

INSPECTION REPORT

REDNAL HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Rednal

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103248

Headteacher: Mr G Catt

Reporting inspector: Mr A Clark

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th February 2001

Inspection number: 194058

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Irwin Avenue Rednal Birmingham
Postcode:	B45 8QY
Telephone number:	0121 453 2520
Fax number:	0121 457 9359
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Allison
Date of previous inspection:	21 st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Andrew Clark 21596	Registered inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Richard Barnard 13526	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Richard Eaton 4430	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
Kath Hurt 24895	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Joe Haves 8070	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus Ltd
Suite 17
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Walesby
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is in Rednal on the outskirts of Birmingham. It caters for children between the ages of seven and eleven. There are currently 326 pupils on roll with a balance of girls and boys. A small percentage of pupils, approximately seven per cent, are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority of pupils are of white European origin. The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality from privately owned and rented local authority housing. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the national average. The percentages of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (27.8 per cent) and those with a statement of special educational needs (1.8 per cent) are also above average. The present Year 5 and 6 pupils entered the school with attainment which was well below average in National Curriculum tests. Standards on entry to the school are rising.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Rednal Hill Junior is a good school with many very good features. Standards have risen significantly and are above those of similar schools. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers ask challenging questions so that pupils think deeply about their work. Relationships are very good. The school is very well led and managed as staff and governors monitor the quality of the school's work thoroughly. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- The personal, social and moral education of pupils is very good and as a result relationships are very good and they behave well.
- Very good leadership and management lead to rising standards and continued school improvement.
- There has been a significant improvement in the rate of attendance. This is because of the excellent monitoring and promotion of attendance led by the headteacher.

What could be improved

- The way pupils talk about their work and explain their ideas. The accuracy of their spelling and handwriting in all subjects.
- The consistent use of marking to improve pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 when the headteacher was newly appointed. There has been good improvement since then. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly. The quality of teaching has improved through the sharing of good practice and careful monitoring by senior staff. The pupils now write imaginatively and at length although they do not always use spelling and handwriting carefully enough. Teachers now check more carefully how well the more able pupils are learning. Teachers use the information well to provide work that interests and motivates the pupils. This contributes to rising standards. Planning is effectively based on the expected levels of the National Curriculum. There are extremely good procedures in place to make sure all pupils progress through the full curriculum. The school is well placed to continue to improve because of the very good quality of leadership and management.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	D	D	B
mathematics	E	D	D	C
science	E	D	C	B

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

In all three subjects standards have improved much faster than they have nationally. They are now much closer to the national average than they were at the time of the last inspection. The percentage of more able pupils attaining the higher levels in the tests was in line with the national average for English and mathematics and above average for science. They were well above those of similar schools. Pupils made good progress from their achievement on entry to the school. This pattern of good progress is repeated throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make good and sometimes very good progress because of the effective way in which work is carefully matched to their needs and support staff are deployed. The achievement of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is also good. The good progress is a direct result of the quality of teaching and careful use of assessment information to set targets for pupils to achieve.

In the work seen pupils write imaginatively, but they do not always spell accurately or use joined handwriting outside of English exercises. Reading standards are appropriate for their age. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound and they are developing good standards in science investigations. Standards in information and communication technology are typical for their age and sometimes better. Standards in art and design and physical education are good. However, a weakness in several subjects is that pupils do not always speak clearly or accurately and this limits their ability to explain or discuss their ideas. Teachers use a range of strategies to overcome this but they are not systematically planned for to ensure good progress through the school. The school has set very challenging targets for attainment in the next National Curriculum tests. The school is well placed to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved. They are polite and friendly to each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils feel valued. Personal development is good. Pupils use their initiative in lessons such as art and design and information and communication technology to work independently and organise their own work.
Attendance	Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Levels of attendance are now close to the national average. Most pupils are punctual and ready to start work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. In 65 per cent of lessons observed teaching was good or better including 30 per cent of very good and occasionally excellent lessons. Only in one lesson was the quality of teaching less than satisfactory and the remainder were satisfactory.

The quality of teaching in English is good because pupils learn to write with imagination. Literacy is taught well but teachers do not always make sure pupils use their knowledge of spelling and handwriting, for example, in their other written work. The teaching of mathematics is good and pupils use a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. Basic numeracy skills are taught effectively. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with high attainment is good through effective assessment and work is targeted to their needs. Teachers manage behaviour very well and so pupils learn in a calm and thoughtful way. Teachers often introduce lessons in a lively and imaginative way and pupils are motivated from the start. They generally concentrate well and work independently. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, usually too long is spent explaining work when they already know what to do; this reduces pupils' work rate. Homework helps pupils to achieve higher standards by allowing them to practise basic skills and to develop their research skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. Pupils' learn through interesting activities. Teachers make good use of the local community, and personal, social and health education is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is excellent. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed and monitored and they are very well supported so that they have full access to all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. It is very good for pupils' social and moral development and contributes to their good behaviour and personal development. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about non-European cultures in subjects such as art and design and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Standards of care are very good. There is very effective use of procedures to monitor and assess progress. The monitoring and promotion of attendance is excellent.

The school works well with parents overall. The school works hard to provide very good information for parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led. The headteacher effectively involves all staff in the drive towards higher standards. He is supported well by the key staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is very good. Governors are well informed and work very well in supporting constant development through their challenging questions and careful planning. They fulfil their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good indeed. The school makes full use of a wide range of assessment and monitoring procedures to measure and act upon its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. There are effective procedures to ensure that all subject leaders monitor, manage and prepare their own budgets. The governors ensure that major commitments such as staff, information and communication technology lead to the best value.

The quality of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • Children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less homework for holiday periods. • The way the school works with parents. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees fully with the parents' positive views of the school. They disagree with the concerns overall. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes it clear how much time pupils need to spend on tasks and many pupils choose to spend longer. The school provides parents with very good information about their children's learning and encourages parents to support the school, which several do. However, some parents feel that the headteacher is not accessible enough. The evidence of the inspection disagrees with this view and considers the procedures for communicating with the school are good. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities include sports, drama and music and is better than that found in many schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving standards in English, mathematics and science. In the national tests in 2000, standards were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. However, when standards are compared to schools with similar backgrounds Rednal Hill did better in English and science and as well in mathematics. In particular, the more able pupils did well in the national tests: more pupils attained the higher levels in English and science than nationally and compared to schools of a similar background standards were well above average. In mathematics, the more able pupils did as well nationally at the higher levels but standards were above average when compared to similar schools.
2. The pattern of improvement is continuing and the standards in the present Year 6 are in line with national expectations in mathematics and science but below in English. Nevertheless, they achieve well over their time in school from the below average standards they achieved at the age of seven.
3. Pupils with special educational needs often make very good progress against the targets set for them. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from ethnic backgrounds and they make similar progress to their classmates. The achievement of boys over the last three years is slightly above that of girls which is against the national trend. However, there are significant variations year on year and there is no evidence of under achievement by either gender. The school analyses the attainment of all groups of pupils in great detail and considers the curriculum carefully for its impact on achievement by different groups. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating to all pupils and that, along with the good quality of teaching, makes a significant contribution to rising standards.
4. The standards are rising throughout the school as the attainment on entry to the school is rising and the present Year 3 compares favourably with the national picture. These pupils continue to do well. For example, they are quick to answer mathematical questions involving very large numbers.
5. However, although the general picture on standards is very positive and many of the weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed, there are some areas of learning, particularly in English, which are not high enough and have an effect on standards in some other subjects. In particular, pupils' speaking skills and spelling are often weak.
6. Pupils throughout the school listen well. This is often the result of good teaching and high expectations. For instance, in an information and communication technology lesson, pupils in Year 5 listened and recalled some very detailed technological descriptions of aspects of the Internet. However, when speaking, many pupils are too quiet and indistinct. They do not always use common words correctly, such as 'was' for 'were', and their explanations of the work they are doing lack detail. There are, of course, exceptions to this, as for example in a very good science lesson where the teacher used a mature technical vocabulary talking of 'saturated solutions' and 'evaporation' and the pupils used the correct terms in return. The school provides opportunities to develop speaking skills, and teachers' questioning often calls for a reasonable response. However, there is no specific planning to promote progression in these skills through other subjects or in drama.
7. Standards of reading are in line with expected levels. By eleven years of age most pupils read fluently and largely accurately. Some pupils are inclined to ignore punctuation and read too quickly. The pupils use reference books and dictionaries correctly. Pupils with special

educational needs often make very good progress thanks to very structured but lively story and play reading by the teacher. Pupils of average ability do not always select the most appropriate books to read individually because there is not enough guidance from their teachers.

8. Pupils often write interestingly and creatively and weaknesses in this area have been effectively addressed. However, spelling is weak in many classes. Pupils often spell words just as they sound rather than following spelling rules. Similarly the quality of handwriting is not always good enough. Many pupils still write in a slow printed style by Year 6. In both cases, pupils are taught the correct way to spell or write and do so in exercises, but they do not transfer this to the rest of their written work. Teachers have, quite rightly, not wanted to stem pupils' creativity and confidence in writing at length by commenting too much on spelling or handwriting. However, as a result, some pupils feel that spelling and presentation does not matter rather than checking and correcting their work.
9. Standards in mathematics are close to average and there are few significant weaknesses in pupils' learning. They learn to calculate sums in their heads at an appropriate level thanks to the good pace of lessons. However, a significant proportion of pupils are slow at doing the actual calculations because they need more practice. Pupils have a good understanding of how numbers grow in tens and identifying patterns in number. Standards of understanding of shape and measure are good. However, pupils' ability to solve written problems and explain their ideas is sometimes limited by the weaknesses in speaking and writing.
10. Achievement in science is good. Pupils have a sound knowledge of life and living processes, and reporting and recording of their results is good. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, make good progress in producing detailed graphs drawn to a small scale. Again pupils sometimes have difficulty explaining their ideas clearly. There is a very detailed analysis of a range of tests and assessment results to identify weaknesses in the subject and this pinpoints areas for development very well. Combined with the good teaching in science this contributes to rising standards.
11. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good because pupils gain significant benefits from specialist support. Over time they make very good gains in their learning; an example of this is the improvements in reading. In addition, pupils are regularly assessed and, when able to work with no extra help, removed from the special educational needs register.
12. Standards in information and communication technology are typical by the age of eleven in many aspects of the subject. Pupils are making particularly good progress in recognising the potential of the Internet to support learning. Standards are rising through the very effective use of good resources introduced last year and good leadership by the subject co-ordinator.
13. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in religious education although the depth of understanding is sometimes limited by the quality of their speaking skills. However, teachers encourage all pupils to discuss their ideas and pupils, including those with special educational needs, participate fully in exploring their ideas about their responsibilities towards the planet. Pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding sufficiently through writing.
14. Standards in art and design and in physical education are often high throughout the school. This is the result of imaginative and skilful teaching and good lesson planning. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress as activities are stimulating and vibrant and opportunities are created for the full involvement of all pupils including those with severe mobility problems.
15. In history, geography, design and technology and music, standards are typical by the age of eleven and achievement is satisfactory and often good. The breadth of pupils' understanding is improved by good opportunities to investigate for themselves studies of the local history and

geography. However, the subjects are taught in termly blocks and pupils go for several terms without studying one subject or the other. This leads to inconsistent progress and opportunities are missed to link topics together to give a greater understanding of the world around them.

16. Overall, the achievement of all pupils is good in many subjects and standards are continuing to rise. The headteacher has established excellent procedures for tracking all pupils' achievement as they progress through school. The outcome is used to set and review targets for pupils of all ages and achievement. The targets are very challenging, often in excess of normal expectations for pupils' gains in learning. As a result of the analytical procedures the school matches resources, such as supplementary booster classes, very carefully to where they are most needed for both lower and higher attaining pupils and the school is well placed to meet its targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' good attitudes to their work, good behaviour, very good relationships, and improving levels of attendance make a good contribution to their achievements, especially to their personal development and awareness of citizenship.
18. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to take part in lessons and clubs, especially relating to sport. During the inspection, their interest and concentration was consistently good in all classes and sometimes very good. For example in a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm captures the pupils' interest and because of this they quickly understand which words to use when describing verbs and nouns.
19. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground. The very good management of behaviour by all staff of the few pupils who show tendencies for inappropriate behaviour ensures that progress in lessons is not disrupted. The swift and effective treatment of any potential over-aggressive behaviour leaves pupils and parents feeling confident and secure. No bullying, sexist or racist behaviour was observed during the inspection and the low level of temporary exclusions and lack of permanent exclusions over the last two years indicates the success of the school's policy in relation to these areas. Pupils know the school rules well and how to behave appropriately. They are polite, friendly and helpful. Relationships are very good because pupils play and work together very well. Co-operation and teamwork has a very positive impact on their achievements in games. In lessons, co-operation in pairs and groups helps pupils learn together well; for example, Year 5 pupils worked in groups to design and construct a model of a Tudor House. Because they listen to each other and share their ideas sensibly the task is completed well and to a high standard.
20. Pupils' personal development is very good and contributes very well to their very good awareness of citizenship. They undertake a wide range of duties with responsible and mature attitudes. The school council plays a significant part in the life of the school and making a major contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are very proud of their fund raising which has helped enhance the provision for outdoor play for all pupils. Meetings are very well structured and pupils play their roles such as chairperson, treasurer and minute taker with pride and respect for others. Pupils develop a very good awareness of the needs and circumstances of others less fortunate than themselves by regular fund raising for charities. Pupils keenly support a range of clubs and show very positive attitudes to team sports. Both the football and netball squads are keen to talk about their performances. Pupils show very good initiative. For example they independently set out equipment so that physical education lessons start promptly, and because pupils are able to work sensibly, with very little supervision, they make good use of their time working on the computers.
21. Attendance rates are satisfactory and meet the national averages. This represents a significant improvement over the last four years and is due in main to the excellent monitoring

and the promotion of the importance of prompt and regular attendance. There are no serious issues in relation to lateness. The improved attitude to attendance by pupils has made a significant impact on their overall attitude to school and their achievements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There has been a significant improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection that contributes in no small part to the improving standards. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs remains a strength of the school.
23. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed during the inspection was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons, including 30 per cent of very good and very occasionally excellent lessons. In 33 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory and the strengths outweighed the weaknesses. In only one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection when almost ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The good quality of teaching is spread very evenly across the age groups and any weaknesses in teaching and learning identified at the time of the last inspection have been effectively addressed. The result is that the improvements to teaching are largely through effective monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff and subject leaders, and the strong commitment of all staff to continued improvements. The support staff make a very good contribution to the learning of many pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, because they understand the pupils' needs well and challenge them to think and work hard.
24. A core strength in the teaching is the very good relationships that staff establish with pupils and the management of behaviour. This is a reflection of the high expectations teachers have of their pupils. This is very effectively seen in a lesson for information and communication technology when pupils are expected to work on computers situated throughout the school corridors with the minimum of supervision. The pupils respond to this responsibility well and work hard. In literacy in Year 5 the pupils work on dramatic readings of a Caribbean myth alongside their friends working on grammar exercises. The teachers' high expectations for pupils' learning means that they work with concentration and at a good pace.
25. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good or better in the majority of lessons and is often very good. Very good teaching occurs in all age groups. In most lessons teachers ask challenging questions to promote deeper thinking. In Year 6, for example, pupils considered the teacher's questions carefully, drew on what they had learned in the lesson, and showed they fully understood the difference between conditional and definite verbs. In mathematics, the teachers explore how well the pupils can use their knowledge by setting increasingly difficult number problems. This was evident in Year 3 when pupils quickly converted fractions to their decimal equivalents.
26. Whilst teaching in English is good there is a weakness in the way teachers mark pupils' work. Although work is always marked and all teachers mark supportively, they sometimes praise work that is not good. Although this may encourage pupils, especially those who find the work difficult, it gives little indication of what should be done to make it better. For those pupils who are very successful in the work the marking does not make them think about how they can improve it further. This has a particular impact on standards of spelling and handwriting. Sometimes the pupils misspell the titles on their books, for example grammar books spelt as 'grammer'.
27. Strengths in teaching reflect in the way teachers introduce new work. Their enthusiasm spills over to the pupils and because of this pupils are keen to learn and work hard. A good example of this was in Year 5, when pupils asked very pertinent questions to help them devise their own scientific experiments to separate mixtures in solution. From this they then went on to

work, largely independently, and their experiments were successful. However, even in this lesson pupils' ability to speak and write logically limits the outcome of their work.

28. The pace of teaching is often good but there are some exceptions in satisfactory lessons. In English lessons and mathematics lessons where teaching is satisfactory, pupils often spend too long on introductory activities and are not as inspired afterwards. In Year 4, for example, pupils spent a long time reading a long page of text together on an exercise aimed at scanning for key phrases and some pupils lost concentration.
29. The summary sessions at the end of lessons often make a good contribution to learning by reviewing and consolidating the key teaching points and then developing new ideas to inspire the pupils for future lessons. In art and design, science, design and technology and physical education there is a good balance throughout lessons between learning a skill and practising it. There is often a good overlap of skills, for example, the use of appliqué art skills in the pupils' designs for Tudor costumes.
30. Teachers provide activities that are carefully matched to meeting the pupils' needs, giving support to those that need extra help and challenging the more able to work or think things out for themselves. Worksheets and textbooks are chosen carefully with this in mind. The quality of learning by pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils acquire a wide range of skills as they progress through the school. For example, a pupil with significant learning difficulties rapidly improves her ability to use commas correctly when writing sentences. The use of special educational needs support staff is very good. They are deployed in an efficient manner to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have good and frequent access to the full curriculum.
31. Teachers make good use of the resources available which are largely stored effectively. For example, in art and design and in design and technology pupils have access to a wide range of good quality resources such as sewing frames, workbenches and consumable materials.
32. Homework makes an effective contribution to the quality of learning. Pupils are expected to take home reading books every night, although they do not always read. In all classes pupils are set further homework weekly. For example, in Year 3 pupils have history and geography tasks to complete and a good range of spelling and writing activities. The homework is always marked and the teacher maintains detailed records. A letter is sent out to pupils who regularly fail to complete tasks. The range of tasks set for holidays is interesting and sometimes challenging. For example, Year 3 pupils are encouraged to find out some basic facts about the Victorians during the summer break and Year 6 pupils are given revision tasks for science and mathematics during the Easter holiday. These make a good contribution to learning and standards. It is understandable that some pupils find they do not have time for all the work and the school is keen to explain to parents that children do not need to spend as much time on tasks as they sometimes do.
33. Overall, there are many strengths to teaching and pupils become better learners as a result. The quality of every teacher's work is monitored and they are given feedback on areas to improve and this is followed up effectively. The school is set to continue to improve teaching and learning.

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

34. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for all pupils are good. The curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and is relevant to the age and interest of the pupils. All the pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum, whatever their background, gender or special educational needs. The school places a good emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy, with generous time allocations to each which is used effectively. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies' planning

materials successfully, and have become more confident and effective in their teaching as a result. The weaknesses in planning for mathematics identified in the last inspection have been fully addressed, and the introduction of grouping pupils based on their ability enables teachers to focus on extending all pupils, including those who are more able. This is now driving up standards in the subject. The school's planning for developing pupils' speaking skills is not precise enough. The opportunities for pupils to extend their ability to speak clearly, logically and fully is not specifically planned for across subjects as well as in English. At present, pupils, often struggle to explain their ideas in class discussions.

35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The school provides the widest possible support for all pupils with special educational needs. There are specific programmes of study in place. The withdrawal groups provide very good provision for literacy and numeracy support. Arrangements for pupil withdrawal and return to class are carefully managed. Support staff provide prompt and effective support when pupils return to class after specialist tuition in their special educational needs groups. For example, in a Year 3 Literacy lesson, the integration assistant took detailed notes of the class teacher's talk, so that the returning pupils gained full access to the information and were then ably supported in discussion. Specific support is in place for individual pupils. Staff give careful consideration to seating arrangements to aid pupils who need to lip-read and provide specialised hardware such as a 'roller-board' keyboard to help pupils who are physically impaired. Each Friday a self-esteem group meets, under specialist care, to help pupils' who lack self-confidence.
36. The school has planned its timetable very effectively so that all the other subjects have sufficient time allocations to enable pupils to move forward in each year. Planning systems have been improved since the last inspection. These now provide more detailed guidance so that teachers are clear about what pupils will learn by the end of the lesson and over the course of the week.. This is improving teaching and raising standards in subjects like art and design and information and communication technology. Useful opportunities to revisit topics in subjects like science ensure pupils have time to consolidate their scientific knowledge and understanding and practise their skills of experimentation. This gives a good boost to their learning in Year 6 that shows in the rising standards in science. Planning through a topic approach enables valuable links to be made between subjects. For example, pupils extend their mathematical skills well when they study graphs for information about the planets in the solar system in science. History topics, such as the Tudors, are effectively used to extend pupils' skills in designing theatrical costumes in art and design. A good range of visits to interesting places, for example the Shakespeare Theatre, gives a further boost to pupils' learning, and results in some high quality artwork.
37. The school provides a good range of activities outside normal lessons, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have opportunities to take part in clubs for computers, drama and a good variety of sports, such as football, netball, tennis and hockey. Younger pupils take part in several of these activities, and join with pupils in the infant school in the orienteering club. Pupils also take part in choir and some recorder activities.
38. The school has very good links with the local community. It supports parents well by running computer courses and breakfast and after-school clubs. Partnership in Sport Birmingham enables pupils to benefit from expert coaching by international players in hockey. Pupils take part successfully in debates in the Birmingham Children's Parliament, reaching the National finals of the competition. They help to plan designs for sculptures to improve and develop the Lickey Hills Park. Links with the local car manufacturing industry are strong. Pupils take part in a competition, organised by a national car manufacturer, designing developments, such as a road bridge, that effectively extends their awareness of engineering. All of these increase their awareness and sense of responsibility for their local area significantly. Liaison with partner institutions is good. There are regular meetings with staff in the feeder schools that ensure a smooth transfer for pupils to the next stage of their education.

39. Provision for developing pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. Most parents agree that the school encourages pupils to become mature, responsible and hard working. Pupils willingly and sensibly take responsibility for daily tasks around the school, like supervising the tuck shop queue and operating the tape recorder in assemblies. All the staff praise pupils' efforts and discuss incidents that arise, so that pupils develop very good relationships with each other and a keen awareness of their personal responsibilities. The school council plays a significant part in this development, and is a continuing major strength of the school. Through its aim of 'making a difference' it is highly successful in promoting pupils' sense of citizenship. Pupils learn to carefully select their representatives, who are then involved in successful major school developments, such as improving the facilities in the school grounds. Health education is promoted effectively through the science programme where pupils learn of the need for a healthy lifestyle and the dangers of drugs misuse. There is a good programme of sex education for older pupils in line with the governors' policy.
40. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good; for their spiritual development and cultural development it is sound. The school still effectively leads pupils to respect each other and to be good citizens. The headteacher targets these aspects of provision in the school development plan. The school rules and brochure refer to the emphasis placed on moral and social matters. They are at the centre of the school's life and work.
41. Although spiritual teaching is not strong across the curriculum, pupils do have opportunities to think about important issues in assemblies, in religious education and, occasionally, in other subjects. Class discussions often bring interesting thoughts as in the modern Ten Commandments being written by Year 3 Assemblies provide a clear message often of a moral or social nature. A deity is always recognised through a prayer and stories provide opportunity for reflection. A traditional Hindu story gave food for thought in the Year 5 assembly seen. Opportunities to develop pupils multi-cultural understanding are fewer than they could be, especially in the arts and in creative writing.
42. Christian principles underpin the moral teaching and extend through to the ideas upon which the school bases its strong provision for social development. There is a good moral lead to activities both in lessons and outside them. The school provides clear teaching on right and wrong and develops well pupils' sense of social responsibility. A display by Year 3, for example, about 'People I admire' listed My Doctor and Florence Nightingale as people they looked up to as well as famous footballers.
43. There are many opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility as part of social development. There is a list of monitors in the main corridor and pupils are clear about their duties and responsibilities. There is a school council that provides a very good opportunity for its members to discuss and put into effect ideas to help the school. All pupils can vote for membership giving them a taste of the democratic process. There is a Gold Book for non-academic achievement. The previous report noted how well pupils co-operated with one another in class. This is still true, for example in discussions in religious education, in mathematics groups and as pupils work at computers in information and communication technology.
44. The school celebrates its local culture well. Pupils have, for example, studied the city as it was 50 years ago and taken details of the Sea Life Centre from the Internet. Players from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra visit the school as part of a programme of live music and recently the school took part in a project involving the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Pupils learn about a satisfactory range of religions in religious education and study the island of St Lucia in geography. There are Celtic Knot designs in a display in the hall and in history teachers emphasise the culture of Tudor England and ancient Egypt. However, some opportunities to explore our multi-cultural society are missed in art and design and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Staff know the pupils and their background very well and this helps them to provide very good care which allows pupils to feel secure and confident in the school. The school is clean, tidy and secure. Health and safety procedures are effective. Fire precautions and first aid arrangements are very good. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good because teachers keep detailed records of pupils' achievement in all aspects of their life. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and the very good care shown to them ensures they are fully included in all aspects of the school life.
46. The previous inspection report found the school's assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, and particularly its use of results in planning the programme of pupils' work, to be unsatisfactory. Since that time the school has enhanced its arrangements for assessment, for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which are now very good. It uses the results well to track how successfully pupils cope with the work provided. It builds up a picture which teachers use when planning the curriculum. In English and mathematics the school uses the standard attainment tests provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for pupils at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. In science, the school has devised its own tests to work out what level the pupils are at. Pupils are tested at the beginning of their junior school life in Year 3 and their results of Key Stage 1 national tests are incorporated into the tracking system.
47. Importantly, the school analyses the result of all its testing very thoroughly. A major strength of the school's assessment procedures is that they provide a rolling programme through each pupil's school life. Targets can be set and achievement monitored against previous attainment. For the core subjects of English, mathematics and science there is a full and detailed tracking system in place. The school is well aware of pupils' needs in these subjects. A major example is in the setting of pupils through the school for mathematics. Pupils are grouped according to how well they do in the tests. In Year 6, there is currently a fourth set. The school's testing showed that the group of lowest attaining pupils in the usual three groups would be large and that these pupils would benefit from being in smaller groups where the teacher could give them more individual help. Progress in both these groups shows that this analysis was correct. The creation of two smaller groups is helping pupils achieve well and raising their standards of work.
48. The only exception to good assessment and monitoring is in the choice of reading books. Pupils choose the books they wish to read but sometimes they need guidance because the words are too difficult and they struggle to make sense of what is written. Whilst the school does not want to stifle pupils' enthusiasm for reading, allowing free choice does lead to some pupils experiencing difficulties which slow their progress in reading, and the present arrangements need improving.
49. The arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Assessments to measure achievement are carried out on all known pupils with special educational needs arriving from other schools. Other pupils causing concern are also assessed and there is a continuous process of tracking progress. For example, the individual education plans are of very good quality with specific targets. They are updated at regular intervals. All appropriate review arrangements are in place.
50. Good standards of behaviour are maintained through the consistent application of the school's very good and well thought out behaviour policy. Rewards and praise are used consistently by all staff and have a very positive impact on maintaining good standards of behaviour and attitudes by all pupils. The large playground and ever-increasing range of furniture and activities, along with good supervision, help ensure good behaviour and relationships in the playground.

51. Procedures for recording and monitoring of potential issues relating to bullying, sexist or racist behaviour are very good. The low level of exclusions demonstrates the success of these procedures and the school's positive attitude towards including all pupils by providing opportunities that take account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs.
52. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent, and have resulted in a significant increase in attendance levels. Every opportunity is used to remind parents of the importance of regular and prompt attendance. Rewards are used most effectively to impress the same on pupils. Excellent monitoring arrangements give staff an early warning of any potential problems which are dealt with quickly and very effectively by the school staff.
53. Child Protection arrangements are very good. The designated teacher has very good knowledge of the procedures and ensures all staff are aware of potential issues and the local guidelines. Good links with the local infant and secondary schools ensures pupils move confidently and settle quickly into their new schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school makes very good efforts to involve parents in the life of the school and their children's education. Although many parents do not get fully involved with helping their children this does not deter the staff and governors. The school welcomes and encourages parents to take part in all aspects of its work and works hard to develop these links. Parental help is encouraged and used effectively in the classroom to support visits and extra-curricular activities and in helping in areas such as photocopying or preparing resources. Parent classes regularly use the computers, both enhancing their own learning and also setting a good role model for the pupils. Parents are quickly and effectively consulted over issues such as behaviour or attendance; those with children with special educational needs are very well informed and given very good encouragement to take part in reviews. Newsletters, the school prospectus, and the governors' annual report all provide very good information about the life of the school and what is being taught.. Staff treat all groups of pupils fairly and no evidence of favouritism was found.
55. About five per cent of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector and 35 per cent responded to the pre-inspection survey of their views about the school. All parents at the meeting were positive in their views about the school. In the survey parents were pleased with standards achieved by the school and the quality of the leadership and management. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views about the school.
56. Some parents expressed concerns over the level of homework, especially in the holiday periods. However, teachers use homework well and parents are given good information about tasks to be performed in the holidays, which usually relate to research for topics to be studied the next term. The headteacher pointed out in a newsletter after the Christmas break that it was not essential for pupils to have carried out all the tasks set. This is a very good example of how the school tries to involve parents in helping their children in their learning. Parents also had concerns about the information they receive on how their children are progressing, but information parents receive on the children's attainment and progress is very good. Reports are of a consistently high quality and provide a detailed analysis of achievements together with specific targets for areas of future development. Parents also expressed concern about how closely the school works with parents and on the range of activities provided outside normal lessons and a few referred to staff showing favouritism towards certain pupils. The range of activities outside lessons is good and staff treat all groups of pupils fairly; there is no evidence of staff showing favouritism. .
57. The quality of links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school provides an induction day for new parents whose children have special educational needs. Regular contact is maintained and information provided. Parents are invited to two formal meetings each year, have access to class teachers and attend review meetings. They

are kept fully informed of their children's progress. The Friends of the school, supported by a small group of active parents, provide a good range of social and fund-raising events. Parents are keen to attend performances by the children, and watch sporting events, but few are involved in supporting their learning; for example few record comments in reading diaries or help with homework.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The quality of leadership and management is very good and has a very positive effect on the quality of learning and improvement in standards.
59. The headteacher is a dynamic leader who provides a clear educational direction and strong procedures to support continued school improvement. He is supported well by key staff and the governing body, who have a shared commitment to raising achievement. The new deputy headteacher is already playing a significant role in managing the school. Parents support the leadership overall.
60. The main strength of the leadership is the strategic evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on a very good range of monitoring systems and detailed analysis of test and assessment results. The information produced is used effectively to set increasingly challenging targets for pupils' learning. Since his appointment in 1997 the headteacher has set and maintained a series of targets for improving provision in all aspects of school life. These targets are based on thorough evaluations involving staff, parents and governors. For example, senior staff and subject leaders monitor teaching regularly and the information provided is used to draw up improvement plans. This has led to improvements in the way teachers frame questions to encourage pupils to be involved and the use of summary sessions to review the main features of a lesson. Individual weaknesses in teaching are also identified, although the procedures are not as rigorous for this as in some other areas. Nevertheless, they lead to targets for improvement for each teacher, which lead to continued improvement. There is an effective procedure for all staff to identify the main strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and leadership through a well-planned series of questions. This has led to improvements in many areas including the provision and situation of resources for information and communication technology. Alongside this is a detailed analysis of all assessment data on pupils' achievement that is described earlier in the report. The outcome of this has been the good use of setting pupils by ability for mathematics and identifying and teaching groups requiring specific additional support, including higher attaining pupils. The achievement of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds is also reviewed although there are no issues in this as pupils' progress is at least as good as their peers.
61. One of the most important results of the impact of good quality monitoring and management by the headteacher is the significant improvement in attendance from a very low baseline three years ago. The procedures are described earlier in the report.
62. There is a strong commitment to developing the professional skills of all staff. All subject leaders have time weekly to monitor, support and evaluate learning in their subjects. This leads to effective sharing of ideas and mutual respect for each other's expertise. In science, for example, the subject leader has improved assessment procedures and worked alongside colleagues, leading to rising standards. As a result of their monitoring, detailed action plans are produced. The subject leader produces a detailed and accurately costed resource list. From this the staff collectively discuss what the priorities for development are and the budget is set accordingly. In this way staff have a strong sense of ownership and a keen desire to ensure resources have a positive impact on learning. Temporary subject leaders are fully involved in the process and are able to offer effective support, as in design and technology. The school is using the well-established procedures for monitoring in meeting the requirements for performance management.

63. There is a very effective team management system which ensures that all staff are kept well informed and are fully involved in all major developments.
64. The new deputy headteacher has led the development and monitoring of procedures to improve behaviour. She is supporting the school well in addressing speaking skills through drama work through a very successful club and within her teaching of booster groups for pupils with a weakness in imaginative writing skills.
65. The governing body has a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have delegated responsibilities to monitor aspects of the curriculum and special educational needs. They hold regular discussions with subject leaders and receive detailed reports from the headteacher. They are therefore in a strong position to question the impact of provision on learning and this contributes to improvements in planning and ensuring finances are directed at where they are most needed. There are good links with the infant school and this helps the successful transition for pupils from one school to another. In particular, the infant school provides good information on the progress of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs so that appropriate support can be offered. At present no pupils require additional language support.
66. There is a strong commitment to including pupils with special educational needs and the special educational needs governor brings very good professional knowledge to this. The quality of the special educational needs co-ordinators' leadership is excellent. She maintains her expertise through regular in-service courses and is currently following a post-graduate diploma course. The co-ordinator uses her management time very effectively to manage the special educational needs programme in school. There are excellent working relationships with her team; they have great confidence in her. All the staff are very committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs achieve their maximum potential.
67. All legal requirements are fully met. For example, there is a very clear statement on special educational needs in the governors' annual report to parents. The special educational needs' register is carefully maintained, with detailed information being maintained on individual education plans. The designated governor for special educational needs is well qualified for his role.
68. There are suitable numbers of teaching staff and they are well qualified for their responsibilities. There is a good number of support staff who are very effectively deployed to support the less able and those with special educational needs. The accommodation is good and used well. The school grounds have been significantly improved through the pupils' own fund-raising efforts.
69. The school makes good use of information and communication technology to monitor standards of attainment and to monitor the attendance of pupils. This has a positive impact on raising standards. Resources are good for all subjects.
70. The governors and headteacher have a very good understanding of the school finances and have secure plans, which reflect future pupil numbers and the school's educational developments. The use of the surplus in the budget, which accrued through very prudent and perceptive financial management, is planned for sensibly and in line with the school development plan priorities. The principles of best value are understood and applied very effectively resulting in very good allocation and use of financial and other resources which are having an increasingly positive impact on standards and school improvement. Good examples are the use of funds and staff for special educational needs provision, booster classes and the use of four sets for teaching mathematics in Year 6.
71. The staff are effectively deployed so that good use is made of their skills. Subject leaders are generally well qualified for their roles and this has a positive impact on learning in many

subjects such as information and communication technology and art and design as well as English and mathematics.

72. Day-to-day financial management and administration are very good. This enables the headteacher and governors to monitor the budget closely, ensure all areas are well resourced and monies are used prudently and linked effectively to school priorities. The strong partnership with the Educational Business Link is used very productively both in relation to strengthening the skills of the governing body but also to support the very effective administrative staff. Their effectiveness, together with the very supportive caretaker, ensures the teaching staff spend the minimum time on routine administrative or support tasks.
73. Overall, the high quality of leadership and management is a significant contributory factor to standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. To continue to raise standards the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve standards of English across the curriculum by:
 - broadening the range of opportunities provided for all pupils to improve their speaking skills and to develop their powers of debate;
 - ensuring the good work undertaken in developing handwriting skills is transferred to creative work and writing in other subject areas;
 - devising an effective policy for improving spelling throughout the school.
(Paragraphs: 5,6,26,77,89,99)
- (2) Ensure marking is consistently applied to give pupils guidance on how to improve their work.
(Paragraphs: 26, 83)

In addition, the following issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

Encouraging all pupils to read more widely and for staff to provide more guidance on the choice of text. (Paragraphs: 7, 76)

Providing opportunities to learn about non-European cultures. (Paragraphs: 44,103,135)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	27	35	33	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	326
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	85
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	82
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	28	48	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	25
	Girls	33	30	37
	Total	55	51	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (73)	67 ([73)	82 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	22
	Girls	33	25	35
	Total	49	43	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (68)	57 (65)	75 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75])

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	303
Any other minority ethnic group	10

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	3	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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	27.2

Education support staff: Y 3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	610736
Total expenditure	627726
Expenditure per pupil	1868
Balance brought forward from previous year	71396
Balance carried forward to next year	54406

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	138

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	3	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	49	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	55	11	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	57	22	6	2
The teaching is good.	46	51	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	52	20	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	36	11	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	41	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	48	18	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	4	7	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	50	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	41	20	5	4

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

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English have improved much faster than the national trend over the last three years. In 2000 the results in national tests were below average but above those of schools with a similar background to Rednal Hill. The most able pupils did particularly well in achieving well above similar schools. Boys slightly out-performed girls during the last three years which is against the national trend. The overall attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is below national expectations. However, from the low standards attained in the tests at age seven these pupils have made good progress and achieved well. Whilst standards for the current Year 6 pupils are still below average they are better than they were.
76. Standards in listening meet expectations throughout the school. Most pupils listen attentively and concentrate well. Speaking skills are below expectations by the age of eleven years. Many pupils do use words incorrectly, for example, the inaccurate use of 'was' and 'were'. Pupils' explanations frequently lack detail and patterns of speech are restricted rather than extended. Responses are often too quiet and indistinct. Most pupils have difficulty in discussing wider issues with a sufficient sense of understanding and use of extended vocabulary. For example, only the more able readers confidently discuss their understanding and appreciation of books and stories. Exceptions arise when teaching is outstanding. For example, in Year 6 pupils engage in animated discussion on the character of James Bond following the teachers' lively reading and role-play.
77. In other year groups speaking skills vary, being stronger in the lower half of the school. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils could not define clearly a 'conjunction,' despite doing a written exercise using them. However, pupils do select relevant words to describe a myth. In Year 3, pupils use clear language to explain a computer game, describing its setting as a 'dark, gloomy wood'. In Year 4, pupils understand the purpose of an instructional text and use appropriate language, for example, knowing and applying the term 'aqueduct' correctly. Pupils of all ages use language principally to answer questions and provide feedback during plenary sessions. They are less competent in an open discussion or debate.
78. Standards of attainment in reading are below average in Year 6, but broadly meet expectations in all other year groups. Most eleven year old pupils read accurately and the more able, fluently. Some fail to pay sufficient attention to punctuation and this leads them to read far too quickly and to misunderstand what they have read. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress through the attention given to improving basic reading skills and a range of strategies to handle new words. Many pupils do not read widely enough from fiction and their experience of non-fiction is also limited. Library skills are adequate, but a number of pupils select unsuitable texts, which is either too difficult for them to understand or too easy.
79. Elsewhere, standards in reading are satisfactory. In Year 5, most pupils read accurately, although their ability to recall and retell a story is variable. For example, of the most fluent readers heard, one pupil confidently discussed character and plot, whilst the others offered few comments. In Years 3 and 4, most pupils read accurately and use letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words and other strategies correctly to overcome problems. Their reading is at a steady pace, but lacks fluency. However, a number of more able pupils read with expression. A minority of pupils struggle to read accurately. A significant number of pupils do not appear to have regular home reading support.
80. Pupils' handwriting skills are of an appropriate standard in their practice books, because of careful teaching. However, many pupils fail to transfer these skills to their creative writing in English, or indeed to written work in other subjects. Standards in writing are below average in Years 5 and 6, but meet expectations in Years 3 and 4. This is principally due to the higher

standards on entry of these younger pupils. In Year 6, the more able pupils write imaginatively; for example, in adapting the 'Railway Children.' to a modern setting. They produce interesting poetry on the environment and can construct an argument, for example, 'TV, a curse or blessing?' Punctuation is mostly accurate, but paragraphing is weak. Pupils of average ability also write in depth for differing purposes. Punctuation and spelling is less secure; for example, they include dialogue, but fail to use speech marks. The less able pupils struggle with punctuation and spelling. A relative strength in all pupils' work is the use of imagination and their perseverance, which leads to many good examples of extended writing. However, there is insufficient evidence of drafting and little evidence of book review.

81. In other year groups, pupils' handwriting varies in quality. In Year 5, the more able pupils use secure, joined writing. However, most other pupils lack consistency here. Many pupils spell words as they sound; for example 'menchoned' (mentioned) or 'disided' (decided). Despite this there are good examples of creative writing, sometimes as a fable, for example 'The Hare and the Elephant.' Amongst younger pupils, most have a secure joined handwriting style. In Year 3 good quality writing includes 'The Magic Potion'. Pupils improve their skills in writing for specific purpose, for example, letters to 'Dear Father Christmas.' This promising work shows pupils using language effectively; however, spelling remains weak – for example, 'clowed' (cloud) and 'mite' (might).
82. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This has a direct impact upon learning and all pupils' good progress over time. In some lessons the quality of teaching helps raise attainment above that expected for their age. In an excellent lesson, rapid pace and high expectations help pupils gain perceptive insights into the varied meaning of language. For example, they understand to 'sing' within the context of a confession. They distinguish between conditional and definite verbs, recognising the place of each. They devise imaginative settings for their story telling, for example, an 'armed temple in a jungle'. Pupils develop their dictionary skills effectively. Challenging questions promote thinking well, for example, to use the fourth letter of a word to locate it alphabetically. In another lesson, explaining to pupils what they are to learn ensures they are well aware of what they are to do and they make very good progress in using appropriate adjectives and verbs. This extends their vocabulary well. Good support is given to carefully targeted groups of pupils to raise their attainment closer to levels typical for their age. For example, the school realised that a group of Year 6 pupils lacked the confidence to write imaginatively and to use good descriptive language. Additional booster lessons now concentrate effectively on eliminating the weaknesses and so successfully improve standards. More able pupils are also identified and given extra support to address possible weaknesses in their work that would prohibit them achieving higher levels. The support given contributes to the improving percentage of pupils reaching these levels. The impact of these good standards in teaching is that most pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. Some develop independent study skills and work extremely hard. Most persevere well with tasks and behaviour is good.
83. In the satisfactory lessons the opening session is too long; this can lead to pupils' inattention. Occasionally, there is a lack of pace and a loss of purpose; tasks are unclear and pupils are unsure of what to do. Some plenary sessions are too short; this limits opportunities for discussion and the consolidation of learning. There is insufficient emphasis upon spelling, particularly in the marking of pupils' written work in other subjects. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is a lack of pace, questioning is unclear and pupils lose interest.
84. The new co-ordinator provides good leadership. Her thorough audit of the teaching of literacy has already identified key findings and issues for action. The staff are well supported in their teaching. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities, although there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' writing skills further. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a popular drama club, which plays an important role in developing speaking skills.

85. The very successful book week recently provided good opportunities to broaden all pupils' experience of literature. The additional curricular time made available, for example in Year 6, helps to raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported and there is very good liaison between classroom teachers and learning support assistants. Staff receive good opportunities for professional development; for example, five have recently attended a 'grammar for writing' course. Whilst resources are generally good, there are insufficient guided reading books.
86. Two important improvements since the last inspection are the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress. The strategy for promoting literacy across the curriculum is developing well, for example, in science, history and music.

MATHEMATICS

87. In the national tests for eleven year olds pupils' standards were above those of similar schools but below the national average. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection and they have risen faster than the national trend. In the work seen standards are close to levels expected for eleven year olds.
88. Many pupils have an above average understanding of space, shape and measure and all except those in the lowest attaining group reach at least an average understanding. Pupils' understanding of number work is average overall but a significant proportion of pupils find the quick mental addition of two numbers (number bonds) difficult. Pupils make good progress on their earlier learning through the quick pace and challenge teachers give in mental work. This is so across the older age groups in the school. However, in Year 3 most pupils have a good knowledge of number bonds and this reflects the changing pattern in pupils' attainment which is now much higher than in previous years. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge of place value and write large numbers accurately.
89. Pupils have done some interesting and mathematically valuable work in other subjects. For example Year 4 pupils used a pie chart to plot the use of leisure time in a personal health and social education lesson and Year 6 confidently handled data about the solar system in science. Pupils could also use a graph to answer questions about planets. However, weaknesses in speaking and writing limit some pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems. An example that illustrates this was when average attaining pupils in Year 3 showed some difficulty understanding the problems about time set in their lesson although they could do the actual sums quite easily.
90. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers prepare and organise lessons well and because of this pupils make good progress and are able to make links between one aspect of mathematics and another. The most able Year 5 pupils for example were able to plot co-ordinates confidently in all four quadrants and realised that the shape they had drawn was symmetrical. One pupil answered immediately that the line of symmetry was the x-axis. Tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and levels of attainment and pupils work in groups with others of a similar ability. In Year 6, for example, lower ability pupils understood that the way some shapes were put together would affect the perimeter but not the area the shapes covered. Within the groups teachers make further allowance for pupils' ability by using two or more tasks in the main part of the lesson. Teachers manage their pupils very well and this makes for orderly lessons in which pupils can concentrate and learn. They also question well; for example, in Year 3 perceptive and probing questioning aided pupils' learning and they gained a good understanding of weights and measures. In this lesson there was also a good balance of practical work and consolidation. A lively lesson in Year 3 introduced good ideas for developing skill in doubling numbers and then, especially, in introducing the idea of co-ordinates. Good explanation and questioning led pupils to think about this new idea. In Year 5 the teacher used a large and well-made treasure island map to teach co-ordinates. The idea

produced much enthusiasm, pupils working very hard to find the treasure before 'Evil TM' could do so!

91. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching was less than good either the pace of the lesson was slow or teacher explanations were less interesting. In some lessons the opening oral session could challenge able pupils more vigorously. Where the teacher spends too much time talking the pupils lose interest and do not make the progress they could. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, two pupil support assistants helped these pupils well, involving them in the lesson and ensuring that they understood the work.
92. Teachers understand and use well the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons move swiftly from the initial mental work into the main task and through to the plenary which teachers use well to summarise and revise the work of the lesson.
93. Assessment procedures are very effectively used to identify groups of pupils to receive additional booster lessons to raise their attainment before they leave school. It is also used well to ensure the pupils are taught in groups of pupils of similar ability and this has a good impact on the progress made.
94. The school has made good progress in developing mathematics since the time of the last inspection. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning has led to improved curriculum planning and to the teaching of pupils in ability groups. This ensures that work is matched well to pupils' needs.

SCIENCE

95. Standards in science have improved considerably since the last inspection, faster than the national rate of improvement. The latest test results show that standards are similar to schools nationally, and better than those of schools with similar backgrounds. Pupils achieve well and make good progress, since the attainment of many of these pupils was low on entry to the school. More pupils now attain the higher Level 5 in science tests than before, because of good teaching and improvements in the systems for planning and checking pupils' progress across the school. These ensure that pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the topics they study.
96. However, systems for checking pupils' scientific skills are not as well developed as they might be. This means that teachers do not have sufficiently clear information about what pupils need to learn next to build into their planning, and their skills in using and applying what they learn in experiments and investigations are relatively weaker. Pupils sometimes struggle to explain their ideas logically and clearly when speaking in discussions and writing reports because of their poor speaking skills.
97. Standards in the present Year 6 are as expected for pupils by the age of eleven years. This is a significant improvement from their attainment on entry to the school. The school's planning ensures that topics are revisited in Year 6 and this gives a good boost to pupils' learning. In their work on the solar system they develop a good understanding of the position and rotation of the planets and of the effect of the sun as a source of light and heat, because the teacher uses diagrams and a model effectively in her demonstration. Pupils have a detailed knowledge of how the human heart and digestive systems work, and the importance of exercise and diet for good health. They produce neat, carefully labelled diagrams and reports, correctly using a wider scientific vocabulary of terms, such as 'photosynthesis', 'seed dispersal' and 'primary consumers'.
98. The quality of teaching is good overall. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory with the majority of it good or very good for all age groups. There are a number of significant strengths that account for pupils' good attitudes and progress in science. Teachers forge very good relationships with their pupils, who respond by listening carefully and behaving well in

lessons. They have good subject knowledge that is evident in their lively, interesting introductions and explanations that successfully capture pupils' interest. They are clear about what pupils will learn in lessons, and plan well-sequenced tasks that steadily build and strengthen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

99. Teachers use questions effectively to check and extend pupils' understanding in lively presentations. This is a major strength in the high quality teaching seen in Years 5 and 6. Excellent teaching is seen in the co-ordinator's class where skilled, persistent use of questions helps pupils plan and organise their own way of separating a salt solution. She routinely uses scientific language, for instance 'saturated solution', 'evaporation' and 'condensation' and so do the pupils. They give clear explanations and make pertinent suggestions, where in other lessons pupils often speak briefly and indistinctly. Levels of enthusiasm are high, as seen in their excitement when the experiment works, and they produce pure drinking water.
100. Teachers plan carefully for the different levels of attainment in their classes, including those pupils with special educational needs. They adapt written tasks so that pupils with writing or reading difficulties are able to record their work. They provide good support for pupils with special educational needs so that they take part fully in all activities. There is a better focus on the needs of more able pupils in teachers' planning that is helping to drive up standards. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher plans well-matched tasks to extend the learning for each group. More able pupils are effectively challenged, and considerably extend their scientific and mathematical skills, when they learn to interpret more difficult graphs involving diameters and distances to identify particular planets in the solar system. Pupils from ethnic backgrounds consistently achieve as well as the other pupils of similar ability.
101. The subject is very well led and managed. Regular monitoring of teaching is identifying what works well and what needs to be improved. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides a strong lead. There is a shared commitment to raising standards further that has led to useful developments in systems for checking pupils' progress and performance in the national tests. This is giving good information on the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. This is providing a firm basis for future planning and development.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age by the time they are eleven years old. Those of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. This is an improvement on the average standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are good, because teachers set them tasks that stimulate their interest and imagination. As a result, pupils with special educational needs, and those who sometimes find it difficult to settle to their tasks, concentrate extremely well and produce good standards of work.
103. This is especially the case for designing, where pupils in Year 6 produce high quality designs for costumes following a visit to the Shakespeare Theatre. They have observed the detail on theatrical costumes at first hand, and become more aware of how to use pattern, colour and decorative touches effectively. Their own carefully drawn designs show imagination and good attention to such details as fabric and sequin patterns, and the use of tie-dyeing and batik techniques. The teacher extends their vocabulary well, and they use more mature language, for example 'swatches', to describe the materials they use. Pupils create interesting sculptures using wire and paper to create three-dimensional figures in response to a challenge to design a sculpture for the Lickey Hills Park. They know of the work of famous artists, and blend colours effectively when interpreting the work of landscape artists, such as Constable, in their own pastel drawings. Their awareness of art from non-western cultures is not so well developed.
104. The teaching of art and design is consistently good, with very good teaching seen in lessons in Years 5 and 6. Planning is effective in providing a good balance of teaching skills and

opportunities for pupils to use those skills in their own projects. Teachers follow its guidelines carefully and have good subject knowledge. They make sure that pupils understand what they are to learn in lessons, and encourage them to ask questions and discuss their ideas. They use sketchbooks well, so that pupils learn to experiment and improve their designs. There is a shared sense of purpose and co-operation, together with ongoing praise and encouragement, so that pupils become absorbed in their artwork, are keen to 'have a go' and work very hard.

105. The resources for teaching art and design have improved since the last inspection, and the school now has a good range of quality resources readily available. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and support for her colleagues. She has identified several relevant areas in the school's systems for planning and checking pupils' progress that will improve the curriculum and pupils' progress even further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. By the age of eleven standards are in line with nationally expected levels. Pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress. The overall quality of teaching is sound and planning to ensure progress through the school is good. The strengths have been maintained since the last inspection.
107. Pupils develop sound and sometimes good making and construction skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 measure, mark and saw wood accurately and use tools correctly. They are very aware of safety issues, which are emphasised effectively by the teachers. Many pupils in Year 5 use needle and thread to sew confidently and accurately, thanks to the teacher's clear explanation and high expectations. Models are often finished to a high standard through good links with art and design work. This is very evident in the range of attractive jewellery designed and made to represent Egyptian artwork.
108. Pupils' designing skills are satisfactory. They often produce accurately drawn designs that are clearly labelled for producing catapults and shadufs, Egyptian irrigation machines. Designs for puppets identify the fabrics to be used and why. Year 6 pupils plan their fruit cocktail in very good detail from a survey they conducted on the most popular fruits. Their plans for Tudor houses are sound although pupils do not show different perspectives in their work.
109. Evaluation processes are largely satisfactory but are limited by the pupils' command of language overall. Comments are based on accurate observations; for example a Year 4 pupil decides that a thin elastic band is no good for his catapult because 'it has to be stretched a long way to store any energy. It is too easy to stretch'. However, many pupils do not analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their work in detail and tend to use simplistic terms to describe work such as 'it is good and holds together'. However, a less able pupil in Year 6 made good progress in explaining why streamlined costumes help swimmers to go fast.
110. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social skills, as pupils are encouraged to work in different groupings and to delegate different tasks to each other such as collecting materials. Relationships are very good in the majority of lessons and this contributes to sound learning. For example, pupils with special educational needs are confident to join in and make a full contribution because they know their contributions are valued.
111. Overall, there is an effective development of pupils' skills, and ideas are often imaginative and linked to studies in other subjects. The subject leader provides effective leadership. The guidance for teaching provides a broad and balanced range of studies. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Skills in designing and evaluating their own work in Years 5 and 6 are not developed enough. Work is well organised and presented and pupils have a good awareness of their own learning overall.

GEOGRAPHY

112. By the age of eleven, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is principally due to the sound, and often good, standard of teaching and positive attitudes of most pupils towards their learning.
113. Pupils in Year 6 have sufficient skills and understanding of maps to produce accurate work on the local area and the wider world. Pupils interpret statistical information on population distribution and land use and display it visually on a map. This map work is more complex than other examples, which are little more than colouring exercises. In a detailed project, pupils produce a number of impressive displays on the European Economic Union. Through this they use independent research skills to compare climatic, economic and commercial similarities and differences. They research other countries as part of their holiday homework projects.
114. As they proceed through the school, most pupils develop and improve their geographical skills. In Year 3 they make good use of photographs to compare climate. For example, one pupil noticed that a dark shadow indicated a very hot day. Pupils in Year 4 complete a detailed study of the River Nile. They recognise its importance to agriculture. Through imaginative teaching, they identify problems caused by pollution and begin to suggest solutions. Their understanding of these improves during the lesson, through collaborative work and discussion. Some good work is completed through a study of tourism and its impact upon the locality at Lickey Hills. This enables pupils to develop their skills in analysing data (on tourist numbers) and assessing the impact upon the environment. This, and other work, provides good opportunities for pupils to improve their mapping and presentational skills.
115. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. From these, and the scrutiny of work, the overall standard of teaching is judged satisfactory, with examples of good teaching being evident. Where teaching is good, pupils are effectively drawn into discussion, which helps consolidate prior learning and promotes new ideas well. Some good work is done to encourage independent study; for example, on Greece in Year 3 and Egypt in Year 4. In the former instance good use was made of resource materials and in the latter a realistic scenario placed pupils in the role of advisers to a government department. The impact of the good teaching is that pupils learn at a good rate and consolidate knowledge and understanding well. Geographical skills improve steadily. On occasion, some tasks provide insufficient challenge; for example colouring of printed maps does little to extend learning. More effective use could be made of summary sessions at the end of lessons, to ensure that pupils can clearly see the work under discussion and thus help maintain pupils' concentration levels.
116. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards their learning. This is particularly evident where they are presented with challenging work that requires them to collaborate, make decisions and offer opinions.
117. The subject leader provides sound leadership and has worked hard to develop the scheme of work. However, the blocking arrangements for this subject lead to some missed opportunities to exploit links with work in history, for example in Year 5. Good use is made of fieldwork to enrich the curriculum, one good example being the village survey in Year 4. The issue of assessment, raised at the last inspection has been successfully dealt with; all units of work have clear assessment targets. The subject makes an adequate contribution to literacy and numeracy in the school, through written tasks and measurement in map work. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

HISTORY

118. By the age of eleven pupils attain standards typical for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This is due to sound, and frequently good, teaching, and the positive attitudes adopted by most pupils towards their learning.
119. Pupils in Year 6 develop a sound understanding of local history. They investigate Birmingham's origins and examine the growth of industry and commerce. Pupils use research skills effectively to discover how Birmingham's Victorian past was influenced by the work of Joseph Chamberlain. This provides useful insights into social change and the growth of local government. Pupils draw effectively upon the memories and mementoes in their own families to identify changes over time in education, transport and leisure. Their work also includes gathering primary evidence on the growth of contemporary culture within a multi-ethnic society. Through this work most pupils develop an appropriate range of historical skills and use them effectively to produce a detailed study of Birmingham's historical growth and development. This is clearly presented in written, illustrative and diagrammatic form. A number of pupils make good use of information and communication technology skills, both for research and presentation.
120. As they move through the school, most pupils acquire a sound understanding of how differing sources of evidence reveal the past. In Year 3, they use topic books effectively to examine the ancient Olympic games. They correctly identify similarities and differences with the modern Olympics. Pupils recognise that artefacts, such as pottery, are good sources of evidence. In Year 4, they discover why the pyramids were constructed and this leads to them gaining useful insights into the beliefs held by the ancient Egyptians. A number of the more able pupils begin to use further sources of evidence, such as the Rosetta stone, to develop an understanding of this period. In Year 5, pupils use chronology effectively to study the Tudor royal family. Some good work is undertaken, as a result of a visit to Selly Manor. Pupils recall this well and a number offer valid comment to show they understand how everyday objects offer clues to life in a Tudor household.
121. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good and very good teaching being observed during the inspection for all age groups. Overall, teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of history and this promotes the subject effectively. Effective use of resources, for example, the examination of a schoolbag's contents, is used successfully to show how an inventory provides good evidence. This leads into an examination of Tudor household inventories, based on a recent visit to Selly Manor. This promotes learning very effectively. Pupils become fully engaged in discussion and speculation. They recall the visit and demonstrate a sound understanding of how artefacts provide information on life in a Tudor household. On occasion, language could be used more precisely. Research activities, amongst younger pupils, sometimes lack sufficient structure and here pupils do not progress swiftly enough. However, the investigative approach does engage pupils actively in their learning. They respond well, being positive, well behaved and motivated. Some good collaborative work takes place.
122. Educational visits; for example to the Black Country Museum, enhance the curriculum effectively and broaden pupils' perspectives. However, the blocking of history into specific terms does lead to some loss in continuity. For example, between Years 5 and 6 there is a three-term gap without any study of history. There is some loss of opportunity to link historical and geographical topics more effectively, for example in local studies. Where the two subjects are blocked together, some very effective work occurs on Egypt and this improves most pupils' overall understanding of that region.
123. Satisfactory progress has been achieved since the last inspection and the concern regarding special educational needs has been addressed through more carefully targeted tasks. Through written work, there is a satisfactory contribution to the development of literacy through

the school. Numeracy is well supported where pupils' research time-lines. Some imaginative resources are used and these include CD-ROM and information and communication technology software.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards in information and communication technology are average by the age of eleven years. However, there is every indication that standards are improving rapidly following the introduction of new resources and the effective leadership of a new subject leader in the last year. The quality of teaching is very good thanks to clear guidance for planning and teachers' enthusiasm which make a positive impact on the rate of pupils' learning.
125. Pupils develop good skills in controlling events on the computer. They plan a program to draw a series of shapes and events on the computer. They become increasingly sophisticated in making the programs more effective by using repeat commands. The teacher in Year 5 asks very direct questions to reinforce pupils' learning. The questions are delivered at a fast, no nonsense pace: "What do I put in the square brackets? Explain how that helps." As a result the pupils are intensely involved and know what to do. Learning is further improved by the fact that pupils revisited the area being studied throughout their time in school and it is evident that the Year 5 pupils have a deeper understanding than Year 3 pupils.
126. Word-processing skills are generally good. By Year 6, pupils present their work in a variety of fonts and styles to good effect. They produce newspaper style articles with headlines and captions. They mix pictures with text from different sources. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the pupils explored the Internet for pictures and information on sea creatures to illustrate a pamphlet for the Birmingham sea-life centre. They then cut and pasted information from the Internet into their brochure. They went on to create their own tables and text boxes and enter their own text. The less able and pupils with special educational needs are supported well. In this instance, the task was altered to match the skills they already possess and, where the teacher felt it would help, these pupils worked with the more able pupils. The able pupils produced sophisticated pamphlets by combining pictures and varying the fonts to good effect.
127. As described above pupils are making good use of the Internet and in several subjects they use the computer as a good source of reference. Pupils also use the Internet as part of their homework projects although very few pupils have computers at home.
128. Pupils make successful use of the computer to handle data. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils produce a questionnaire in their studies on the local area. In science they produce their own data tables on conductors and non-conductors. They used computers successfully as part of a survey on a local Victorian graveyard.
129. A strength of the teaching and learning is the good use of a technical vocabulary by both teachers and pupils. The planning guidance indicates the key vocabulary needed and teachers use the terms consistently to regularly revise and reinforce learning. As a result, pupils are increasingly able to explain the difference between a website and a search engine and to use different sophisticated methods of controlling programs.
130. Another strength is in the very well planned organisation of resources and the monitoring of their use. Computers are sited along corridors and specially created areas are developed for the whole class to work in. Teachers make good use of a projector to demonstrate the controls and activities. As a result of the organisation pupils are expected to work with minimum supervision. They work well independently and rise to the teachers' expectations for sensible behaviour and work hard. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good.

MUSIC

131. Standards in music are in line with those expected for eleven year olds. Pupils sing clearly and in pitch. The sound is a very natural one, more pleasing in softer songs than in louder ones. Year 3 pupils have made a good beginning to composition, being able to put together and then read and perform using picture symbols to represent the instruments and notes to be played. Although the music is very simple this is the beginning of 'real' music making. Pupils have some grasp of the idea of mixing sounds to make a piece of music. By Year 6, pupils can accurately read rhythms from traditional notation and make up their own short tunes using the five notes of the pentatonic scale and simple rhythm patterns. They have a well-developed aural sense, many being able to spot quickly and surely when another group makes a slip in pitch or rhythm. Whilst the most able could be led to more advanced music making, the standard is at least satisfactory.
132. Pupils enjoy their music making. In all the lessons seen there was a buzz of excited work. Pupils stayed on the tasks and worked together at a good pace. In hymn practice and assembly pupils clearly enjoyed the songs and the choir rehearsal had an air of enthusiasm. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all lessons and make good progress. Boys and girls take part and make music with equal enthusiasm. There were, however, very few boys in the choir.
133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The previous report considered progress uneven and this is still the case in that some teachers have good music skills themselves and others have not. This affects the style of teaching but rarely seriously limits learning. Where teachers have good music skills teaching is good and occasionally very good. They use first-rate class management to help them lead pupils into enjoyable learning. They question pupils perceptively about the music and because of this pupils' appreciation and depth of understanding improves. Where music teaching skills are not as strong teachers use the guidance given by the curriculum leader well to produce satisfactory lessons. Here too pupils gain in musical skill and knowledge. For example, the Year 4 teacher played a complex piece of classical music and challenged the pupils by asking them to draw their responses to the sound. As a result the pupils have a deeper understanding of the emotions expressed in music.
134. Through the school pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Hymn practice shows pupils making satisfactory progress as new songs are being learned through repetition but there is little advance in the singing skills being made because not enough emphasis is placed on improving on the tunefulness of the song. In lessons, activities are structured so that pupils can participate at their own level of skill and understanding. As a result all pupils benefit. The music composed in Year 5, for example, showed a wide variety of skill and understanding. Not enough opportunities are created to challenge the most able in some lessons, for example, by using the full extent of their knowledge of playing an instrument.
135. Overall the school has addressed the shortcomings mentioned in the previous report. The subject is led well. The curriculum leader has devised a good scheme of work with ideas for non-specialist teachers to use. There is now a framework to ensure pupils make progress through the school. Pupils do not listen to music from non-European cultures often enough. There are also assessment tasks built in to the units although currently not all teachers use them.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Pupils reach the expected standards by the age of eleven years in all the areas of physical education and their progress is good overall. Standards in games are above average, particularly in football and hockey where pupils benefit from good quality coaching by staff with expertise in these games. A good range of sporting clubs and opportunities to participate in competitions provide a further boost to pupils' achievements in games. Pupils and staff are

rightly proud of their performances in local competitions. Improvement has been good since the last inspection.

137. The school ensures full inclusion so that every pupil is able to take part in all the activities and to make good progress. For instance, there is very good provision and support for pupils with mobility difficulties. Some races for Sports Day are designed so that they can compete equally, and tennis activities are carefully adapted so that they can learn to throw and strike the ball with a racquet alongside other pupils.
138. By Year 6, most pupils can control a balance on different body parts, and work co-operatively with a partner to link such balances with a range of travelling movements. They share ideas so that they sometimes mirror their partner's movements or repeat them. Their sequences are not always as imaginative as they might be because teachers do not emphasise this enough. Pupils develop good skills in controlling and passing balls in tennis, football and hockey because teachers demonstrate and encourage them to practise good techniques. For instance, in a Year 5 hockey lesson, pupils learn how to position and pass the ball to avoid a defending player. They compete energetically in team games, but also have a good sense of teamwork and fair play. Regular swimming sessions ensure that most pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
139. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully to the school's planning guidelines, and lessons have a clear focus on the skills pupils will develop. The major consistent strength is the teachers' very good control and relationships with pupils. This reflects well in pupils' good attitudes in lessons. They are attentive, interested and follow instructions carefully, showing good levels of independence when setting out the apparatus with minimal supervision. This means that lessons always run smoothly.
140. Pupils understand the need to warm up and cool down in lessons because teachers discuss this at the start of lessons. Younger pupils particularly enjoy warming up to lively music. They are enthusiastic and eager to exercise, following their teacher's actions closely. There is a sound balance of instruction and opportunities to practise new skills. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their own and others' work to see what is effective and what could be improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. However, the work tends to focus more upon moral issues and social responsibility rather than spiritual and religious ones. The Year 6 pupils' work on 'Saving the Planet', for example, brought forward some interesting ideas but centred on social and moral issues whilst failing to promote the spiritual and religious significance of the planet to different religious groups and cultures. There are, however, some good examples of teaching of Christianity. For example, in Year 3 pupils learned to interpret aspects of the Old Testament by producing their own list of Ten Commandments and giving their reasons for them.
142. Pupils enjoy their work in religious education, particularly when talking about issues in which they are interested. In the lessons seen all pupils took a part including those with special educational needs. Discussion with pupils shows that they are interested in the work and think religious issues are important. Behaviour is good and pupils listen to one another well. When writing they concentrate and work at a good pace; only in one lesson where the teacher talked too much did pupils' interest wane.
143. The quality of teaching is sound and teachers use some good ideas. In Year 6, for example, pupils applied, and were interviewed, for the job of 'Steward of the Planet'. This brought forward good opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and listening skills and to use their writing skills. Generally, however, teachers provide few opportunities for extended writing.

Teachers question well and the best teaching challenges pupils to think about what they are learning. Sometimes teachers do not follow through these challenges far enough to make the most able pupils think hard about what they are saying. For example, in the Year 6 lessons some ideas offered in the applications for the job of saving the planet lacked the detail expected of pupils in Year 6.

144. The school has made progress since the time of the last inspection. Religious education is now regularly taught across all year groups. There is a fair spread of work across different religions. Pupils are also learning from religion as well as about religion as the local education authority's guidance intends. Assessment of pupils' work and monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator still have to be developed but the school curriculum guidelines contain some very useful basic help for teachers. Monitoring is a stated priority for next year. The subject co-ordinator has good ideas for the development of religious education. She does all the current medium-term planning which provides continuity and progression from year group to year group.