stage 3 and above are satisfactory.
85. Most teachers keep detailed and regular records of their assessments of pupils' progress. In the reception classes, teachers assess children's baseline attainments on entry to the school. In Year 2 and Year 6, teachers' assessments of pupils' work for national results are accurate when compared to the pupils' test results. The school also assesses pupils' progress by setting optional national tests in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5.
86. Assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage are good. Staff assess children's skills thoroughly on entry to reception and during everyday observations, recording their progress towards meeting the Early Learning Goals. They use the results of assessments and the baseline tests successfully to group children, monitor progress and to plan future lessons.
87. Assessment procedures are satisfactory for English and mathematics. The procedures to assess pupils' attainments in reading are sound. Pupils' reading ages are regularly measured by standardised tests throughout the whole school. Teachers thus have good means of assessing how well pupils achieve relative to their previous standards in reading. Analysis of these reading test results has revealed that standards are beginning to improve within the last year. Assessment in mathematics from year to year is accurate and consistent. It is based on an appropriate balance of observation, marking, focused assessments and commercial, standardised tests.
88. Teachers do not yet keep regular checklists of what pupils have done in information and communication technology or of how well they have achieved. However, many teachers set some reasonably accurate targets for improvement at the end of lessons.
89. The school uses sound assessment procedures in other subjects and keeps good records of these assessments in cohort record files. Teachers know the capabilities of pupils in their classes well and adapt their planning to take account of this knowledge.
90. The school has introduced some good means for pupils to assess their own progress, such as in class discussions, and through paired work, group reading and feedback sessions. These are good methods of adding further information to the school's knowledge of what it does and what it needs to do to improve. They are used in many classes and a range of subjects.

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

91. As found at the previous inspection, the school welcomes parents and encourages their involvement in the work of the school. Parents' involvement with the school is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
92. The quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory. Regular letters keep parents updated about the curriculum and items of interest. The prospectus and annual report to parents from the governing body contains useful information. Some parents expressed concern regarding the amount of information they receive on their children's progress. However, there are regular parent and teacher consultation meetings and pupils' annual progress reports are clear and informative on how children have progressed and suggest ways in which they might improve.
93. A minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concern that the school does not work closely with them. Inspection findings do not wholly support this view. Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers at any reasonable time and forms asking for parents' views are distributed with annual progress reports. As from this term's parent-teacher meeting, parents and their children will be able to discuss individual targets for improvement with teachers to help parents to play a full part in their children's learning.
94. All parents are encouraged to be directly involved in school and a significant number respond, for instance, by helping in class and on trips. Staff are appreciative of this assistance. The majority of parents are happy with the amount of homework their children receive and have readily signed the home-school agreement supporting this. However, there are some variations evident in the way in which class teachers implement the school's homework policy.
95. The Home-School Association organises fund raising and social events. These are well supported by parents and the community, enabling considerable funds to be raised in support of the school.

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

96. The quality of leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. Many staff have only recently assumed their present responsibilities and others are covering the responsibilities of absent or recently retired colleagues. Inspection evidence indicates that there is a clear capacity within the staff to move forward successfully. Although standards are starting to rise, much is only recently in place and there is still a great deal more to be achieved.
97. Throughout this period of transition, the headteacher has tried hard to maintain the much valued ethos of the school praised in the last inspection report. He has a clear vision for the school's development. He has striven to continue to provide the effective and caring leadership for the school that has secured its positive learning environment. In many ways, he has been successful and the vast majority of parents, including those who have criticisms of the school, say that it is the ethos of the school that has drawn them to it.
98. The headteacher has recognised that the abler pupils in the infant classes were not achieving the standards they were capable of and has taken appropriate steps to address this. Progress is being made, particularly with the introduction of a new phonics scheme and the methods used to teach writing. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are much higher and there has been a significant improvement in the past year in the quality of teachers' planning and delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

99. The deputy headteacher, who took up her appointment in January 2001, has been pivotal in helping to realise the headteacher's vision for the school. She has taken over the strategic responsibility for the management of special educational needs in the school. She is working hard to bring about closer links between the school's provision, its curricular provision and the provision made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Inspection evidence indicates that, historically, pupils' special educational needs have not been identified at an early enough stage.
100. Plans for the deputy headteacher to support pupils both individually and in classes have been thwarted by staffing difficulties and she has, at short notice, been required to take over responsibility for a Year 6 class. This is preventing the development of a vital area of the school's work. There have also been some changes in the management of individual subjects. Although some co-ordinators have only recently taken over responsibility for their subjects, they are providing positive guidance to their colleagues and demonstrate a willingness to raising standards.
101. Some of the shortcomings in the leadership and management of the school stem from the fact that the school has not responded quickly enough to the changes needed to cope with the new challenges it has faced. The school reports that there are a number of contributory factors to this; for example, the turnover of staff and the external restrictions in respect of the provision of support for pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties.
102. At present, a third of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 have joined the school other than at the usual starting time (that is, in the Reception class). In both the present Year 5 and Year 6 year groups, nearly half the pupils have joined from other schools. A significant number of these pupils have come to the school with learning and behavioural difficulties for a 'Fresh Start'. They have placed particular challenges on the school's established policies, procedures and practices.
103. The school has been, and continues to be, dogged by staffing issues stemming from teacher absence through ill health. It has faced difficulties in securing temporary and permanent staff following the retirement and departure, on promotion, of a number of key members of staff. Every effort has been made to ensure stability for pupils but circumstances beyond the school's control have not helped in this task. The school has indicated that one group of Year 6 pupils have been taught by at least 13 different teachers in just over a year. This has affected the progress made by pupils, a significant minority of whom already presented challenging learning and behavioural needs.
104. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has tried very hard to accommodate its challenging pupils. It has admitted pupils with known difficulties from within its immediate area and much further afield in the belief that the strong ethos of the school, implicit in the work and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils, will be a positive influence. In practice, too many such pupils have joined the school in too short a period and this has diluted the impact of these aims and values. It has also diverted the school's efforts and attention away from pupils already in the school who have particular and equally challenging needs.
105. A key factor in all this has been that appropriate and extensive training for teaching and support staff in order to help them cope better with the challenges they face has not been provided. As one member of the teaching staff commented to inspectors, *"We are trained and experienced in dealing with the needs of 95 per cent of the pupils in this school but it is that 5 per cent who are causing us the greatest of concern"*. At the present time, too much of the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's time has been spent in dealing with specific incidents rather than developing effective long-term support mechanisms.

106. The aims of the school are straightforward and are evident in its work. However, there is little mention in them of the school's Church foundation or much to differentiate this school from any other. Good working relationships between all members of the school community are at the heart of the school's ethos. The teaching and non-teaching staff are committed to the school and to raising standards. This is evident, for example, in the way in which they have taken on board much more rigorous planning to improve their delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of what the school stands for. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and want to learn.
107. Apart from incidents caused by a very small but significant proportion of pupils, the day-to-day routines of the school are smooth. Pupils' achievements are both valued and celebrated. The school as whole works hard to raise and maintain pupils' feelings of self-worth, particularly for those who find conformity hard to achieve. In the majority of lessons for the majority of the time, the learning environment is business-like and this makes a good contribution to the progress pupils make.
108. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Teachers' planning now relates to attainment levels of the National Curriculum. It successfully outlines what is to be learnt in lessons through clearly stated learning outcomes, which are now shared with pupils.
109. Procedures are now in place for the more consistent and rigorous monitoring of standards of attainment and quality of education. There is evidence, particularly in literacy and numeracy, that this is being effective in raising standards although more work still needs to be done in order that standards can rise at least in line with the national trend.
110. Comparison with all schools in England indicates that the rate of progress by pupils in Year 6 is similar to the average. This must, however, be viewed in relation to the influx of pupils who have joined the school in this key stage, many of whom have made at least satisfactory progress in their time in the school. The school is aware that it cannot be complacent but its efforts at addressing these issues have been thwarted by staffing difficulties and the challenges of a small but significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties.
111. At the end of Year 2, although the proportion of pupils gaining the level expected for pupils at the age of 7 years has improved overall, improvement in the proportions gaining the higher levels has been slower. The school has now recognised that this is a priority for development and has put in place strategies to deal with the issues.
112. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are being successfully implemented in the school. Much has been done in the last year to develop the rigour in teachers' planning and delivery. Observations of literacy and numeracy lessons demonstrate that this is effective as standards of teaching and learning are good.
113. The school has recently achieved significant improvements to the planning of the curriculum. All National Curriculum subjects are now planned on the basis of nationally available guidance. This, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, provides a firm basis for curriculum co-ordinators to undertake their management role. The headteacher undertakes the monitoring of teaching. He has systems in place to identify and address through in-service education and training areas for development both for individuals and the staff as a whole.
114. The governors are supportive of the work of the school. They rely heavily on the headteacher to help them in shaping the future direction of the school and to identify

where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. As a corporate group, they have a satisfactory overview of the work of the school. Many individual governors have a firm grasp of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They are keen and willing to help, bringing to the school experience gained in business and industry.

115. The governing body satisfactorily fulfils its statutory duties but, historically, has not been rigorous enough in calling upon the school to account for its performance. The role of the fully governing body in vigorously evaluating the work of the school is under developed.
116. The school is successfully implementing its performance management policy. All key dates have been met. The headteacher reports that teachers' objectives have successfully balanced individual needs and the priorities of the school.
117. The future development of the school is identified in the school's development plan. Its structure, which follows the local education authority's model, pays necessary attention to identifying costings, timescales, responsibilities and success criteria. There is provision for monitoring initiatives and for the governing body to evaluate the outcomes. It is, however, a very detailed document and the school's key priorities are not immediately apparent to the outsider reader.
118. Satisfactory use is made of new technologies in supporting the administration and management of the school. Appropriate safeguards are in place to protect data.
119. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. The school costs its spending decisions and makes appropriate use of the specific grants and provision available to it. The governing body has due regard to the proportion, and for the use, of budget surpluses. Financial management is sound. There are appropriate procedures in place for the school to track its income and expenditure. The school appropriately applies the principles of 'best value' to purchases. The targeting of spending for the benefit of pupils is satisfactory. The school reports that the recommendations made in the latest audit report are now in practice.
120. Parents' fund raising efforts make a much appreciated contribution to the provision of learning resources. The school reports that although its number of pupils has increased, the amount of money made available to it from the local education authority has fallen in the current financial year, requiring the use of budget surpluses from earlier periods to balance the budget.
121. The school's income from public funds is similar to the average for all primary schools in England. Taking all factors into account, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
122. There are sufficient, well-qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school gives good support to those new to the school or to teaching. The procedures to evaluate academic training courses and provide feedback to other staff help to raise standards. However, the school has had a high number of staff changes, due mainly to recruitment problems.
123. There are insufficient numbers of support staff to meet the needs of all pupils. Those who are in post make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Insufficient training is provided for some support staff, particularly lunchtime supervisors.
124. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, classrooms are of an appropriate size with suitable storage space. There are attractive displays celebrating pupils' achievements which support their self esteem well and provide an environment that is conducive to



learning. The school site is clean, tidy and well maintained by a hard working staff. The playgrounds and fields are spacious but when all the older pupils are confined to the one hard surface playground there is not enough space for them. Deficiencies in some teaching areas have been drawn to the attention of the governing body.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

125. The governing body, senior management and, where appropriate, the staff now need to:

(1) raise standards across the curriculum to enable pupils of all abilities to make the best possible progress, focusing in particular on the development of:

- (i) skills in reading and writing, particularly for those pupils who have difficulties;
- (ii) writing across the curriculum;
- (iii) pencil and paper skills and the wider application of investigative skills in mathematics;
- (iv) independently planning and conducting investigative work in science;

and by planning more effectively for the differing needs of pupils in science and the non-core subjects;

*(paragraphs 43, 51, 149-162, 163-178 and 179-189)*

(2) strengthen the provision made for pupils with special educational needs by:

- (i) ensuring that special needs are identified as soon as possible;
- (ii) providing a more consistent structure for supporting pupils with reading and writing difficulties;
- (iii) ensuring that the targets in pupils' individual education plans at Stage 2 are clear and indicate the necessary small steps to be taken in learning;
- (iv) increasing the expertise of teaching and support staff to deal with the diverse range of special educational needs within the school;

*(paragraphs 3, 21, 43, 99, 156, 159, 187, 191, 202 and 215)*

(3) improve standards of behaviour, particularly in the playground, by:

- (i) reviewing and developing existing policies in relation to the particular needs of pupils and seeing that the strategies identified for action are carried out;
- (ii) ensuring that there are sufficient staff with the necessary expertise and training both in classes and at lunchtime to support pupils' welfare and needs;
- (iii) ensuring that rewards and sanctions are fully effective in eliminating unacceptable behaviour;

*(paragraphs 30-31, 77-78, 99, 101-5, 110 and 123)*

(4) take a central role in driving up standards by:

- (i) taking all possible steps to establish staffing stability;
- (ii) more rigorously monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved in all aspects of the school's work and responding promptly to any shortcomings;
- (iii) evaluating the school's 'fresh start' initiative and taking appropriate action;
- (iv) being more pro-active in planning for change and then rigorously implementing strategies to address these plans;
- (v) more actively communicating the school's vision and the progress made towards achieving it to staff, parents, pupils and the wider community.

*(paragraphs 96-117)*

In addition, the following issue should also be addressed:

(5) revise the aims of the school to reflect more fully its church foundation.

*(paragraph 106)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 70 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 56 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 2         | 10        | 28   | 27           | 1              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 3         | 12        | 41   | 40           | 1              | 0    | 0         |

In two lessons, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching.

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | YR to Y6 |
|---|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 276      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 14       |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

| Special educational needs   | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 4       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 42      |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 10           |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 25           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 10           |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0.1 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 16   | 16    | 32    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 11      | 13      | 16          |
|   | Girls    | 16      | 16      | 16          |
|   | Total    | 27      | 29      | 32          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 84 (69) | 91 (78) | 100 (66)    |
|   | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 10      | 9           | 11      |
|   | Girls    | 15      | 16          | 16      |
|   | Total    | 25      | 25          | 27      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 78 (63) | 78 (66)     | 84 (78) |
|   | 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 (Year 6)

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 14   | 32    | 46    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 12      | 9           | 13      |
|   | Girls    | 25      | 22          | 29      |
|   | Total    | 37      | 31          | 42      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 80 (78) | 67 (78)     | 91 (89) |
|   | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69)     | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 6       | 7           | 8       |
|   | Girls    | 20      | 16          | 22      |
|   | Total    | 26      | 23          | 30      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 57 (69) | 51 (67)     | 65 (83) |
|   | 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                   | 4            |
| Indian                          | 10           |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 257          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

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

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

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 0            | 0         |
| Black – African heritage     | 0            | 0         |
| Black – other                | 0            | 0         |
| Indian                       | 0            | 0         |
| Pakistani                    | 0            | 0         |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            | 0         |
| Chinese                      | 0            | 0         |
| White                        | 5            | 0         |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0            | 0         |

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 12 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 22 |
| Average class size                       | 26 |

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

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 150 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Financial year                             | 2000/1  |
|  | £       |
| Total income                               | 533,516 |
| Total expenditure                          | 535,132 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2,012   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 10,420  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 8,804   |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years   | 4 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 1 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 21.7%

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 276 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 60  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 58             | 39            | 3                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 58             | 32            | 7                | 0                 | 3          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 40             | 45            | 15               | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 30             | 47            | 15               | 8                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 55             | 38            | 5                | 0                 | 2          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 37             | 38            | 18               | 7                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 62             | 26            | 12               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 62             | 33            | 5                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 32             | 45            | 23               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 43             | 35            | 14               | 3                 | 5          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 53             | 40            | 7                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 20             | 29            | 20               | 22                | 9          |

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

- A number of parents were concerned about the disruption caused in the school by a small minority of disaffected pupils.
- Parents value the school's caring ethos.
- There are some inconsistencies with the setting of homework that the school is seeking to address.

### Other issues raised by parents

In both the questionnaires and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents expressed a diverse range of views and opinions.

## **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**

126. Children start school either in September or January. At the time of the inspection, there were 20 full-time children, who started school in September, working in the Foundation Stage. Most children benefit from nursery and play group experiences and links between pre-school settings, home and school are strong. Parents play a vital part in this partnership. Learning in school is successfully built upon at home. The children are well settled and cared for and are very happy to come to school. Their enthusiasm for learning is a pleasure to see.
127. Provision is of a high standard. The staff team plans for a well-balanced and exciting range of experiences including class and group activities and follows the stepping stones for learning closely. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are achieving the Early Learning Goals and above in all areas of learning.
128. Teaching is very good. Children are encouraged to show initiative and to make choices about their own learning, as well as to work in guided experiences with the teacher. Relationships are a strength and, because children feel confident enough to experiment with their learning and try out new ideas, they make good progress. On occasions, creative experiences in art can be over-guided by teachers, limiting opportunities for the children's imaginative and personal creativity.
129. Results of simple tests at the start of the Foundation Stage show that attainment on entry is above average in all areas of experience. Personal, social and emotional development and language and communication skills are particularly good, but skills with reading and mathematics are only just above average. Good use of ongoing checks and assessments help to build up a clear picture of the children's achievement and track their progress through the stepping stones for learning.
130. There are few children from minority ethnic groups in the Foundation Stage and all understand English and so make similar progress to the rest of the class. At the time of the inspection, no children were identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Boys and girls work well together. They enjoy and experiment with a similar range of experiences.
131. Accommodation is well used and is appropriate for the children's learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

132. Children make very good progress with their personal, social and emotional development and achieve above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Staff successfully provide a calm and happy learning environment, where relationships between adults and children are very good. Children feel their contributions are really valued. They work hard because they are positive about themselves and their learning. Behaviour is very good. Children are clearly taught right from wrong and to care for living things. Often discussions in topics about plants and animals reflect the need to be kind to animals and to care for pets at home.
133. The children work well with each other and are confident to take initiatives. This is evident when the children share a story about a king and take turns in making suggestions for his visit to their class. They decide amicably on what is important in a list of rules for his castle, and help each other with ideas and instructions for making 'royal

puppets’.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

134. Children start school with above average communication and language skills. They make very good progress with their learning and are likely to achieve above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
135. Children’s good language and communication skills are of great benefit to their learning. They listen well and ask and answer questions confidently. The small number of children from minority ethnic groups communicate well in lessons.
136. Provision for the development of reading and writing is good. Teaching is of high quality. Staff look closely at ways in which children can experiment and develop their early writing and reading skills freely. Previously, writing experiences were too closely tied to using banks of words for support. Now children regularly write and record their own ideas and findings in everyday lessons. They understand that writing holds meaning and are beginning to use letters and simple words in their own writing. For instance, they experiment with writing letters of the alphabet, such as ‘c’, ‘k’ and ‘p’, and link them with their sounds; they list the ingredients needed to make cakes and write invitations to a class party. Children are developing control over the shape and formation of letters and can write their own names freely.
137. Boys and girls equally enjoy sharing books and exploring stories. They use the pictures to help recall the story line and begin to memorise words and sentences in simple stories. The vast majority are beginning to recognise letters and simple words and enjoy taking their ‘letter books’ home to practise their reading. They read different types of books and read along with adults as they search for information. For instance, when sharing ‘The Giant’s Stew’, they are eager to guess what might happen next in the story and spot words and letters they know.

### **Mathematical development**

138. By the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment in the Early Learning Goals is above average. Progress is good, especially in number. Children can count on and backwards and recognise numbers to 20 and above. They can record numbers clearly and put them into order. They sort and match small toys in relation to size and colour and begin to use mathematical language such as ‘taller than’ and ‘wider than’, when comparing model animals.
139. Teachers make particularly good use is made of incidental learning, for instance, identifying basic shapes, such as circles and triangles, whilst making crowns for the king and queen; and counting the number of boys and girls when lining up at lunchtime. Children from minority ethnic groups are working well and are happy to join in discussions about adding ‘one more’ spoonful to a cake mixture and predicting how many spoonfuls there will be altogether.

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

140. Teaching and progress in this area of experience is very good and the children are expected to achieve above the Early Learning Goals. Some exciting experiences with making cakes enable the children to use their senses and to experiment with how materials change. Particularly good questioning skills by teachers build upon the children’s natural curiosity. This was evident when three children handled eggs and were asked to predict what was inside the shell. All agreed that chickens lay eggs and that



eggs hatch open. One child stated that, "Inside is white and that the orange part is the yolk". After adding the egg, they identified that the mixture became 'smooth and runny'.

141. Skills with information and communication technology are also developing well. Children show good mouse control, as they select colours from a palette, whilst others are able to operate a robotic toy with commands to make it travel backwards and forwards.
142. Children talk about their own community and people who help them and find out about the passing of time and changing seasons. They build up a good appreciation of the wider world through stories and pictures about, for example, 'Barnaby Bear'.

### **Physical development**

143. Teaching and progress in this area of experience is good. Children have daily access to a safe area for outdoor experiences and also regular use of the school hall.
144. The children work confidently together as they learn to use and explore larger spaces with care. They listen carefully to the teacher and begin to follow commands promptly as they stop and start and change direction. Good personal and social skills mean that most children attempt to dress themselves and that they are gaining in independence.
145. In outdoor experiences, children learn to guide and pedal large toys and to manoeuvre in and out of spaces. Dexterity is developed through handling objects and by cutting and producing fine work in collage. These skills are developed when children construct models of castles with construction kits and secure towers and turrets with great care. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

### **Creative development**

146. The range and quality of resources provided is good and stimulates interest and response from the children. Although the teaching is good, children are given less opportunity to explore their own ideas and to create something new in some aspects of art, such as collage. However, taking all their creative experiences into account, by the end of the Foundation Stage children are likely to achieve above the Early Learning Goals.
147. The children have daily access to painting, collage and role play experiences. They experiment with mixing and applying paint, as they produce paintings of characters related to a shared story. All groups enjoy making puppets and take great care with matching the right tone of skin colour and securing hair and whiskers. They enjoy entering into role play, whether in the café or puppet theatre and create some original theatre for themselves. All groups contribute as individuals in these activities but only are just starting to work in pairs.
148. Children listen to, and join in with, their favourite songs and learn how to handle and use untuned percussion instruments for accompaniment. Singing the 'Grand Old Duke of York' as they march along the corridor at the beginning of playtime is great fun for them and they perform it well.

## ENGLISH

149. At the time of the last inspection, standards were satisfactory. Over time, attainment has been below average in the national tests for 7 year olds at the end of Year 2. Fewer pupils achieved the higher levels with their reading and writing, despite starting school with at least average or better literacy skills. Attainment in national tests at the age of 11 years, at the end of Year 6, has remained broadly in line with levels achieved nationally.
150. The findings of this inspection indicate that, although attainment is below average by the end of Year 2, pupils' progress is improving and standards are rising. This is because good quality teaching and a much clearer structure for teaching reading and writing skills are now helping pupils to make better progress. For instance, letters and their sounds are now taught in a more regular and specific way and this is helping younger pupils to identify unknown words and to read more accurately and fluently.
151. Inspection findings also indicate that although attainment is below average in Year 6, the majority of pupils make good progress and are well behaved. This includes a significant number of pupils who have joined the school since the start of Year 3. However, in Year 6, the poor behaviour of a significant minority of boys is taking up too much of the teacher's time. This, in turn, slows down progress and lowers standards for the majority. There is a marked difference between the attitudes of these boys and the other boys and girls in this year group towards their work. Teachers work hard to motivate interest, but a significant minority of boys do not contribute as keenly as the girls and need consistent teacher encouragement to do so.
152. Throughout the school, speaking and listening skills are average, with the majority of pupils confident to ask and answer questions and to add to class discussions.
153. The literacy strategy is well established in each year group, including mixed-age classes, where work is planned for different levels of ability. In Years 1 and 2, for instance, lessons are planned with different word and sentence work, so that pupils who work at faster rate are not held back and younger pupils can work at an appropriate level. Basic skills with handwriting, use of punctuation and grammar are soundly taught and used with growing consistency by pupils in their writing.
154. Often opportunities to write in other subjects are missed and this limits the chance to experiment with different types and purposes for writing. Careful scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that writing in history lessons often involves too many worksheets and that writing in science often follows a whole class format. However, good use is made of the computer to practise and develop skills with reading and writing. A significant number of pupils also use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to research information at home and then share these findings in lessons. An instance was seen in Years 4 and 5, where facts about the life of Edward Lear helped contribute to a lively poetry lesson.
155. The school works hard to provide the opportunity for all school groups to learn and work together happily in English. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are making good progress with their learning in literacy and can be found working in many of the higher achieving groups. There are no pupils at the early stage of learning English.
156. The provision for pupils with special educational needs varies. Pupils with reading and writing difficulties are supported in the classroom through work planned for different levels of ability. However, targets set for their learning in individual plans (IEPs), especially at Stage 2, are not specific enough and so less helpful in improving progress. Relationships between classroom assistants and pupils on the higher stages of support

(Stages 4 and 5) are very good and foster confidence and steady progress in lessons. On occasions, the work set for some pupils with statements for speech and language difficulties in literacy lessons is not at an appropriate level.

157. Speaking and listening skills are average. The majority of pupils speak confidently in larger groups and work in co-operation with others in small groups in the literacy hour. In Year 3, good use was made of role play, where characters from the story of Red Riding Hood took the 'hot seat' and answered specific questions in a competent way. Responses were valued by the teacher and the class. As a result, pupils talked more readily and made good progress. The main thrust for developing speaking skills is through teachers' use of questioning. This was evident Years 1 and 2, when pupils replied eagerly to 'why?' and 'how?' questions about the story of the Little Red Hen or when pupils capable of learning at a faster rate in Year 6 studied poems and gave a personal response to the mood and setting of 'The Listener' by Walter de la Mare.
158. Standards in reading are just below average in Years 2 and 6. Boys and girls enjoy reading and are keen to explore stories and talk about their favourite characters. There are signs that more capable readers are making better progress and reaching the higher levels with their reading. For instance, in Year 2, pupils read accurately and fluently and with some expression in guided reading groups. They refer to the text to identify 'time' words such as 'next' and 'in the meantime', as they explore how story lines develop. By Year 6, more competent readers begin to develop personal tastes in reading. One pupil compared the styles of JK Rowling and JR Tolkein as 'writers of magical stories', and described research at home for further information on the authors' websites. The range of books has improved since the last inspection, along with pupils' skills in skimming and scanning for information.
159. Less competent readers lack fluency with their reading. They use a limited range of reading strategies to find out the meaning of words and are too dependent upon recalling words by sight. Few pupils use the whole sentence to make a good 'guess' at unknown words. Many pupils identified with special educational needs find reading independently a struggle. There are few supporting adults in classrooms to help pupils practise and gain accuracy and fluency with their reading. Learning targets in individual plans (IEPs) are not focused clearly enough on what skills pupils need to learn. In guided group reading, one or two teachers make very good diagnostic assessment of pupils' individual skills as readers, but few records or plans show or use this information to guide future learning and support.
160. Despite the fact that overall standards are below average in writing in Years 2 and 6, some aspects of writing are good. Pupils take pride in their work and handwriting is neat and tidy. They construct sentences with a growing awareness of grammar and punctuation. Spelling is regularly taught in school and practised at home and so standards are improving. New initiatives in the Years 1 and 2 classes encourage pupils to experiment more readily with their early writing skills and to be less dependent on using banks of words to help with writing sentences. This is enabling younger pupils to write in a more confident and independent way. However, an evaluation of pupils' past and present work in Years 3 to 6 indicates that teachers are not expecting pupils to write enough, or to shape, read through and improve their own work. Some challenging lessons were observed in Year 6, where good teaching skills enabled more capable learners to successfully learn about imagery and alliteration as they studied poetry in greater depth.
161. Most pupils are keen to learn and join in readily with lessons. They enjoy continuing their learning at home and researching about their favourite authors and poets. The vast majority of pupils concentrate on the task at hand, but there is a significant minority of

boys, who find it hard to settle to work. This affects their own learning and that of others.

162. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in English. Teachers have a firm grasp of the literacy strategy and make good use of feedback time (plenary) for sharing achievement. In the majority of year groups lessons move on at a pace and are well managed. However, there is a minority of pupils with challenging behaviour in Years 1 and 6, who become very unsettled by changes of teacher or routine. Work is regularly marked and, at its best, offers encouragement and guidance with developing literacy skills.
163. It has been essential for the literacy co-ordinator to focus on improving standards, particularly by the end of Year 2. New initiatives with reading and writing, along with the introduction of 'Jolly Phonics' and reading resources, are already paying dividends. At present the co-ordinator has no designated time to monitor achievement in school or to facilitate the sharing of good practice so that teaching and learning may benefit further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

164. Standards in mathematics are similar to those found nationally in Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be similar to the national averages but the results of tests taken soon after indicated a different picture. At the end of Year 2, pupils' results were very low, that is in the bottom 5 per cent in the country; at the end of Year 6 they were well above the national average. Historically, too few pupils in Year 2 have achieved the higher levels in mathematics; that is changing and results are improving.
165. Pupils have a good grasp of number work and this makes an important contribution to the standards they achieve. The school is successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have worked hard in the last year to develop a more rigorous approach to their planning and delivery of the strategy and this is reflected in pupils' work and the standards they achieve. There is now far less reliance on worksheets and workbooks but still, in some instances, a tendency for over-practice. Overall, there is a much better match of work to pupils' differing needs. For example, in one Year 2 lesson on place value, various activities at different levels were running concurrently; all pupils were being challenged by their different tasks.
166. Mental mathematics is developing well in the younger classes (Years 1 and 2). In a Year 1 class, pupils worked with numbers up to 10 and, for many, 20. They were keen to participate in a 'show me' game when they held up their answers at a certain moment for the teacher to see. Although some made guesses, others were clearly thinking out their answers. In the mixed Years 1 and 2 classes a strength of the mental maths sessions was the way in which the teacher helped pupils to explore different ways of adding a range of numbers. This successfully encouraged them to look at alternative ways of getting the same answer.
167. In the older classes (Years 3 to 6), mental calculations feature at the beginning of most lessons. In some classes, good use is made of timed challenges. In a Year 3 class, pupils worked accurately with pencils and paper to solve simple problems. However, in some instances, the time they had was just a little too generous. Pupils were not quite on the edge of their chairs and some had enough time to exchange solutions with their neighbours. In an older class, pupils made good use of marker boards to share their answers with the class. They demonstrated that they had thought the process through before sharing their answers. In a Year 5 class, pupils' mental dexterity was successfully exercised in a 'Countdown' challenge where pupils were asked to compute a series of numbers to arrive at or close to a given answer. The concentration of these pupils was quite remarkable and many came very close to the target; their efforts would have been

greatly enhanced had they had the opportunity to use pencil and paper to record different combinations.

168. Teachers' planning and delivery of the mental mathematics sessions is secure. The challenges provided are, on the whole, appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment. It is the pace at which this part of the numeracy strategy is conducted that lacks consistency; in the best sessions, the atmosphere fizzles and pupils' responses are quick and accurate.
169. Mental work is invariably linked to the main focus of lessons and the process is effectively managed by the majority of teachers. A contributory factor to this is the way in which learning objectives are shared with pupils so that links are explicit from the outset. This was particularly important in one of the Year 6 lessons observed where a number of pupils were reticent about applying their previous knowledge and understanding to a new learning situation. The teacher wisely adapted her plans to take account of this, focusing instead on smaller steps in learning to help pupils gain the confidence they otherwise lacked.
170. In Years 1 and 2, pupils work with money in a variety of settings. The younger pupils recognise and name coins. They are able to identify the cost of labelled items and hand over coins to the value of 6 pence. Many can suggest different ways of combining coins to reach the same amount, for example,  $2p+2p+2p=6p$  or  $5p+1p=6p$ . Older pupils can identify and add coins to the value of 20p, although some are still more comfortable in using 1p coins. Although boys and girls achieve similar results when they handle the coins, it is evident that the girls are quicker than the boys in making and checking their calculations. The ablest pupils in these classes are working with coins to undertake sums such  $30p + 36p$ . Most are confident in making this calculation and a few demonstrate that they are successfully developing the more advanced thinking skills necessary to apply this knowledge and understanding in other settings.
171. Year 6 pupils work with equivalent and improper fractions. The abler pupils have some difficulty in converting improper fractions as mixed numbers. Their basic understanding of fractions and place value is secure but there are evident gaps in the way in which they marry the two areas together. Their mathematical thinking is not sufficiently refined to make the necessary links. Fortunately, in one lesson, their teacher was able to spot the shortcomings and lead them through the necessary process in small steps. Then, through providing timely hints clues and guidance, she enabled them to take their learning forward successfully. Although by the end of the lesson their response was still not as quick as could be expected for their ages, they were nevertheless computing with some accuracy and clear logic.
172. Less able pupils experienced similar difficulties when dealing with equivalent fractions. Their uncertainty in dealing with equivalence indicated that their understanding of basic concepts was quite insecure. Again, by breaking learning down into manageable small steps, the teacher was able to develop their skills and confidence. The problems faced by these older pupils tend to confirm judgements resulting from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' planning. In the past, too much emphasis may have been placed by the school on mechanical processes at the expense of developing pupils' mathematical thinking. This could well be reflected in the low proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels in the Year 2 statutory tests.
173. Pupils are making progress with their number work because teachers are now much clearer about how they need to plan for the development of pupils' mathematical thinking as well as their computational skills. This is much more reflected in teachers' planning than hitherto and is making an important contribution to raising standards.

174. Other areas of the mathematics curriculum are given appropriate coverage. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were measuring three-dimensional objects to the nearest centimetre. The vast majority are quite conversant with measuring equipment such as rulers and tape measures but they are less inclined towards such accuracy. One of their challenges was to estimate and measure curved objects that exceeded the length of their measuring tape. This exercise called for pupils to co-operate with each other and to share their ideas. They did this well and supporting adults ensured that all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, were fully able to participate and extend their learning. Boys and girls were equally involved in this practical work and responded well to the questions and tips from adults that focus their thinking.
175. Pupils in other year groups also work with measures, one class with distances, another with mass and a further class with time. These activities are appropriately covered and the majority of pupils reach the expected standard for their ages. There are strengths and shortcomings in pupils learning in this work. On the positive side, pupils have a good grasp of time and can switch readily from the 12 hour to 24 hour clock. In both the other areas, pupils' prior attainment lacks consistency; many still need to explain and consolidate their thinking through practical activities.
176. Evidence from pupils' previous work shows that there is some coverage of data handling but limited use of information and communication technology to support this work. There is appropriate use of numeracy skills in other curricular areas such as science.
177. The overall quality of teaching is good because of the way in which the majority of teachers are now focusing on manageable steps in learning and the development of pupils' learning. Most teachers' planning is detailed and purposeful, drawing well on pupils' previous achievements. The setting arrangements evident in Years 1 and 2 and Year 6 are certainly helping teachers to plan more closely for pupils' differing needs and this is making a valuable contribution to the quality of their learning. The process is, however, still developing. Pupils' confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge and understanding across a range of situations is not yet secure. Teachers are, however, using mathematical terminology well. When other adults are available to give support, they are generally well prepared for their work.
178. The co-ordinator has only just joined the school and is still at the stage of familiarising herself with the scheme of work and resources. That said, she has a good grasp of what the priorities for development are and the ways in which these will be achieved. The school is adequately resourced for the teaching of mathematics but there are areas of shortfall, particularly in respect of information and communication technology resources.

## **SCIENCE**

179. Inspection findings show that in the present Year 2 class, pupils' standards are similar to those expected nationally. In recent years, pupils have attained standards below the national average at the age of 7 years. These were below those reported at the last inspection and indicate unsatisfactory progress since then. Two factors contribute to this recent improvement. The curriculum now identifies science as a separate subject rather than studying it as part of a wider topic. This means that more time is given to science each week. In addition, teachers now have new, clearer curriculum guidelines.
180. In Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve standards similar to the national average. This is reflected in the 2000 National Curriculum test results. These show that there is no significant difference in attainment between boys

and girls or amongst pupils from different cultural backgrounds. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning. Over the past four years, pupils have achieved well to gain a good level of improvement. There has been a steady rise in results, following the national trend.

181. In Years 1 and 2, pupils take part in simple investigations as part of an appropriately balanced curriculum. They learn about the characteristics of different materials by finding out how they can be changed. Scrutiny of last year's work indicates that pupils' observant written descriptions record 'smooth', 'sticky' and 'gooey' textures when they compare the colour, feel, and smell of cake mixture before and after cooking. When illustrating their understanding about the sun as a light source, their drawings show correctly where a shadow will fall. Much of this earlier recording, however, is insufficiently demanding. It does not require pupils to identify what they have learned but merely to colour in photocopied worksheets. This means that pupils often gain only a superficial understanding of scientific concepts.
182. More challenging tasks are set for the current pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' more effective planning requires pupils to record their own findings after careful discussion and observation. During an attractively resourced lesson about plant variation, pupils were fascinated as the teacher slowly and carefully revealed contrasting flowers. Her very careful handling showed that they were special. This created a calm atmosphere in which pupils maintained good concentration throughout the lesson. Their sensitively observed drawings show recognisable characteristics of petals, leaves and roots. The written task produced accurate descriptions of 'curls', 'spikes', 'masses of leaves' or 'slim petals'. This activity gave suitable scope for pupils of all abilities to work at their own level.
183. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are introduced to correct scientific procedures as they study a range of suitable topics. Their earlier work is very neatly presented, recording a variety of practical investigations by description, diagram and simple bar graphs. However, because these were set up by teachers, pupils have not developed the skills of planning and conducting their own experiments. They have not used their own words to describe and compare findings or to evaluate methods. The slower writing and inaccurate copying of below average pupils hindered the development of their recording skills. There is no evidence of pupils using library books to support their research.
184. Lessons in these year groups now show improved opportunities for first hand experience. Pupils follow instructions and conduct their own practical experiments. This closer involvement helps to make the subject more 'real' for them. It improves pupils' understanding of scientific concepts. Teachers' clear explanations and suitable materials help pupils to understand how to set up an investigation and what to look for. Year 3 pupils worked co-operatively in pairs to complete an electrical circuit with a switch. They correctly named those materials that are effective conductors and insulators. Teachers placed particular emphasis on the safety implications of electricity and pupils explained what these are.
185. Pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class responded with well-remembered details to their teacher's enthusiasm and lively questioning. Their interest in each other's contributions reflects the way in which the teacher values pupils' suggestions. The story of Samuel Morse's practical application of an electrical switch held pupils' interest well. They enjoyed translating and sending short messages to each other in Morse code.
186. Following a thorough explanation, pupils in Year 5 took part in a satisfactory discussion about changing the balance of air pressure. They co-operated very well in their paired investigations. However, the disintegration of their paper straws in water made it difficult

for them to complete their experiments. The lesson summary offered little opportunity for them to explain what they understood or to suggest improvements to the method. This limited the value of the lesson and limited pupils' potential for achievement.

187. In their study of forces, pupils in Year 6 made suitable predictions about the time a spinner takes to fall. Most collaborated well in groups and made satisfactory progress with a rather undemanding task. Unfortunately, learning was hindered by the very disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils. The sound of other classes was clearly audible beyond the merely curtained partition. These factors and the lack of sufficient support for pupils of lower ability or special educational needs held back the progress of all pupils. Where there is an additional adult supporting a pupil, satisfactory progress is made.
188. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' improved planning for pupils to make their own discoveries in science lessons is effective in reinforcing their understanding. As all pupils take part in the same tasks, however, higher ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Pupils with less developed literacy skills are slowed down by the demands of some written recording methods. These pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Teachers invariably share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and sometimes vary the presentation by using an overhead projector to make lessons more interesting. There is no evidence of information and communication technology being used to help pupils develop skills of expression or research.
189. The recently introduced scheme of work provides a clearer framework for staff and emphasises the need for practical investigation. Science is now the main focus for improvement and although there is currently no curriculum co-ordinator, the school is committed to improving standards in the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

190. Attainment is in line with nationally expected standards for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and pupils continue to make sound progress. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to express their ideas in an interesting variety of ways. This is particularly valuable in developing the confidence of pupils with special educational needs and of those speaking English as an additional language.
191. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an awareness of how to use colour, line and tone. A suitable variety of pattern, collage and representational work shows their satisfactory handling of tools. Colourful patterns show some of the colourful characteristics that pupils have observed in reproductions of paintings by Mondrian and Kandinsky. Pupils in Year 1 considered ways of expressing feelings in a picture by adding something that makes them happy. Their appropriate suggestions of a teddy, a dog, or a baby brother were carefully included in their oil pastel drawings. They concentrated well, but did not experiment with this medium first. As a result, pupils filled in pencil lines rather than using the special, soft blending qualities of pastel. Pupils with special educational needs enjoyed this activity and the focused encouragement of the class assistant helped them to extend their concentration and make satisfactory progress.
192. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn more about the diversity of pattern. After examining patterns from African and Egyptian cultures, pupils in Year 3 created alternating repeat patterns. They confidently practised a simple dip and stamp technique with ready-made print blocks. In an earlier lesson they had already carefully cut out their own lino block designs which they could have used. Therefore, although pupils found this absorbing, it did not sufficiently develop their design ability or printing expertise.



193. Careful study of artists' illustrations and persistent prompting from the teacher helped Year 6 pupils to observe ways of expressing movement. The examples are rather small, but pupils successfully identify the effects of blurring, smudging and overlapping. Work, which includes Degas' 'Dancers' and Delaunay's 'Cardiff Team', ensures that subjects interest both boys and girls. Pupils showed real interest in each other's work as they commented positively on different results. This encourages pupils' awareness of the feelings of others and effectively consolidates their learning.
194. The satisfactory quality of teaching ensures that pupils have suitable opportunities to develop appropriate skills, particularly in drawing and information and communication technology. Pupils' sensitive black and white drawings of buildings show how they have been taught to observe swirly, criss-cross or herringbone linear patterns. However, when teachers follow skill teaching with over-direction of results, pupils do not have freedom to interpret and express their own vision. Some lively computer text exclamations such as 'Grrrrr', 'Brat', 'Takka' and 'POW!' suitably accompany a display of the red, yellow and black cartoon-type images characteristic of Roy Lichtenstein. Although they have sketchbooks, pupils do not always use them to discover the qualities of materials before using them in their final work.
195. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to examine the new scheme of work together with staff. This will identify resources needed to develop the curriculum further. In particular, the library lacks an interesting and attractive range of books that would allow pupils to discover for themselves the widely contrasting work of artists. As yet, there is no affective assessment of pupils' achievements to ensure that these are built upon to progressively develop their skills and understanding. Although pupils are taught to handle implements safely, there is a need for additional safety measures when using sharp cutting tools.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

196. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology by Years 2 and 6. Evidence was gained from one lesson, photographs, discussion with pupils and examples of their work. This shows that all pupils follow a well-planned programme of designing, making and testing their products, as seen at the last inspection. Varied and interesting results, together with pupils' clear plans and instructions indicate that the subject is effectively taught throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and others who speak English as an additional language satisfactorily extend their knowledge and skills at each stage of learning.
197. In Years 1 and 2, pupils undertake suitable tasks with the 'design and make' elements appropriately balanced. They manipulate interlocking construction kits and also select and join a variety of materials to make models of moving vehicles. The combination of labelled drawings and brief written description gives pupils good scope to express their own ideas. For example, a Year 2 pupil wrote, 'It will have a sign saying AA, two doors at the front and two rear lights'.
198. A well-resourced and efficiently organised Year 2 lesson gave good guidance for pupils to cut, fold, curl and join paper and threads to create faces for puppets. This led to a good level of interest and concentration as pupils amicably shared tools and materials. Their attractive and amusing finished products showed close resemblance to individual designs with suitably accomplished techniques. Pupils explained how they might change a future design, for instance by making 'a sad face and curly, instead of straight hair'. Their good awareness of the need to keep work surfaces tidy is seen in the sensible clearing away of tools.

199. By Year 6, pupils have built on this sound foundation to extend their range of techniques with a wider choice of materials. Their designs now include swatches of preferred fabric and reasons for rejecting other possibilities. Plaiting, stitching, gathering, knotting and perforating are some of the interesting methods that pupils use to shape textiles for their money containers. Pupils' worksheets show that they learn the importance of hygiene and safety when testing recipes for the biscuit and packaging design project. They analyse and compare products and suggest means of improvement. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils wrote about carefully cleaning the tables before mixing and kneading their bread mixture. They described how the addition of yeast makes the dough grow to double its size.
200. Insufficient lesson observations mean that it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning of lessons is satisfactory and learning objectives clearly identified. Graded worksheets allow pupils to record ideas and evaluate the success of their designs. Teachers make suitable links with other subjects such as English and mathematics. For example, pupils record preferences for biscuit flavours in the form of bar graphs. There is a small amount of simple computer drawing for designs. Each project shows a strong focus on examining component parts and examining how they work. In the lesson observed, good organisation and teaching of safe practices was evident. This contributed to the good behaviour and careful concentration.
201. The enthusiastic and efficient subject co-ordinator monitors progress informally. Suitable records of pupils' achievements are kept in the form of examples of work. Plans are now in hand to develop a means of assessment that will directly inform teachers' planning. Pupils with limited literacy skills do not always have enough help to record their ideas in a way suited to their ability. Very suitable homework tasks are chosen to involve such pupils and those with special educational needs more fully. For instance, they enjoyed bringing pop-up books from home to illustrate the flap mechanism necessary for their book design project.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

202. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve the expected standards. The school has maintained the standards reported on in the last inspection, with boys achieving as well as girls. Year 2 pupils have some basic geographical knowledge; for example, they can identify the physical features of their local environment, such as houses, roads and shops. When asked what they have identified on the Scottish Isle of Struay, they replied: "*the physical and human features*". Most could identify alternative methods of transport on the island from a map. Many can locate the Sahara desert, Lapland, Africa, China and the South Pole on a map of the world. They have written quite fluently about the weather and the different clothes people wear in these places. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes unable to achieve as well because they do not get sufficient extra adult support.
203. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop geographical skills satisfactorily. Their mapping skills are average. Many pupils accurately read features on maps or name towns, countries and sea areas, either in the United Kingdom or in other parts of the world, such as Kenya. Year 3 pupils know about cities in Kenya, such as Nairobi and Mombassa. They are learning about the Rift Valley but do not yet understand much about its geographical features. Most pupils know that the highest mountain is called Mount Kenya and they can identify it on a map. Pupils have used the Internet to find new information about Kenya. More able pupils navigate their way through a number of Internet websites to obtain relevant text and graphical data.

204. In Year 5, pupils are able to describe the effects of rainfall, how water evaporates into the air or soaks into the ground. They identify places with very low annual rainfall, such as Afghanistan. More able pupils refer to their independent research, knowing about the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. Most know of the equator, but are not sure if it is an actual or an imaginary line.
205. Year 6 pupils understand well how erosion, transportation of soil and deposition affect the landscape. They conduct geographical experiments in which they observe the changes in the shape and colour of sand and how water moves it to different areas. The innovative nature of this teaching in Year 6 is having a direct impact upon the good quality of learning.
206. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with a little that is excellent. No teaching is unsatisfactory. The most effective teaching has a number of key features. Teachers have a positive, bright approach that inspires their pupils. They inject lessons with a fast and furious pace and use their voices very effectively to control their class. Their preparation is very good with large, attractive, laminated pictures and clear, well-drawn acetates for an overhead projector. They help pupils explore and develop the skill of geographical enquiry through a potent mix of direct experiences and carefully prepared worksheets. In one lesson in Year 3, the teacher's enthusiasm for Kenya was so infectious that pupils responded with "*Right, I'm going there!*".
207. When, occasionally, teaching is less effective it is because teachers do not set tasks which reflect sufficiently the needs of pupils of different ages in mixed-age classes. Pupils are then not assured that they are given work that is matched well to their needs.
208. The leadership of geography is good. The school uses the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's curriculum guidelines effectively as its scheme of work, amended where it feels that it is appropriate. Assessment procedures are in place and teachers are using them with increasing rigour. The resources to assist teaching and learning are satisfactory but teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology in geography. The school is in a good position to improve standards throughout the school.

## HISTORY

209. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 meet the standards expected for their ages. Boys achieve as well as girls. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn appropriate information about the past. They successfully identify some of the changes that have taken place in lifestyles since Victorian times from studying photographs and videotapes. They know, for example, that boys attended school, but girls in general did not, and that there were no cars in those days. Pupils develop a sound understanding of chronology through discussions with their teachers and direct experience of working and playing. They use words such as 'now' and 'a long time ago' in talking about their work. They make comparisons between then and now in their class discussions. Pupils show some confidence in using dates and time-lines.
210. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are also making sound gains in their learning. In Year 4 and Year 5, pupils can talk knowledgeably about the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan and Lake Texcoco. They have garnered facts about the Aztec gods, and could say that the Sun-God had to have sacrifices offered to him, "*because every night he had to fight against the forces of darkness*". Some pupils have used the Dudley Grid for Learning to get onto the Internet, operating a number of search engines to obtain primary source materials.

211. Year 6 pupils learn very quickly when their teacher presents them with excellent resources and teaches them very competently. They are able to amalgamate information and communication technology into their learning and, for example, can obtain a copy of a Victorian school timetable from the Internet to illustrate their work.
212. The overall quality of teaching is good. In effective lessons, teachers plan lessons carefully, using appropriate resources, such as photographs and household artefacts. They also provide opportunities for pupils to undertake simple research using the Internet to foster their interest. Pupils, in response, enjoy the subject, concentrate well and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of history.
213. Teachers provide pupils with good support throughout lessons and pupils readily turn to them for assistance where necessary. When, as in Year 1, pupils had not fully understood the different conditions of Victorian childhood, the teacher revisited the subject the next week using different resources to emphasise the key points. In this way, teachers ensure pupils learn well over time by amending their planning in the light of experience.
214. In the Year 4 and 5 class, lessons are invigorated by the teacher's good knowledge of the subject and good working resources. The good cross-curricular links, for example between history and religious education, are exploited effectively to consolidate learning.
215. When, rarely, teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because the teacher has not planned sufficiently for every group of pupils and does not make key teaching points clear and precise. As seen in a Year 5 class, pupils with special educational needs make the slowest progress and are often unable to make any gains in understanding. As a result, pupils do not learn or attain as much as they should, thinking, for example, that Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Victoria were sisters. Many pupils throughout the school have very enthusiastic attitudes to their learning and this helps them to take good advantage of the good teaching.
216. Leadership in history is satisfactory. The school has an appropriate scheme of work, based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's curriculum guidelines. Assessment procedures are sound. The writing activities, undertaken in the subject, make a contribution towards the development of pupils' literacy skills. The school has made satisfactory progress in its provision for history since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

217. Most Year 2 pupils exceed the standards expected at their age. Pupils are confident when using computers and do well when using information technology for communicating. Overall, pupils in Year 6 meet the standards expected but in Years 3 to 6, a few important aspects of the curriculum have not been taught systematically. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills can vary quite widely. Older pupils do not have sufficient skills in control technology and in using sensors to monitor and record changes in the environment, such as changes in temperature and light. Spreadsheet programs the school has are under-used, which means pupils' experience of this aspect of modelling is limited.
218. Staff have designed a school website but few pupils have been involved in its use yet. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were in line with those expected at 7 and 11 years. Considering the increased emphasis upon information and communication technology in the revised curriculum, the school has made satisfactory progress in recent years. There are no appreciable differences in the attainment or progress of boys and girls.

219. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 regularly use wordprocessing programs to draft ideas and edit text. By the age of seven, most pupils can edit mistakes, change the appearance of text, save files and print out their work independently. Teachers are confident in the subject, which means they often plan opportunities to include information and communication technology in day-to-day work. This is evident in Year 2, when pupils have the opportunity to compare conventional painting methods with those employed using a graphics program through direct experiences. They re-create their pictures in the style of Mondrian on computers using the *autoshape*, *paintbrush*, *spray can*, *block*, *eraser* and *fill* facilities.
220. Activities with a programmable floor robot, undertaken from the Reception class onwards, introduce early ideas of control as pupils enter a sequence of commands, such as *Forward 2*, *Right 90*, *Forward 1*, to send the robot along a pre-determined route. Pupils with special educational needs have good mouse-control skills.
221. Pupils' general skills are extended well in the older classes, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Most are confident enough to work independently. For example, pupils in Year 3 science lessons use the Internet to search for information about electrical circuits. Higher attaining pupils can copy pictures into a word-processor, add their own text, save and print. Year 4 pupils use this technique to select pictures to illustrate their own poems.
222. Pupils in Year 3 are able to use facilities available on the Internet and the Dudley Grid for Learning. They also have a good understanding of the features of word processing software such as the spellchecker tool but are less familiar with tools to correct grammar. Year 4 pupils can use Internet search engines to find out a range of facts about the Aztec civilisation in their history lessons. This activity enabled pupils to experience a sense of wonder at the huge differences between that civilisation and our own.
223. Year 5 pupils have used the Internet as an integral part of their spiritual development when researching Christian religious texts such as the Book of Kells. More able pupils in Year 6 have done well in creating a World War II newspaper, which effectively combined text, clip art and Internet images. This work showed their awareness of the wider world and historical events of the twentieth century.
224. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to use a range of search engines and compare the efficiency of one with another when they use them for geographical studies. This integration of information and communication technology with a range of subjects is a good example of the school's approach. Pupils are encouraged to think about when the use of information and communication technology is appropriate and when it is not – an important aspect of the curriculum.
225. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have a growing confidence in information and communication technology and the direct teaching observed was often effective. In Year 2 and Year 3 it is very good. As well as including information technology more frequently in lessons, teachers increasingly use it at their own level for writing reports, planning and record keeping. Children with specific needs are given adult support from time to time, so they are able to learn and keep pace with other pupils. In some classes, however, such as Year 1, not enough support is provided to address the learning needs of all pupils. Some teachers in Key Stage 2 introduce the more complex aspects of the subject, such as spreadsheets, but in some classes pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about data handling or to develop control and modelling skills.
226. The subject co-ordinator has managed well the many changes that have taken place in the curriculum during the last two years, and is well qualified for her role. Following completion of external in-service training and post-graduate education, she has provided

colleagues with good, regular advice and support. A whole school assessment system has been introduced which provides teacher and pupils with a good guide to the development of skills from year to year, although its use is not yet widespread. Most teachers have good subject knowledge due to their receiving extra training. As a result of this hard work, the school is well placed to improve standards further.

## MUSIC

227. Standards in music are similar to those expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all cultural backgrounds and abilities achieve satisfactorily in singing and in awareness of rhythm patterns as they listen to music. This matches the judgement made at the last inspection, which also noted the lack of pupils' experience in using instruments to create their own music. Pupils have suitable opportunities to sing, to listen to and learn about music, but their current music making skills are still inconsistently developed.
228. Pupils experience music in assembly, music lessons and may also sing in the choir or learn to play the recorder in lunchtime clubs. A variety of termly concerts gives all pupils good opportunities to perform before larger audiences. Visiting music teachers occasionally demonstrate instrumental playing in school. Three pupils are now learning to play the cello after being inspired by one of these sessions.
229. By the time they are in Year 2, most pupils sing a variety of songs in tune, with or without an accompaniment. They begin to recognise the mood of music, and try to introduce this expression into their playing of percussion instruments. Pupils learn to control the volume and pitch of their voices in enjoyable singing games. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils responded to simple music notation represented as shapes and symbols. They maintained very good effort and concentration, especially relishing the contrast between whispering and singing very loudly.
230. By Year 6, there are occasions when more able pupils progress at a faster pace, particularly those who have instrumental lessons. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily despite little consistent previous composing experience. In Year 6, the teacher used suitable recorded music to help pupils to recognise a strong rhythm. They successfully identified and sang a repeated rhythm pattern to '*Frère Jacques*'. When transferring this skill to percussion instruments, they were well motivated by the good example of three pupils playing cello, recorder and clarinet. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson but their attempts at writing notation showed their lack of previous work in this area.
231. Listening to contrasting music recordings of Grieg, Tchaikovsky or Pachelbel gives pupils good opportunities for developing descriptive writing. One pupil's impression of '*The sugar plum fairy*' excerpt read, '*It's not loud or fast. It is soft, calm and sweet...like sitting in a park eating ice cream*'.
232. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' good management skills and harmonious relationships with most pupils gain their co-operation and sustained attention. This helps pupils to achieve the aims of the lesson successfully. Most pupils approach music activities with confidence, helped by teachers' praise and encouragement for their efforts. When teachers allow pupils to contribute their own ideas their interest is held more effectively and they make more rapid progress. In lessons where teaching is too closely directed, however, pupils have no opportunities to suggest changes and feel less involved in their learning. Insufficient attention has been paid to the development of listening and singing skills and to increasing opportunities for pupils to create their own music.

233. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership but has only informal opportunities to monitor learning. Teachers modify lesson plans suitably according to pupils' progress in preceding lessons. These assessment strategies are to be extended following planned in-service training. Recent staff training and links with the music advisory service have led to a satisfactory start on introducing computers into music lessons. The school lacks the necessary resources to implement this aspect of the curriculum effectively. Although there are enough untuned percussion instruments, the range is basic and many are in need of replacement. There are few tuned instruments, which limits pupils' development of melody patterns.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

234. Pupils attain standards which are similar to national expectations in Years 2 and 6. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those pupils whose home language is not English. Standards have been soundly maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with physical disabilities achieve well with the support of a nursery nurse during their lessons. A balanced timetable, which includes dance, gymnastics and games, with swimming for pupils in Years 3 to 6, makes a sound contribution to pupils' physical education. By Year 6, the majority of pupils meet the National Curriculum requirements in swimming.
235. By Year 2, pupils listen carefully to instructions when using small or large apparatus in the hall or outdoors. They enjoy their physical education lessons and respond in a lively way to a variety of well-planned activities. A brisk warm up session allowed pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class to practise the dodging activities they had learned in the previous lesson. Pupils used space sensibly as they tried to escape their partner. Movements were quick and agile as they changed direction and pace in response to the whistle. The teacher's enjoyment and physical involvement succeeded in encouraging pupils to try hard and improve their performance.
236. A circle chase game provided a good opportunity for pupils to repeat these movements while following simple rules. An atmosphere of good humour and co-operation between pupils was maintained throughout. The teacher effectively managed the consistently unco-operative behaviour of one pupil. Her suitable balance of giving him an active role without giving him too much attention meant that minimum distraction was caused to other pupils' learning.
237. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop suitable techniques and movements within a range of appropriate themes. Their learning about fair play is satisfactorily developed through team games, inter-school netball and football matches and after school clubs. It was interesting to observe the attack and defence theme running through both dance and gymnastics lessons. Very effective teaching of pupils in Years 3 and 4 helped them to combine good variety and control of their movements into a dance pattern. The strong rhythms of Lloyd-Webber's *Variations* and Sky's *Toccata* inspired energetic striding, leaping and stamping steps. Pupils' interesting demonstration and discussion highlighted successful efforts and helped pupils to share and extend their ideas.
238. In Year 6, pupils followed the same theme, improving their ball throwing skills in groups. Co-operation was good, with pupils keeping as far as possible to their allotted space in the hall. Their confident, well co-ordinated movements were combined with suitable discussion, which effectively focused on how performance could be improved. The same lesson in the parallel class was not effective because of the considerable noise and disruption created by a group of boys. Most pupils were attentive and enjoyed the vigorous exercise as they practised skills learned in previous lessons. However, the noisy atmosphere prevented the control necessary for safety in physical education and

limited the progress of all pupils.

239. The quality of teaching is good overall. Demonstration and discussion are particularly helpful in making pupils aware of their achievements and improving the quality of movement. Lessons are thoroughly planned and well organised, with suitable emphasis on learning relevant vocabulary. This is sometimes displayed on cards for pupils to read and is helpful in drawing their attention to verbs. Three Year 6 pupils sitting out were usefully involved in one lesson by writing full lists of each activity and the movements taking place. This is a more relevant occupation for pupils who forget their kit than reading, as seen in each of the other lessons.
240. The newly introduced scheme of work is being monitored by the recently appointed subject co-ordinator. Monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum are therefore at an early stage of development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

241. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 and so it is not possible to judge teaching or attainment at this phase. Most pupils attain expected standards by Year 6. Many develop an understanding of Christianity and Judaism but have a more limited understanding of Islam and Buddhism.
242. By Year 6, pupils have, for example, a good understanding of symbols of the Jewish faith such as the Tallit. They can give accurate reasons for the symbolism behind the special clothes worn by Jews at special times. In some lessons, pupils show great trust in their teacher, writing very personal prayers to God, such as, "*Thank you for helping my sister get through childbirth*". In this way and others, pupils show they are making good progress in their spiritual development.
243. The overall quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is effective, it is because lessons are well organised. Teachers generally match the work carefully to the abilities of different groups. They help pupils to reflect upon life, and to develop a greater understanding of themselves. Pupils are given time in religious education lessons for quiet reflection. However, teachers do not though plan sufficiently for pupils to visit synagogues, mosques, and churches of different denominations as part of their wider cultural development. The school has strong links with the local Church and the vicar - an active member of the governing body - is a regular visitor.
244. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The school uses a scheme of work that predates the last inspection. Teachers aim to adopt the new Dudley Locally Agreed Syllabus when it is published to provide a better basis for their planning. The provision for religious education has, as a result, been insecure for too long and subject development has been slow. Religious education does not make a sufficiently strong contribution to literacy. World faiths such as Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism are not taught in enough depth. Assessment is at an early stage of development. The artefacts used to assist religious education are only adequate. The strongest element of the school's provision for religious education is in the way teachers and the vast majority pupils show a quiet respect for each other.